

Trinity Watson

Beth Backes

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Bias in Media Towards Social Groups

In headlines nowadays, there are blatant examples of subtle bias towards a social group of people, from women being admonished to get along with the boys, employers giving black workers nooses, and other inflammatory and offensive behaviors that require vigorous scrutiny. In the 21st century, authors, artists, and media personalities form examples of those becoming biased against others, especially outside their social groups, through such forms as showing prejudice or emotional bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. According to Meyer (para 4), subtle bias targets the demeaning and marginalizing against the recipient. In written or spoke, the language is constructed so that the reader is persuaded to be for or against a person, idea, policy, organization, or event. By definition, the language might have small micro-aggressions that one would not take notice of the statement's objective. In the previous United States elections, Trump supporters became major victims of subtle bias. During the August 2020 campaigns, CNN anchor Don Lemon wrote that Trump voters “must have cognitive dissonance to support such a bad person” (Dennis, para 2). Being a media personality, Lemon’s remarks against Trump supporters signified some sort of prejudice against the social group. This paper attempts to dissect how Don Lemon tries to convince the mass that Trump supporters have inconsistent thoughts about their preferred candidate, stating that they must be suffering cognitive dissonance by supporting a bad person.

Since the remarks by Don Lemon constitutes subtle bias, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the tool to use to uncover subtle bias of the remarks or statement by the media personality. Ideally, critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary research design that comprises multiple and distinct methodological approaches in the study of language (Amoussou, Franck & Ayodele, 12). Through CDA, analysts view language as a form of social practice, which makes the analysts investigate the hidden power of communicated language or ideologies embedded in the text or written material. In normal parlance, critical denotes evaluating something, whether an object or even a situation, while applying the rules, values, and principles applicable to the subject of the analysis. While researching or conducting analysis on the language, text, or situation implies, the researchers must be dedicated to ensuring that they examine the material and social consequence of the discourse. For instance, in determining the bias towards Trump supporters, one must consider an explicit impetus of intervening actively to challenge the social problems that would result due to these subtle biases. Therefore, while using a critical discourse analysis tool in analyzing Lemon's subtle bias, the aim is to dissect the consequence of the statement on the social group.

Don Lemon, a man who has been vocal against the Trump movement, is one of the most proficient American Journalists. He has been the host on CNN Tonight since 2014. In the 2011 memoir, *Transparent*, Lemon stated that he is gay, making one of the few black men broadcasting who have come out as gays. His criticism of the Trump movement and supporters took a central stage in August, and especially being a renowned media personality. But working for CNN, where the claims were made and later published in subsequent news, the news could not be shocking. This stemmed from the fact that most of the media in the United States, including CNN and Fox News, are biased towards Trump's administration and running for a

second term. For instance, CNN has argued that Donald Trump was unfit for the job and could not be compared to the government before his (Joseph, para 4). The media giant was also kept insisting that new disclosures and the outbreak of coronavirus, which the media kept arguing that complaining that Trump was unable to control, signified Trump's incompetency to keep the country together. As a result, working as a news anchor in CNN, Lemon was free to utter the and statement, accusing supporters of cognitive support dissonance, ignoring the fact this would spur reactions from the supporters.

The first CDA on Lemon's statement that "Trump supporters must be suffering from cognitive dissonance to support such a bad person" rests on using the phrase cognitive dissonance. One must first think about why Lemon decided to use the term, a vocabulary that is not commonly used to describe a person. Ideally, cognitive dissonance is a situation where there is a conflict of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, which results in mental discomfort making one alter his beliefs and attitude to restore balance. It seems Lemon used this term to achieve the same purpose, making Trump's supporters feel uncomfortable and uneasy about their beliefs and attitude towards their preferred candidate, Donald Trump. Moreover, in the statement, Lemon uses an active voice, stating that Trump's supporters are suffering from this problem. While a passive voice would have included a general statement, leaving a person to think which of the supporters suffer from cognitive dissonance, active voice persuades other people, making them biased against Trump supporters.

Also, Lemon uses pathos as the rhetorical strategy to convince the public. Unlike ethos and logos that convince the reader or a listener due to the author's character and use of reasoning, respectively, pathos appeals to the reader's emotions. This means that by persuading a person's emotions, there is a high likelihood that one may persuade a person's attitude towards a person,

event, or situation, a strategy that Lemon tries to achieve in his statement. The language choice by Lemon about Trump sparks emotional response not only from Trump's supporters but also from anti-Trump campaigners. Using the adjective, bad person, to describe Donald Trump, one starts to think of some of the incidences that would make Trump qualify as a bad person. As Trump had been accused of racism, misogyny, undemocratic, and other sorts of bad things, supporting him would seem to support these policies. Therefore, one may seek not to be associated with such characteristics and thus may shift the support. If that would happen, that means that Lemon would have succeeded in persuading people against Trump and his policies.

In conclusion, Don Lemon tries to convince the mass that Trump supporters have inconsistent thoughts about their preferred candidate, stating that they must be suffering cognitive dissonance by supporting a bad person. Critical discourse analysis is significant in analyzing the statement since it is the tool used to uncover subtle language bias. The tool analyzes what could be embedded in the language used against a person, social group, event, or organization. Through CDA, the first analysis was on the effect of the uncommon vocabulary phrase, cognitive dissonance. The analysis establishes that Lemon used the phrase to cause uneasiness and discomfort among Trump supporters. The claim also argues that Trump is a bad person. Using this adjective to describe Trump, the idea would be to connect the presidential candidate with all sorts of things that would be termed as intolerable by the Americans.

Works Cited

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In writing, my strengths lie in making connections between different subjects and conducting the analysis. While writing could be seen as just a simple task, critical thinking is an important aspect that one must possess. Critical thinking being one of my major strengths in writing; I always find myself finding content on many subjects. On the contrary, my writing requires improvement in some areas. While I am good at analytical writing, I have some weaknesses in narrative writing. I would also like to expand my vocabulary, especially in the description of things. I am also looking forward to where my sentence structures, dialog, and character all become more intuitive to me.