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“A Possibly Sick Bird that Could Inform Broader Public Policy”: Discourse Analysis of Humor and News Discourse in “Last Week Tonight with John Oliver”

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Abstract

Comedy news has become a relevant and influential referent of news media diet for people in the U.S. One of the major exponents of this kind of outlets in the U.S. is the show *Last Week Tonight*. This paper analyzes the objective value of comedy discourse and news discourse from this show and aims at investigating its persuasive effect on people. Van Dijk's (1983) model of news discourse analysis, and Attardo's (2010), and Attardo and Raskin (1991) sequences of joke organization and General Theory of Verbal Humor joke-forming resources were used to apply a conceptual framework for the jokes and the news piece structure of this paper. Results showed that humor is used in pieces of information as de-escalation to the seriousness of news discourse, and that this show has a robust news discourse structure similar to serious news programs.

Keywords: comedy news discourse, canned jokes, news discourse analysis, “Last Week Tonight”, discourse analysis.

1. Introduction

Comedy shows are unique news media outlets that have gained popularity in recent times. The approach these kinds of shows provide to news broadcasting and media consumption has become quite relevant for today's society, and their approach should be seen with nuance and objective criticism (Burns, 2020), due to the power of laughter used in the communicative process. Comedy, as Attardo states (2010), fulfills social functions. The ones connected to comedy news are mediation and social management. As a result, humorous content can be used as a transitional device that permits the presentation of situations, themes, or events that can engage interaction, but also as a tool to ease interactions such as communicating news and/or raising awareness of current real-life events.

Last Week Tonight (LWT) is a show produced by actor and comedian John Oliver, with a group of other comedy writers, journalists, and researchers. It was created in 2014, and it is currently broadcasted by the channel Home Box Office (HBO), and it has a YouTube channel where its main news piece investigations are uploaded for public consumption online.

To analyze this show's unique take on comedy news, I suggest a composed conceptual discourse analysis framework, which analyzes the jokes used in a news piece segment of the show available on YouTube and the general structure of the news piece in question. This paper analyzes

both the news piece structure and the jokes used in such piece from the show to demonstrate the value in discourse analysis that comedy news holds in the portrayal of this novel kind of news format. The news discourse analysis was carried out implementing Van Dijk’s (1983) approach to news discourse to understand how the news piece’s news coverage process occurs and is structured. For the jokes’ analysis, the conceptual framework is a combination of both Attardo’s (2010) and Attardo and Raskin’s (1991) sequential organization of canned jokes and the General Theory Verbal Humor joke-forming resources, as well as Long and Graesser’s (1988) descriptors from their taxonomy of jokes.

- Comedy news are outlets that have become influential in the U.S. society as part of many people’s media diet (Burns, 2020).
- *Last Week Tonight* is one of the most recognizable comedy news outlets that focuses on delivering current-news with a comedic twist.
- This paper analyzes comedy and news’ discourse objectively in order to understand the concrete value comedy news have as both humor and news discourse.
- A conceptual framework brought together from Van Dijk’s (1983) model of news discourse analysis, Attardo’s (2010), and Attardo and Raskin (1991) sequences of joke organization and General Theory of Verbal Humor joke-forming resources was used to apply a conceptual framework for the jokes and the news piece structure of this paper.
- The results obtained proved that the news discourse management of a LWT’s news piece had the same robust structure than a news piece or article found in any news program or in a newspaper.
- It was also found that the jokes are used to alleviate tension and/or harshness on the pieces of information given to the audience.

1.1 *Humor discourse analysis*

Understanding the linguistic value humor is challenging. Long and Graesser (1988) explain that humor is a complex linguistic phenomenon, even challenged and discussed in the realm of psychology. They state that humor, “like all speech acts, must be decoded and comprehended in the context of rules of language, rules of conversation, the speaker’s intentions, and other dimensions of the social situation” (p. 35). Long and Graesser (1988) then define humor as anything said or done in purpose or inadvertently that can be considered funny or amazing to others. When in a conversation, for example, certain expectations are met with playful word plays or incongruous reactions, among other ways to interpret and decode humor from social interactions.

Overall, defining humor concretely can be difficult since people could interpret sarcasm, irony, and even ridiculous situations as humor. Humor, for Attardo (2002), is seen as “an umbrella term encompassing programmatically all the semantic field of humor and humorous forms” (p. 160). For irony and sarcasm to be considered humorous, Attardo (2002) comments, there should be an element of playfulness in the utterance, hence it would be understood as funny. Attardo further comments that there is a distinction between humor competence and performance in the process of identifying humor in conversational interactions. Humor competence is defined as “the capacity of a speaker to process semantically a given text and to locate a set of relationships among its components, such that he/she would identify the text (or part of it) as humorous in an ideal situation” (Attardo, 2002: 161). Humor performance, then, is defined as “the actual encounter of two speakers, in a given actual place and time (from which) speaker A says something and speaker B processes the text (what A said) and, having recognized the humor, reacts by laughing” (*Ibid.*). Attardo (2002) further comments that for humor performance to happen,

speaker A and B may not need to be present physically, thus providing to the conceptual framework of analysis the validity needed when applied to comedy shows, comedy specials, pre-recorded jokes, among other humorous texts.

Attardo (2002) offers an explanation of humor in both semantic and pragmatic views. Semantically speaking, he comments that humor is understood as the opposition of two scripts or frames that can be compatible in their entirety or partially within a text. This means that, with the concept of the “incongruity-resolution model” from Long and Graesser (1988), humor occurs when “an incongruous punch line is resolved to a preceding text” (p. 58). Incongruity provides the punch-line (or premise) perceived with a sense of surprise from the hearer, and the preceding text could generate a humorous reaction, in most cases. This can be up to debate, and Long and Graesser (1998) do go on it, but for the sake of the linguistic background for this project, we will use such an example to establish the semantic view of humor. Regarding humor’s pragmatic view, Attardo comments that it is understood “as a violation of Grice’s Cooperative Principle” (p. 162), which explains that both parts within a conversation are cooperating with each other to engage in seeking meaning from their utterances. Attardo further comments on this view that

humor is a real violation, not a flout or a mentioned violation... [that] differs from other modes of communication that involve violations of the Cooperative Principle, such as lying, in that its purpose (amusement) is largely approved of socially and that significant amounts of humor are incorporated in everyday conversations, exchanges, etc. (Attardo, 2002: 162).

Such definition helps to establish what Attardo (2010) later referred to as a key characteristic of humor: its social functions. He comments that there are primary and secondary social functions. The former is defined as the effects “that the speaker may [wish to] achieve directly by using humorous segments or texts in his/her discourse” (p. 323). Four main classes of primary social functions of humor in communicative processes illustrate Attardo’s characteristics (2010: 323-329):

- (1) Social management: humor is used as a tool to facilitate in-group interaction and strengthen in-group bonding or out-group rejection;
- (2) Decommittment: humorous communication is retractable, i.e., the speaker may back off from his/her utterance without loss of face;
- (3) Mediation: humorous discourse is a “transitional device” that allows the introduction of topics or situations with the sense of embarrassing or aggressive interaction;
- (4) Defunctionalization: humor not used for transmission of information (its principal function), but for playful (ludic) purposes.

Secondary social functions are defined as the effects “that are achieved either indirectly or without the knowledge or intent of the user” (Attardo, 2010: 323). The classes of secondary social functions of humor in communicative processes are far less extensive than in the primary classes, yet they are also worth mentioning for this research project. The three functions mentioned by Attardo (2010) are to provide real-life information, taboo information, and to reveal information from the speaker to the hearer, as in setting the mood for humor in the conversation, acceptance of the subject matter for the conversation, among other elements described as “meta-functions”.

1.2 *News pieces discourse analysis*

After establishing a rather general framework of how humor works in discourse analysis, I will explain how news discourse is then laid out and understood. Van Dijk (1983)

mentions discourse types when referring to news discourse, saying that there is “specialization in certain discourse types or genres, such as everyday conversation, stories, classroom discourse, textbooks, proverbs, or news” (p. 25). He further adds that discourse types should be then characterized and situated within the “terms of a specific combination of various textual and contextual properties” (Van Dijk, 1983: 25).

From the previous argument, he then specifies three general characteristics for news discourse. The first one is described as functionality, which entails how surface structures of discourse and meanings from it can be developed and analyzed either “indications about characteristics of the speaker (e.g., intentions, wishes, moods), the relations between speaker and hearer (e.g., confidence, intimacy, power), and the type of social situation (e.g., a court trial, a school lesson, a birthday party)” (Van Dijk, 1983: 25). That means that within a social context, the properties of discourse can then be understood as functional related to their social contexts, such as the cases of the examples given above.

The second characteristic Van Dijk (1983) comments related to news discourse is meaningfulness. This one explains how a textual sequence should hold meaning, in comparison with just a collection of sentences. For that meaning to occur, local and global coherence should foster unity within each other. The former terms, local and global coherence, are understood as to how meaningfully related clauses and sentences are within a text (local) and how larger parts of the discourse, the theme or topic of it, can be considered coherent: that if we refer to a section of or the whole discourse discussing something “real” (global). The real explained by Van Dijk as “facts and to components of facts, such as objects, persons, properties, actions, or events” (pp. 25-26).

The last characteristic Van Dijk provides news discourse with is goal-directedness. This characteristic encases how communicative situations are considered in uttering meaningful discourses, thus defining such situations as speech acts. Van Dijk (1983) provides an example of these characteristics functioning to provide further understanding: “if we want to invite someone to a party, we may first want to know (by asking questions) whether the other person is free that night” (Van Dijk, 1983: 26). He further comments that, from the example given in the last sentence, meaningful discourse is said with the intention of performing a social act, understood also as a speech act. Van Dijk (1983) adds that “such an act is not performed in a vacuum, but has a reason, some concrete purpose” (p. 26).

Van Dijk states that these characteristics are present in each discourse type, in the sense that “each discourse type has its social functions, associated with different possible surface structures (style), different meanings and ways of establishing coherence, and different speech acts” (1983: 26). Van Dijk adds that discourse can contain different other elements that can contribute to its established goals, such as rhetorical operations such as rhymes, metaphors, sayings, and even jokes if one takes Attardo’s (2010) structure for jokes into consideration (see Section 2.2). Van Dijk (1983) further states that news discourse can have a conventional schema that stories could use when providing news pieces in either a news article or a news piece in television.

As a last point of discussion for this section, it is important to clarify that Van Dijk (1983) defined news as discourse in his article through the analysis of textual structures of news discourse, thus ignoring “the various contextual conditions and constraints on such textual structures” (p. 28). Such description does not represent a problem for the LWT’s news piece analysis since John Oliver’s creative team’s endeavors for research on a piece use news piece from news channels, as well as printed articles from newspapers and reports. Thus, understanding news discourse in both printed and spoken outlets as similar outlets. In Van Dijk’s (1983) words, news discourse “is both a result of and a condition for the cognitive operations of journalists and readers, respectively, in the production, reproduction, or understanding of the news “data” (p. 29). Such

definition can help represent how the subjectivity and objectivity of facts communicated in news pieces can entail the three characteristics he mentioned in his model, as well as speech acts and the functions they fulfill when providing and communicating news.

1.3 Comedy news and current social problems

It has been established that having awareness of how news discourse works, mainly through its characteristics and speech acts fulfilled from the action of providing news, is executed in media outlets. This section will now discuss how and why comedy news has become an outlet for alternative news diets for many people. Burns (2020) comments that Jon Stewart became the pioneer of this new format of comedy shows, becoming the first person to address real-life issues with a comedic twist on *The Daily Show*. In Burns' words:

[*The Daily Show*] became significantly more news-driven: this shift was put into sharp focus by their coverage of the 2000 election and politics after 9/11. By 2009, a Time magazine poll showed that Stewart had become the most trusted news anchor on the air [...] The Daily Show was so influential that basically every single comedy news show right now is hosted by its alumni – including John Oliver, Samantha Bee, Hasan Minhaj and Wyatt Cenac. (Burns, 2020)

Burns (2020) comments that Stewart moved on from having interviews with “small-town politicians or oddballs with the journalistic intensity of reporting on war crimes” (Burns, 2020) to present news pieces and coverages through the use of head-style comedic monologues. The value of this new format for comedy shows has been well received, so much that the study of comedy used in the aforementioned kinds of shows is an important aspect of our current times and our current news consumption. *The Daily Show* has gone from mocking figures holding political power to influencing groups in society and has also altered the course of important public opinion matters (Brewer et al., 2018) as well as to showcase political figures for the sake of more informed political decisions in 2004 pre-electoral times in the U.S. (Rotfeld, 2005). *The Daily Show* and, subsequently, *Last Week Tonight* have left an impact in specific sectors of the public, so much so that comedic journalism has been coined as a term that exemplifies such efforts of providing news and being seen as “legitimate” news sources in the US, for example (Castagner & Grondin, 2019; Lang, 2019; Michaud Wild, 2019).

Burns further discusses how the implementation of humor works to provide a sense of trust in the people consuming this kind of shows on their media diet. He argues that, with an example of a news show host discussing a political event from the 2020 U.S. elections, that the potency of comedy concerning politics is that it has “the potential to act as a site for radical emancipatory politics, but it can just as easily function in the most ideological fashion and the guise of radicality” (Burns, 2020). He further discusses how comedy, related to its use in comedy news, has the potential to either reaffirm our beliefs about the world or it can help us evidence real-life situations that may or may not have a wider acknowledgment in society or culture.

Comedy can be a magic pill that helps open our eyes to what's really going on. Or it can simply reaffirm the status quo, and help us see contradictions in our world. Or pacify us into contently chuckling about nobody taking away grandpa's keys. Jokes can make us question our world in ourselves or jokes can just affirm what we already know. (Burns, 2020)

He also reaffirms that comedy news serves to inform the public of situations that need the attention of social groups and actors, yet such involvement must happen with nuance and objective criticism: “comedy news shows often work best when [...] they use comedy to critically consider both ends of the political spectrum – even if doing so challenges the audience's assumptions” (Burns, 2020). Such an argument for comedy news to work is what made Jon Stewart's show popular, and he was able to inspire his “alumni” into continuing the tradition of

comedic journalism (Lang, 2019). John Oliver, being one of his “alumni”, often is credited to portray such nuance and objective coverage of news through comedy in his show *Last Week Tonight*: it “has become known for wide-ranging critiques of powerful people and institutions” (Burns, 2020). Burns (2020) further points out a phenomenon news sources outlets have referred to as the “*John Oliver effect*” (Konuwa, 2019; Holter, 2016; Michaud Wild, 2019), when the show tackles real-life topics that need public attention and these gain active social relevance, such as U.S. criminal justice reforms, net neutrality regulation, the global tobacco industry, televangelists, and scholarship for women’s educational institutions across the U.S., to name a few examples.

As a consequence of the information above, comedy news shows can be understood as outlets that provide nuanced and objective takes on news reports and investigations. Such kind of discourse fulfills the communicative, meaningful, and goal-directed aims news discourse is thought to do so (Van Dijk, 1983), as well as through humorous discourse that is situated within social paradigms that covers aspects of social management, mediational transitions, and functionalization of information transmission (Attardo, 2010). After outlining the theoretical analysis behind comedy news discourse analysis, I will now proceed with the methodology behind such analysis to be carried out.

2. Methodology

This section presents the methodological procedure for the analysis of the text chosen and the conceptual framework created for it. The text chosen is the main story that Oliver (2021) presented on his show, regarding how a next pandemic could happen in the future. From this text, Van Dijk’s (1983) news discourse structure and Attardo’s (2010) and Attardo and Raskin’s (1991) canned jokes sequential organization and General Theory of Verbal Humor’s (GTVH) joke-forming resources were both used to analyze the news discourse structure and the humorous discourse in the text.

2.1 *News discourse structure (van Dijk, 1983)*

Van Dijk (1983) commented on a model regarding the structuring of news discourse. He comments that news discourse should be seen as a “specific kind of (re)construction of reality according to the norms and values of some society” (p. 28). The perception, construction, and formulation of reality as news events are underlined in factors such as social routines of journalistic (inter)action and fundamental strategies of information processing (Van Dijk, 1983). Another factor he underlies reality as news events is how “the manifestation of a complex process in which knowledge, beliefs, and opinions are matched with existing or incoming information about events, the social contexts of news production, and representations of the reading public” (p. 28). Thus, Van Dijk, states, news production is a form of discourse processing, to that end.

Van Dijk’s structure model refers to the use of macrostructures: news discourse organization relies on the importance of these, as macrostructures are represented “by titles or headlines, by initial or final summaries, or by leads” (Van Dijk, 1983: 34). He justifies the importance of macrostructural analysis in mass media, as macrostructures “allow the explicit definition of main topics or themes in messages, even for those cases where these macrostructures are not specifically expressed in surface structures, that is, in titles, leads, or thematical words and sentences” (Van Dijk, 1983: 35). His analysis only applied to written text, yet he commented that news discourse is not only presented in the press but also in television, news articles and/or pieces can be assigned to this kind of structuring framework (Van Dijk, 1983).

Some of the categories in Van Dijk’s (1983) structure, as he comments, can be omitted. Omitting certain sections without proper acknowledgment of the background information in a

news piece can be harmful to the readers/viewers of it. Yet, he states that some of these categories “need not occur explicitly, e.g., because it can be assumed that readers already have that information or because such information is deemed to be irrelevant” (Van Dijk, 1983, p. 37), and any given understanding of a description of the events told in the news piece can become partially recalled, overgeneralized, or “even biased if readers do not, in fact, have the information” (idem).

The analysis was conducted through Van Dijk’s (1983) conventional superstructure of news discourse presented in Figure 1 above. The figure represents how three central aspects of the news piece should be clear to understand the layout of the news piece regarding the headline of the news piece, the event(s) related to the headline, and the comments the news anchor/journalist provides to the events.

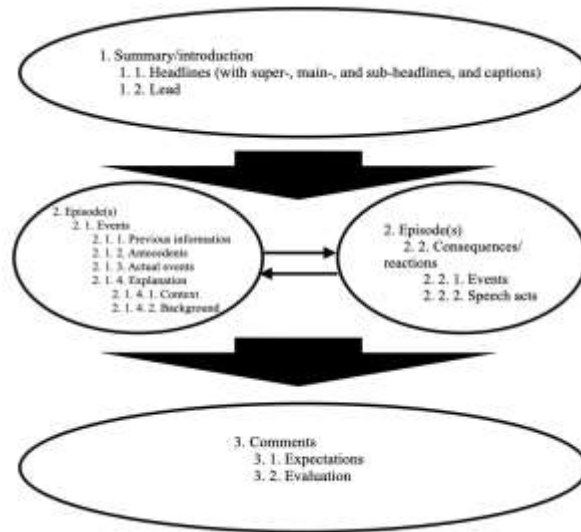


Figure 1. Van Dijk’s (1983) conventional superstructure of news discourse

2.2 Joke texts’ framework: Sequential organization of canned jokes, and the general theory of verbal humor

From Attardo’s (2010) extensive body of work regarding humor discourse analysis, I brought the sequential joke-telling organization. The jokes used in the LWT’s news piece seem to fall into the denomination of canned jokes, “which has been used before the time of utterance in a form similar to that used by the speaker, such as those which are found in books, collections of jokes, etc.” (pp. 295-296). These kinds of jokes, Attardo (2010) explains, do not depend on contextual factors, meaning the human interactions happening within a conversation are related to information that the hearer may or may not possess, and its strength relies upon how interchangeable within any contexts these jokes can be. It is important to comment here that Attardo (2010) describes that this “acontextuality” jokes possess creates a certain degree of flexibility, as contextual links can be made to the basic structure of a canned joke, thus making it contextually charged yet expected. Attardo (2010) adds to that that “a comedian’s monologue, even if it is ultimately composed of a string of jokes, will attempt to connect jokes by their theme or with some sort of narrative connection” (p. 298). Since LWT’s news pieces are given in a comedic monologue style, applying Attardo’s (2010) canned jokes analysis to the comprehension of jokes used when communicating critical information points in news pieces is relevant to this project.

Canned jokes are laid out in a three-part structure. such structure is laid out in Figure 2 above.

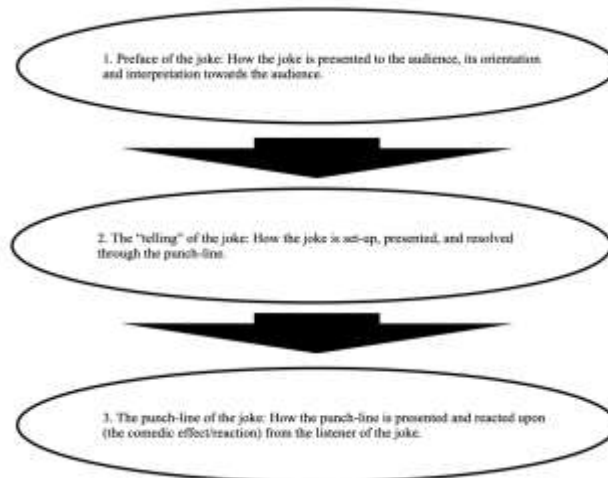


Figure 2. Attardo’s (2010) three-part joke analysis structure

The first part, the “preface” of a joke, fulfills the acceptance of the joke-telling to an audience and the orientation of the joke’s presentation and interpretation. Secondly, we have the “telling” of the joke, that requires a suspension of disbelief, as Attardo (2010) comments, to accept the text’s preface and any kind of incoherence premise that can be set up from the preface of the joke: “if the inconsistencies were challenged, or even acknowledged, the joke would be destroyed because the audience would refuse it on the grounds of its implausibility” (p. 305). The last part of this structure is the punch line of the joke, which is the response provided after hearing the joke text. This will be understood as the comedic reaction to the text joke, since it is the expected answer, but not the only one that can occur.

It is also important for this project also to complement the joke texts framework of analysis with the General Theory of Verbal Humor (henceforth called GTVH, from here onwards). This theory addresses how verbal humor is interpreted and analyzed in the context of discourse analysis. Attardo and Raskin (1991) proposed six joke-informing knowledge resources after the analysis of different parameters and degrees of similarity among jokes examples. Such resources are as follows (Attardo & Raskin, 1991: 5-17):

- (1) script oppositions, in which the second script (or sentence) uttered shows incongruence with the first one;
- (2) logical mechanisms, similarly used for reasoning utterances;
- (3) situations, which provides more context to a joke or humorous situation;
- (4) targets, which normally are the receiver of a joke or humorous statement;
- (5) narrative strategies, expectations of text genres such as expository utterances, riddles, a question-and-answer sequence, and so on;
- (6) language, which entails word choices, syntactic constructions, text-to-sentence division, among other language options made for the joke uttered.

From these joke-forming knowledge resources, Aliaga-Aguza (2018) comments on her analysis of joke sequences for *sitcoms* that the application of the GTVH allows for a “selection of jokes indicators and marks that allow to find generalizable patterns to all kinds of humorous texts and analyze these from a linguistic point of view” (p. 136).

This conceptual framework is then based on Attardo’s (2010) sequential organization of canned jokes, Long and Graesser’s (1988) descriptors from their taxonomy of jokes, as well as Attardo and Raskin (1991) GTVH’s knowledge resources to lay out certain examples of the joke texts related to the news piece. This framework will potentially provide and acknowledge the themes and/or contents a joke text has, the first and second part of Attardo’s (2010) canned joke structure, as well as the third part of the structure attributed to the punchline. To that regard, Attardo explains that laughter is attributed with the termination of talk, as well as with signals or attempts to provide “closure of interchanges, but that it also functions as a signal of appreciation of the humorous intent of the speaker, or even serves to “make fun of the speaker” (p. 310). Thus, when a joke text is normally uttered, the expected response is laughter in most cases. This framework will be applied for certain joke texts examples John Oliver uses displayed in Section 3.2, specifically to understand how the preface or premise of these joke texts is laid out (step one), how the set-up is presented and told (step two) and how the punch line is said to generate a response in the receiver/reader of the joke (step three). I will now proceed to discuss the findings of the analyzed LWT’s news piece regarding CoVid-19 and possible new pandemics.

3. Discussion of findings

This section will address the findings of the analysis made to the LWT's news piece. Both Van Dijk’s (1983) superstructure of news discourse analysis as well as the joke texts’ conceptual framework put together from Long and Graesser’s (1988) taxonomy descriptors, Attardo’s (2010) canned joke sequencing, and Attardo and Raskin’s (1991) GTVH knowledge resources were implemented in analyzing the news piece and the jokes within it. This section will present figures to provide enough information to the discussion of the overall findings of the news piece structure and specific joke text examples that help convey the analysis made in this paper.

3.1 News superstructure and news piece elements

The analysis of the news piece’s overall superstructure suggested by Van Dijk (1983) is laid out in Figure 3.

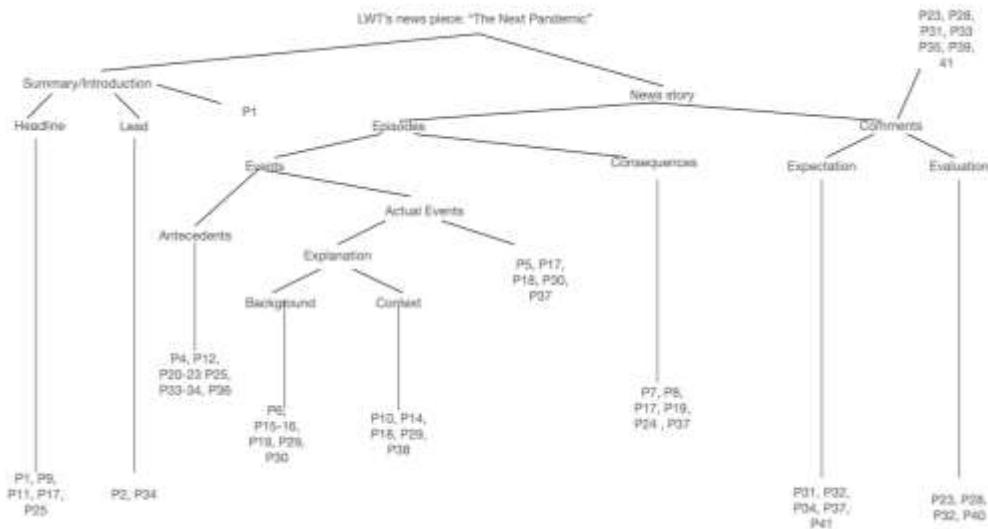


Figure 3. Van Dijk’s (1983) conventional superstructure of news discourse applied to LWT’s news piece “The Next Pandemic” (Oliver, 2021)

When analyzing the general aspects of the superstructure, it is evident how the LWT’s news piece is heavily charged with pieces of information that work as antecedents, background, and context explanations for the sake of the arguments on the news piece. A concrete example of this is paragraphs 10 to 22, an excerpt of the whole analysis of the news piece shown in Table 1 below, in which John Oliver explains three important points to provide commentary to his headline. These points are how animals are the main agent of virus transmission, the main ones being bats, and how the spreading works in instances of exotic animals being present in human habitats.

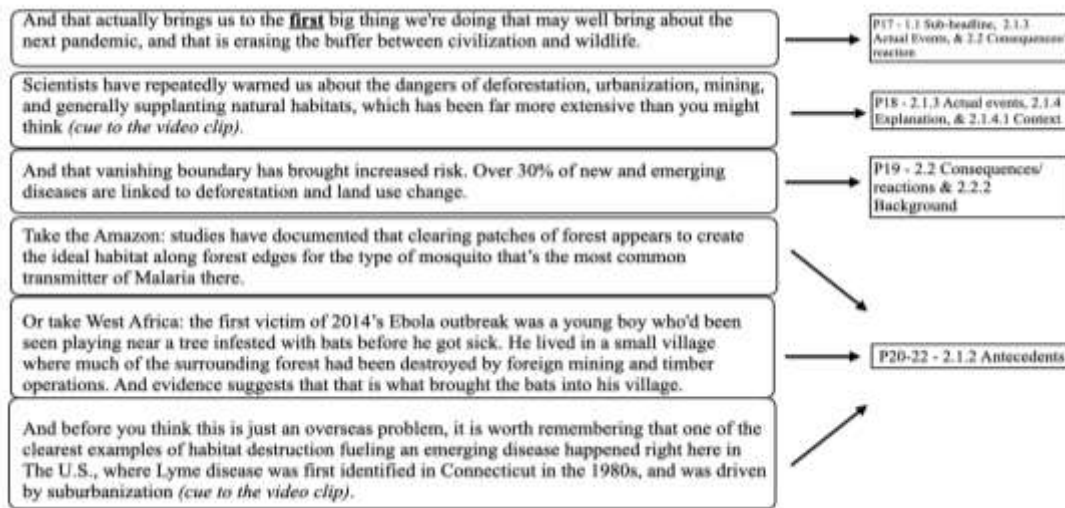


Figure 4.1

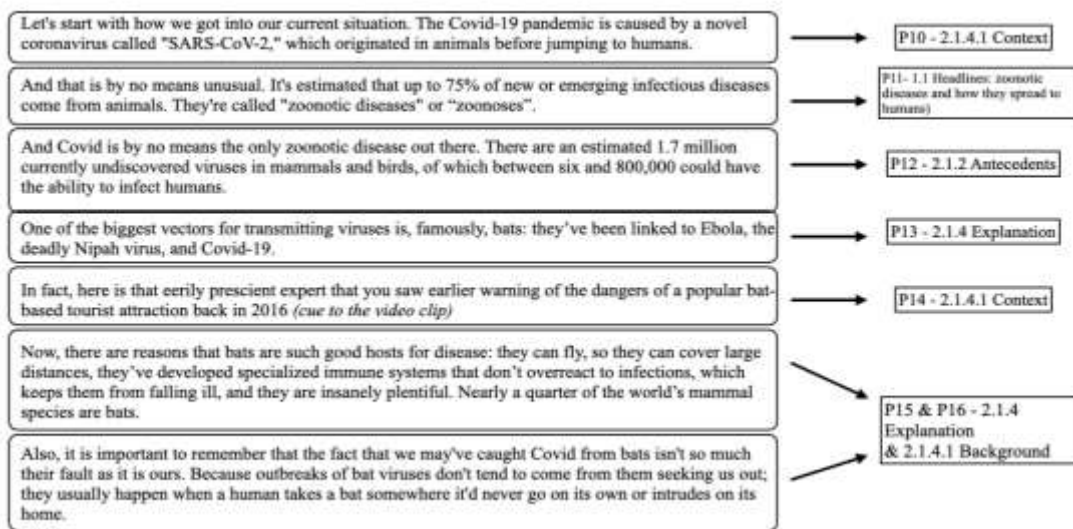


Figure 4.2

Figure 4.1 & 4.2. Example of LWT’s news piece discourse paragraphs 10 to 22: Animals as the main agent of virus transmission, bats, and exotic animals’ presence in human habitats

Figure 4.1 and 4.2 above present four instances of explanation, three instances of background information, and two instances of antecedents to help clarify and concrete the point that Oliver wants to communicate. He further expands on these functions in the video with news

coverage excerpts from either U.S. local newscasts or other news networks, such as CNN, Vice, and PBS, to name a few examples. Such video excerpts serve sometimes as both background and context information for the comments made in the news piece or for jokes. What Van Dijk's (1983) superstructure shows in Figure 3 is that other sections of the news piece focus on commenting on the information provided. Such comments fall into the category of expectations for the future of pandemics control and the evaluation of antecedents, background, and context information that reinforce the main events the news piece covers — the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to address how a possible future pandemic can happen in a bigger and wider scale. They are also reinforced with certain jokes that help ease the harsh reality the information pieces provide. Such comments add up to the headlines of the news piece, referring to how a next pandemic can occur. Through that, the superstructure shows that antecedents, background and context information are set for Oliver to provide comments, expectations, and evaluations. Thus, creating and showing the news piece as a whole text composed of many other sub-functions.

From the analysis above, and connecting Van Dijk's (1983) characteristics of news discourse, the news piece shows how it fulfills the three characteristic functions to make itself worth of being acknowledged as news discourse. The first characteristic, functionality, is fulfilled through the type of social situation (a news anchor giving the news), the characteristic of this report (raising awareness of the current pandemic and measurements of preventing a future one), and the relationship Oliver and the audience has. In spite of Oliver's efforts to down-size the news pieces as "real news", and even joking about how LWT is not a news show, the points that Burns (2020), Holter (2016), Konuwa (2019) and Lang (2019) have made regarding the influence and functionality of the show prove otherwise.

The second characteristic, meaningfulness, is fulfilled through the considerable number of references behind the news piece's events, their contexts and background information, as well as the antecedents for the main theme. Thus, it provides LWT's news piece with the local and global coherence Van Dijk defined (1983: 25-26): the meaning behind news discourse should be either about the discussion of real facts "and to components of facts, such as objects, persons, properties, actions, or events". Consequently, it is proven that the meaningfulness behind the news piece is significant regarding the global coherence (addressing the main theme, the Covid-19 pandemic) and the local coherence (how the different elements of the superstructure are meaningfully related).

The last characteristic, goal-directedness and how social acts can be also understood as speech acts, is also fulfilled. This is seen through the comments, expectations, and evaluations of John Oliver made in relation to and with strong meaningful connections of other elements within the superstructure of the news piece. Such comments fulfill a relevant principle on this characteristic. As a consequence, a speech act can be evidenced as the awareness-raising of a current problem and the antecedents behind it, as well as the background and context of certain other situations linked to the overall theme of the piece. Another speech act that is evidenced as a joke, the overall theme of the news piece, is how John Oliver informs of broad public policies on his shows, either addressing global or domestic politics (for the U.S., at least). That observation is also discussed in joke example #5 in Section 3.2, since it is explicitly presented by Oliver himself as a self-deprecating joke.

Overall, the analysis of the news discourse superstructure from Van Dijk (1983) helped analyze in detail the value that LWT's news piece has as news discourse. As such, the fulfillment of the three characteristics Van Dijk (1983) attributed news discourse with provides to the LWT's news piece speech act attributes, thus validating the importance and significance that Burns (2020) discussed on the relevance of comedy news as valuable outlets for information provision to people in recent years.

3.2 Canned jokes and GTVH resources analysis

On this section of the findings, four jokes will be presented and discussed through the conceptual framework acknowledged in Section 2.2.

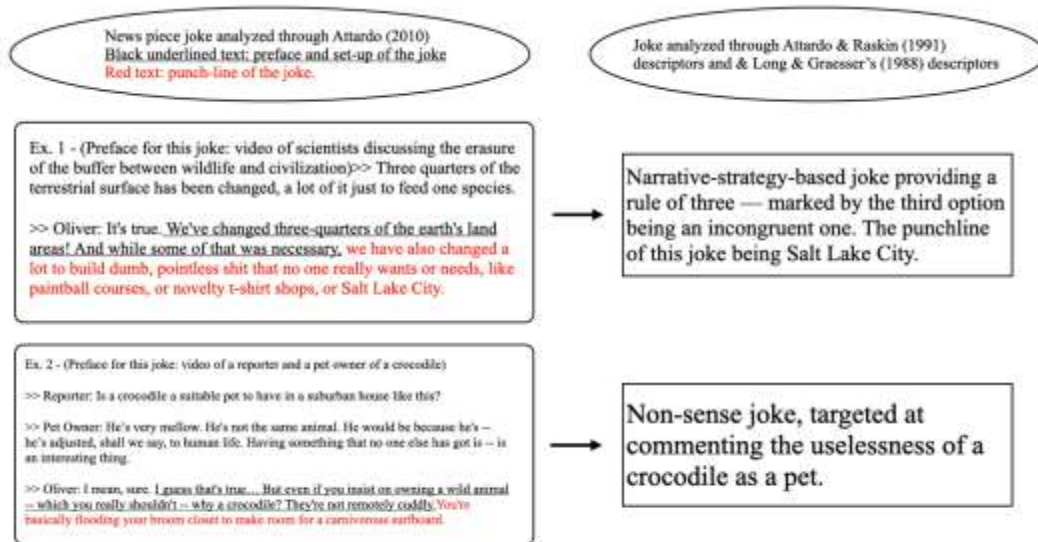


Figure 5.1

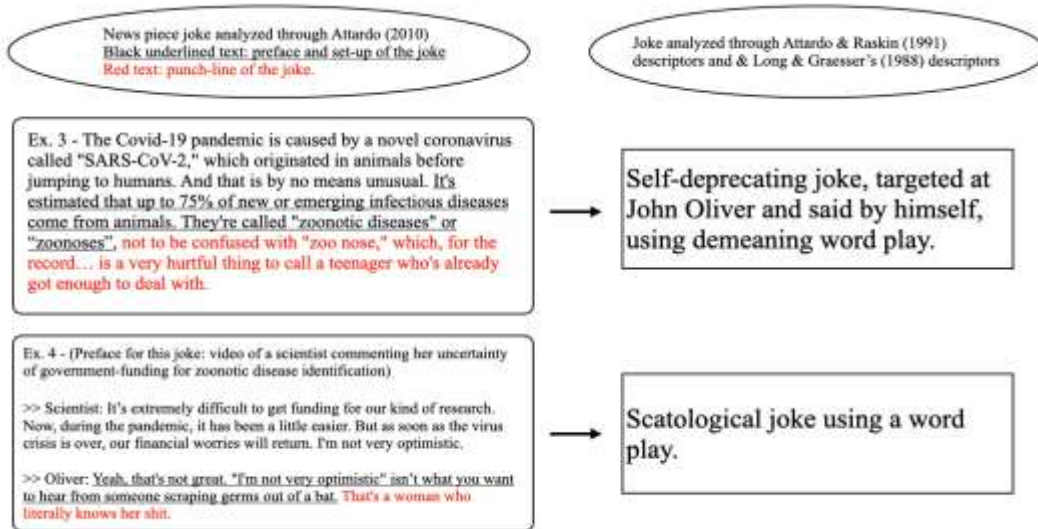


Figure 5.2

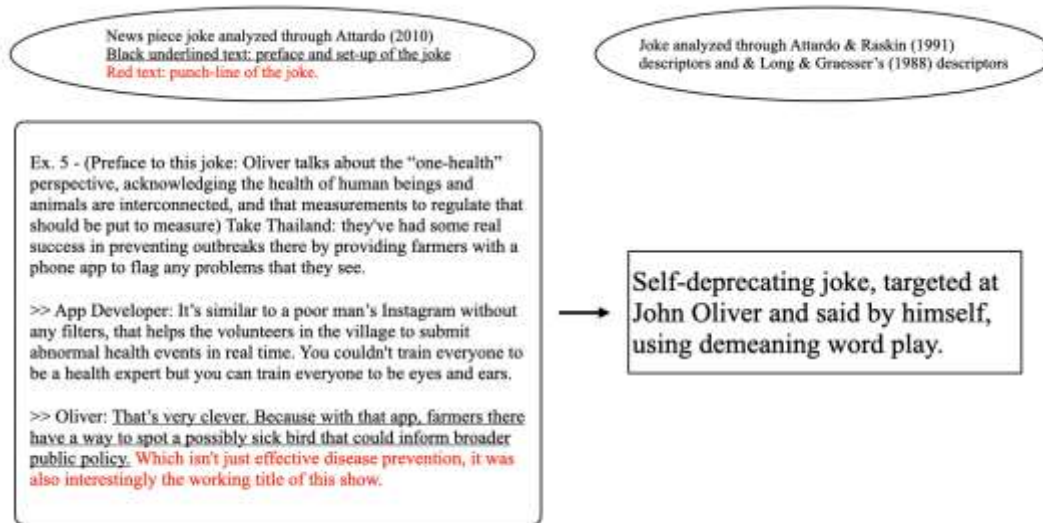


Figure 5.3

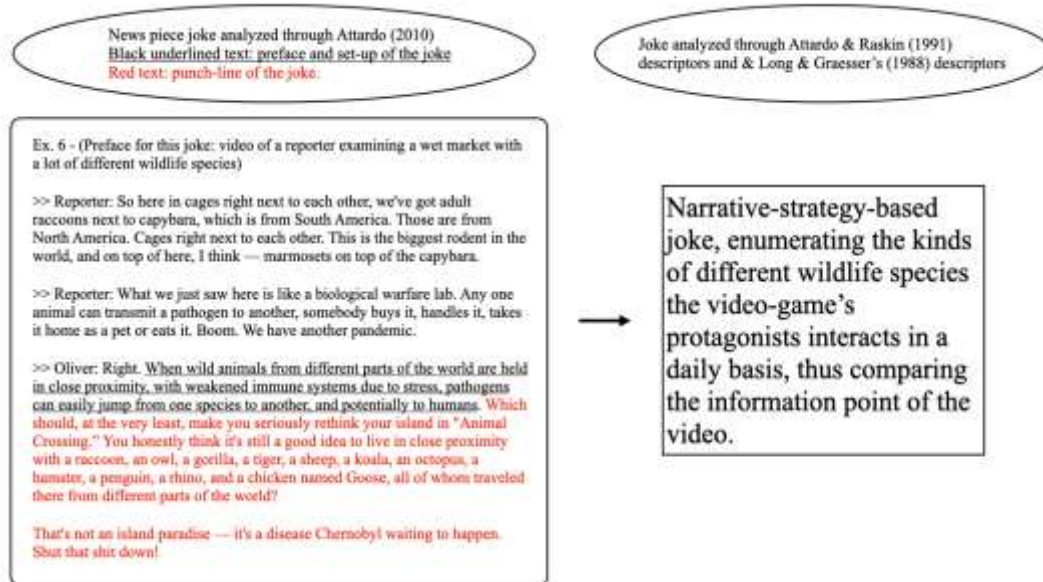


Figure 5.4

Figures 5.1-5.4. LWT's example jokes (Oliver, 2021), analyzed through Long and Graesser's (1988) taxonomy descriptors, Attardo's (2010) canned joke sequencing, and Attardo and Raskin's (1991) GTVH knowledge resources

It is worth acknowledging that the primary social functions these jokes have, based on what Attardo (2010) described, are the primary social function of humor as mediation and defunctionalization. The former makes humorous discourse as a transitional device that permits different other topics or situations to be de-escalated from embarrassing or aggressive outcomes. The difference here is that, on this news piece, such function is used to decode and reduce the harshness of the information given. On the latter, defunctionalization, word plays appear which come into play with a similar function of mediating, yet also fulfilling the purpose of being tongue-in-cheek jokes to alleviate the mood of the note, as shown in example 4 of Figure 5.2 above. These primary functions also convey some secondary social functions of providing information and allowing the acceptance of the subject matter and the information presented through jokes, yet

the texts are mere follow-ups to pieces of information. We will now proceed to comment on the analysis of the joke texts through the conceptual framework.

Some of the LWT’s news piece jokes fall into specific descriptors from Long and Graesser’s (1988) taxonomy, such as hostile, sexual, social satire, scatological and non-sense jokes that are used to alleviate the tension of the cold data provided on the information points. It was interesting to find a new type that Long and Graesser (1988) did not comment on their taxonomy, and that was self-deprecating humor. This kind of humor is relevant to analyze because Greengross and Miller (2008) interpret self-deprecating humor as a way to make evident the “flaws” of a person or the teller of a joke, through hostile humor directed at her or himself. Such criticism is aimed at aspects such as behaviors, utterances, personality traits, competencies, social status, sexual activeness, and the lack thereof, among others (Greengross & Miller, 2008). It is worth noting that John Oliver uses hostile criticism as a way to convey jokes, and there is no clearer example of this than in example# 5 in Figure 5.3, in which he makes a wordplay with the phrase “a possibly sick bird that could inform broader public policy” and a direct comparison with himself. This kind of humorous discourse also appears at the beginning of the headline addressing zoonotic diseases, in which he points out that the word should not be confused with “zoo nose, which for the record... is a very hurtful thing to call a teenager who’s already got enough to deal with” (Oliver, 2021), and automatically presents a photo of himself as a teenager as a resort of more comedic value, setting a graphic punchline shown in Figure 6 below.



Figure 6. Screenshot of the “self-deprecating” joke (example #3) (Oliver, 2021)

Thus, this use of self-deprecating humor is implemented as a way to harshly criticize personal traits (Greengross & Miller, 2008), and from the discussion on the primary and secondary social functions humor is known for (Attardo, 2010), it can be seen that humor is a mechanism that adds value to discourse, in this specific case being news discourse.

Seconded to the analysis above, the jokes also were analyzed contemplating Attardo & Raskin’s (1991) GHTV resources. From these, certain jokes fit into Attardo and Raskin’s resources categories, such as narrative strategies: “rule of three” in example 1 and “incongruous comparisons” in example 2 of Figure 5.1, and language-based resources, such as example 5 in Figure 5.3. Attardo and Raskin’s (1991) resources helped to identify such joke and humorous text tropes.

The jokes examples in figures 5.1 to 5.4 are then presented here to comment on the style that has characterized LWT’s news broadcasting. Oliver uses these jokes, as previously discussed in Section 3.1, to alleviate tension and/or harshness on the pieces of information given to the audience, no matter how incongruous these can end up being. As it was stated by Van Dijk (1983), the analysis dimensions of news discourse are important to consider. That is why, when Van Dijk (1983) referred to rhetorical operations as an example for those, he acknowledged the

use of different kinds of these in metaphors or ironic statements, for example. It is interesting to acknowledge that three decades later, a new kind of news discourse would appear in comedy news discourse, with the seriousness of journalistic research but also combining jokes to hone the awareness through jokes and humorous discourse. To that degree, Burns (2020) comments that comedic discourse presents a sense of challenge towards one's ideas held by subjective views, this addressed as "egalitarian comedy" by Burns (2020) in which "both the source of the comedy and its target appear divided internally [...] it is the emergence of this internal division that enables us to laugh while also facilitating critique" (Burns, 2020).

4. Conclusion

From the analysis of both news discourse and humorous discourse, I was able to find how news discourse presented in the show LWT works through its characteristics and the structure it follows when laying down news pieces. The jokes used in the show serve to fulfill the sense of meditational transitions for the news piece content to be digested by the audience, as well as providing laughter and critique towards objective facts being discussed in it.

The conceptual framework created for this project was then applied to understand and represent the kind of value comedy news discourse has as a speech act, and to see why it works well on people consuming it. Such framework was put together through the use of Van Dijk's (1893) superstructure of news discourse, Attardo's (2010) GTVH's joke-forming resources and Attardo and Raskin (1991) sequences of joke organization, and Long and Graesser's (1988) taxonomy of jokes.

The value that comedy news outlets such as LWT can be attributed to both the fusion of news discourse elements for news coverage and the humorous discourse that allows a better comprehension of the information provided through the deflection and de-escalation of the seriousness of the information provided. This analysis and its results proves the comment Burns (2020) makes about how comedy news discourse and the TV shows true, in the sense that comedy news should be considered as an outlet to spread awareness of situations that need the attention of active participants in society, yet also procuring nuance and objective criticism towards the information given on the journalistic labor this kind of discourse possess.

From the last comment, then, it should be noted that further research or the replication of this kind of framework could be applied to other comedy news outlets to validate and provide different outlets with the same kind of discourse analysis. As such, further analysis of the value of comedy discourse in presenting real-life events or situations could be conducted to acknowledge and treat them with levity through comedy, in contrast to the harsh realities the events represent. After all, "laughter is the best medicine".

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“B” (Accompanying My Daughter Through Life): Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This study analyzes the poem “B” by Sarah Kay, through the interpretation of the various metaphors that compose it. This was poem was first published in 2011 and it is a love letter that the author sends the daughter she does not yet have. In order to do this a critical discourse analysis methodology is used (Fairclough, 1995), as well as an interpretation of the metaphors that are present in the poem (Lakoff, 2003).

Keywords: Sarah Key, “B”, critical discourse analysis.

1. Introduction

Throughout history women have played different roles in society and in many cases they have had to endure difficult situations that have brought them to fight for their rights, and much has been achieved. The poem that is analyzed in this paper is called B, by Sarah Kay who is an American poet educator who travels across the United States and all around the world teaching poetry, and performs spoken word poetry. She has written four books of poetry and she became well known because of her performance of this poem in a TED Talk in 2011 (Project Voice, n.d.).

The poem shows a reflection from a woman who lets the audience see what life looks like through her eyes. She embraces the idea of maybe becoming a mother to a girl, and showing her that even when life has wonderful moments, it will not always be easy to enjoy the ride. Analyzing this text is relevant because it expresses what some of the feelings that a woman in a context like Kay’s experiences in life, some of her joys, but also some of her fears. What is trying to be analyzed in this paper is what metaphors the author uses to describe life as a woman and what message they convey.

In order to do this, I will use critical discourse analysis (CDA) which is a methodology that looks not only into the text itself, but also the context where it was born and how it was created (Fairclough, 1995). I will also analyze the metaphors that the author used to describe her feelings about life as a woman, based on Lakoff’s (2003) work.

2. Literature review

This section provides an overview of CDA and the use of metaphors, which serve as the framework used to analyze the poem. It also invites the reader on a short trip through the history of the feminist movement, since this seems to inspire the essence of the poem that is being analyzed.

2.1 *Critical discourse analysis*

According to Fairclough (1995), discourse understood from a linguistic point of view goes beyond a text, which can be written or spoken, it includes other forms of communication such as non-verbal and symbols that make language to be a “form of social practice” (p. 7). This means that language and the use that it is given help shape the way that people interact with each other, and also it is a means to spread and reproduce ideologies and ways of acting.

He describes critical discourse analysis as a framework that integrates “(a) analysis of text, (b) analysis of processes of text production, consumption and distribution, and (c) sociocultural analysis of the discursive event [...] as a whole” (Fairclough, 1995: 25). It offers a critical point of view about the discourse that is being analyzed, allowing us to understand the ideologies that underlie it.

2.2 *Metaphors*

Metaphors are a valuable resource found in texts that is largely used poetry, because of the richness that offers to it. This paper analyzes the poem from a CDA point of view, but also looks at the metaphors because, as stated by Charteris-Black (2004: 28) cited in Hart (2007: 2): “metaphor is . . . central to critical discourse analysis since it is concerned with forming a coherent view of reality”. It can be interpreted that metaphors allow the audience to comprehend what is often a subjective experience, such as political points of view, emotions, and spiritual experiences, among others.

For the purpose of this analysis, I used Lakoff’s (2003) classification of the types of metaphors that can be found. He affirms that “human *thought processes* are *largely metaphorical*” (p. 7), this means that humans are constantly using metaphors to interpret and interact with the world that surrounds them. Therefore, it is quite natural for people to communicate using them, this makes expressing their feelings, thoughts and emotions easier, as these resources make concrete what is abstract. In addition, metaphors let the speaker juggle with the words so it highlights what is important to communicate and hides what is not.

The metaphors found in this poem can be classified under four different types. I will now mention them and briefly describe them:

- *Conduit metaphors*: The idea, which is usually put into objects, and the words which are the containers of the idea. It is sent to the recipient of the message along a conduit. The recipient receives it and interprets it to get the message that was conveyed. They are easily understood without the need of providing additional context.
- *Ontological metaphors*: These take parts of our experiences and allow us to categorize them. They serve different purposes, such as refer to various concepts, quantify, identify aspects, identify causes, as well as set goals and motivate actions.
- *Personification metaphors*: This type of metaphors take non-human objects and give them human characteristics, such as capabilities that are exclusive of people.

- *Metonyms*: It takes an entity in order to talk about a whole, meaning that only a part of it is mentioned in the metaphor, but the entire subject is referred to.

Although Lakoff offers a more extensive taxonomy, for the purpose of this paper I only include the types that were taken into account to interpret the metaphors that appear in this poem.

2.3 Introduction to feminism

In this section I give a brief overview of what feminism is, addressing some of the most important moments in the history of the feminist movement. I also mention some of the milestones that have been achieved throughout its history. Finally, I invite the reader to pay special attention to the third feminism wave, as it is the one I am using as a reference to analyze this poem.

The feminist movement has been present in human's history for centuries and although its demands have varied throughout time, its main goal has not changed. It can be summarized in Faludi's (1991) words: "Feminism asks the world to recognize at long last that women aren't decorative ornaments, worthy vessels, members of a 'special-interest' group" (p. 15). This can be interpreted in various forms, whether it is demanding safety, equal job opportunities and salaries to men, or having the choice to make their own decisions, women seek recognition of their worth through the feminist movement.

I now present a summary of the transit of feminism through history based on the wonderful work done by Jenainati and Groves (2007).

Originally women were mostly considered to be someone's possession, either their daughter or wife, and when married even their bodies belonged to their husbands. In addition, they did not have formal rights, and it was almost impossible for them to receive higher education, if any education at all. Women were suppressed by patriarchy, which in Weedon's (1987) words is defined as "power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men" (p. 2). This means that they were expected to be at home, serving their husband's needs, and raising their kids, no matter what their own interests or desires were.

2.3.1 First feminism wave

The first wave feminism goes back some centuries and it is possible to identify some political actions, in certain contexts, that must have served as inspiration to more women to keep nurturing the movement.

In 1642 London was the scenario where a group of women who worked in different types of businesses, united and marched to the Houses of Lords and Commons to ask for the law to consider the conditions of the working class and improve them. This was the beginning of many other protests that women led whenever they or their class were discriminated against by political decisions. Although this did not receive the name of feminism or feminist movement, it is clearly one of the earliest moments in history when women gathered seeking a common goal.

The 18th and 19th centuries were illuminated with the presence of female figures who addressed the subordination to men that women experienced through their writing. This movement followed the Age of Enlightenment and inspired by it, the use of the reason instead of only trusting faith.

This first wave feminism achieved the recognition of some women's rights and also the first steps were taken of a long journey to grant women the right to vote. One of the milestones of this first wave of feminism was that by mid 1900s women were free to vote in most countries.

2.3.2 *Second feminism wave*

The second feminism wave can be located from the 1960s on to the 1980s approximately. The term was first coined by Marsha Lear in 1968 in an article written for *The New York Times*, and it made reference to the feminist activity in different countries. This wave emphasized that women's oppression is rooted in social constructs, and this led to the creation of two political movements: Women's Rights Movement (WRM) and Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). Even when both movements sought to achieve the recognition of women's rights, the WRM was mostly constituted by women who were part of the working class. They demanded better working rights and conditions for women. The WLM had clear demands that the supporters of the movement wanted to achieve (Jenainati & Groves, 2007: 163):

1. Equal pay for men and women;
2. Equal education and job opportunities;
3. Free 24-hour nurseries;
4. Free contraception and abortion on demand;
5. Financial and legal independence;
6. An end to discrimination against lesbians and a woman's right to define her sexuality;
7. Freedom from intimidation by threat or use of violence and an end to male aggression and dominance.

This wave was influenced by some important female figures such as Virginia Woolf, Betty Friedan, and Simone de Beauvoir, who through their writing offered a glance to the injustices and discrimination that women still suffered. They wanted to raise awareness of this situation and offer theoretical support to the feminist movement, based on existing philosophies, such as existentialism. This philosophical movement claims that a person exists and then becomes something based on their actions. De Beauvoir took this principle as theoretical base to state that women, just like men, should be able to control their actions without having anyone limiting their decisions. Betty Friedan participated in this movement by exposing the struggle that women in the late 1900s had trying to balance their working lives and their roles as mothers and at home. She suggested that the feminist movement had to be rebuilt from scratch, and men needed to be involved in it. I consider that this is a very modern point of view of the feminist movement, as today it is thought not to be only a women's movement, but a humanity's movement.

Some of the milestones conquered in the second feminist wave are related to women's participation on the decision making of how big their family would be, this had as a result the development of the first oral contraceptive for women. Also, the violence against women, which had commonly been normalized, started to be more and more penalized, whether this took place at home or elsewhere. Furthermore, commissions and institutions have been created in many countries to provide assistance to women whose rights are being violated or who are being discriminated against. In addition, thanks to the feminist movement same-sex couples have gained the right to marry and even adopt children in some countries.

The feminist movement has grown stronger throughout time; however, it has had to face some setbacks during the process. In the 1980s it was under attack by different actors of social life, such as academics, journalists, to name a few. They claimed that women had already reached their goal of having their rights recognized, and that they should go back to performing their roles at home, enjoying what had been gained. Fortunately, these women have never stopped fighting for what they deserve and they have conquered a very important place in today's political, economic and social world.

2.3.3 *Third wave feminism*

All waves of feminism have been influenced by the context of their historical time and have faced their own problems and challenges. However, the third wave feminism has turned to be difficult in a different way than the previous waves faced. According to Shelley Budgeon's collaboration in Gill and Scharff's book (2011), the third wave feminism rejects the binary accepted codes used in the previous generations, which has caused contradictions. During the last decades genders' social roles have turned liquid and they are constantly changing and restructuring. This has caused that femininity, feminism, gender and their meanings are questioned, as they are no longer what they meant in the previous waves and they need to be rethought.

Budgeon (2001) emphasizes the characteristics of today's society regarding gender, which get more visible every passing day. She mentions since today we find large groups of transgender, bisexual, and interracial people, it is hard to talk about only women when it comes to feminism. Feminism nowadays has to focus on individual needs rather than on a gender's needs, which can be ambiguous and complicated to identify. "By advocating an analytical move away from understanding gender in collective terms third-wave feminism often promotes a 'politics of difference' starting from the specificity of individual experience" (p. 282). This implies that the feminist movement in its third wave has to be inclusive and the feminist activities can take different paths.

Based on this, the third wave feminism intends to create a feminism that will be reshaped over and over again, making room for everyone to fit in it, but following very specific characteristics that are representative of it. Some examples are the culture of do it yourself (DIY), which promotes the independence of each individual and their empowerment. Also, in the third wave feminism, the empowerment of the oppressed genders is desired and sought.

Although much has been done, and life is in certain aspects notoriously easier than it used to be for women, there is still much more to achieve. Women around the world are still suffering violence in different forms, and oftentimes their rights keep on being neglected or in cases, not even acknowledged. Not until every woman has the possibility to make their own decisions and feel free and safe while doing it, we could say that the feminist movement has reached its main goal. I will venture now and say that this is part of what Sarah Kay wants to express in her poem "B", that life is always complicated, but especially if you are a woman. Nevertheless, it is a wonderful path to travel and must be enjoyed.

3. Methodology

As it has previously been mentioned this poem was first published in 2011, which means that it responds to a somewhat recent context, in terms of what women experience nowadays. I chose this poem because I consider that the message that is sent is worth being analyzed, as it offers an opportunity for almost anyone to feel identified with it, because situations that compose life are present there. However, although she never specifically mentions that she is narrating a woman's experience exclusively, she does let the audience know that she thinks of life being tougher on women by talking to a hypothetical daughter – and not a son. She does this through the use of metaphors.

I will now proceed to describe the methodology that was followed to come up with the findings that are presented in the following section. As it has previously been mentioned, the poem was analyzed under the CDA methodology in combination with a metaphor analysis.

As a reminder to the reader, what I sought to analyze in this poem was what metaphors the author uses to describe life as a woman and what message they convey. I selected this text

because I considered that this poem expresses very clearly what the joys and struggles that women experience are, set in the context of a middle class a western society in the twenty-first century.

After selecting the theoretical framework that I considered more appropriate for developing this analysis, I briefly described it so the reader knows what I based on to carry out the analysis. Next, I did a literature review on feminism and the feminist waves, in order to provide the reader with a summary of how the movement has developed throughout time. This helped me highlight what have been the main goals and conflicts that are the most representative of each wave, and the third wave feminism contextualizes the poem in its own time.

Finally, after identifying the categories suggested by Lakoff to classify metaphors, I was able to offer a classification and interpretation of the various metaphors that compose the poem. In order to do this, I went over the metaphors that are in the poem and identified the different types that the author uses. Then I was able to offer an interpretation to them. I present all this in a table to facilitate the comprehension. Sometimes more than one metaphor will be found in the same line of the table, this is not to cut ideas and allow the analysis to flow.

4. Findings and discussion

In this section I take the metaphors in the poem and offer an interpretation to each one of them, as well as I classify them based on four Lakoff’s categories. I also present an interpretation to them to unveil what the author means when she writes them. I ought to mention that this is a personal interpretation and can be revisited for further revision in the future.

Metaphor	Interpretation	Classification
She’s going to call me Point B, because that way she knows that no matter what happens, at least she can always find her way to me.	What the author means is that even when her daughter, if she had one, was to be free to experience life on her own, she would always be there to support and comfort her. Life, she predicts, is not going to be easy.	This is a conduit metaphor. It takes an idea, puts it into words and expresses it in a way that the audience can understand it without any trouble.
And I am going to paint the Solar Systems on the backs of her hands, so she has to learn the entire universe before she can say ‘Oh, I know that like the back of my hand’.	With this metaphor she lets the audience know that she seeks to teach her daughter to be humble. She wants to make sure that her daughter is able to listen to the facts and what others have to say, so she can formulate an opinion of her own. She intends to raise a daughter who will be able to recognize her mistakes and her limitations.	In this section of the poem a conduit metaphor and an ontological metaphor motivating actions can be found. “I am going to paint the Solar Systems in the backs of her hands” falls under the first category. It is expected that the audience understands that the author does not plan to paint the hands of her daughter, it is a poetic resource to express what has already been interpreted. “...so she has to learn the entire universe before she can say ‘Oh, I know that like the back of my hand’” corresponds to the latter category. It tries to prevent the author’s daughter from making a fool of herself acting recklessly.
This life will hit you, hard, in the face, wait for you to get back up, just so it can kick you in the stomach but getting the wind knocked out of you is the only way to remind your lungs how much they like the taste of air.	The author is aware of the difficulties and hard times that her daughter will most likely have to go through, as life is not always easy. However, she is able to transmit a positive message acknowledging that enduring hard times has the possibility of making us value and enjoy the good times when they come. I consider that this metaphor is powerful because it presents the audience the possibility to take advantage of the good and the bad that life offers us.	This section is composed by personification metaphors. Expressions such as “will hit you, hard”, “kick you in the stomach” are used as utterances that personify life, they assign it human characteristics, such as the possibility of hurting someone physically and causing them pain. The same thing happens with the expression, “...the only way to remind your lungs how much they like the taste of air”. In this case lungs are thought as being able to remember and like things: human characteristics. And when analyzed in detail one concludes that the author is not referring to actual

		lungs, but to the sense of peace that comes after experiencing pain and despair.
There is hurt, that cannot be fixed by band aids or poetry, so the first time she realizes that Wonder Woman isn't coming I'll make sure she knows she does not have to wear the cape all by herself. Because no matter how wide you stretch your fingers, your hands will always be too small to catch all the pain you want to heal. Believe me, I've tried.	The author is aware that life can be hurtful sometimes, and that the pain that certain circumstances can cause might be difficult to overcome. It also occasionally stays around longer than expected. She is also sensitive to young people's eagerness to help others and make a change in the world. Therefore, she tries to tell her daughter that there will be times in life when she will feel the responsibility to stand up for others, or at least to help those around her and this is fine. Nevertheless, she also wants her daughter to know that is not alone in life and she should always feel free to ask for help. There is much to be done in this world, it is impossible for a single person to help everyone.	In this section we find ontological metaphors, specifically the one referring to "hurt". This points out that there are hard situations in life and is followed by a conduit metaphor. Wonder Woman conveys the message that the author's daughter does not need focuses the attention on quantity, when it mentions "all the pain you want to heal". Although it is not possible to count how much pain that is, it to be alone in life. Finally, there is also an ontological metaphor that lets the audience know that is not little.
Don't keep your nose up in the air like that I know that trick, I've done it a million times. You're just smelling for smoke so you can follow the trail back to a burning house so you can find the boy who lost everything in the fire to see if you can save him. Or else find the boy who lit the fire in the first place to see if you can change him. But I know she will anyway, so instead, I'll always keep an extra supply of chocolate and rain boots nearby. Because there is no heartbreak that chocolate can't fix. Ok, there's a few heartbreaks that chocolate can't fix, but that's what the rain boots are for, because rain will wash away everything if you let it.	The author knows that young people are often attracted to situations that might end up hurting or endangering them. This could be translated into making bad decisions, making mistakes or choosing poorly their friends and partners. She is aware of this, probably because she has experienced it in the past. She is trying to prevent her daughter from experiencing heartache, because like any mother she does not want to see her suffering. Although she is aware that heartaches are part of life and that everyone needs to go through them in order to learn to make better choices in the future. She offers here a couple of remedies to pain: chocolate and rain. Chocolate, among others, is commonly a symbol of comfort for people who are going through difficult moments. This is a way that the author finds to tell her daughter that she will always be able to find comfort by her side. The second metaphor that she uses is rain water, as this washes and flows, never stays. She intends to let her daughter know that no matter how much she is suffering, pain will not last forever, but she needs to let it pass and take the lessons that it was there to teach her.	The utterance "don't keep <i>your nose</i> up in the air" is a metonym that focuses on just a part of the element to refer to the whole. The author is not really taking about her nose, but is hoping that she will stay out of trouble. "You are just smelling for smoke [...] to see if you can save him" is a conduit metaphor that takes the idea of <i>trouble</i> and uses the smoke of a burning house as resource to express it poetically. The same thing occurs when she refers to "the boy who lost everything in the fire/ lit the fire". These conduit metaphors talk about the boy's past and what he is like nowadays. Chocolate and rain are personification metaphors, as they both are presented as healing elements, they are thought to be able to "fix and wash" what is wronging the person who is in pain. These actions are found in people.
When you open your hands to catch, and wind up with only blisters and bruises. When you step out of the phone booth and try to fly, and the very people you want to save are the ones standing on your cape. When your boots will fill with rain and you'll be up to your knees in disappointment	There will also be times in life, the author foresees, when her daughter will try to do good and will end up hurt and disappointed, due to her innocence in a world that is immersed in an oppressive system.	All metaphors that are found in this section fall under the category of conduit metaphors. They take the idea of trying to help others and end up being frustrated and disappointed, and express it using a variety of objects.
There's nothing more beautiful than the way the ocean refuses to stop kissing the shoreline no matter how many times it is sent away.	This metaphor is a powerful way that the author finds to tell her daughter that she will probably find a large number of problems in her way to achieving her goals. She might have to face rejection, injustices, discrimination, and many other situations, but she must never give up. Only persistence and passion can make her get what she works for.	Another personification metaphor can be found here. The idea of not giving up on one's dreams, no matter what the obstacles are, is conveyed using the ocean and shoreline. They are attributed the capability of <i>refusing to stop kissing and sending something/ someone away</i> .
This world is made out of sugar. It can crumble so easily. But don't be	I find this metaphor to be a beautiful way of showing how fragile life can be, one day we are here and the next day we may no longer	"...is made out of sugar. It can crumble so easily" is an ontological metaphor that refers to the

<p>afraid to stick your tongue out and taste it.</p>	<p>be. Things can change so abruptly; this is why it is important to enjoy what life has to offer.</p>	<p>fragility of life. However, the “stick your tongue and taste it” is a conduit metaphor that offers advice to the author’s daughter on how to enjoy it.</p>
<p>Remember your mama is a worrier and your papa is a warrior. And you’re the girl with small hands and big eyes who never stops asking for more.</p> <p>Don’t you ever apologize for the way your eyes refuse to stop shining, your voice is small but don’t ever stop singing.</p>	<p>I consider this metaphor to be a clear image of what family means to the author, and the roles that each person plays within the family organization. The mother, being represented as a worrier, gives the audience the idea that a mother will always care about her children. They will always represent something she needs to worry about in a world full of danger. The father, shown as a warrior, represents someone who will always protect his family and who will be ready to fight whoever dares to threaten them in any way. The girl who never stops asking for more is someone who will never give up until she achieves her goals, and who will question the injustices she sees.</p>	<p>“Worrier”, “warrior”, and “girl with small hands and big eyes who never stops asking for more” are ontological metaphors that help the audience identify aspects that are meant to be highlighted by the author. They refer to the personality of each character involved.</p> <p>“Your eyes refuse to stop shining” is a personalization metaphor that, once again, focuses on the personality of the author’s daughter.</p>
<p>And when they finally hand you a heartache, when they slip war and hatred under your door and offer you handouts on street corners of cynicism and defeat you tell them that they really ought to meet your mother.</p>	<p>With this final metaphor the author tries to tell her daughter that she will have to see war and hatred, they are part of life, but she must not get enrolled in them. She also knows that this can sometimes make her feel like she cannot take it any longer and that she is ready to give up. When this happens, she wants her daughter to remember everything she taught her and also that she is there to support her in her journey.</p>	<p>This last section of the poem can also be interpreted through conduit metaphors, which take the idea of those negative thoughts and emotions that are present in life, and use “hand you a heartache”. “Slip war and hatred”, “handouts of cynicism and defeat” as means express them.</p>

5. Conclusions

This poem was analyzed based on the CDA framework that considers that the discourse goes far beyond what is written, this means that the message and the way it was conveyed requires additional interpretation. In this case, the analysis of the metaphors under Lakoff’s classification allowed us to see not only what the main categories that Kay uses in her poem are, but also the message she sends to her audience.

After analyzing this poem, I conclude that this author is someone who has gone through hard times in life, when she has been hurt and belittled, but who has also had the opportunity to enjoy life’s greatness, and she considers worthwhile spreading a positive message. In addition, even when she does not speak only to women, she does let the audience know what she considers life to be like for us. I think this poem is a perfect balance between showing the way previous generations have been educated, where women’s voices were less heard and were expected to be weaker, and the empowerment that women have achieved in the last decades.

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Ideologies and Censorship in the Discourse of Two Opinion Columns: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This article examines two opinion columns titled “Dilema Ético” (Ethical Dilemma) and “A Margarita” (To Margarita) from a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective. The relevance of the analysis of these columns is that they were written within a context of social crisis in Colombia where the political polarization has increased over the last years. The study intends to identify and analyze expressions used in the discourse of two columnists that represent opposite political ideologies and how this can enact constraints of freedom of speech. The analysis is conducted through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The findings show that the columnist identified with right-wing ideologies imposed herself on the columnist aligned with left-wing ideologies, thus restrict her freedom of speech.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, ideology, political spectrum, opinion column, freedom of speech.

1. Introduction

Freedom of speech has been systematically hindered in Colombia (Gómez & Hernandez, 2008; Cañizalez, 2015), over the last decades there has been a surge in the number of TV presenters, journalists, and columnists who have been removed from traditional newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. The common topic for their removal was their opinions against the illegal armed groups, the government, some politicians, or other interests of the established institutions.

This is the way the power of politics is enacted in this context. Most of these mass media broadcasters belong to the richest people in Colombia who are aligned with the current ruling government in the country. An example of this is the resignation of the columnist Margarita Rosa de Francisco from the traditional Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo*. In her column entitled “Dilema Ético”, she discusses the way power is articulated in Colombia and how it has contributed to the social crisis the country faces. She expresses her dilemma of opposing the government’s ideas while working for an institution that is aligned with the current government’s ideology. For this reason, the newspaper director, Luz Ángela Sarmiento, responds with the column, “A Margarita”. Therefore, the present analysis seeks to identify and analyze expressions used in the discourse of two columnists that represent opposite political ideologies and how this can enact constraints of freedom of speech. The next section presents the literature review of the study.

- Referring to people with money power and political power in media outlets can enact censorship.
- Being identified as an individual with leftish ideas in the Colombian context may be a cause for freedom of speech constrains.
- Opinions are minimized and treated as an insult or a slander by those ones mentioned to devalue an argument utilized by the writer.

2. Literature review

This section provides a broad definition of the concept and the study of ideology, and the definition of left- and right-wing in the Colombian context, and the definition of freedom of speech and self-censorship. It includes the operationalization of the concepts.

2.1 *The concept of ideology*

The concept of ideology has been discussed widely over the past years. Its ubiquitous meaning is applied to different concepts like the idea, theory, science, belief, value, and utopia (Sartori, 1991). For Gerring (1997) an ideology is “a set of idea-elements that are bound together, that belong to one another in a non-random fashion” (p. 980). Hence, ideology can have different interpretations, but it is tied to different elements that underpin such “idea”. Van Dijk (1998) recognizes two domains in the definition of ideology: the cognitive and the sociocognitive. The cognitive perspective is constituted by a system of ideas, or beliefs that a certain group of people have and represent their interests. The sociocognitive domain involves the cognitive part and adds a second component. An instance of this can be found in the newspapers’ opinions where the columnists views’ “are usually not personal, but social, institutional, or political” (Van Dijk, 1998: 22).

Therefore, in the context of this paper, the author sees ideology as something (“an idea”) shared rather than personal, and does not necessarily refer to the cultural, national, or linguistic community, but a specific group. They are not shared by all the members in a large community (at the country level, for example), but in smaller ones like people that belong to a specific political party. The ideology commonly refers to rigid, fake, and biased ideas of others. It usually addresses the idea of “we have the truth; they have ideologies” (Van Dijk, 2006: 728). In other words, an ideology is opposite of what people believe is true. Van Dijk (2006), on the other hand, states that an ideology is the “foundation of the social representations shared by a social group” (p. 729). The representations that people who belong to the high class, are different from those in the middle and low class, for example. For the analysis presented in this paper, the view of ideology proposed by Van Dijk is used. Consequently, the notion of ideology as a sociocognitive orientation is taken as the discourse of the newspaper. The next section presents the concepts of left- and right-wings ideologies.

2.2 *The left- and right-wing*

Back in 1789 during the French Revolution, in the *Assemblée Nationale Constituante* (National Constitutional Assembly) these concepts appeared for the first time. In the discussion of the king’s Louis XVI absolute veto, the assembly was divided in two. On the right side, those who agreed to leave the power of the king stood up so that the old regime continued while, on the left side, those who believed that the power should remain in the population, thus they opposed to such regime (González & Queirolo, 2013). However, such division can be unreliable as, within each side of the spectrum, there are several shades that distant from the extremes.

According to Boix (1996), the left- and right-wing (social democrats and conservatives, respectively) share the goal at the macro level, the maximization of the growth rate. The left usually attempts to balance growth and equity by increasing the participation of the state in the country's economy and investing in the formation of human capital. In contrast, the right intends to reduce the public sector, the taxes, but poorly invest in the formation of human and fixed capital. In this sense, the right tends to incentive the private sector in different economic activities (transportation, finance, commerce, construction, mining, and communications, for example). The left, on the other hand, is aligned with the incentive to the public sector.

Coppedge (1997) elaborates a political party classification in the left- and right-wing axis. According to the author, the right-wing is often characterized by the traditional elite population, their discourse usually involves fascist or neofascist expressions. They are usually authoritative. The center-right-wing, apart from the support from the elites, emphasizes the cooperation between the private sector, the public order, honest governments, and priority of the economic growth over distribution. On the contrary, the center-left-wing ideas emphasize justice, equity, and social mobility while the left-wing prioritize distribution over accumulation.

Fagerholm (2016) identified two subtypes of the concept of (political) ideology: communal and particular. The first involves all the society (a type of Marxist view of the society) while the second is opposed to it and it is much more narrowed and typically identified as a delimited group, class, or movement (the diversification of ideas among the political spectrum). The following table shows a general view of the concept.

Table 1. Concept of particular ideologies

Conservative Particular Ideology	“Maintain the prevalent societal structures and patronize the reigning communal ideology.”
e.g., social democratic ideology (Nordic countries) that are protectors of the remains of the welfare of the state.	
Reformative Particular Ideology	“Renovate the prevalent societal structures as well as the reigning communal ideology.”
e.g., Neoliberal ideology that tries to reintroduce classical liberalism.	
Subversive particular ideology	“Pull down the existing societal structure and introduce a new communal ideology.”
e.g., extreme left and extreme (Anarchist communist) right (neo-Fascism)	

In this sense, the concepts of left-wing and right-wing are complex to define. For this reason, the analysis will be delimited by Coppedge's (1997) view that proposed the broad concept of the left- and right-wing ideologies.

2.3 Freedom of speech

Freedom of speech is one of the essential rights in democratic countries. In Colombia, this right is contained in the 21st article of the 1991's Political Colombian Constitution:

“Se garantiza a toda persona la libertad de expresar y difundir su pensamiento y opiniones, la de informar y recibir información veraz e imparcial, y la de fundar medios masivos de comunicación. Estos son libres y tienen responsabilidad social. Se garantiza el derecho a la rectificación en condiciones de equidad. No habrá censura”. (It is guaranteed to all the people the freedom of expressing and disseminating their thoughts and opinions, informing and receiving verified and impartial information, and establishing mass communication means. They (the people) are free and have social responsibility. It is guaranteed the right to rectification equitably conditions. There will not be censorship.)

In this sense, unless the information is not verified or fake, the right to express ideas and opinions is defended by the constitution. Therefore, each person has the freedom of expressing what they desire to express. According to Cubides-Cardenas et al. (2020), the right of freedom of speech in Colombia has opened the opportunity to discuss other issues like the freedom of thought, freedom of information, freedom of no censorship, freedom of the press, and freedom of rectification. The following section defines the notion of self-censorship

2.4 *Self-censorship*

Recently, people in many Latin American countries have raised their voices against the governments' mismanagement and the dominant groups' ideas. As it was expected, many of those who have spoken out have been silent either from the organization they worked for or for moral reasons, they self-censor. Noelle-Neuman (1974) suggests that the justification for such behavior (self-censoring) is due to fear of isolation from a specific social group. Other factors are related to a threat, imposition, or ethics. Self-censorship also represents a menace for the press due to not only political but also economic pressure. If people cannot express what they want, then the freedom of speech would be inconclusive. No country is excluded from self-censorship, even the most democratic country experienced such issue; however, transitional countries are exposed to banning due to political pressure.

Despite the right to freedom of speech, people tend to avoid language or opinions that can be condemned by others. Self-censorship can be seen, somehow, as a personal choice because people are not obliged to speak (Görlach, 2019). Moreover, self-censorship is “one of the sociopsychological mechanisms that often obstructs a well-functioning democratic society” (Bar-Tal, 2017: 41). This action “prevents free access to information, obstructs the freedom of expression, and harms free flow of information” (Ibid.). People are unable to create a real image of the society they live in and end up modifying, believing, and accepting the views of the dominant groups. Therefore, any contradictory opinion is banned or rejected. In this study, the concept of self-censorship is considered from the perspective of Bar-Tal (2017). The next section presents the methodology.

3. Methodology

This section provides information about the approaches used and the structure of the columns' analysis.

3.1 *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)*

CDA, as Van Dijk (2008) expresses, studies the “way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (p. 352). In other words, it attempts to reveal the real meaning and the purpose of what has been said and how it is represented in society. CDA is characterized by (Van Dijk, 2008):

- (1) Its focus on social problems and political issues.
- (2) The critical analysis of social problems in a multidisciplinary manner. That is to say, the analysis can be carried out through the lenses of linguistics, psychology, sociology, etc.
- (3) It not only describes the discourse structures but explains them.
- (4) The relationship between power and dominance in society. The way it is enacted, confirmed, legitimated, reproduced, or challenged.

Within this view of analysis, language use is divided into micro or macro levels of social order. At the macro level, the context is analyzed to evidence traits of power, dominance, or inequality and to describe the issue in a situated manner. At the micro, specific features of the language are analyzed such as topics and lexicon. Among the ways to analyze and bridge both levels, Van Dijk (2008) proposes four: Member-groups, Action-process, Context-social structure, and personal and social cognition. The present analysis is based on the personal and social cognition domain. In the next paragraph, the ideological structures and discourse strategies are presented.

3.2 Ideological structures and discourse strategies

Through the discursive structures and strategies, ideologies can be acquired, expressed, and reproduce in the discourse. Van Dijk (2006) contends that a discursive structure can mark an ideology. For example, the use of the pronoun We/Us that is used commonly used by people who desire to include themselves in a specific group. Unlike the use of They/Them that usually constitutes an opposite group. The grammatical structures are not perse markers of ideology. They are part of the speaker's communication systems. However, when these structures are situated in a specific context, they influence the discourse. For instance, the syntactic structures (subject-verb, subject-verb-object, object-verb-subject). In the sentences "the USA invades Iraq", "Iraq was invaded by USA" the interpretation may affect the real intention of the speaker/writer. Generally, in active-voice sentences, the agent is the performer of the action directly affect the receiver whereas, in passive-voice types, the agent receives the action, thus it may lose the actual meaning of the statement. Moreover, the figures of speech (metaphors, hyperbole, similes, euphemisms) are used to emphasize either positive or negative ideological meaning through a formal structure.

Van Dijk (2006) adds that the ideological discourse is organized by a general strategy that encompasses two parts: the positive self-presentation, and the negative presentation of the other. It generally emphasizes the positive things of Us and dismisses the negative ones of Us. On the contrary, it de-emphasizes the positive information about Them and emphasizes the negative ones. Consequently, it becomes a polarizing principle. Table 2 shows some of the ways the discourse ideologies are enacted at the macro level.

Table 2. Some expressions of ideologies in discourse

<p>Context: Speaker speaks as a member of a social group; and/or addresses recipient as a group member; ideologically biased context models: subject representations of a communicative event and its participants as members of categories or groups.</p> <p>Text, discourse, conversation:</p> <p>Overall strategy: positive presentation/action of Us, negative presentation/action of Them</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emphasize Our good things, and Their bad things, and 2. De-emphasize Our bad things and Their good things.

Note: Adapted from *Some expressions of ideologies in discourse*. From "Ideology and Discourse Analysis" by Van Dijk, T. (2006) *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11(2), 115-140.

Table 1 provides some variables to be used as a framework to analyze the way ideologies are enacted in the discourse of two opinion columns in order to identify their influence in the constraints of freedom of speech.

3.3 Selection of units of analysis

The units of analysis were selected based on the following moves of communication strategy that are called the "ideological square" (Van Dijk, 1998):

- (1) Express/emphasize information that is positive about Us.
- (2) Express/emphasize information that is negative about Them.
- (3) Suppress/de-emphasize information that is positive about Them.
- (4) Suppress/de-emphasize information that is negative about Us.

These moves helped me to identify the strategies employed in both opinion columns for analysis. Before conducting the analysis, the descriptions of the columns¹ are presented: “Dilema Ético” (Ethical Dilemma) and “A Margarita” (To Margarita). These columns are interesting because they involve two well-recognized figures in Colombia. The first column was written by Margarita Rosa de Francisco, who is a Colombian actress, singer, composer, presenter, and writer. From her background, it seems that Margarita belongs to a sphere of society that can be defined as high class. The second column was written by Luz Ángela Sarmiento, who is the director of the editorial house *El Tiempo*. She is Luis Carlos Sarmiento Ángulo’s daughter, a Colombian banker, owner of *Grupo AVAL*, one of the largest bank conglomerates in Colombia. The topic of discussion starts when Margarita, as a columnist of *El Tiempo*, writes a column where expresses her ideas about the country’s social crisis. In a statement of her column, she indirectly referred to Luis Carlos Sarmiento Ángulo and his influence over the decisions taken in the country as to the financial sector through Alvaro Uribe Vélez (a Colombian ex-president), Iván Duque’s (president of Colombia) mentor. For this reason, Luz Ángela responds with the column, “A Margarita”. Luz Ángela shows her disagreement with Margarita’s words and provides her point of view about the situation stated. In the following section, the analysis is presented.

4. Analysis

This section provides an analysis of the columns. The use of the expressions of ideology in discourse by Van Dijk (2006) is arranged in two different levels (Table 1): context, text, and discourse, and a critical analysis based on his 2008 CDA proposal. For the columns “Dilema Ético” and “A Margarita”, four units of analysis were identified respectively. They were classified as follow (Table 3):

Table 3. Overall discourse strategy

Discourse strategy	“Dilema Ético”	“A Margarita”
positive presentation/action of Us	0	1
Positive presentation of them	0	1
negative presentation/action of Them	4	3

4.1 Ideological analysis

Tables 4 and 5 show the analysis of the columnist contexts. Table 6 and Table 7 describe the analysis of the units. The selection was based on the recurrence of the variables (Table 3) and the salience within the text. The macrostructure level involves the context and text, the microstructure level which addresses the meaning and form.

¹ Both columns are available on <https://www.eltiempo.com/opinion/columnistas/margarita-rosa-de-francisco/dilema-etico-columna-de-margarita-rosa-de-francisco-566095>.

Table 4. Analysis of the context: “Dilema Ético”

Margarita Rosa de Francisco’s Column	
Spanish	English
<i>Los ciudadanos hoy contemplamos con desolación la misma barbarie, desigualdad y miseria, ellas sí, muy bien administradas, pues han logrado mantenerlas estables por décadas, siempre en el más cruel de los niveles.</i>	The citizens today look with desolation at the same barbarity, inequality, and misery, they are very well managed, because they have succeeded in keeping them stable for decades, always at the cruelest of levels.
The columnist identified herself as a citizen. Despised those who have managed the country (the presidents), and she considered she was affected by those decisions taken. This can have a reference to the right-wing parties that have ruled the country during its republican history so that she identified herself on the opposite side of the political spectrum (the left-wing).	

Table 5. Analysis of the context: “A Margarita”

Luz Ángela Sarmiento	
Spanish	English
<i>Los términos de la columna de Margarita Rosa de Francisco son tan injuriosos contra Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo, mi padre, y contra este periódico que ameritan una reflexión.</i>	The terms of the column of Margarita Rosa de Francisco are so insulting against Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo, my father, and against this newspaper that they deserve a reflection.
Although the columnist does not explicitly provide the context, the word, <i>my father</i> , and, <i>against the newspaper</i> , may have revealed her political position. Her father is a well-known banker in Colombia, who is the newspaper owner, and that has been accused to influence the decisions of the Colombian president (right-wing). Therefore, she may be aligned to such a political stance	

Table 6. Text, discourse, and conversation

Text, discourse, and conversation Column: “Dilema Ético” <i>Negative Presentation/ Action of them</i>
(Example 1) <i>El presidente más remoto en mi recuerdo es Misael Pastrana, y de ahí para adelante, todos los que le siguieron me han parecido uno solo.</i> (The most remote president in my memory is Misael Pastrana, and from then on, everyone who followed him has seemed to me the same one).
The columnist mentioned the Colombian ex-president Misael Pastrana whose political inclination was aligned with the conservative party in Colombia (right-wing party). Then, she used the expressions “ <i>todos</i> ”, “ <i>me han parecido uno solo</i> ”, “ <i>ahí para adelante</i> ” which means that the most significant Colombian ruling government has been aligned with the right-wing. In other words, Colombian has been guided by politicians with right-wing ideas.
(Example 2) <i>Aun cuando el último proceso de paz significó para muchos de nosotros un milagroso acontecimiento, este ocurrió dentro de un gobierno con los mismos vicios de todos los precedentes.</i> (Even though the last peace process meant a miraculous event for many of us, it happened within a government with the same vices as all the previous ones.)
The columnist expresses that the peace process was positive for the country; however, she highlights that it happened under the rule of a government with the same vice. Therefore, she confirms what she said about the right-wing governments in the country.
(Example 3) <i>¿Cómo hacerme la desentendida cuando, todos los días –por vías alternativas–, periodistas de gran trayectoria y basados en investigaciones muy serias denuncian los alcances de la corrupción empresarial asociada con la política, las autoridades de justicia, el paramilitarismo y el narcotráfico?</i> (How can I become disengaged when, every day, through alternative channels, journalists of great trajectory and based on very serious investigations denounce the extent of corporate corruption associated with politics, the justice authorities, paramilitarism and drug trafficking?)
The columnist utilized the expressions “ <i>investigaciones muy serias</i> ” and “ <i>denuncian</i> ” to validate her thoughts and accuse the government and the justice system. Then, she mentioned that those

<p>accusations are linked to corporate corruption, paramilitarism, and drug trafficking. In this stage, she associates these problematics with the previous governments' vices, and thus to the right-wing politicians</p>
<p>(Example 4) <i>¿Cómo no pensar en personas más innombrables que “el innombrable”, dueños de todo el país, que financian las campañas de presidentes como el que hoy nos malgobierna? ¿Cómo no empezar a gritar que no es “el que diga Uribe”, sino el que diga el más innombrable e intocable de todos, ese que alguna vez se ufano de mandar a confeccionar leyes a su medida?</i> (How not to think of people more unmentionable than "the unmentionable," owners of the whole country, who finance the campaigns of presidents like the one that is currently governing us? How can we not begin to shout that it is not "Uribe who says," but the most unspeakable and untouchable of all, the one who once boasted of having laws tailored to his needs?)</p>
<p>The columnist used the words “<i>personas más innombrables</i>”, and “<i>el innombrable</i>” to refer to two recognized people in the country: Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo, and Alvaro Uribe Velez. The first is a banker and the second an ex-president that has a great influence on public opinion due to his questionable fight against the guerrilla during his mandate between 2002-2010. Therefore, he became a representative of the Colombian's right-wing parties along with the Conservative party. He also influenced the presidential elections in 2010 (ex-president Juan Manuel Santos which, under his mandate, the peace accord was signed) and 2018 (Iván Duque Marquez) whose candidates were elected. She expresses “<i>dueños de todo el país que financian las campañas de los presidentes</i>” that is interpreted as the elite, represented in this column by Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo is who controls the decisions taken in the country. She also says “<i>como el que hoy nos malgobierna</i>” which means that the is ruled by the same model over the last 70 years.</p>

It is evidenced that Margarita's column accuses the elite and right-wing parties to maintain the hegemony of the country. This has resulted in the social crisis the country faces. However, this view may be uncomfortable for Colombians who are aligned with right-wing ideologies either because they belong to the elite sphere or belong to the private corporates. Table 3 shows the analysis of Luz Ángela's column response. The table displays examples that start with the number 1 each time the unit under analysis changes.

Table 7. Text, discourse and conversation

<p>Text, discourse, and conversation Column: “A Margarita”</p>
<p><i>Positive presentation of them</i></p>
<p>(Example 1) <i>Esta columnista, no cuesta reconocerlo, es una pluma suprema. Margarita Rosa escribe como una diosa, con maravilloso estilo y magistral uso de figuras literarias, es un placer leerla. Declara, como solo ella sabe hacerlo, el Sturm und Drang que permea todos sus escritos</i> (This columnist, not hard to recognize, is a supreme pen. Margarita Rosa writes like a goddess, with wonderful style and masterful use of literary figures, it is a pleasure to read. She declares, as only she knows, the <i>Sturm und Drang</i> that permeates all her writings)</p>
<p>Luz Ángela utilized the different words that may flatter Margarita's discourse. Words such as supreme pen, writes like a goddess, wonderful style, masterful use of literary figures refers to the written discourse, however, in terms of meaning, she considers that Margarita's column is subjective and emotional rather than rational as the <i>Sturm un Drang</i> movement suggests.</p>
<p><i>Positive presentation of us</i></p>
<p>(Example 1) <i>Pero es inaceptable cuando lanza falsas acusaciones contra mi padre, como “ese que algún día se ufano de mandar confeccionar leyes a su medida”. (But it is unacceptable when he makes false accusations against my father, such as "the one who one day boasted of having laws made to his measure".)</i></p>
<p>Luz Angela controverted Margarita's accusations although they were underpinned by serious journalists. It seems that Luz Angela attempts to reestablish the perception one can have towards her father, even when Margarita did not mention his name. Probably, she wanted to highlight her father's name and honor by discrediting Margarita's words.</p>
<p><i>Negative Presentation of them</i></p>

(Example 1) <i>Se siente cínica ante toda forma de gobierno en este país desde los años 70 hasta nuestros días.</i> (She feels cynical about any form of government in this country from the 1970s to the present day.)
Luz Ángela said that Margarita feels cynical as to the governments in the country over past years. The word cynical may suggest that Luz Ángela wants to transmit that Margarita is not sincere and is driven by her own interest, thus she is not trustful.
(Example 2) <i>Eso tristemente solo demuestra una gran ignorancia de los componentes del sistema bancario en Colombia, de sus regulaciones y funcionamiento.</i> (That sadly only demonstrates a great ignorance of the components of the banking system in Colombia, of its regulations and functioning.)
The word ignorance denotes the lack of knowledge or understanding of something; however, its pejorative meaning may refer to uneducated. Luz Ángela used adverbs such as sadly and a great to intensify the meaning of the word, thus it may be understood that the word ignorance has a pejorative meaning.
(Example 3) <i>Nuevamente, desconocimiento del sistema. Los clientes –ni los nuestros ni los de nadie– son prisioneros.</i> (Again, ignorance of the system. Clients-neither ours nor anyone else’s-are prisoners.)
The writer emphasized the word ignorance a second time. It probably shows that she discredited Margarita’s accusations as to the Colombian bank system. This may reinforce the pejorative meaning of the word ignorance.

4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

This section discusses the intended meaning enacted by both columnists and their positionality concerning two opposite ideologies: left-wing and right-wing ideas.

Margarita began her opinion column by describing the political context. She referred to Misael Pastrana, a Colombian ex-president who had been affiliated to the Colombian’s Conservative party. Then, she mentions “*me han parecido uno solo*” (*I found them similar*) to refer to the continuity of the same set of ideologies that have ruled the country for decades. Later, she points out the peace process and highlights the meaningfulness for many Colombians who are in favor of it (generally those aligned with leftish ideologies); however, the government in which this peace accord was signed, was also aligned with the same ideology of previous governments. Regarding the peace process, the right-wing parties and the members did not support it, but instead, they rejected it. In this sense, even though the peace process was signed under the right-wing government, it had also irregularities and acts against the law. This process marked a detachment of ex-president Juan Manuel Santos from the ideals of the party led by Alvaro Uribe Vélez. Then, Margarita used the words “*barbarie, desigualdad, y miseria*” (*barbarity, inequity, and misery*) to describe the panorama of the country nowadays. This shed some light on the social problems that the country faces in terms of poverty, health, education, environment, justice, and unequal tax payment between natural people and legal entities. Most of these words are related to the leftish discourses that request equity and justice. Finally, she concluded the paragraph by underlining that such problems have been “*muy bien administradas*” (well-administered) to affirm that they have rooted in the country and are led by right-wing politicians.

In the second paragraph, she expressed that “*poco a poco, he ido asomándome con más curiosidad*” (*little by little, I’ve been leaning out with curiosity*). Her words denote that she has become interested to expand her view of the country’s social problems. She used the words “*indignación, horror, ganas de intervenir*” (*indignation, horror, and willingness to participate*) to express her willingness to participate in the public discussion. She highlights that the social inequality and injustice enacted in the country were the triggering factors for her interest. She also has political interests as she supports the left-wing candidate for the 2021 presidential elections. Then, she mentioned that “*opinar en contra de ciertos temas en un medio oficial*” (*provide an opinion about certain topics in an official newspaper*), and “*no recomendable*” (*no*

recommended) suggest that some means of communication and mass media are influenced by the ruling government so that an opinion against may be condemned. Moreover, she added that “*cada vez me queda más difícil mirar para otro lado*” (*It’s getting harder and harder for me to look the other way*). Therefore, she feels that the 2021 presidential and parliamentary elections are crucial for the future of the country, thus she has to establish a position.

In the third paragraph, Margarita used rhetorical questions which relate to the articulation of the power in Colombia, and the severe complaints and investigations that well-recognized journalists have evidenced in regards to the “*corrupción empresarial asociada con la política, las autoridades de justiciar, el paramilitarismo, y el narcotráfico*” (*the corporate corruption associated with the polity, the justice, the paramilitarism, and the drug-traffic*). She affirmed that there is a link between corporate corruption, and other problems, and the polity; however, she did not mention who, apart from right-wing politicians.

In the fourth paragraph, again, Margarita began with another rhetorical question. Here, she implicitly pointed out two different subjects when she says “*personas más innombrables que ‘el innombrable’ dueños del país*” “*people more unmentionable than the unmentionable one*”. The first subject mentioned is Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo, one of the richest bankers in the country who is the owner of the largest bank conglomerates in the country Grupo AVAL, and the editorial house and newspaper *EL Tiempo*. On the other hand, “*el innombrable*” refers to the right-wing Colombian ex-president Alvaro Uribe Vélez who has influenced the politics since the 80s, especially during 2002 and 2008 when he was the president and the posterior governments that have been elected due to his support (Juan Manuel Santos and Iván Duque). This is confirmed when she affirmed, “*el que diga Uribe*” (the one Uribe says) which means that any presidential candidate he supports ends up elected. Those governments which she refers to as “*nos malgobierna*” (*misgovern us*), show her concern about the polity and the social reality of the country. Therefore, this person has a great influence on the decisions taken in the country.

In the last paragraph, Margarita expressed “*hacer pequeños actos éticos*” (*to make small ethical acts*) and “*simbólicos*” (*symbolic*) to influence the reader to act against the country’s hegemony to maintain the “*dignidad*” (*dignity*). She concluded her column by stating “*El mio es, por lo pronto, haber escrito esto*” (Mine, so far, has been written this). It denotes a withdrawal from the newspaper due to the incompatibility of her own ideas, and the ideas of the newspaper. She felt her voice may be silent, thus she self-censored. The following section presents an analysis of the column “A Margarita”.

Luz Ángela began by mentioning the opinion column Margarite wrote. She refers to Margarita’s opinion as “*términos injuriosos*” (*offensive terms*). In other words, she affirms that such opinion is an infringement of his father’s and the newspaper’s honor. She places her father’s honor as the topic of the discussion. It is relevant to notice here that her father is Luis Carlos Sarmiento Ángulo who has been accused of influence in Alvaro Uribe Vélez (right-wing figure) power over the current government. Hence, this is the link between Luz Ángela and the right-wing ideology.

In the second and third paragraph, Luz Ángela provided two examples of two former columnists, José Obdulio Gaviria, and Claudia López, that had been fired due to defamation and questioning the honor of, the first, the high commissioner of peace, and the second, the owners of the newspaper *El Tiempo*. However, the resignation in both cases occurred differently. José Obdulio Gaviria was allowed to continue in the newspaper while Claudia López was immediately fired. Both columnists have opposite ideals, the first connects better with the right-wing party whereas the second is on the left-wing. The situation that Claudia López lived in is similar to the one Margarita Rosa de Francisco experienced. Both questioned the influence and interests of the owners’ newspaper in public opinion and the politics in the country.

In the third paragraph, Luz Ángela referred back to Margarita's words "*medio oficial*" (official newspaper) "*no recomendable*" (no recommended). Luz Ángela then attributed a negative connotation to the words by defining them as "*ideas de confabulaciones y amenazas*" (*ideas of collusion and threat*). It seems that she tries to discredit Margarita's opinion. Then, she asked for "*claridad y exactitud*" (*clarity and precision*) of the intentions of the words after she has already devalued the statement.

In the fourth paragraph, Luz Ángela flattered Margarita by saying "*pluma suprema, escribe como una diosa, con maravilloso estilo y magistral uso de figuras literarias, es un placer leerla*" (*supreme writing, she writes like a goddess, marvelous style and masterful use of literary figures*). However, she added that "*Declara, como solo ella, el Sturm und Drang que permea todos sus escritos*" (*She manifests, like only her, the Sturm und Drang that pervade all her writings*). At first sight, it could read that Luz Ángela truly flatters Margarita; nevertheless, the following statement minimizes her attributives and condemn her ideas. The "*Sturm und Drang*" was a movement between the 60s and 80s. Emotions and subjectivity were expressed freely in opposition to the rationalism imposed by the enlightenment. In this sense, the attribution that Luz Ángela provides to Margarita's words is more on the emotional side rather than the rational. Then, Luz Ángela used the expression "*se siente cínica*" (she feels cynical) when she talks about the governments that have ruled the country over the last seventy years and added that "*anuncia que quiere intervenir en la discusión pública*" (*she announces she wants to intervene in the public discussion*). In other words, Margarita distrusts the former governments so that she feels she is entitled to participate in the public discussion.

In the fifth paragraph, Luz Ángela went back to the subject of her father's honor by expressing "*lanza falsas acusaciones contra mi padre*" (*she utters false accusations against my father*). She intends to reassure that her father had not been involved in any of the events that Margarita had mentioned. Even, Luz Ángela, once again, devalued Margarita's opinion by infantilize it and treat it as lacking a valid argument and ignorant of the components of the bank system, regulation, and functioning in the country. In other words, since Margarita does not know about the bank system, she should not discuss it.

In the last paragraphs, Luz Ángela addresses a situation that occurred in the country when, through the social media, some activists defy the bank conglomerate by asking Colombians to cancel their bank accounts due to the presumable links that Luis Carlos Sarmiento Ángulo, through the corporation Corficolombiana (A Colombian financial company), had with what it is known as the Odebrecht case. Luz Ángela affirmed that "*eso nunca sucedió*" (*it never happened*). She finishes her column by sending Margarita a message of censorship "*las difamaciones vulgares no serán toleradas nunca en este periódico*" (vulgar defamation won't be tolerated in this newspaper). In other words, Margarita had either to align with the newspaper's ideology or withdraw.

5. Conclusion

By using Van Dijk's ideological structures and discourse strategies, I identified and analyzed expressions used by two columnists that represent to political ideologies and how this can enact self-censorship. Moreover, I described the concept of ideology as a general term, and more specifically, to a political stance: the left- and right-wing concepts, freedom of speech, and self-censorship. The analysis was conducted through Van Dijk's (2008) CDA approach and his Ideological structures and discourse strategies example (Van Dijk, 2006). The findings showed that the columnist aligned with the right-wing ideology imposed on the columnist, who represented left-wing ideology, that was a causal of her withdrawal and that censorship. As for the methodology, CDA does not have a defined structure that can be of conflict by the moment of the analysis, thus identifying the units of analysis becomes a demanding process. Hence, it is essential

to be familiar with different views of the concept of CDA. However, it is practical since it allows to study diverse subjects, situations, and materials (an opinion column, in the case of this study). For further research, it is suggested to analyze the discourse of other groups of media outlets in Colombia in order to be aware of their agenda-setting and their influence over individuals' opinions.

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