

Abstract

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Legitimization of War in Western Media Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis Approach

Abstract This study is concerned with the role language plays in the process of legitimization. Out of all social practices that any discourse tends to legitimize, the current study focuses on the process of war legitimization which usually finds its way in political discourse. However, the study opts for exploring the strategies of war legitimization in media discourse, and in particular, videogames. It explores the discursive structures of war videogames produced by the Western media. The data under examination is the verbal and the visual content of five games taken from the famous war videogames series Call of Duty. The study examines how the verbal and the visual content of those games play a significant role in rendering war an inevitable justified act in other words, how they attempt to legitimize wars. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) theories and approaches form the theoretical background of the analysis of the verbal and the visual features identified in the given sample. Drawing on van Leeuwen's (2007) and Reyes' (2011) accounts of the strategies of legitimization in discourse, the current study identifies five key legitimization strategies that underlie the content of the videogames at hand. In the analysis, the study first identifies the legitimization strategies then highlights their verbal and/or visual representation and finally offers an in depth interpretation of the implications of those representations and how they work together in a way that leaves the game player with a profound belief that war is a desirable act that would certainly yield virtuous results. The study concludes that media discourse has become the most influential type of discourse in terms of its impact on people all over the world. The study also shows that although videogames fall under the genre of entertainment media discourse however, it is loaded with ideological and political content that serves certain agendas and tends to shape its users' perception of crucial social practices such as war. Keywords: Legitimization, War, Media Discourse, Videogames, Call of Duty, Critical Discourse Analysis, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, Strategies of Legitimization, Verbal and Visual content. . List of Tables Table 3.1 The Forms of Authorization and their possible linguistic realizations 65 Table 3.2 The forms of Moral Evaluation 67 Table 3.3 Reyes' (2011) Strategies of Legitimization in Political Discourse 70 Table 3.4 Suggested Model of Analysis 72 List of Abbreviations DA: Discourse Analysis CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis MCDA: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis MW: Modern Warfare