

## **Critical Discourse Analysis Perspective: Power Dominance in the Discourse of the *Privacy Policy of Domino's Pizza Website***

Aisha Rehman\*

### **Abstract**

This study explores how power through discourse is constructed in the online privacy policy of Domino's through Critical Discourse Analysis by applying Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model which influences customers. The study examines the linguistic, interpretative, and socio-cultural practices that shape the power dynamics in a discourse. The study's findings show that linguistic techniques such as alliteration, negative construction, conditional clauses, imperative sentences, adverbs, legal jargon, and modal verbs limit the user's agency, convinces the users' views and relationship with the company and gives benefit to it. It is recommended that the company make a user-friendly privacy policy to build a trusting relationship with the customers. Moreover, the study suggests that in the digital age, customers should be cautious and read the guidelines carefully while providing their personal information on the websites.

**Keywords:** Privacy Policy, Domino's Pizza, Critical Discourse Analysis, Fairclough 3D Model, Power Dominance

### **Introduction**

In 1960, Domino's started its journey and became one of the leading pizza-making companies, delivering high-quality ingredients worldwide. It has franchises in more than 60 countries, significantly impacting the food delivery industry.

Domino 2007 launched its online ordering service in 2007 and in 2008 launched the Pizza Builder and Domino's Tracker tools so that customers can order Pizzas from their screens (About Dominios| Pizza History| Dominios Pakistan, n.d). International marketing involves a network of companies that sell their goods and services to meet global needs. Domino's Pizza, a famous company. Domino's Pizza has successfully increased its global market share by understanding and adapting to various countries' cultural and customer demands. It shows that a well-planned market strategy enables a company to expand its business globally (Anwar1 & Ruma, 2022)

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\*Lecturer Rehman College of Nursing Peshawar  
Email: [aishafrehman06@gmail.com](mailto:aishafrehman06@gmail.com)

A study by Bhattacharya, Sharma, and Gupta (2023) indicates that purchasers were worried about the sensitive information they shared during online purchases due to hacking-related concerns.

With the advancement of technology, privacy has become a concern on a global level because people can access personal information online, which can be used for unauthorized purposes and harm a person or a company. In 2021, it was reported that around \$6 trillion in the global economy was damaged due to the infringement of personal data protection. To this end, websites have created privacy policies.

The privacy policy intends to help users understand that the website's data collection is complex. Businesses frequently fail to act according to personal data protection laws due to legal standards or by ignoring the policies. (Chatsuwan, Phromma, Surasvadi, & Thajchayapong, 2023). In addition, a study conducted by (Brumen, Zajc & Bonsnjak 2023) focuses on the issue that the users might be sharing their data with the mobile app developers and the platform as the "free" business model is shared among the mobile apps and the major platforms. This research aimed to analyze permission requests by mobile apps for data and investigate the difference between permissions on privacy policies and those displayed on app stores. Six hundred thirty-six mobile apps from different categories were collected for personal data from the privacy policies, and permissions were obtained from the platform stores. The result showed that free apps collected more data than paid ones. In addition, there was a difference between the permissions listed in the privacy policies and the Google Play and Apple app store websites. Privacy policies revealed more permission requirements than the app stores. It is suggested that the transparency between privacy policies and permission displayed on the app stores should align.

Ironclad app website (What Is a Privacy Policy? Everything You Need to Know, n.d.): A privacy policy, sometimes called a privacy statement or a privacy notice, is a legal document that explains how a website or a mobile app collects information about users to secure both the users and the company.

Privacy policies are often complex and challenging for users to understand because they provide information on how their data will be accessed and processed. For that, they use complex Language. The Language used in privacy policies, with its complex and legalistic terminology, can be seen as a tool of power, obscuring the true nature of the relationship between the user and the organization (Shvartzshnaider, Apthorpe, Feamster, & Nissenbaum, 2019).

Discourse Analyzer (2024) says that power is operated through language and social interaction because it is persuasive and dynamic and

it shapes how individuals and groups perceive and understand the perspective of the world.

The present study investigates the power dominance in the discourse of the privacy policy of Dominos website. It explores how linguistic choices influence the user's perceptions and understanding while purchasing the food online. The aim of conducting this study was explore Domino's online privacy policy shapes customers perception and understanding through its power dominated discourse.

### **Research Methodology**

The current study is qualitative research because it is descriptive and objective. According to Bhandari (2020), qualitative research collects and analyzes non-numerical data to understand beliefs, opinions, and experiences. In addition, it generates new ideas for future research. It uses different methods, such as content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, and ground theory. In the current study, the researcher used Discourse Analysis (DA), particularly Critical Discourse Analysis (Luo, n.d.).

#### *Discourse Analysis*

(Alek, 2023) Discourse Analysis is a fundamental methodology in qualitative research that elaborates on the relationship between language and society's complex and powerful dynamics. Discourse Analysis aims to discover the deeper meaning of Language, whether spoken or written, making it a more robust method of uncovering the links between Language and society's social, cultural, and power structures.

#### *Critical Discourse Analysis*

A study by Karimi and Niazi (2023) shows that critical discourse analysis is one of the new methods in discourse analysis and linguistic studies. It examines linguistic data, ideological processes, and situational, social, and intertextuality contexts that affect discourse formation. Similarly, another study conducted by Nguyen (2024) presents CDA as a varied nature for analyzing language, power and society where discourse plays a vital role.

#### *Sources of Data*

According to the presentation given by (Ajayi, 2017) that primary data is data that the researcher has acquired for the first time to solve a problem provided in the data. The researcher will use Domino's online privacy policy as a primary source of information for this study. This privacy policy may be obtained by visiting the website Domino's - The Pizza Experts (dominos.com.pk)

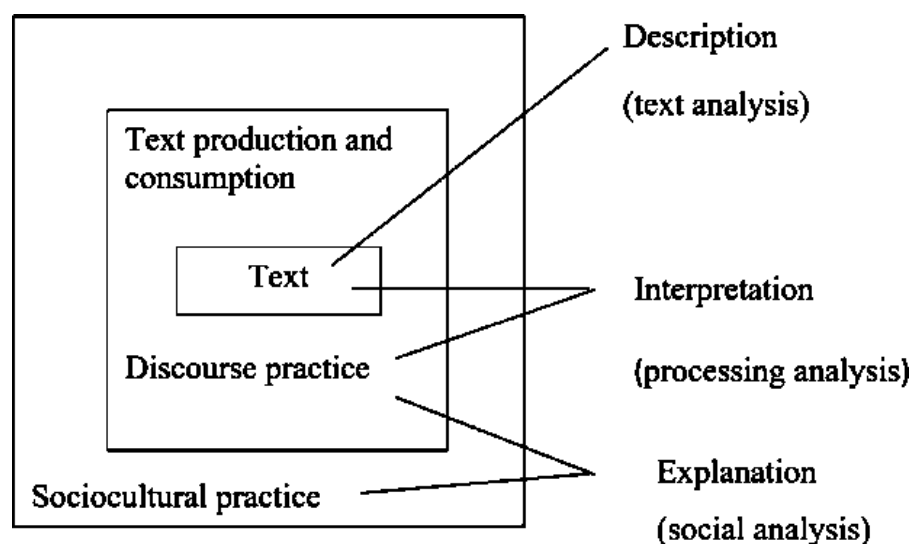
To analyze the data, the researcher uses the material readily available on the Internet in papers, scholarly journals, and books connected to the issue. Ajayi (2017) explains that secondary data is the interpretation and analysis of primary data.

### Theoretical Framework

Vinz & George (2022) their study presents that the theoretical framework supports research by providing a ground for established ideas. Sinclair (2007) and Fulton and Krainovich-Miller (2010) compare the theoretical framework to the navigator or the travel plan, which helps the researcher focus on the correct theories to fill the gap in the study. (Adom, Hussein, & Agyem, 2018) their research focuses on Domino's privacy policy as a primary source and the researcher used Fairclough's three-dimensional model to analyze Domino's website's privacy policy.

#### *Fairclough Three-Dimensional Model*

A study by (Nisar, Aqeel, & Hussain, 2024) shows Fairclough's Model in Critical Discourse Analysis, has been an integral part of the research for many years. Fairclough introduced many theories and approaches towards it. He introduced his work on discourse and Language as the "Critical Study of language" to bring attention to social connections and relationships through Language (Fairclough, 1989, p.5). Fairclough identified three critical aspects for critically analyzing any text:



*Figure 1 Fairclough's three-dimensional model*

1. Text analysis (description) focuses on examining the linguistic and symbolic features of the text.
2. Processing analysis (interpretation) examines how discourse creates and understands meaning.
3. Social analysis (explanation) investigates the social, cultural, and historical context in which the discourse occurs.

In 2015, Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis emphasized investigating how social power, dominance, and inequality are practiced and resisted in the social and political context. In addition, CDA is a critical attitude to maintain the status quo in power relations (Mayor & Bietti, 2017)

### **Data Analysis**

#### *Textual Analysis*

In the privacy policy, various linguistic techniques are utilized to effectively present power and dominance and establish the authority of the entity behind the policy.

#### *Alliteration*

Power dominance in the discourse is prevalent with alliteration: "The privacy policy discloses the privacy practice for [www.domino's.com.pk](http://www.domino's.com.pk)." The repetition of the consonant "p" creates a rhythmic and forceful pattern that makes the discourse persuasive that the privacy policy of the website Domino's is used to practice the website's privacy for Pakistani users. The alliteration technique reinforces the dominance of the message being communicated.

#### *Negative Construction*

The privacy policy of Domino's highlights power dominance through its discourse by using negative construction. For instance, "We do not establish or maintain registrations for any child whom we know to be under the age of 13." The negative construction in the sentence "do not" creates power and authority by rejecting children's registration who are under 13. It shows the company's dominance by positioning its perspective as the only viable option and limiting the scope of acceptable ideas.

Similarly, the other sentence, "We do not solicit or knowingly collect personally identifiable information from children under the age of 13." presents the negative construction by the use of "do not" and showcases that the privacy policy will never approach or request children under 13 to provide identifiable information. With the negative construction, the

policy discourse maintains dominance by narrowing the viewpoint for website users to take action.

#### *Conditional Clauses*

Conditional Clauses in the privacy policy of Domino's website play a significant role by imposing power dominance and expressing conditions in the discourse that convince the users, for example, "If you contact us by letter, phone, or email through the contact information on the feedback page, we will collect your sender information and may collect the other information you voluntarily disclose to us." In this sentence, the use of "If" frames the hypothetical scenario that if the users are going to contact the company via letter, phone, or email on the contact given on the feedback page, the result would be that they will collect all the details which the users have provided to them while contacting them. In addition, the conditional clauses in the discourse take control over the outcomes of the actions taken by the users, which makes the discourse dominant.

Parallelly, in another example, "If you are just browsing our website, a cookie identifies your browser and user ID (and not your identity)." Using "If" at the beginning of the sentence creates a possible scenario: if the users browse the website, the cookie will identify the users' identification and the browser from which they search it. The discourse establishes a cause-and-effect relationship through conditional clauses between the discourse of the website privacy policy and the users. It imposes limitations on the users, which makes the discourse persuasive to influence the users.

#### *Imperative Sentence*

Imperative sentences in the privacy policies make a direct command or instruct the users. In contrast, the privacy policy of Domino's is softened, for instance, "Please let us know." in this sentence, the use of the "Please" word makes it ease but still exerts power and control in the discourse that the users should let them know if they are finding any difficulty so the company will navigate them. Imperative sentences in the privacy policy create power dominance by taking the matter into their own hands and limiting the role of the users.

#### *Declarative Sentence*

Declarative sentences in the discourse of Domino's privacy policy straightforwardly make statements establishing and maintaining power dominance within the discourse. For example, in "We take precautions to protect your information," in this sentence the discourse asserts fact and decision that the company's website is going to protect the information they have collected from the users, which gives the authority to the privacy

policy's discourse and influences the users to perceive the dominance of the company.

#### *Adverb*

Adverbs play a crucial role in establishing power dynamics within the discourse. In the sentence "This privacy policy applies only to information collected by this website," the word "only" asserts that the company is the sole entity controlling the scope of the privacy policy and its practices. It limits the user's interference, which influences their perception and understanding of their relationship with the website.

#### *Legal Jargon*

Legal jargon such as "Privacy policy," "legal name," "precautions," "sensitive information," "encryption," "verify," and "consent" in Domino's privacy policy builds power dynamics that the company has the authority and control over the users. This complex legal jargon is complicated for laypeople to comprehend, and they may feel compelled and non-negotiable with the policy and accept the conditions.

#### *Modal Verbs*

Domino's privacy policy shows power and control over the user's data with modal verbs like "May," "Will" and "Can". For example, "May" points to the things that the company might do by being flexible without making explicit promises, whereas "Will" indicates the surety and definite actions of the company by showing its authority. In addition, "Can" shows the company's ability to take control of specific actions. Overall, the modal verbs showcase power dominance in Domino's privacy policy to influence users.

#### *Discourse Practice*

Domino's website has created a privacy policy for users, using linguistic techniques to influence them and exert power over them. The privacy policy is distributed on the website for internet users. Users of Domino's website might interpret the policy slightly differently based on their socioeconomic status.

#### *Social Practice*

The privacy policy may reinforce power relations by suggesting that website users will be secure if they follow their policy. The policy influences the users by making the discourse powerful and controlling by limiting the scope of the users. The privacy policy of Domino's targets website users who order pizzas online by using persuasive language to

influence its users to believe that they are the controllers of their data, thereby maintaining authority.

### Discussion

The current study explored the linguistic features in the Domino's Privacy Policy through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis by employing Fairclough's three-dimensional model. The analysis shows that the language used in the Privacy Policy presents a power dynamic which shapes the customer's perception and asserts authority. To establish dominance and maintain control over the customers, linguistic devices like alliteration, conditional clauses, imperative, declarative and modal verbs are strategically used in the privacy policy.

The use of negative construction and legal jargons are used to protect the company legally but it also limits the customers understanding of the content. In addition, the inclusion of adverbs and modal verbs displays the companies' intentions for unidirectional flow of power and authority which also minimizes the scope of negotiations for the users.

By manipulating the language, the discourse shows the societal practices which highlights the power and control over the online customers. The findings of the current study support the arguments with reference to the scholars Shvartzshnaider et al (2019) and Discourse Analyzer (2024) who claim that language is the tool to exercise power and authority.

Furthermore, the study highlights that privacy policy is meant to be clear and transparent but it functions as a power and benefits the companies instead of the users. The present study contributes to the field of critical digital discourse studies by emphasizing that legal texts like privacy policy creates social hierarchies and inequalities.

Future studies could extend this research by carrying out comparative analysis of the privacy policies of the different companies across the different regions. For data analysis, mixed-methods approaches, and interviews can be utilized. Moreover, legal scholars, linguists and cybersecurity experts could contribute in understanding the intersection between language, law and cyber ethics.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this study represents that Domino's privacy policy uses linguistic tools to exhibit power, control and authority over its users. Through critical discourse analysis and applying Fairclough three-dimensional model it shows that the policy is not only a document but a discursive tool of power relationship.

Language is not neutral but it plays a significant role in creating perception of autonomy and rights and responsibilities of the users. In



addition, the use of complex grammar and legal language creates a powerful relationship between the company and the online customers.

This research highlights the need for more transparent and user-friendly privacy policies and understanding of how digital communication structures the societal norms and power relations.

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