

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Dietary Recommendations of Medical Associations and Research Articles on Hypertension Disease

* Zunaira Tariq, MPhil Scholar

** Ata ul Ghafar, MPhil Scholar (Corresponding Author)

*** Shepherd Masood Akhtar, MPhil Scholar

Abstract



"Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk p. 353). This study aims to investigate the language use between medical associations and research articles through Van Dijk's Semantic Macrostructure model of Critical Discourse Analysis. This study is qualitative in nature. The data was collected from ten medical research articles on high blood pressure disease from PubMed and Science Direct. These articles were purposefully selected from 2010 to 2020. Similarly, the association's dietary recommendations are selected for the comparison. These selected associations are the World Health Organization, the Mayo Clinic, the American Health Organization, and the American Health Associations. Van Dijk's macrostructure rules have been applied only with the dietary recommendations suggested by associations and articles. The data has been analyzed using the categories defined by Van Dijk, i.e. Generalization, Deletion, Selection and Construction through AntConc (Version 4.0.10). The findings of the study revealed that medical associations usually omit the details of their discourse. Generalization and deletion have been highly observed in medical associations. As far as research articles are concerned, they have built macro-propositions by providing adequate details about each and every recommendation. They focused on the aspect that every piece of information is important and nothing is irrelevant. It has been observed that, associations present the abstracting details to propagate certain ideologies and hidden agendas and divert public attention toward particular brands and products. Furthermore, the producers of medical discourse attempted to impose a large influence of their underlying beliefs and objectives on public minds. As a result, with the support of capitalism, the medical discourse of associations has been badly influenced.

Keywords: HBP, CDA, Van Dijk's Model Macrostructure Model, Capitalism

Introduction

The concept of medical discourse has been emerging as a theme of study in various fields for many years. In the previous few years, the subject matter of medical discourse has been investigated in several branches of linguistics. According to Brown (2006), the second edition of the Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics has a particular section named "Medicine and Language," which has combined the different approaches and perspectives on the research area of medical discourse. It is clearly evidence that a community of applied linguists and researchers is focusing on the significance of emerging medical discourse analysis.

There is a diversity of research methods, approaches, themes, and forms of medical discourse that are so vast and have been emerging in the field of applied linguistics. But, this study has only focused on the critical discourse analysis of the medical condition high blood pressure and the related dietary treatments recommended by well-known medical associations and research articles by doing contrastive analysis in the medical discourse of these dietary recommendations by applying Van Dijk's four macrostructure rules i.e. Generalization, Deletion, Selection and Construction.

Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are similar since both investigate language in context. However, CDA distinguishes itself by describing and evaluating the

* Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University Faisalabad

** Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University Faisalabad Email: ataulghafar56@gmail.com

***Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University Faisalabad

manipulation of facts, power relations and abuses, social or political dominance, and the use of language by various institutions to carry out activities. Furthermore, CDA reveals people's conduct under various dominating scenarios. These distinctions distinguish CDA from DA.

According to Van Dijk, critical discourse analysis is a study that explains how text and language in a social and political environment reproduce social injustice, power abuse, and dominance. CDA plays a vital role in research since it aids in understanding and exposing the occurrences of inequality, racism, and oppression. Van Dijk defines three sorts of power institutions: military power based on force, rich power based on money, and the power of parents, professors, institutions, and organizations based on knowledge. Power makes a group dominant, and this power is subsequently incorporated into legislation, rules, norms, and habits, resulting in hegemony.

Mayr (2008, as stated in Dijk, 2015) argues that the power and control of groups fluctuate, which indicates that if a group has more or less power, it has more or less influence over the actions and minds of other groups. This defines power as accessing holy societal resources like force, money, position, celebrity, knowledge, information, "culture," or even diverse forms of public speech and communication.

Hypertension is a disorder in which the veins are always tight. It is also characterized as an increased or growing circulatory strain. Blood is transported from the heart to all body regions through the vessels. The researcher in this paper uses the Van Dijk macrostructure model to investigate the nature of language. The macrostructure model of Van Dijk is organized into four categories: deletion, selection, generalization, and construction. Using the Van Dijk model's four fundamental principles, we may analyze any piece of literature for in-depth understanding.

As a result, this work aims to examine the language used by medical researchers and associations as they present information about high blood pressure disease and guidelines for controlling it. The study looks at how both utilize language to influence the mind, misuse authority, and misrepresent the facts. Furthermore, CDA will use dialogue to determine which group in the medical sector has more power over others. This will assist the reader in realizing that social power may be used not only to influence other institutions but also locally to enact for the other members of a dominant group.

The study's significance is to raise awareness about how language may be used to alter facts and present various truths based on different schools of thought. The review is extremely informative and opens new possibilities for clinical scientists and language analysts.

Hypothesis

This research will test the following hypothesis:

Medical Associations omit the details of dietary treatments of Hypertension disease and mostly give the general statements regarding recommendations to hide the Western Lifestyle and their dietary patterns and the sponsorships of different companies/organizations and food industries.

Problem Statement

The problem statement of this study is to identify language usage between dietary recommendations of medical associations and research articles by using a Van Dijk's macrostructure model.

Research Questions

1. What types of keywords were used in medical association and research articles dietary recommendations?
2. How the medical associations and research articles have used generalization and deletion in the discourse of their dietary recommendations?
3. How construction and selection is varied among the discourse of medical associations and research articles in their dietary recommendations?
4. What is the discourse purpose behind deletion, selection, construction, and generalization in medical journals and association's recommendations?

Review of Relevant Literature

Language and Discourse

Language is a spoken or written form of expression, while discourse includes the context and in-depth meaning incorporated in the language in use. Language is not solely about the precise construction of linguistic structures; rather, it includes different meanings within them. These meanings can be best understood by analysing the language on the basis of its context, which is the main concern in discourse analysis.

Rashidi and Rafieerad (2010) assert by elucidating the structural aspects and perspectives of language that in-depth analysis of the discourse is viewed as the broad field of study that is used to describe different linguistic characteristics and aspects carried by a communicator while communicating in any communicative event.

A discourse is an organized method of analysis that investigates and offers the spoken or written patterns in reference to the social boundaries. Discourse is inevitable; it has impacts and influences on how we interpret different things. The emphasis of discourse analysis is on analysing the underpinning ideologies and beliefs that underlie the norms of a society as they are communicated through its language.

Language is a moral and useful action made by the communicators in any communicative event. It is not something of only scientific significance communicators in any communicative event. It is not something of only scientific significance. Language and discourse are interconnected, and discourse is about language in use (Johnstone, 2000).

Critical Discourse Analysis is a multi-disciplinary field of knowledge that draws upon different fields of study. Fairclough & Wodak (1997) stated that social issues are the main concern of critical discourse analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis calls attention to the power relations, ideologies, societal norms constructed by the language people used at different events under different circumstances.

Carroll (2004) believes that critical discourse analysis serves as both a theory and a method that provides different dimensions and numerous aspects for the in-depth analysis of a spoken or written text. Discourse analysis incorporates contemporary perspectives on different social, cultural, and political aspects. Language's functional aspect in the development and justification of social interactions is a sociological trait.

Carmen M. Martinez-Roldan (2005) investigated bilingual children's gender ideologies using CDA. Studies related to children's ideologies are concerned with how children learn and develop their ideas. Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory underpins the problem of children's ideology, which is connected to the social viewpoint.

Vygotsky (1987) illustrates how babies learn about their culture and peers through discussion. The process of creating ideas begins in childhood. Children will occasionally utilize terms that adults would use in their talks. Children exhibit a lack of conceptual thinking early in life.

Florio-Ruane (2001) proposes five phrases for educating children about explicit gender issues. Each statement represents a different aspect of the gender dilemma. Humans use language to study six parts of reality, according to Gee (1999): text meaning, activities, politics, connections, semiotics, identities, and relationships. Examining these phrases reveals a plethora of information, particularly in world-building (meaning, political building and social construction).

Critical discourse analysis is a "surgical theory" for revealing the representation of power and ideology in a discourse text. Fairclough (1995) investigated that ideology is present in every writing. Language is not a neutral commodity; it contains tremendous ideals. Vocabulary, words, and language patterns are used to express power. Power may be defined in various ways, but in general, powerful people or organizations tend to preserve, perpetuate, and reproduce it (Bourdieu, 2014: 15).

As a result, you must engage in text analysis, discourse practices, and powerful social acts as a consumer of public discourse. Because ideological behaviours can only be recognized through power practice, language and ideology cannot be divorced from the context of the interaction between language and power (Fairclough, 1989).

Language emerged from nothing and originated due to a particular socio-historical period. Creative impulses always drive a language to commit itself to communicating and establish itself as an important component of power development. "Practice" rather than "ownership" defines power, according to Foucault.

Medical Discourse

Discourse has a very significant role in the medical field, and medical discourse is basically defined as the discourse that deals with therapies, healing, cures, expressions of pain, or some related language ideologies. The topic of medical discourse is remarkable and has relevant practical importance (Cooper et al. 2003; Maynard & Heritage 2005; Roberts et al. 2005).

Whitehead and Tim Kurz (2008) examine how anorexia nervosa and obesity are portrayed in women's magazines. Because it is based on a feminist poststructuralist perspective, the Foucauldian

Discourse Study is employed for the analysis. The analysis is based on six analytic phases, which the researchers identify as discursive constructions, discourses, action orientation, positioning, practice, and subjectivity. The study examined the representations of obesity and anorexia nervosa in publications.

Critical discourse analysis may help you comprehend power and ideology in a dialogue. Language manipulation is quite common, and we may investigate these discursive actions utilizing rhetoric, irony, or mitigation in CD studies. Objectivity is an important idea, especially in scientific vocabulary. However, there is some uncertainty, particularly in medical science, that they will change their views because of power, authority, and facts. Previous scholars have looked into this adjustment in scientific terms.

Ghafar et al. (2022) revealed that certain choices of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and rhetorical devices have been used in medical discourse to propagate certain ideologies and hidden agendas and divert public attention towards certain dietary brands, medicines, and surgeries.

Roberts and Sarangi (1999) have worked in collaboration with the Royal College of Physical Practitioners to get an understanding of the medical discourse, and the analysis of the insights from the medical discourse has been applied to improve the doctor-patient interactions and train the doctors. Patients, practitioners, immigrants, and nonimmigrants can all benefit from such collaborative work. However, immigrant patients sometimes find it difficult to tell practitioners about their problems during clinical sessions (Jefferson & Lee, 1992; Wilce, 1998). As a result, "training for uncertainty" (Fox, 1957) must be taken into consideration for handling and managing the "interactional uncertainty" (Roberts et al., 2004) in multi-ethnic societies.

Theoretical Framework

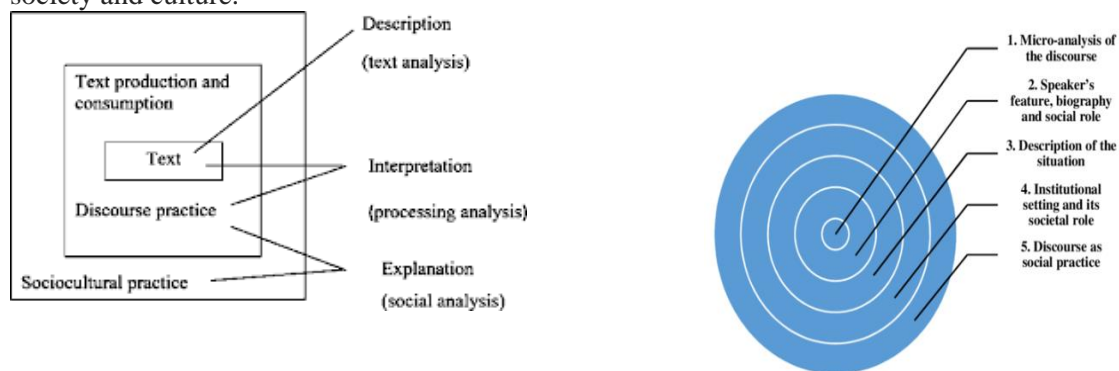
A text, according to Van Dijk, is a collection of structures or levels that support one another. He divides it into three parts. The macrostructure is the most important feature. This is the overall or general meaning of a text that may be seen by examining the subject or theme of the tale. The superstructure comes in second place. This discourse structure refers to the literary framework of the text or how the text's contents are intertwined with the news. The microstructure is ranked third. Is it feasible to distil the essence of a piece of art down to a single word, sentence, statement, clause, paraphrase, or image?

CDA, according to Trask (2007), is focused on answering issues such as "Why was this content prepared for everyone?" It is directed at which societies? Moreover, why is this so? Is the author or speaker concealing something? What implicit assumptions and prejudices are there in the text?

Critical discourse analysis deals with multidisciplinary fields; it is not promoted in any specific direction or particular school of thought. Rather, it deals with multidisciplinary fields to offer an alternate "mode" or "point of view" of guessing, investigation, and application throughout the entire field. We may track down a pretty basic point of view in such different regions as pragmatics, discussion examination, account investigation, way of talking, stylistics, sociolinguistics, ethnography, or media examination, among others. (Schiffrin and Tannen P. 352)The research has provided three major CDA models.

1. 3D multinational Fairclough model
2. CDA Wodak model
3. The model of Van Dijk.

Fairclough, Wodak, and Van Dijk all make similar statements about critical discourse analysis: power relations are discursive, manipulative structures are created, and discourse comprises society and culture.



All of the research that has been studied has found that critical discourse analysis plays a significant role in the formation of specific ideologies. Previous research has identified all aspects of discourse and society: language and discourse, social wrongs, and discourse analysis techniques and manipulation. The researcher used the Van Dijk model of critical discourse analysis at macrostructure for analysis because she wanted to study language gaps, background, and hidden ideologies. This work is extremely important in critical discourse analysis. According to the Van Dijk (the 1980s) model, four main points are included in it: Deletion, Generalization, Selection, and Construction. With the help of these four main points of the Van Dijk model, researchers will interpret dietary recommendations from medical associations and research articles on hypertension disease.



Figure.1 Framework of Study (Macrostructure Model 1980s)

Methodology

The current study focuses on dietary recommendations from medical associations and research articles. The researcher has selected a (CDA) model of macrostructure proposed by Van Dijk for the data analysis. The data has been selected randomly from ten medical research articles on hypertension disease from PubMed and Science Direct. These articles are selected from 2010 to 2020. Similarly, associations' recommendations are selected for the comparison. These selected associations are the World Health Organization, the Mayo Clinic, the American Health Organization, and the American Health Association.

Study Design

This study is descriptive in nature and deals with the comparative analysis of dietary recommendations from medical associations and research articles. The researcher has adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The researcher applied Van Dijk's macrostructure model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to understand the nature of journal language and associations in the data. Macro structural analysis has been done on the content of these selected dietary recommendations by using Van Dijk's macrostructure rules to find the gap between medical associations discourse and research articles discourse.

Data analysis procedure

As far as the data analysis procedure is concerned, the data has been analyzed using the categories defined by Van Dijk, i.e. deletion, generalization, selection, and construction. AntConc (version 4.0.10) has been used to find and contrast the frequencies of particular terms related to four macrostructure rules. Results have been presented using tabular forms. Microsoft Excel Sheet has been used for the graphical representations of findings. Column charts have been utilized here to show the contrast in the frequencies of the terms used by research articles and medical associations. All the data have been analyzed under the macrostructure taxonomy at the deletion, generalization, selection, and construction levels.

Results and Discussion

This section consists of the main findings of the data, which are based on the research questions in this research. The contrastive analysis of the discourse of dietary recommendations in research articles and medical associations has been done under the principles of Van Dijk's macrostructure model of critical discourse analysis by following four macrostructure rules of text, i.e. Generalization, Deletion, Selection and Construction. The following tabular and graphical representations show the contrast between the terms suggested by medical associations and research articles in terms of generalization, deletion, selection, and construction.

This study examines dietary recommendations of medical associations and research articles on HBP disease, as well as language gaps between the researcher's recommendations and the medical

directories. It is all about studying language with its context, background information, and objectives behind the language or the actions performed after some specific lexical choices. All four research questions were answered in the current paper; the first was answered through corpus-based analysis, and the remaining three were answered through context analysis of the data.

Deletion (hiding information)

According to the Van Dijk (the 1980s) model, four main points are included in it: Deletion, Generalization, Selection, and Construction. With the help of these four main points of the Van Dijk model, we can interpret any piece of text for deeper understanding. Deletion in which all the irrelevant information, local details, and sometimes full propositions are deleted from the text.

Table.1 Compared frequencies of deleted terms in medical associations and research articles.

Deletion	Key Term Frequencies	
	Articles Frequency	Associations Frequency
Life style modification	32	2
Mediterranean diet	34	7
Smoking is a major risk	17	0
Avoid binge drinking	2	2
Active	9	2
Calcium channel blocker	17	0
Avoid medication	14	11
Reduce salt	28	4
Processed meat	10	0
Avoid Carbohydrate	10	0

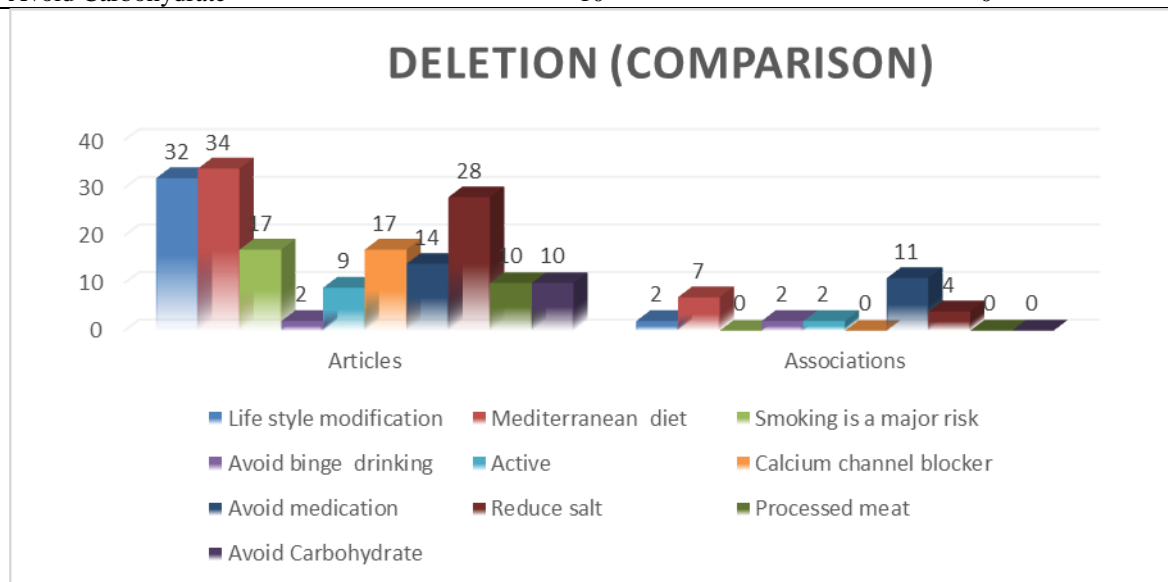


Figure 2. Graphical representation of deletion in medical associations and research articles.

From the findings, it is clearly seen that medical associations are frequently using deletion in their sequence of propositions. All the above information i.e. "evidences about differences studies and associations, "smoking life style modification, 1500mg salt Mediterranean diet and Western/American Diet" in table 2 indicate that these are mainly missing in medical associations while the research articles are frequently using these terms. Medical associations are deleting the information about the quantity of alcoholic drinks how much take a person in the disease or somebody must avoid the consumption of drink and also hiding Mediterranean diet rich in fibers, to count the intake of calories and nutrients, to maintain check and balance of balance diet for different individuals. Research articles while suggesting the dietary recommendations, are emphasizing on providing all the information regarding the disease so that the patients can fully take benefit and there is no chance left for the misinterpretation of discourse. From the following graph, it can be seen that the frequencies of terms that have been mentioned in the table are very low in medical associations as compared to research articles. Mostly, medical associations have deleted the information or these are hiding the important details about dietary treatments but the research articles are focusing on developing the strong macrostructure that nothing is irrelevant; every local detail is important, research articles are

providing the evidences about different cross-sectional studies and the guidelines suggested by different organizations with evidences While the medical associations are omitting such references to guidelines.

Generalization

As Van Dijk (1986) stated, "generalization" refers to the process of reducing and abstracting the details by using such words that are more general. By applying this macrostructure rule to the discourse of dietary recommendations of both the medical associations and research articles, it is revealed that the medical research articles are using more generalization to recommend dietary treatments regarding high blood pressure disease.

Table.2 Compared frequencies of generalized terms in medical associations and research articles.

Generalization	Key Term Frequencies	
	Articles Frequency	Associations Frequency
Life style change	13	22
Balanced diet	12	27
Avoid Smoking	4	10
May	4	15
Exercise	3	6
Individual	7	9
Studies	12	3
healthy diet	4	8

Medical associations are building their macro proposition in such a way that it replaces the minor sequence of propositions with one general term as a whole, i.e., "eat a balanced diet," "exercise most of the days of the week," "lose weight," "choose a healthy diet," or "make lifestyle changes." Comparatively, the research articles are focusing on that language use, which provides particular details about every minor thing that is related to HBP. Basically, medical associations are just focusing on the global meaning of their dietary treatments' discourse by abstracting the details and substituting with more general terms. As you can see in the graphical representation.

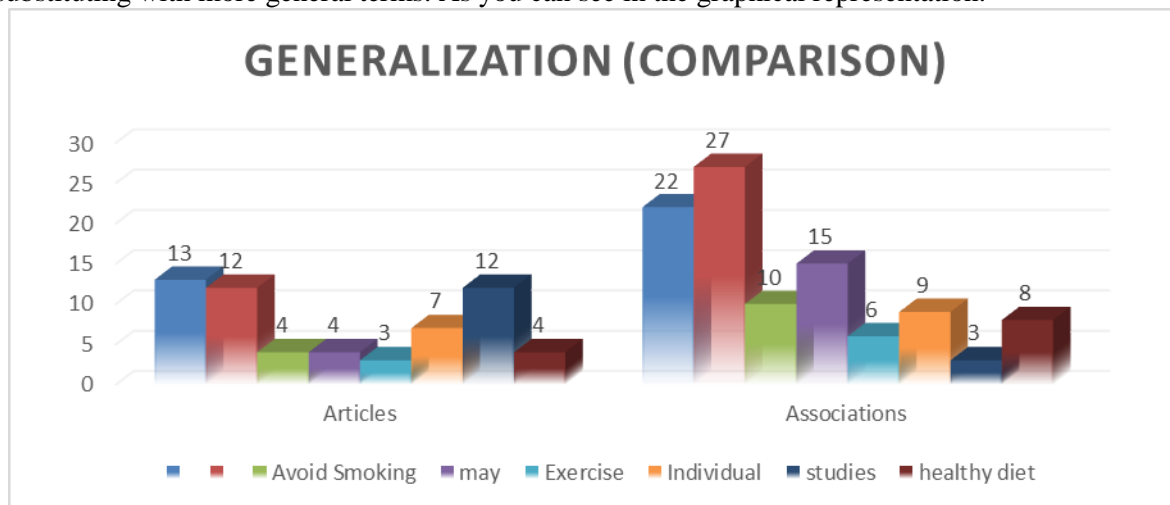


Figure 3. Graphical representation of deletion in medical associations and research articles.

All of these terms indicate that associations are replacing the main information by using superordinate concepts and terms. They are abstracting pertinent details like "which diet we should take?" "for how much time should we exercise?" "what kind of exercise (aerobic or anaerobic) we should do?" "how can we modify our lifestyle to cure the disease?" They are suggesting the dietary treatment generally to all the individuals that have this disease by using terms like "individual are abstracting pertinent details like "which diet we should take?" "For how much time should we exercise?" "What kind of exercise (aerobic or anaerobic) we should do?" "How can we modify our lifestyle to cure the disease?" They are suggesting the dietary treatment generally to all the individuals that have this disease by using terms like "individual" and "general" and not specifying different levels of patients. While the research articles are building their discourse by using less general terms because they are emphasizing specific details, the medical associations are generalizing or abstracting. By following this above tabular representation, only the term "studies" has the highest frequency

regarding generalization in research articles because they are focusing on giving the references of different studies regarding dietary treatments of the disease.

Selection

Selection refers to the selection of vocabulary, which is different in both the medical associations and research articles. In order to make macro-propositions in the discourse of dietary recommendations, some microstructures have been processed into it. For this purpose, work has been done on the vocabulary used in medical associations and research articles. It can be seen in table no. 3 that research articles have selected more particular vocabulary related to the disease such words in their discourse that are contextual to the disease high blood pressure like Aerobic exercise, HF, ACE, ARBs, Psychological stress. That’s why the frequencies of selected vocabulary related to disease are higher in research articles than in medical associations, as shown in figure 4. While the associations are selecting such word choices that are more general, anyone can interpret them in their own way. They are less focused on the vocabulary that is related to the medical field.

Table.3 Compared frequencies of selected terms in medical associations and research articles.

Selection	Key Term Frequencies	
	Articles Frequency	Associations Frequency
Aerobic exercise	19	1
HF	6	0
ACE	11	10
ARBs	4	5
Carbohydrate	10	0
Psychological stress	15	4

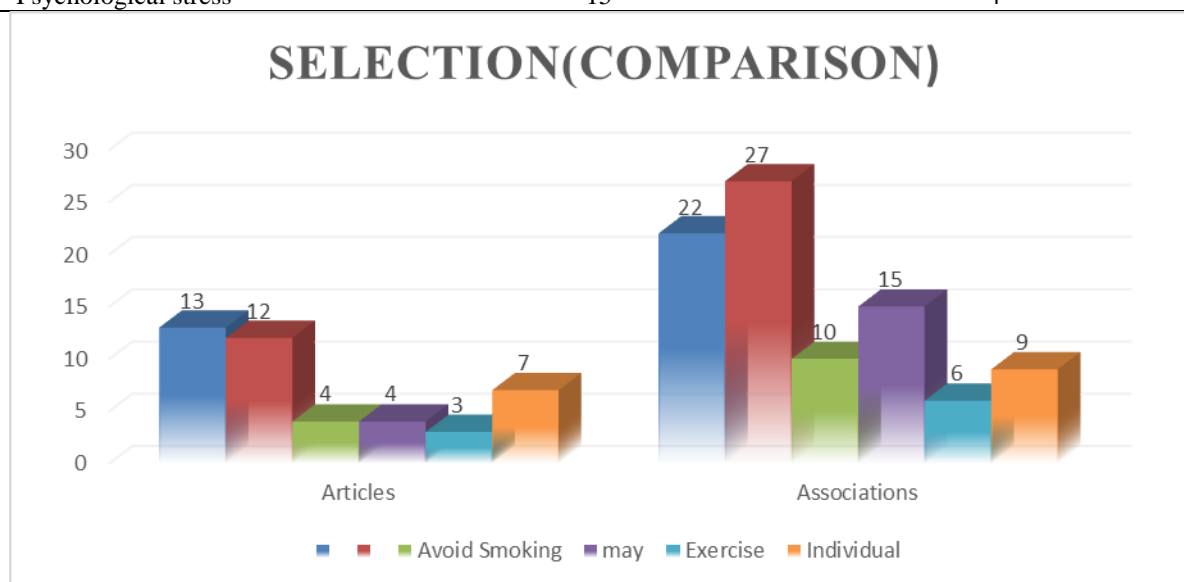


Figure 4. Graphical representation of deletion in medical associations and research articles.

Medical Associations are selecting more general vocabulary to create the semantic macro proposition that they are abstracting and generalizing the information to create a gap for the people in the interpretation of discourse. As it is above mentioned, they use words that are too general, like "exercise," "balanced diet," and "plant-based diet," instead of "aerobic exercise," "HF," "ACE," "ARBs," "psychological stress," "DASH diet," and "Mediterranean diet," to form a generalized macro structure.

Construction

According to Van Dijk (1986), in the macrostructure rule, "Construction," we construct a new macro-proposition on a more global level by combining and organizing the macro information in the text to maintain coherence and cohesion among the ideas. By applying this macro rule, it is shown in Table 4 that research articles have constructed their discourse in a more coherent way and are using linking words and phrases to combine the micro propositions in the text; the frequencies of such words are higher in research articles instead of medical associations.

Table.4 Compared frequencies of constructed terms in medical associations and research articles

Construction	Key Term Frequencies	
	Articles Frequency	Associations Frequency
In addition to	4	0
Furthermore	2	1
Moreover	3	2
Similarly	4	1
As mention	8	0
Especially	3	2

As it is observed, research articles are using linking terms between the clauses like "however," "in addition to," "while," "similarly," "moreover," "especially," and "interestingly" to construct the global meaning of the text by arranging the micro propositions that function as the whole macro proposition.

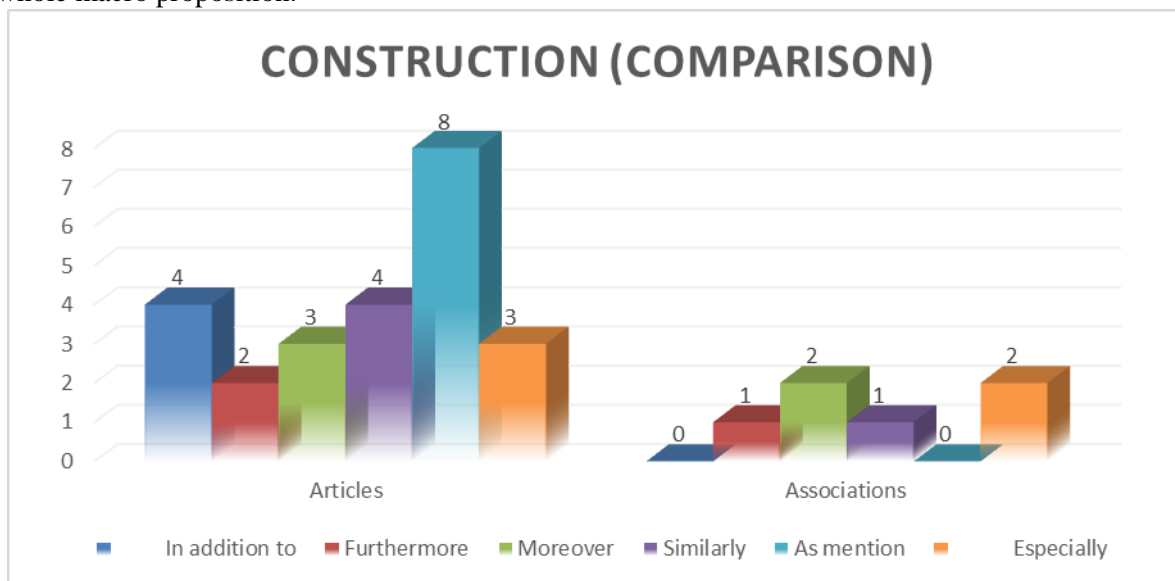


Figure.5 Graphical representation of deletion in medical associations and research articles.

There is more coherence and cohesion between the ideas in the research articles because they are providing each and every piece of information step by step. For example, "However, the vast majority of patients," "In addition to the role of foods in the diet," or "Moreover, certain dietary changes like the Mediterranean diet" all indicate coherence and cohesion in the discourse of research articles. Figure 4 is also showing that terms which create cohesion and coherence are lesser in medical associations because they are using just simple sentences by just providing the general information or give the recommendations in bullet points to build a generalized macro position. In this way, the construction of discourse is a little bit different in both medical associations and research articles.

Research Articles are constructing their discourse by making a connection between information to make the strong macro-proposition but the medical associations are constructing their discourse by abstracting and reducing the information to make Construction. Medical Association Research articles make the global meaning of the text more general. This is how the construction varies among the medical associations and research articles.

Limitations

There are some important limitations that need to be considered. First, the sample size is limited, and the selection process depends on the researcher's interest. Secondly, the critical discourse has been analyzed at the macrostructure level. Thirdly, the analysis of the data is not in-depth. Finally, the findings of the research cannot be generalized to a large context; the study results are specific to a small sample corpus.

Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies can concentrate on different medical association's recommendations on the same diseases and figure out the discursive practices that stakeholders used for their personal agendas in the medical field. Additionally, different CDA critical discourse models, such as socio-cognitive, multi-dimensional, can apply to medical discourses.

Conclusion

Critical discourse analysis is used in many disciplines and different fields. The common perception of the medical profession is that the information they present is always true, and they transmit meaning as it is without changing the facts to suit their purposes or intentions. Van Dijk's macrostructure rules (generalization, deletion, selection, and construction) have been applied for the analysis of medical associations and research articles. The hypothesis of the study proved to be true: there has been more deletion and generalization of pertinent details in the recommendations of medical associations. It has been observed that associations have kept their information secret by abstracting the details and making them too general so that they could hide the sponsors behind this approach because associations usually link with different brands. As far as research articles are concerned, they have built macro-propositions by providing adequate details about each and every recommendation. They focused on the aspect that every piece of information is important and nothing is irrelevant.

The reason behind the deletion and generalization of propositions is the support of capitalism. As capitalist theory is also reflecting the medical discourse in the way food markets have also been globalized, politics and economics are involved everywhere in different fields and ways due to the fact that business associations truly sponsor the food markets and the medical health associations. If medical associations restrict anything regarding processed foods, these businesses will be damaged, and they can't afford such losses. According to capitalist theory (Chun, 2017), businesses are made for profits, which is why they sponsor the national and international medical associations. This is actually the reason for the ambiguous, reductive, and generalized discourse of associations.

Furthermore, the producers of medical discourse attempt to impose a large influence of their underlying beliefs and objectives on public minds because surgeons and administrators are linked with many brands. As far as research articles are concerned, they are not associated with any brand or medication company; therefore, their recommendations provide clear and truthful information.

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