The Ideology of Falun Gong:
A Critical Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The present study was influenced by Heather's (2000) study of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and three key concepts in religious discourse: intertextuality, consumerism and psychology of language (identity and commitment). The study focuses on how modern Falun Gong religious text is constructed and how ideology arises in the text. Corpus analysis and interviews were also used as complementary methodologies, based on the Falun Gong key text 'Zhuan Falun'. Interviews were additionally conducted with 10 participants form Taiwan (via local telephone-interviews) and 10 participants from China who reside in New Zealand permanently. Despite participants' differences in nationality, generally, the results from CDA, corpus analysis and interviews showed its promotional nature, its persuasive style with a consumerist-orientation, and its appeal to members as an 'elite', as opposed to 'ordinary people'. It is hoped that this study may improve our understanding of how new sects' religious discourse works in the 21st century. Furthermore, the study hopes to provide impetus for further studies of CDA and religious language, generally.

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GLOSSARY OF CHINESE TERMS USED

Dafa – Great law ('da' means big or great in Chinese).

De – moral character.

Dharma-ending period – According to Buddha Sakyamuni, Dharma ending period

      beings five hundred years after he passed away, and his Dharma could no

      longer save people.

Fa – 'The law'. Law and principle in Buddha school .

Gong – Cultivation energy. A practice that cultivates such energy.

Qi – Vital energy.

Qigong – A form of traditional Chinese exercise which cultivates 'qi' or energy.

Tao – 1. Known as "Dao", a Taoist term for the "way of nature and the universe", 2.

      enlightened being who has achieved this Tao.

Wu – Enlightenment

Xingxing – mind or heart nature; moral characters.

Zhen-shan-ren – 'Truthfulness -benevolence-forbearance', which are the principles of

      Falun Gong.

Zhuan Falun – 'Zhuan' means 'turning' and 'Falun' is the symbol of Falun Dafa.

      Therefore Zhuan Falun means 'the turning wheel/symbol'.

1   Introduction

1.1 Background information

1.1.1 Falun Gong background

The controversial background of Falun Gong is interesting to many scholars. Within the last ten years, Falun Gong or Falun Dafa has developed explosively in Mainland China and in other countries. The Chinese government has denounced this newly developed 'religion' in various ways; the growth of Falun Gong has been rapid. The founder of Falun Gong, Li Hongzhi (Master Li), stated that to avoid being categorized as a 'religion' Falun Gong practitioners do not practise religious forms. Does that make Falun Gong separate from religion? Religion is defined as a "belief in and reverence for a supernatural power accepted as the creator and governor of the universe" or "the spiritual or emotional attitude of one who recognizes the existence of superhuman power or powers" (Soukhanov & Ellis, 1984). From this perspective, Falun Gong is, by definition a religion. Edward Irons (2003, p245) states that there should not be a problem when using the term 'religion' to refer to Falun Gong since "it meets the essential traits of a religious group: an organised social group adhering to common teaching and, often, leadership, with shared ritual, ideology, myth, and an orientation towards an ultimate reality beyond the everyday".

Followers of this qigong-based new religious group are claimed to number 70 to 100 million practitioners world-wide (Lowe, 2003). Though the reporters in China think that 20 million is the probable number, Falun Gong has developed extraordinarily since it was first founded in 1992. Having started ten years ago the international dissemination of Falun Gong has occurred primarily since 1999, after protests in July of that year in China (Irons, 2003; Lowe, 2003). Irons (2003) declares that most of the

practitioners are elderly people in China, but there are many well-educated overseas Chinese in U.S.A., Canada and Europe who are truthfully Falun gong practitioners(Lowe, 2003).

The expansion of Falun Gong is closely related to its discourse (text) since there is no hierarchical system in this group (such as, churches, bishops, priests, etc) which passes down the information of the Master's teaching. It appears that all the dissemination of the 'fa' and information about Falun Gong are delivered in the form of either verbal data or visual data; in traditional ways (books and prints), or more modern technology (electric data, e.g. CD, VCD, DVD, internet), mostly, through friends and family. Due to the nature of the spread of Falun Gong, Zhuan Falun, the principal Falun Gong text is thus important material for this study, in which the ideologies of Falun Gong are to be revealed. Zhuan Falun focuses on the enumerating of the 'Dafa' (great law). The great law is based on 'Buddha law'. This is to say that the great law is a creative idea borrowed from another traditional Chinese religion. The 'Dafa' can repress evil and harmonise all things. In Zhuan Falun, it is said that the great law is Li Hongzhi's law, the Master's law. It is to say that Li Hongzhi equals the 'Dafa'.

1.1.2 Text analysis

Most religious groups have *'texts'* to document the doctrines. Falun Gong Master Li Hongzhi's talk has been transcribed into not only books but electronic data as well and has been translated into many languages. The terminologies inscribed in those texts are the keys to the ideologies Falun Gong conveys. Irons (2003, p256) said "technical terms and frequently used expressions are enticing clues to ideology and historical descent in newly formed religious groups". Falun Gong has many defined

terms used frequently in the book <u>Zhuan Falun</u>. Many of the words are commonplace in the traditional Chinese religion Buddhism, such as fa, de, karma, and so on. Irons (2003, p256) pointed out that Falun Gong terminology does show that a "specialised set of terms is necessary to impart the teachings; the language is the vehicle for the ideology". <u>Zhuan Falun</u> is not the only text that the Falun Gong group has; there are texts of Falun Gong in different forms spread worldwide. These texts seem to have compelling power to their followers. It was urged by participants to read and re-read this book. "The more you read the more 'fa' you get", one participant disclosed. It is obvious that the inner solidarity of Falun Gong is well established by its text production.

1.2 Literature review

One has to bear in mind that language is married to religion; every 'higher' level of spirituality needs a sub-vocal to propagate doctrines. "Every higher form of thought requires some verbalization"(Crystal, 1965, p149). It is clear that the linguistic values of language used in religious activities are documented.

The interest of this thesis is to explore the language utilised in religious context. The broader definition of discourse is the sum of any human text production. Discourse is also the different use of language in different social situations, for example, in classrooms, in offices, or in this particular context **'**religious discourse'. Religious activities have intimate relationships with 'text'**,** which is a discourse action. From the Falun Gong example, text plays an important role in the dissemination of religious discourse.

In the following literature review, the concepts of discourse, text and critical discourse analysis (CDA) are discussed as fundamental for this study. Ideology and its

implications for identity, discursive and social practice are likewise included. The discussion of the relationship between religious discourse and CDA approach as formulated by Heather (2000) is also added as a guide to this study.

1.2.1 The study of discourse

Generally speaking, discourse is any everyday spoken or written language. However, some scholars separate discourse from written language, recognising discourse as spoken language or 'talk' and written language as 'text'. These two formations of 'interaction' are equally important and useful in the concept of discourse. The linguistic term for 'discourse' is sometimes recognised as a 'form of language used in different social context/situations' (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Philip & Jorgensen, 2002; van Dijk, 1997; Wodak, 1996).

Van Dijk (1997, p2) articulated "three main dimensions in discourse: a) language uses, b) the communication of beliefs (cognition) and, c) interaction in social situation". Although, many analysts pay particular attention to spoken language or 'talk', in terms of language use, of course all language use cannot be limited to 'spoken' only. All forms of communication and interaction should be included, written as well as spoken, even nonverbal communication, which makes up the study of *social semiosis* generally. Fairclough uses the term 'text' to mean written text and transcripts of spoken interaction. Fairclough's (1992, p3)definition of text is that " text is regarded here as one dimension of discourse: the written or spoken 'product' of the process of text production". Van Dijk (1996; 1997) considers that despite the difference between these two modes, there are great similarities between them, and they achieve the same goals and have similar functions. The concept of discourse, in a broader sense, includes situation language (e.g. the classroom situation, clinical

interactions, and so on), styles of writing / genre (newspaper, novels, academic report), the interaction amongst embedding of the discursive practice in social events.

One major differentiation between 'text' and 'talk' is that text can be saved and re-examined later, therefore losing its spontaneity. The detaching of text from the current speech event, however, may be advantageous. The nature of mass reproduction of text and its dissemination is significant in manufacturing power. Disregarding time and space limitation, the consumption of text and the production of text does not co-exist in the same time-line. Therefore, information can be manipulated and a false reality is easily reconstructed or re-contextualized. Nonetheless, spoken as well as written language creates ideology.

In a particular communicative event, discourse has its functional aspect, or *genre*. Since discourse is recognised as different use of language in different social contexts, genre is a style of language. There are obvious but important differences between different types of discourse. One can say that genre is a 'socio-cultural' understanding of a certain speech event in which certain language styles are conventionalised to facilitate a particular social hierarchical structure of the language use.

1.2.2 CDA

Methodologies that can apply to linguistic studies are numerous, but to investigate the representational interpretation of meaning and ideology, in which power relation and social identities are manifested, 'Critical Discourse Analysis' (CDA) is the most specialized. Many recent analysts have emphasized the importance of moving from Discourse Analysis (DA) to CDA. CDA does not only examine the purely linguistic value of language, but includes and addressees issues such as genre, cohesion, language structures and interrelations between texts, including the field of language

studies within social semiotics. Thus, Heather articulates "DA cannot ethically be carried out without moving onto CDA" (Heather, 2000, p18).

A CDA framework is most suitable for this research since the subject is studied non-quantitatively, since the focus is on a way of life. CDA is a philosophical approach to discourse analysis. To many people, 'philosophy' is supposed to be profound and incomprehensible because it presumably stands for something 'abstract'. In fact, philosophy has traditionally been understood more as a way of living, a means of thinking, a belief, an approach to probe 'meanings'; it is different from the 'scientific' exploring of truth as fact (Wilson, 1968). Philosophy deals with aspects that are essential to our daily life, and religion is the philosophical affair that everybody knows something about and is more or less familiar with as a human belief system. Our belief systems, however, constitute ideologies, which in turn often involve unequal power relations.

1.2.3 Ideology

In terms of *power relations,* a crucial concept for CDA is *ideology*, conceived of as a cognitive system (van Dijk, 1998). Van Dijk (1998, p8) defined ideology as "the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group". Ideology may influence what is understood and accepted as true or false. It is the output of our logic system, and the framework of a person's 'world view'. It helps people to behave in a certain way according to the situation they adapted to and perceived as 'right' or 'common'. What is involved in ideological practice? Van Dijk (1998) pointed out that social interpretation and the practice of power in relation to other groups are something that most scholars would agree with. Ideology includes a person's beliefs, disposition, expression of feelings (non-verbal), and so on. No doubt ideology helps stabilise the

status quo of organizations due to its regulatory property. It 'programs' us with 'rules' that are 'orthodox'. It is not difficult to claim that ideology is ubiquitous since ideology is an idealisation of the world and we are 'hardwired' by ideologies.

Sometimes people are unaware that they interpret things in a sense of what they think they know and understand, thus there is always a tension between ideology and rationality. Ideology is built up with social and cultural understanding. Religion is more a cultural, moral understanding than a pure linguistic area. "Ideology conceived in doctrinal terms may be intricately bound up with ideology existing in the social dimension" (Heather, 2000, p35). Without the concordance of such understanding one could not justify the perceived ideology as 'logic' or 'common sense'. Using CDA to inspect discourse studies in a religious context is mostly appropriate because every religious group has its unique technique of spreading its ideology.

1.2.4 Drawing on Noel Heather – Religious Language and CDA

Noel Heather's study (2000): *'Religious Language and Critical Discourse Analysis: Ideology and Identity in Christian Discourse Today'* is noteworthy as the first CDA investigation of language in a religious context (namely, contemporary Christian fundamentalist group in the U.K.). The main focus of this book is very relevant to the power-focused concerns of CDA and it is useful to employ the focus of this book as a guideline for the present study.

Three concerns of CDA mentioned in this book are the central concerns of this research:

- Intertextuality and hybridity of religious discourse.

- Power relations and consumerism within religious discourse.

- Psychology of language: Identity and social-cognition of religious context.

These issues link together intriguingly. The description of the three issues is vaguely divisible. The power relations condition the individuals' cognitive processes and situate and determine the individuals' identity. The power of the religious text is enumerated through text consumption. One CDA feature of Heather's study of religious language is that of 'intertextuality' and its dialogical nature. Churches offer routinely quoted texts to provide spiritual or emotional support to worshippers. Texts to texts and readers to texts are intriguingly interactive through the innate play of 'presupposition'. Without probing the 'truth' value of certain statements churches make, believers will 'assume' the statements true according to the presupposed opinion. By consuming text and the intertextual chain, readers position themselves to correspond with the text (this is how texts construct readers). In CDA terms, the reader's inner coherence during consumption (and re-construction)' of text strongly supports their beliefs. The interrelated texts are keys to the cognitive states the writer intends to show in the text. The mixed genre and texts lead to the hybridity of text production, which is to the reader's preference (Fairclough, 1992). Textual hybridity is a distinct property of religious text, which relates closely to the consumption of text and believer's cognition of their beliefs (Heather, 2000; Fairclough, 1992).

Power cannot be discussed separately from ideology so that the principle of CDA most relevant to this study is the investigation of the power relations. In religious discourse, power is generated in many ways. Heather (2000) proposed that language can be manipulative, thus "forcing individuals into adopting roles which serve power-driven goals" (Heather, 2000, p15), thereby "situating participants according to the roles determined by relation of power" (Heather, 2000, p33). The corollary of this

viewpoint in the discussion of religious discourse is the relation between 'hegemony' and 'elite group'. Hegemony in the religious context involves persuading people to join and accept a certain ideology as 'natural' and 'justifiably dominant within social cognition' (Heather, 2000). Another very important idea of CDA is to investigate the 'discursive practice', which is the consequence of the exertion of power and the outcome of the social cognition. The study of discourse practice thus talks in terms of its production, distribution and consumption (Heather, (2000).

CDA also focuses on socio-cognitive processes in the religious context, which looks at how the cognitive process conditions an individual's identity and group identities. The consumption of text is thus the consumption of ideology. By consuming, readers find their identities constructed in the text. One of the central concepts of Heather's work is consumerism and social-cognition (identity). The dominant power creates the text, and the readers – the less powerful who gain power by consuming are positioned by it. Readers also discover the representation of the author by adopting the constructions made in the text. To consume texts, readers also consume and 'digest' power exerted by the 'meaning maker'. Then, readers are forced to adopt certain roles that the language in the text compels.

1.3 Research methodology

This research looks closely at Falun Gong's fundamental text 'Zhuan Falun' and examines the ideology the book conveys. Also, by using computer-assisted corpus analysis this study is able to detect the 'frequent and salient' terms, which reveals important aspects and characteristics of the text. Moreover, the collocation and concordance that can be observed in relation to these common terms is also

investigated. Such an approach reinforces the linguistic insights of the correlation of words and their implication.

The research also includes a simple interview technique with participants who are Falun Gong members, by asking twenty participants: 'how do you feel after studying Zhuan Falun and practising Falun Gong?'. To gain the perspective of the in-group perception of this particular 'religion', interviews provided information about 'real people's feelings' toward their belief and how they justify and practise their beliefs by their language usage and social practice.

The study also seeks broadly to understand why and how Falun Gong has grown so quickly and why it appeals.

1.4 Description of the study

The following chapter (chapter2) aims to illustrate what CDA is and the important components of CDA. The focus of this chapter is on how CDA views text and ideology. In chapter 3, the study explains the role of religion in society as a background of this study; also the study discusses the relationship between language, religion and society from a sociological and applied linguistic point of view. Critical discourse analysis is a philosophical way of looking at language in society, therefore, religious language is viewed as having meta-physical implications for our life rather than probing the 'true or false'.

In chapter 4, Noel Heather (2000) provides a clear guide on investigating this particular topic through discussions of *intertextuality, power, consumption of text and identity*. The study also inspects Fairclough's relevant views and social cognitive processes through text consumption from the angle of the socio-psychology of

language. The application of ideology is further discussed since it is a foundational concept of this study.

Chapter 5 describes the qualitative and quantitative methodologies used in this study. The nature of both methodologies is complementary. The quantitative corpus analysis complements the qualitative CDA approach usefully by providing the 'wordlist' and 'concordance' data.

Chapter 6 and chapter 7 are the final report on the findings and analysis. The analysis is based on the qualitative and quantitative data gathered and it probes how language is used in this modern religious context. Findings show the text <u>Zhuan Falun</u> is basically promotional material of Master Li, the language style used in the text having a commercial orientation. People who practise Falun Gong are referred to as 'practitioners', who are implied to be 'better people' compared with 'ordinary people'. Thus, Falun Gong followers are constructed as an 'elite' and Master Li is 'the Master' of all.

2   The CDA approach

2.1 Critical theory

'Critical' implies showing connections and causes that are hidden; it also implies 'intervention' (Fairclough, 1992, p9). *'Critical study'* means taking social inequality and social transformation as central to one's work (Dandaneau, 2001; Pennycock, 2001). In talking about critical theory one must mention the 'Frankfurt school' and famous, associated critical theorists and sociologists, such as Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas, Marcuse. The Frankfurt School was both an institution and a mode of thought. The Institute continued its work in exile in the United States following Hitler's rise to power and did not return to Germany until the late 40's. During this time, the Institute's members developed a unique and powerful critique of modern life. This critique served as a basis for much of the radical student movement of the 1960's (Fuhrman, 11/1/1995).

Critical theories seek insights into the relation behind social convention and power and investigate the concept of 'ideology', which helps psychoanalysts understand the connection between the subconsciousness and power control. Unlike scientific theories, which focus on external forces and the physical world, critical theories aim at internal 'emancipation' and 'enlightenment' (Geuss, 1981, p55). Their main focus is to create awareness in the 'human agent' about 'hidden coercion' ; that is, consciousness of the subjectivities that are imposed on every individual by the dominant powers, which affects the individual's determination of his/her own identities in relation to society and other human agents, thereby, emancipating them from coercion and imposition and relating them to their own interests (Geuss, 1981).

Scientific theory separates the subject from the objectivities. On the contrary, critical theory is itself a part of the domain it portrays. A science theory is not the phenomenon itself whereas critical theory is always itself part of the ensembles it studies (theory and phenomenon). Therefore, when using critical theories, it is important that one is aware of the reflexivity of one's own critique. Critical theories believe that knowledge is subjective. Every individual piece of research is biased by its own interest; critical theory is a reflection on the study it supports.

When critical theory is applied to linguistic studies, it first illustrates how any linguistic research being undertaking has to take society into consideration. It is unnecessary to embed the term 'sociolinguistic' into such studies because all language is social; all languages have social use and are socially instrumental. Second, the researcher has to be aware of his/her own bias towards the research being undertaken. Critical theory considers that all social theories are a set of beliefs, so researchers have to understand that their own theories are one of such beliefs.

2.2 What is CDA ?

What is 'critical discourse analysis' (CDA)? The answer is utterly simple in its linguistic aspect: it is "a way of viewing language use as part of a critical analysis of social context" (Pennycook, 2001, p78). If one intends to probe the relation between ideology and power, truth and power, dominant and dominated, critical discourse analysis is the method that observes the whole discursive event as a complete entity from the synchronic and historical point of view. With this principle in mind, the central concern of CDA is not the power that discourse imposes on individuals but the innate effectiveness that discourses bear. The constitution that one is looking at is not any externally re-organised transformation but discourse itself.

'Discourse analysis' first refers to the analysis beyond the limits of a single sentence at a time, and for correlating culture and language. At this stage language is viewed as a passive entity. It is what Brown and Yule (1983) called 'pervasive illusion': only understanding that the meanings of language rely solely on the linguistic features, such as syntax, grammar and lexical items'. That is to say that socio-cultural intervention was not considered most important. Nevertheless, referring to CDA, the process of analysing language altered. CDA inspects the unbalanced power relations in this world through reconsideration and examination of language description as 'social action'.

Fowler (Widdowson, 1998, p137) suggests that CDA is an exercise in "instrumental linguistics"; the term comes from Halliday's functional linguistics (Widdowson, 1998, p137) which considers language as 'doing' or 'action'. The focus of CDA is on the 'discursive practices' in society and the power struggle between the dominant and the dominated, which, in other words, is the 'ideological practice' or how people use language to do things, to achieve their goals, values or definitions of reality. Wodak (1996, p17) defined CDA as "the analysis of linguistic and semiotic aspects of social processes and problems. The focus is not on language or the use of language in and of itself, but upon the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures", so that CDA is by nature interdisciplinary.

Fairclough (1995, p132) clearly pointed out that CDA focuses on investigating the 'causality' and determination between: "a) discursive practice, events and texts, and b)wider social and cultural structures , relations and processes", its aim was to "investigate how such practices , events and text arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing

power and hegemony". A CDA framework is thus characterised by the fundamental aim of exploring the relation between the three elements of: text, discursive practice and social practice (Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 1996, 2003).

Although there is some variation in the understanding of the term 'discourse' (some people recognise discourse only as speech or 'talk'), the most common sense of discourse is much broader, in terms of language usage and discursive practice and social semiotics. In this sense, text does not only refer to the written language, the written form of language, rather, it is viewed as a totality of spoken and written language 'product'. This is the sense in which 'discourse' is understood in the present study.

2.3 The components of CDA

The CDA approach used in this linguistic research involves the following key features. These features cannot be viewed separately and cannot be isolated when discussing the concepts of CDA.

2.3.1 *Social semiotics* and *discourse*

Semiotics has been defined as 'the science of the life of signs in society' (Hodge & Kress, 1988). In this sense, all forms of communication are a process of semiosis. Hodge and Kress proposed that "every system of signs is the product of processes of semiosis, and documents the history of its own constitution"(1988, p6).   Language is defined as a sign system for making meanings and it is socially constitutive; this system performs in specific social semiotic acts – discourse. In this sign system, 'text' is understood as the vehicle of communication and does not exist by itself as part of the reality; it corresponds with ideology, and it reflects another reality.

Analysing text is thus analysing a form of discourse, a 'mediated interaction' (Fairclough, 1999). If one is analysing a transcript of a TV show, the transcript is a transformation of the show on TV into a written form. This kind of text is viewed as 'TV discourse'. "Thus discourse in this sense is where a social form of organization engages with systems of signs in the products of text, thereby reproducing or changing the sets of meanings and values which makes up a culture"(Hodge & Kress, 1988, p6).

Social semiotics lays its emphasis on society and meaning; it stresses the interaction between the 'participants' or 'agents' and the society, rather than only the structure and codes in the semiotic system (Hodge & Kress, 1988). Thus, conceptually, the theory of social semiotics includes the theory of CDA due to the fact that critical linguistic studies are the study of the representation and the transformation of the use of a particular sign system – language. This not only focuses on how power influences meanings, but also on how meaning contributes to power, since meaning is not intrinsically encoded; it is not intact or distinct. Both theories or 'schools' also stress that meaning or representation in text is not only written but also visual. This multi-modal approach recognises all "representational modes which are in play in the text, in the same degree of detail with the same methodological precision as discourse analysis is able to do with linguistic text"(Kress, 1997, p258). Thus, the relation between social semiotics, discourse analysis and CDA is firmly interdependent, as shown below in Figure 2.1.

Social semiotics ↔ Discourse analysis ↔ CDA
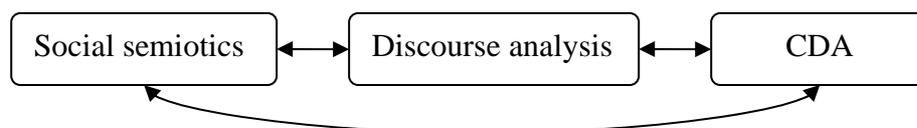
Figure 2.1 The relation between social semiotics, discourse analysis and CDA

2.3.2 Context and CDA

CDA focuses on the function of language in social use; this relationship between the users and the situation is generally referred to as the *context*, and concerns the background knowledge of situations in which text is either produced or encountered. It is easy to view text merely in isolation as the product of writing, and 'talk' is often studied as the product of speaking. By so doing, researchers may overlook the relation between the language users or 'meaning makers', and the whole situation in which the particular interactive formation of meaning occurs.

The concept of context also helps to clarify presupposition in meaning making. Phillips and Jorgensen (2002, p1), for example, defined discourse as "a particular way of talking and understating the world (or aspect of the world)", indicating that language is structured to suit different situation*s* it represents and people have different language choices in different social fields. CDA seeks to uncover these choices. Fairclough (1992) proposed that the term 'discourse' is a form of 'social practice', rather than purely individual activities. This implies that discourse underpins social structures and has to be presented and understood in a certain *social context*. This is also in accordance with Foucault's idea of discourse as facilitating social convention and conformation (Foucault & Gordon, 1980). Discourse itself, in other words, is viewed as having an intrinsic power, which gives people indications about how to behave. Thus, a hierarchical structure is formed without being directly, elaborately re-organised within an institution, which in turn is how Fairclough illustrated 'discourse is socially constitutive', namely:

"discourse contributes to the constitution of all those dimensions of social structure which directly or indirectly shape and constrain its own norms and

conventions, as well as the relations, identities and institutions which lie behind them. Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (1992, p64).

2.3.3 Meaning

Foucault's and Fairclough's ideas raise the semantic question of whether text is itself significant or meaningful without an interpreter. Does meaning exist in text by itself or is it in the interpretation? Though text analysis can be arranged under several analytical categories (grammar, lexicon, content, structure, etc.), the present study prefers to speak of *meaning potential* and its repercussion in discursive practice, which pilots the social practice.

According to Fairclough (Fairclough, 2003, p27) "texts inevitably make assumptions". Text does not only tell you what is said, but by so doing it discovers what is unsaid. Moreover, text always interacts with social events; it has representational and interpersonal functions. Texts do not have internal meaning without a meaning maker's intention and a receiver's interpretation, thus it also unveils identities and the interpersonal relation of the reader and the meaning maker; to put it more bluntly, it manifests the *power struggle* between the reader and the author. It is the ideational and interpersonal meaning that the texts 'intend' to manifest.

Text is viewed as representing three basic purposes of language and three scopes of meanings, which coexist with discourse. Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2003) terms them the *identity, relational and ideational* meaning – similar to Halliday's three metafunctions of all texts:

- Ideational: the representation of the physical world that lies around us.

- Interpersonal: how the text represents the relations between the writer and the reader.

- Textual: how the text itself represents the world and the interpersonal relation. (Eggins & Martin, 1997, p239)

Fairclough's identity and relational meaning of text accords with Halliday's interpersonal function of language; his ideational category corresponds with Halliday's. Furthermore, Halliday's textual metafunction is to make sense of a coherent text representation with regards to the abstract organisation of discourse, the implicit and explicit message, the word orders, and so on. This general functional approach to meaning is useful but unduly neglectful of context.

2.3.3.1 Interpretation

CDA views discursive practice as a cognitive process, which incorporates interpretation. Our interpretation is based not only on the literal words but also on our socio-cultural knowledge. Sometimes behaving on the basis of a sentence's literal meaning is inappropriate because it is not socially understood (e.g. a child in a classroom may respond to a teacher's statement: "somebody is not doing their work!" with "I'm not!"). This aspect of the process of interpreting and using experiences in the past and the knowledge of the world often makes it hard to determine what is intended by the writer/text-producer and what is not. Therefore the meaning is not stably embedded in texts.

Discourse involves the process of text production and consumption, the characters interpolated between these factors and their relation to the social background. The motives for production of text vary and the interpretations of the text diverge; this all depends on the *context*. Understandably, the meanings revealed (the interpretation)

differ depending on their relation to society and who the interpreter is. Consequently, the result of the discursive practice is unpredictable; especially when the creativities of human being are added to the order of discourses, the conventional conformity to the social context might also change and new orders of discourse form.

2.3.4 Genre and register theory

Another theory behind CDA, which unveils the power of discourse, is 'genre and register theory'. Though genre and register theory is described as theory which is linguistically utilised to categorise different types of discourses or texts (Eggins & Martin, 1997), here, we are more interested in the hidden power of genre.

Genre is socially constructed to sustain certain conventions of linguistic communication. In other words, genres are "socially authorised through conventions, which, in turn, are embedded in the discursive practices of members of a specific disciplinary culture" (Bhatia, 2001, p66). To maintain the 'integrity' of a genre, for example in academic discourse, the style of textual activities is homogeneous. Thus, the solidarity with this particular discourse is preserved. Bhatia (2001, p66) urges that "genres, in whatever manner one may identify them, whether as a typificaiton of rhetorical action, or as shared communicative purpose, are products of an understanding or a prior knowledge of generic convention. These generic conventions are responsible for regulating generic constructs, giving them internal ordering". Thus, a particular genre inherits a socially authorised generic power.

Linguistically, genre is a type of literary production and is defined by its social function. Thus different genres have different ways of utilizing language to achieve different goals and to establish different *ideologies.* Indeed one could say that by

nature, genre itself is ideological. Geuss (1981, p19) proposed that a form of consciousness can be an ideology "in virtue of some of its generic properties".

Genres are often shaped significantly by the interest of the dominant, working as a 'gate-keeper' – inclusive to the insider but exclusive to the outsider. To the insiders, the existing genre is an inbuilt reinforcement of their idea of justifiable dominance. Another aspect that is worthy of paying attention to is that of generic control to raise power, in other word 'hegemony'. 'Generic integrity' shows or implies a certain proficiency, for example, as is evident in newspaper, medical/clinic discourse, etc. Genre may thus be viewed as representing kinds of semiotic categories, which unveil the power struggle sites in a society.

Genre theory unfolds the relation between *text* (in Fairclough's term *discourse*) and the *context*. The combination and the creativities between genre and text, however, do not make meaning deterministic, but rather probabilistic. Eggins & Martin (1997, p236) pointed out that "an interactant setting out to achieve a particular cultural goal is most likely to initiate a text of a particular genre, and that text is most likely to unfold in a particular way – but the potential for alternatives is inherent in the dialogic relationship between language and context". Thus, a mutual genre theory is dealing with language and the context to which it is applied. In different genres, readers might find different grammatical structure, lexical choice and semantic choice, which contribute to the different level of context, which relates to the construct 'register' as a "theoretical explanation of the common-sense observation that we use language differently in different situations" (Eggins & Martin, 1997, p234); the diversity of situations is, in other words, different genre .

2.3.5 Ideology and CDA

In the analysis of discourse, Fairclough defined discourse as writing or transcription of spoken language. The transcription of spoken language is a transformation of a reality; as a result, text does not only 'transform' the reality, it 'distorts' it. CDA holds that the relationship between discourse and social structure is dialectic. (Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2003). The intermediary between discourse and social structure is text. Texts are the reflection of a more abstract contextual dimension that we call 'ideology'. Ideology is central to the concept of CDA; it reveals the subtle power exercised by discourses and the dominant.

2.3.5.1 What is ideology?

Ideology in a descriptive sense typically includes "such things as the beliefs the members of the group hold, the concepts they use, the attitudes and psychological dispositions they exhibit, their motives , desires , values, predilections, works of art, religious rituals , gestures, etc." (Geuss 1981, p.5). Ideology is a system that can condition people's interpretation of the reality.

In a critical sense, Wodak (1996, p18) articulates that ideology is a "particular way of representing and constructing society which reproduces unequal relations of domination and exploitation", and according to Van Dijk, (1996, 1997, 1998, 2001) ideology involves cognitive comprehension of power relations in society.

Ideology contains non-discursive and discursive elements. The 'discursive' elements are referred to as the cognitive or conceptual processes, such as ideas, beliefs (Geuss, 1981; van Dijk, 1996, 1998, 2001). The 'non-discursive' elements refer to ritual performance, non-verbal communications, etc. (For example, the Falun Gong group have their ritual qi-gong exercise, which is not an 'idea' but plays an important role in

the group ideology of Falun Gong. The religious beliefs of Falun Gong are the discursive elements of part of the ideology of the group, whereas the qi-gong exercise is a non-discursive element of the ideology) Undeniably, ideologies are established with the purpose of controlling or regulating human behaviours as part of a group's unavoidable relation to hierarchy (Geuss, 1981; Hodge & Kress, 1988).

In a more pragmatic but pejorative sense, ideology can be thought of as a false consciousness of reality. "Ideology viewed as false consciousness represents the world 'upside-down' in inverted form. But it also displays an image of the world as it ought to be, as seen from the vantage point of the dominant, or as it is, from the vantage point of the dominated group"(Hodge & Kress, 1998, p3).

Since ideology successfully invades a person's logic system and his/her consciousness, it is perceived as 'common' or 'consensual'. The system which regulates and controls our attitudes and behaviours is called the 'logonomic system' by Hodge & Kress (1988, p4). Such a system helps us to normalise the abstract and vague (discursive) component of the ideology, whereby, once a certain idea is justified as 'logic', it is assumed to be true. The leading classes or the dominants manipulate the semiosis, which they intend to deliver by imposing and normalising certain logonomic systems of the dominated. Sometimes people are unaware that they interpret things in a sense of what they think they know and understand; however it may be a false belief that is coerced, so that there is always a tension between ideology and rationality.

2.3.5.2 What makes a form of consciousness an ideology? And Why create ideology?

Geuss (1981, p15) has maintained that "a form of consciousness is an ideology in virtue of some of its *functional* properties". Ideology is created by the dominant to

sustain their power over the dominated. The functions of ideology are to support, stabilise or legitimate certain kinds of social institutions of practice. In the pejorative sense, ideology is a false reality created by the dominant class (the powerful or the privileged generally) for manipulating information in order to maintain their position in the society without the subordinated consciously being aware of it. It means, if a form of consciousness is deluded, it relies on the subordinated/dominated being oblivious of having 'false belief' about its purpose and its usefulness to the dominant. For example, if a political leader wants to persuade his people that allocating a great proportion of tax to the military is necessary, typically an ideology first has to be established by creating the 'common sense' that the country needs to be protected. This makes it almost impossible to question the purpose and the ideology of the leader.

2.3.6 The virtue of CDA

CDA is like a wake-up call; its aim is to make people aware of the possibly manipulative functions of language; it aims to explore the subtle power hidden in discourses (Fairclough, 1992, 1999, 2002, 2003; Foucault & Gordon, 1980). Thus, even Widdowson, a strong critic of CDA, acknowledges the significance of CDA in stating that "what is most plainly distinctive about critical discourse analysis is its sense of responsibility and its commitment to social justice"(1998, p136). In the study of religious discourse, CDA provides several clear concepts and issues to be inspected (e.g. meaning, discourse, ideology, power, and so on). CDA also focuses on socio-cognition and textual activities (production, dissemination, consumption and the hybridity of text). Such an approach is helpful when the subject is related to social behaviours.

It represents an appeal too to the applied linguist who should likewise realize that the analysis he/she uses is part of the language system and carries ideology as well as the language used in other genres. Since the analysis itself is a 'text' with 'imaginational readers' in mind, it is impossible to be purely objective. Widdowson (1998, p148) articulated "your analysis will be the record of whatever partial interpretation suits your own agenda".

That does not mean that we should get rid of the ideologies that we hold or we believe; instead, we should ask what it means, what is the significance it has to the research and/or, to an extent, society. Heather (2000, p33) articulated "the philosophy of CDA wishes us to be aware of how, by accepting programming imposed by such discourse, we are colluding with underlying social parameters which they support".

2.4 Summary

Different types of genres/discourses cooperate with the cognitive process of social psychology of language and contribute to people's perception and interpretation. As such, discourse contributes to the establishment of *social identities*, *social relations* between 'people' and 'the construction of knowledge and belief' through the manipulation of existing social categories (e.g. genre, context, discourse). These establishments correspond with the three dimensions of meaning discussed above– *identity*, *relational* and *ideational* function of language (Fairclough, 1992, 1995). CDA does not, however, assume that meanings have stable characteristics like conversational analysis does. Critical discourse analysts focus more on the transformation of text and the ramification of the consumer's interpretation of the text and the intention of the meaning maker.

In CDA, the level of meaning is the core of the analysis. Meaning itself is a non-starter without *context.* Also the context is a mute consensus, in which speaker/author and receiver/reader share the same beliefs and assumptions (Cutting 2000). We can say that context helps narrow the *meaning potential.* Meaning does not exist by itself without an abstract reference or tangible object to which it can point. Without interpreters/ receivers processing the linguistic symbols/ semantics, meaning is simply 'meaningless'.

In social science fields, we are looking at the product of society. Central to Marx's ideas is the principle that the existence of society is prior to the existence of the individual. Also, without people with whom you use language to 'communicate', language is not considered a 'sign system' that carries meaning. Therefore, language is one of the products of society since the existence of society is prior to language, just as language exists prior to an individual. Thus, language is an invention of human societies. Text, the product of any spoken and written language, also has its own products – ideology, the product of social practice**. "**Ideology refers to the position of power, the political biases and assumptions that all social interactions bring with them to their texts" (Eggins & Martin, 1997, p237). Ideology is the interpretation of the meanings that receivers hold, which is the product of a particular genre and is instituted in particular contexts, and is integral to a CDA approach

3   Religion and Religious Language

3.1 Introduction

It is stated that CDA is "by its nature interdisciplinary" (Wodak, 1996, p17); it merges diverse disciplinary perspectives in its analysis. Using a CDA framework to investigate language usage in a religious context, presupposed that a merely linguistic or religious analysis will not suffice. Both religion and language are socially instrumental; they have functions in societies in which they operate.

Language is integral to religion in that all religions revere certain texts and all cultivate certain rhetorical genres. Religion is also fundamental to social cognitive processes in terms of its absolute influence on human civilisation's development (material and non-material) and its transformation into various forms of social-linguistic action as a 'social institution'.

3.2 Religion

The sociologist Durkheim, for example maintained that "religion is not merely a social institution; it is the 'eminently social' institution" (Durkheim, 1961, p22), religious groups being small societies in which people comply with the rules that sustain their inner coherence. Thus religion may be viewed as a social, non-scientistic naturalism with a significant place for normative issues, for objective norms and values in a disenchanted world.

Dandaneau (2001, p146) pointed out that "religions stand apart in that they lay claim to a scared realm that transcends all things social; but religious forces are human forces or, what for Durkheim is the same thing, moral forces". For Durkheim, "if religion has given birth to all that is essential in society, it is because the idea of

society is the soul of religion" (Durkheim, 1961, p466) , which is to say that social practice is the reflection of, among other things, one's awe, fear, and respect and so on; social practice itself contains all the basic human emotions and these are the subjects that can be addressed in a religious context.

Ritual practices are important elements in religious performance. In chapter 2, it is motioned that there are two elements of ideology: discursive elements and non-discursive elements (Geuss, 1981). The discursive elements are things like ideas and beliefs; the non-discursive elements are things that one can observe, such as ritual practice (e.g. the Falun Gong qi-gong practice is the non-discursive ritual practice of Falun Gong ideology).

Human beings are social animals. We congregate to somehow obtain a 'quantitative' status or power. In a mob or a group of people, it is easy to adhere their identities with leader and on another (Kernberg, 1998). Since religious action is a primitive tribal practice, all congregations, in a broader sense, can more or less be categorised as some kind of religious practise and all have 'ritual practice'. Broadly speaking, people dressing in their favourite teams' uniform at the rugby world cup can be classified as a kind of 'ritual practice'. Dandaneau wrote (2001, p146; Durkheim, 1961):

> "Even aspects of social life that are not in and of themselves religious contain elements of ritual and attention of the sacred and so borrow the form of religion for purpose that are not religious".

Central to the function of religion is that, indeed, it not only binds people together, but binds 'a person' together as well in terms of social cognition. It is like a catalyst in social change and gives people an undeniable reason to actualise their goals.

This is to say that religion gives a person guidelines, which justifies a person's pre-conceived idea of the world or gives explanation, thus enhancing a person's identity in relation to society and offering spiritual solace. Therefore, a person knows how to behave and what to expect.

3.3 Linguistic Philosophy in Language Use

Humans use language to complete the process of culture transmission. Animals have their particular sound system or sign system to help them communicate, to exchange feelings of fear, excitement and danger. However, the most significant difference between them and humans is that the later are sociologically and linguistically more flexible. We can use metaphor, we can tell stories, create fictions and consciously reflect on such activities and even language itself.

Traditionally linguists focused on building up a scientific structure of the language use. The traditional philosophy of language concentrated on the structure and the 'logic' of utterances, whereby it tended to be assumed that language's sole function was to simply mirror the external details of reality. Language was thereby reduced to logic, the main idea being of the 'proposition' as the totality of thoughts or intentions of the sentence, which determines the truth or falsity of the sentence(Chapman, 2000; Wittgenstein, 1968). The logic of sentences provides coherence. On the other hand, it can also deceive the hearer in various ways. Some people find that the development of language is beyond the scientific method that can be set up to analyse language uses.

The method of verifying the truth value of a sentential proposition was assumed to simply be its materialistic verification. Religious language, however, is not primarily concerned with the description of material reality but rather with immaterial aspects of existence.

Thus religious language typically has other functions than stating facts or giving information (Wilson, 1968). Because religious language is an inward flow of message, and is to be self-involving or performative for the self (Holt 1999, p.6), thus there is problematic with meaning in a religious context because of the semantic features applied in the language use. Consequently, the attention of the investigation of religious language turned to the exploration of meaning and interpretation.

The word *meaning* has been used in various ways and it would be confusing to try to give it a precise definition. Many philosophers have different names for 'meaning'. Frege distinguished between 'sense' and 'reference', Mill spoke of 'connotation and denotation' (Chapman, 2000). Sense is what Frege described as 'expressions of quality' and what Russell named 'abbreviated description' (Chapman 2000). For example, 'black rose'. It is known that there is no black rose in the world, so we can say that this expression has no reference but it has 'sense' and connotation – its has a 'meaning'.

The relation between us and the language we use is like the relation between the numerals say, '1' and '2'. It is only when the numbers 1 and 2 are contextually used that the function and the definition of the number 1 and 2 are established. In Wittgenstein's early book 'Tractatus' he found that the only indisputably true proposition were tautologies that literally say nothing about the world (Randall 1997). There fore in Wittgenstein's (1968) later work 'Philosophical Investigations' he pointed out that:

> "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false? It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life**"** (Wittgenstein, 1968, p88).

Meaning is an essential concept of the entire context: material world + individuality. There is no meaning that is completely fixed, the speaker and the listener co-construct their meaning of the world and their reality. Meaning changes all the time because every minute differs from the next. "Possibility is the prior order of the world, but the order must be utterly simple, which is beyond any empirical experience" (Wittgenstein, 1968, p44). That is to say 'everything is possible'. Therefore, meaning is constantly changing. When hearing someone says something, the meaning of the sound is in the listener and the 'material world'. In Wittgenstein's later work he attempted to account for meaning that does not require any positivism, that is to say that he was aware of the meta-function of language compared to his early picture/mirror theory of language and reality.

The way we pick up meaning is subjective and situational; logic might give justified explanation but somehow ignores the flexibility and possibility of human life, it is essentially a different category from language. Wittgenstein realised that "logic does not treat of language in the sense in which a natural science treats of a natural phenomenon" (1968, p38).

3.3.1 Speech Act Theory

A further critique of the fact that our usage of language cannot be divided simply into only true (positive fact) and false (negative fact) proposition involved Austin's and Searle's 'speech act theory' in the 1950's and 1960's

Austin pointed out that many sentences mean something other than their literal meaning. In a logical statement, a statement can always be tested as true or false, but in socio-cultural and socio-linguistic use of language, there are sentences that cannot

meet these conditions but have functions beyond the literal meaning. (Chapman, 2000; Paltridge, 2000)

Austin(1962, p12) argued that "to say something is to do something". His example is with an official pronouncement like "I now pronounce you man and wife" that "we are doing something – namely, marrying, rather than reporting something" (162, p13). This kind of *performative* utterance is not merely saying something but doing something.

Austin (1962, p46) distinguished performatives from *constatives*, meaning that performatives are language usages that 'perform' some act; the constative utterance, which is unlike the performative, is a true or false statement. Thus, the performatives have no true-false value except appropriateness. The appropriateness of an utterance Austin termed its 'felicity condition' (Paltridge, 2000). Whereby, an utterance must be stated by the right person, at the right place, in the right time and follow the right procedure 'in order to fully exercise the function of this language.

In Austin's speech act theory, utterances have three kinds of meaning. The first meaning is called the locutionary force (Austin, 1962), which is the literal meaning of the utterance (e.g. "would you shut the window "). The speaker's intended meaning is, according to Austin (1962), the illocutionary force; it hides meaning behind the propositional meanings – it is the latent meaning of utterance (e.g. it is cold in here).The actual effect of the original statement is termed its perlocutionary force (e.g. the listener gets up and closes the window). Both the perlocutionary and locutionary aspects do not always follow the speaker's intention.

There are many devices in speech which might determine the interpretation of the performance of the speech, such as mood, tone, voice cadence, emphasis, connecting

particles, context (circumstances of the utterance), and accompaniment of the utterance. Thus an informative or declarative utterance may well perform an implicit request (as the example above illustrates). As Austin noted:

"It is always necessary that the circumstances in which the words are uttered should be in some way, or ways , appropriate, and it is very commonly necessary that either the speaker himself or other persons should also perform certain other actions, whether "physical" or "mental" actions or even acts of uttering further words"(1962, p8).

Thus, whether an utterance is performative or constative utterance is largely legitimated by the listener's interpretation.

This is in accord with Wittgenstein's idea of "when one utters a sentence in a usual way, something else takes place in the listener's mind" (1968, p176). One utterance often has more than one illocutionary force. Language plays a notoriously ambiguous role in this aspect. An utterance can be interpreted in diverse ways. Therefore to misinterpret an utterance can cause communication breakdown.

3.4 Linguistic Analysis of Religion

Religion has been described as a 'form of discourse', whose purpose is to describe 'hyper-fact' (Clack, 1999). It is a general misunderstanding that religious language is primarily a description of 'fact' or 'hyper-fact', a viewpoint identified by Austin as the 'descriptive fallacy' (Chapman, 2000, p116). The function of religious language is in fact focused very little on stating fact (Chapman, 2000; Clack, 1999; Rhees, 1997).

Religious ideology is best understood and believed by the believers themselves as an internal expression. Durkheim (1961, p15) stated in this regard, for example, that "there are no religions which are false". Therefore, to talk about God, people use a

different grammar from the grammar the analytical linguist uses in the analysis of logic.

To understand the language of religion then it is necessary to explain the 'grammar' of religious language. The grammar of religious language is not only about the syntax or reference, but the grammar of the context.. Religion is closely bound to a particular discourse which represents a way of believing and a way of living. Hence Wittgenstein (1968) articulated that our understanding of language and its meaning is in the *form of life* rather the language itself. The understanding of religious language thus take place within the practice of this particular form of life, which is why we say a person 'practises' religion.

In his 'Philosophical Investigation' (1968), Wittgenstein also speaks about 'language games'**.** Speaking of religion as a language game is to view religious language as a unique form of language, which performs a particular way of living, thinking and activities. Such ideas align with the CDA – view of language as *social action***,** since words themselves without practice are dead or meaningless. The features of religious language are viewed as a language-game; it is not merely a set of 'ideas' or thoughts, it is something people 'do' with their language in a 'form of life'. It is because of these reasons religious language is performative, thus it does not state facts.

Furthermore, since religious discourse is a communicative event which utilises particular communicative forms and discourse genres, there are intrinsic powers existing in this form of communication and there are elements of convention and rules which persist within this form of communication.

Foucault ,in arguing that power is integral to discourse(Foucault & Gordon, 1980), pointed out that there are certain strategies which are utilised to regulate conventions,

prohibitions and exclusion being the two main ones (Wodak, 1996); or, in Wodak's words: "Every discursive setting is limited by rules and conventions whereby many other possibilities are excluded" (1996, p25).

Such rules and conventions are intrinsically functional. For instance, the role of a doctor in a clinic setting is orthodoxically accepted as the authority in the clinic, who is permitted to diagnose the illness of the patients and give prescriptions. It is rare to find one who disagrees with the doctor or doubts the 'proficiency' of the doctor in the clinic because conventionally it is not acceptable to question a doctor if oneself is not practising in the medical field.

This kind of cognitive process is internal. To prevent everyone having access to all discourses, only people with certain knowledge have the authority to claim certain discourse. Conventions and rules that produce knowledge make discursive practice 'privileged'(Foucault & Gordon, 1980).

In religious talk also, the jargon and terminologies utilised are a representation of the church's authority. Only people who are officially empowered (e.g. priests) are authorised to claim this discourse in churches. So that within discourses there are hierarchy systems and the consumption of the discourse is closely bound to the exercising of power. Even changing the communicative style would not deny the existence of power, rather it would makes the exercising of power more subtle.

Religious discourse, like education discourse, is complex, because religion is not only a 'profession', but also something that every one knows about and has access to (theoretically). Within a CDA framework we want to ask the 'why, what and how' of the phenomena we are observing in the Falun Gong religious ideology and to probe 'what's going on in religious talk?'

4   Critical Discourse Analysis in a Religious Context

4.1 Introduction

In the field of religious language and critical discourse analysis there is very little material to refer to. The book '*Religious Language and Critical Discourse Analysis: Ideology and Identity in Christian Discourse Today'* written by Noel Heather in the series of Religions and Discourse (Vol. 5) is groundbreaking in this regard and utilised as a framework in this study. Following Heather, three important dimensions, at the core of CDA have been selected for study, namely: *power relation consumerism in the religious context*, *intertextuality*, and *identity and social -cognition of religious context*.

The modern phenomenon of '*technologisation'* (Fairclough, 1992, 1996) is another facet of the dispersion of text consumption within a religious context. The consumption of texts is a power-based interaction between the consumers (reader/hearer/believer) and the text makers and is not only the consumption of material; it is more importantly the consumption of ideologies hidden in texts since texts re-construct a social reality, which affects the readers' self-identification in societies.

Because of the nature of this particular genre (religious language), the power-based linguistic exercise of religious talk and the authority of the religious group are essentially unchallengeable for participants. Actually, however, we are interested in the psychological aspects of language used in this particular genre and the linguistic strategies employed by religious discourse. What we want to probe is 'how language affects cognitive process in religious language?' and 'why?'.

4.2 Intertextuality

4.2.1 Introduction

In the 21st century, the concept of intertextuality has assumed greater currency (Allen, 2000, p105; Fairclough, 1992; Heather, 2000). Heather (2000, p178) stated "a focus on intertextuality clearly highlights the hybrid nature of many texts today in the postmodernist line". In the early twentieth century, Saussure looked at language as a sign system and said that no sign has a meaning of its own. This is the beginning of the concept of intertexuality in the 20th century. Later on, the idea of intertextuality was brought up by Bakhtin (Fairclough, 1992); it was clear at that time that all conversations are built up by utterances (exchanges) of participants (reading or speaking), and are oriented retrospectively to the previous utterance and Bakhtin extended this perspective to written text as well (Fairclough, 1992) . Kristeva, who intended to explain Bakhtin and Saussure's idea on the inter-dependent meaning of text, originated the term 'intertextuality' in the late 1960's (Allen, 2000; Fairclough, 1992; Heather, 2000), to mean that text does not in itself have stable meaning and objective interpretation but only in relation to other texts to which it constitutes a 'context'. Heather (2000, p153) claimed that "little, it seems, could be more obvious than the fact that Christian discourse often relies heavily on intertextuality". For example, the Bible and other texts are used to provide ideational, emotional and spiritual support to the believers in the religious 'context' of contemporary society.

The relation between intertextuality and power is central to CDA study, which views textual productivity as shaping the social structure. The order of discourses is structured by the hegemonic struggle with power relations relying on the domination of ideologies extorted by texts and the intrinsic power of manipulating texts.

4.2.2 Intertextuality Theory

In relation to intertextuality, Fairclough cited Foucault's idea that "there can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactualize others" (1992, p101). In other words, intertextuality is the interaction amongst texts, or an external relation of texts (Fairclough 2003). "In the most obvious sense, intertexuality is the presence of actual elements of others text within a text – quotations" (Fairclough 2003, p39). However, there are various ways intertexuality performs in texts. Some of them are much less obvious than others. Intertextuality references can vary in form, from an explicit quotation marks to being "faintly perceptible as background assumption or presuppositions"(Heather, 2000, p160).

Text is thus essentially dialogical, an interlocutor (or in Fairclough's discussion – 'texts') have to consider what has been said and base their following statements on the previous statements, thus providing coherence. Also the interlocutors (texts) have to consider what is anticipated to be said later in relation to the previous statements uttered (Fairclough, 1992; Heather, 2000). Thus "each utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication" (Fairclough 1992, p102). Therefore the intertextual reading yields coherence by making relevant assumptions, which connects what has been said and what is about to be said. The context thus revealed in a text also tells what the author intends to conceal. By reading a text, the readers will 'assume' what the author means, and the interpretations of the readers are based on their background knowledge and understanding of what is said. As Fairclough noted:

> "Texts inevitably make assumption. What is 'said' in a text is 'said' against a background of what is 'unsaid, but taken as given"(2003, p40).

Due to social differences, the interpretation can differ dramatically. What is left unsaid is where the reader's assumption lies. Texts respond to a perceived opinion and create a 'presupposed' reality.

Apart from 'assumptions', a second concept in the study of intertextuality is 'presupposition'. "Presuppositions are propositions which are taken by the producer of the text as already established or 'given'"(Fairclough, 1992, p120). The difference between assumption and presupposition is that the former takes account of what is unsaid, and the latter takes what is said for granted. Both presupposition or/and assumption are a means of manipulating text; both cooperate with and rely on people's experiences of prior texts and by so doing contribute to the ideological creation of subjectivities.

Thus, intertextuality as a set of chain reactions of texts may be pictured as: within each text there are other sets of voices which are potentially affecting the meaning of the text. These sets of voices from other texts may or may not contribute to the actual meaning of the text. However, they can easily contribute to the potential interpretation of the hearer/readers. Thus, intertextuality is the source of the ambivalence of texts. If the interpretation of a text can be affected by various sources, then the interpretation of that text may not be clearly placed in relation to the text's 'intertextual network' (Fairclough, 1992, p105). Therefore, the meaning of a text may be ambiguous and polysemic.

Drawing on the discussion of Bakhtin and Kristeva, Fairclough (1992) pointed out two dimensions of intertextuality – *vertical* and *horizontal*. The vertical dimension of intertextuality is the relation between text and other texts, "which constitute its more or less immediate or distant context" (Fairclough, 1992, p103), or the relation of the text to its historical context. The horizontal dimension of intertextuality is simply the

relation between texts themselves, similar to 'speaking turns' in a conversation (Fairclough, 1992).

A further concept integral to intertextuality is the transformation of discourses (Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2003). This refers to the fact that the discourses we experience every day are made available to our socio-historical background within the order of discourses. Discourses are made in different forms/modes in order to be introduced to all potential audiences. For example, a speech can be transformed into taped data or a brief summary. The transformation of 'text' adds to the ambivalence of text. What has been said at the beginning is assumed by the readers or the hearers based on their background knowledge. Intertextual analysis dynamically and dialectally focuses on how texts transform this social and historical resource. The transformation of discourses also 're-accentuates' (Fairclough, 1992, 2002) how genre may be mixed in texts. Fairclough (1992) claims that the linguistic and intertextual heterogeneity of text is a particular feature of areas of social cultural change. In the textual chain, the function of mediating social context and language is crucial. Peoples' perception of reality is realised by their background understanding, which is a product of intertextuality. That is to say, our interpretation and understanding is not made then and there; it has historical traits. In other words, the miscellaneous 'text' consumption in the past is the causation of the ideology one absorbs in the future. Falun Gong texts can thus be viewed as belonging to a big 'intertextual chain'. Within its newly developed religious ideology, the same idea is repeated relentlessly in different 'transformations'.

Despite technological development, the tradition and essence of text production is intriguingly complex. The ideology of a text is inter-dependent on other texts *vertically* or/and *horizontally* (Fairclough, 1992). In Christian language, for example,

the Bible is read aloud by priests/ministers, who then summarize such readings in sermons, often incorporating quotes by someone else. These types of texts tend to be transformed into one another according to a well-established line of transformation. This series of transformations is predictable in some way. It does not only transform the texts, but also transforms the social relations. For example, a quote by a pop-star in a sermon would have various social ramifications. The levels of transformation vary according to the context.

A transformed text implies what is said before without giving a detailed description of what was actually said. For example, the sermon transformed from the Bible and the content of the sermon are 'assumed' to be in accordance with the Bible. This sermon in turn might be quoted somewhere else, so that the same transformation process occurs again.

Traditionally, linguists examine language and the language relation based on the notion of a stable relationship between signifier and signified as the principal analytical technique. Likewise, scientific or other 'objective' discourses rely on the illusion of the "transcendental signified" (Allen, 2000, p32) as some kind of essence, which points to no signified. Thus, the transcendental signified is an unarguable entity, which escapes from the chain of 'signs' and must be 'true'.

In a religious context, the intertextual relation of texts shows that God is an existing 'body', which is fundamental and does not have immediate reference. Thus there is no need to explain 'who is God ?' or 'what is God?'. By stating the marvels done by God, the existence of God is 'presupposed' to be true by believers who are consumers of religious 'texts' that are transformed into everyday surrounding texts – which can be the Bible, banners, posters or 'chit-chat' with someone. This can be done in very subtle ways.

4.3 Power and consumerism within religious discourse

4.3.1 Introduction

'Consumption' in a modern sense does not merely point to tangible, consumable objects. Though traditionally 'consumption' equals the behaviours of purchasing and consuming 'goods and services', linguistically, what is consumed is ideology and its semiotic meaning. In the present study the concept of consumption is used as an instrumental idea of obtaining information. Furthermore, consumerism constitutes how society is constructed and how we see ourselves as individuals. Modern society tends to condition itself into a consumerist mode of thinking, seeking the resources of entertainment and other satisfactions adapted to its specific interests (Fairclough, 1992; Heather, 2000). The most common example is 'infomercial' programs on TV. The dynamic host or/and hostess not only entertains the audiences but also empowers them to take part in the role of being a powerful consumer. By consuming what is intended to sell, audiences are told that they will be pleased about the outcome or result. This kind of infomercial or sales-marketing discourse is also widespread in modern religious discourse (Heather, 2000). Due to the asymmetrical power structure (discourse consumer and discourse 'salesperson'), this not only involves the discussion of religious language but also the discussion of power-related consumerism. Heather (2000) identifies the practice of consumption as a mental process, which unveils imbalanced power. Central to the discussion of this chapter are three ideas: *democratization, commodificaition* and *technologization*, which are common phenomena of modern discourse.

4.3.2 Democratization

Democratization, in Fairclough's sense, means "the removal of inequities and asymmetries in the discursive and linguistic rights, obligations and prestige of groups of people" (1992, p201). A simple example would be, in a text, the use of low modality verbs and personal pronouns. This familiarity encourages people to participate in things that relate or affect them. As a result of participation, they consume.

The reduction of overt markers of power asymmetry between people of unequal power leads to a change in the orders of discourses and the hybridity of discourses (Fairclough, 1992). This is not to say that the hegemonic distance is reduced by the elimination of power-asymmetrical markers; it is to say though that the power is exerted in a more subtle way. Democratisation is one of the production processes of commodification. It is an inclusive use of language aim at 'assumed audiences'.

4.3.3 Commodification

Fairclough defined *commodification* as "the process whereby social domains and institutions, whose concern is not producing commodities in the narrower economic sense of goods for sale, come nonetheless to be organised and conceptualised in terms of commodity *production*, *distribution* and *consumption*" (Fairclough, 1992, p207). Education and government organisation, for example, are two domains where orders of discourse have been adapted through colonization by the advertising genre (Fairclough, 1989, p208).

Commodified texts built upon advertising models also commonly manifest other democratising features, apart from informality and a more conversational tone (Fairclough, 1992, p219), such as the use of discourse from other 'professions' and

the deploying other 'expert discourses', to suit one's specific purpose. In a religious

context, Heather pointed out the use of 'youth-focused language' in Christian

churches (2000, p47) as an example of this phenomenon. In Falun Gong text, too,

there are frequent examples of scientific (pseudo) evidence being communicated.

However, no references are presented in support.

4.3.4 Technologization

The notion of technologization of discourse refers to the use of language

instrumentally and consciously as a technological tool (Fairclough, 1992, 1995,

1996). Discourse utilised by a particular group in a particular context, according to

Foucault, inherits an innate power (Fairclough, 1992; Heather, 2000). Qualified or

authorised mediators are seen as appropriated to convey certain information and the

information given by these people has an instrumental function. Technologized

discourse does not only carry information, it also carries social structure and power

relations.

Fairclough defined the technologization of discourse in terms of "enhanced language

reflexivity …the institutional side of modern reflexivity" (2001, p232) and "the

embodiment in situational forms and practices of circuits in networks which

systematically chain together three domains of practice: research into the discoursal

practices of workplaces and institutions, design of discoursal practices in accordance

with institutional strategies and objectives , and training of personnel in such designed

discoursal practice" (Fairclough, 1996, cited by Heather 2000, p52).

Indeed, much of language's use as a tool to achieve institutional goals is over.

However, language manoeuvres are often below consciousness, often undetectable by

the individuals. Whether it is the formality and the convention or the consumerism

that drives the technologization of discourse, the notion that discourse is open to technologization reminds us that forms of 'texts' that we are accustomed to in certain ways can have different meanings and be interpreted in different ways when applied in different contexts.

4.3.5 Consumerism and identity

Consumerism also appears to be neatly tied to the dimension of identity. As Fairclough put it:

> "to establish one's own product as different, its identity has to be constructed. At the same time, categories of potential buyers for products are often not specifiable in terms of independently existing types of social memberships (class, regional and ethnic group gender, etc.): they also have to be constructed in the discourse" (Fairclough, 1992, p211).

To adapt one's mind to a certain productional mode, one internalises certain mental processes and an identity. By consuming, one is self-positioned in relation to the external or/and internal environment. Consequently, identities constructed in the items for consumption are established.

4.4 The psychology of language in religious discourse

4.4.1 Introduction

The modern concept of individual and society is basically dualistic (Philip & Jorgensen, 2002, p98). The external world is recognised by people as a container full of information to be processed, and each individual who, by the processes of cognition, observes the world and understands the information, accumulates knowledge and perceives the 'reality' as it is. Because the world is full of information,

an individual thus develops a way of coping with such great quantities of information, which is so-called 'categorisation'– a way of making sense of the chaotic meaningless signs (Philip & Jorgensen, 2002). One outcome of the dualistic idea of individuals' relation to society and the ability to categorise is the idea of 'me' or 'us' and 'others'. Competitive human nature thus is sustained by the idea of identity or demarcation of self, 'we-are-better-than-you'.

4.4.2 Commitment at personal and group level - Discursive psychology

Linguistically, personal pronouns are the in-group markers that indicate formality or informality, solidarity or distance and 'categorise' groups (Cutting, 2000). Psychologically, the by-product of 'othering' is a negative attempt to define identity whereby intergroup conflicts are established (Gudykunst & Lim, 1986; Kernberg, 1998; Philip & Jorgensen, 2002). Individual commitments towards groups internalize the ideological superego that is required within groups (Kernberg, 1998). Thus, the identity of individuals within certain groups is designated as social identification, which determines who they are and what their roles are in the society (Gudykunst & Lim, 1986, pp11,13). Philip and Jorgensen also stated : "people's cognitive process changes since self-categorisation as a group member leads to the expression of social identity rather than a personal identity"(2002, p101).

In Freud's view "people in mobs have an immediate sense of intimacy with one another that is derived from the projection of their ego ideal onto the leader and from their identification with the leader as well as with their fellows"(Kernberg, 1998, p3). Because people's self-esteem is wound into the group, in order to feel good about

themselves, they have to feel good about the group, what Philip and Jorgensen termed "in-group favouritism" (2002, p101) .

Discursive psychology rejects the idea that the individual has a single stable identity. Instead, it argues that individual's identity is socially formed "through the ways in which people position themselves in texts and talk in everyday life" (Philip & Jorgensen, 2002, p109). The discursive practice is the outcome of this type of 'positioning'. As a result, "what people perceive as real is real in its social consequences" (Hewstone & Giles, 1986, p10).

Texts manifest action, representation and identification (Fairclough, 2003). The discourse practice in texts leads to social practice, by which we conceptualize the reality, which, however, is only the consequences of ideological practice. Once a person internalizes certain 'rules' of convention (ideologies), it is hard to break his or her individual assurance towards what he or she believes. Sociologically, this is termed 'consistency theory' (Philip & Jorgensen, 2002, p98). In order to maintain inner consistency and coherence, a person belonging to a particular group has to assume that what he/she 'knows' is true so that he can point reflectively and abstractly to the 'fact', otherwise he/she will be "self-deluded"(Dewart, 1970, p84), a state also termed 'cognitive dissonance' (Philip & Jorgensen, 2002, p98). Therefore, to avoid ridicule or criticism, once a person has made a decision to join a group he/she will try by all means to justify the choice – if necessary, by changing cognition, to be consistent. When the ideational reality of a text is internalized, it becomes what is perceived as 'true'. In inter-group communication, especially in the religious domain, 'faith' is the explanation and solution of the 'dissonance' between believer and non-believer.

4.4.3 Social cognition, discourse and power

As Heather has succinctly pointed out: "beyond the level of an individual's identity lies that of the group ,which can be defined in terms of social cognition"(2000, p33). As mentioned earlier, too, discourse is intrinsically power-oriented and hegemonic. Because discourses bind people's 'minds' together, discourse thus "manufactures the consent of others" (van Dijk, 1996, p85). Thus making it easy for a person to position him/herself in groups and societies. Principally, the continuation of social cognition is usually related to the exercise of power.

The power of discourse is dependent on who the controller is and who has access to the discourse. Condor and Antaki (1996) indicated that social cognition does not only speak about the 'cognising' process but also works on another focus of social cognition, which treats 'human knowledge as a social product under shared ownership'. Because discourse is a social activity, no cognitive process is individual or private. Discourse is portrayed as a "public enterprise built by many hands, whose 'cause' is not a matter of individuals' mental processing and whose effects go beyond the individuals involved"(Condor & Antaki, 1997, p335); discursive practice is public activity.

Having the power of accessing certain discourse, a person categorizes him/herself with a group and contributes directly or indirectly to the discursive practice. The external aspects of the discursive practice which are termed social practice, conceptualizes and acknowledges a person as part of the group (the elite) who 'own' the exclusive knowledge that belongs to a particular discourse. By so doing, a strong *commitment frame* is formed within people who belong to certain groups (Heather, 2000, p226).

4.4.4 Cognition, identity and language in religious context

Haslett (1986) argued that a particular communication code functions like a gatekeeper, limiting social relations and social interaction. This is similar to Bernstein's notion (Haslett, 1986, p34) of restricted codes, which are predominately interpreted based on context, culture or social relations and social backgrounds. Underlying such codes is the use of *in-house* language and in certain situations the restricted code is more prestigious than the elaborated code.

Identity-by-exclusion is a commonly used term in social cognition in creating commitment at group level (Heather, 2000). *Not-being-like-others* and *not-the-way-we-were* are both common strategies that are projected onto personal and group identities within religious group (Heather, 2000). Jargon and special lexicon choices and other in-group makers are also important indicators to signify social intimacy (Cutting, 2000; Heather, 2000). These forms of 'in-house' language are important in affirming the mental models (frame) of believers and coerce the discursive practice of such discourse.

Within the religious context, one absorbs the ideology unwittingly and forms a 'frame' of world-view. The perplexed cognitive process re-constructs one's reality. A common Chinese religious expression is thus 'Kai *Wu*', which means to suddenly wake up and realize a mistake or to open up to understanding, realisation or perception of meaning.(In the Falun Gong basic text Zhuan Falun it refers to 'enlightenment').

5   The methodology

5.1 Design of this study

The aim of this study is to investigate the ideology of Falun Gong and Falun Gong practitioners' perception of Falun Gong. The study was carried out through textual analysis using a theoretical framework known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). For reliability of the research quantitative and qualitative research methods are combined utilising computer assisted corpus analysis and a CDA framework. Computer assisted corpus analysis is used to detect the most frequent patterns, words and collocations in 'Zhuan Falun' – the foundational text of Falun Gong teaching. Also the similarities and differences between Zhuan Falun and the features of modern Christianity proposed in "Religious Language and Critical Discourse Analysis: Ideology and Identity in Christian Discourse Today" written by Heather (2000) are compared. Within this framework the ideology of Zhuan Falun is investigated using three main approaches: *corpus analysis*, *interviews* and a *close reading* of the book Zhuan Falun.   These three main approaches are designed to unveil the ideologies of Falun Gong, and to reflect the three characteristics (intertextuality, power and consumerism, commitment/ social cognition/identity) that are discussed in Heather's work. Interviews were conducted with twenty participants in total. Two nationalities were investigated: Taiwan and Mainland China, as two variables. Interviews were audio-taped as verbal data.

5.2 Textual data

The foundational text of Falun Gong, Zhuan Falun, was studied to discover how Falun Gong and its distinctive qualities are constructed. Zhuan Falun containing the

doctrines of Falun Gong is taken as representative data of the conventional ideology of Falun Dafa/ Falun Gong. Only the English language version is used in order to avoid the issue of translation, which impinges on another field of social-linguistic research. Also, for corpus analysis, the program available was designed for detecting English language behaviours; to establish the corpora using a Chinese version is unviable.

The book Zhan Falun contains 397pages, 128,187 words, from introduction to appendix. For the corpus analysis, the whole book was scanned thoroughly as an assistant methodology to support the research. There are many different English translations of Zhan Falun. The version examined is a U.S. English version (First translation edition printed on February, 2002, Taiwan. Published by YIH CHYUN BOOK CO., LTD).

Miscellaneous types of additional Falun Gong texts, including newspapers (The Epoch Times, Falun Gong Reader), the transcription of Master Li's teaching in various places, pamphlets and so on, have not been included in the proposed research data.

5.3 Interviews

5.3.1 Participants

Twenty participants took part in an interview: ten from Taiwan (Republic of China) and ten from Mainland China (People's Republic of China). The ten Taiwanese participants are Falun Gong members who resided in Taiwan when the research was conducted and the ten Mainland Chinese participants are Falun Gong members who have permanently immigrated to New Zealand. Participants are adults from the age of 20 to 60 plus. Participants' ages and educational background are not the issue in the

discussion, but might still have a subtle influence in the study. Most of the local Chinese participants were approached in front of the Chinese Embassy while they were practising Falun Dafa and protesting silently against the Chinese government's inhuman treatment of Falun Gong members in China. They were approached during their break time with the help of a local Auckland contact. The Taiwanese participants were firstly approached through a local contact in Taiwan. The consent forms and information sheets were distributed by the local contact to each participant. The researcher personally has had no direct contact with the Tawniness participants, apart from conducting a telephone-interview with them.

5.3.2 Verbal data

The twenty interviews were audio-taped as verbal data, though not for purposes of detailed transcription. Some parts of participants' statements were transcribed for analytical use in the thesis. Each interview lasted from 20 minutes to 40 minutes depending on the participant's involvement and opinions. Ten interviews with local (New Zealand) Falun Gong members were conducted face-to-face in various places in Auckland, and the other ten interviews with Taiwanese Falun Gong members took place by telephone. Due to the lack of physical – visual cues, it is difficult to determine whether the participant had finished the locution exchange during the telephone interview, therefore interruption occurred now and then.

Interviews started with one open-ended question 'what does Falun Gong mean to you and how do you feel after you read Zhuan Falun and have practised Falun Gong? '. The interview question was designed to probe Falun Gong members' self-identity in relation to their religious beliefs and Falun Gong ideologies. Moreover, participants' answers were indicators of modern discourses used in religious talk.

During the interviews, the interviewer tried not to interrupt the interviewees; however, when interviewees diverged from the questions asked, a few questions were asked to re-allow comments in line with the original question. For example: when asked 'what does Falun Gong mean to you?' some people merely responded initially 'it's really good, it is the law that I have been looking for in my life', then the interviewer would ask them how and why they think so.

5.4 Corpus analysis

5.4.1 Preparing the data

The text data is from the Falun Gong fundamental text called 'Zhuan Falun', which encompasses the philosophical principles of Falun Gong. Like other religious texts, it contains particular lexicons, collocations and other linguistic features that indicate group affiliation. When 'corpus analysis' was first nominated as the second methodology, it was uncertain whether the results of a computer assisted analysis would reflect the core of CDA – the ideologies and other features that are proposed for discussion. Accordingly, a pilot study based on the first three chapters was completed. "Biber argued that pilot studies were needed to fine-tune the structure of a corpus to make it more representative" (Kennedy 1998, p.69), and Ostdijk suggested (Kennedy 1998, p. 69) that "samples up to 20,000 words might be necessary". The present sample contains up to one-third of the complete data (about 40,000 words), and thus is considered adequate.

The complete data, which contains 397 pages (128,187 words), was subsequently scanned into a computer to transform it into electronic form for analysing. Subsequently, the text (the electronic data) has to be checked (via a spelling check), since if a spelling error occurs, the computer will not itself recognise the mistake. The

electronic data will first be examined through a 'wordList' tool. Once the list is completed, concordances, clusters and collocates can be selected. The complete text data contains 128,187 words. All data are required to be saved as 'text' instead of 'word document' in order to be compatible with the program 'Wordsmith'.

5.4.2 The programme – WordSmith Tool

The program used to exam the text was 'Wordsmith Tool'(Scott, 1996). The analysis was restricted to the 500 most frequent words in a wordlist of 1,000. The most frequent word 'the' occurs 4,647 times (3.62 %) and the 500th word 'student' only occurs 31 times (0.02 %), which has very little influence on the research.

The main analytical tool is the *WordList,* the main function of which is to create and maintain an alphabetical / frequency list of words. Once the list is completed, the users can explore a specific word in more detail be using a 'cluster' tool, which provides more exhaustive word analysis. Clusters are words which are found recurrently in each other's company. They represent a tighter relation than collocates. They represent not only the grammatical correctness, but they are more likely to manifest the ideology in text as all words have a tendency to cluster with other words in a certain particular genre / text. Thus 'WordList clusters' is a very powerful tool for exploring the combinatory properties of vocabulary.

Once the user has the list or lists they need, it is often necessary to account for different word forms-for instance, plural and singular or 'walk' and 'walks'. WordLister offers a lemmatisation feature for such cases. With or without lemmatisation, it is possible to view the word lists for interesting characteristics such as frequency, presence (or absence) of words, the proportion of different words to the total words, and so on.

Concordancer is another main feature of the Wordsmith Tool. The Concordancer can locate words that happen together with any particular words. Despite the contestation of meaning involving longer stretches of text, the concordancer does tend to crystallise around the item in question so that it can be captured. The computer programme highlights the simplistic 'ground floor' language responses and by so doing directs the human analyst's attention to the more complex 'top floor' language input. The larger the corpus the more obviously useful the computer's help becomes and the more versatile the program. Unlike clusters, the Concordancer has a generous capacity-it can cope with up to 16,000 lines.

5.4.3 How can a computer assisted programme contribute to CDA ?

To start the research using Wordsmith Tool, the researcher has to have a clear idea of what is to be looked at and what would be expected to be found. The researcher's knowledge about the 'genre' and the topic clearly plays an important role in finding a suitable method. In the case of this project, managing religious discourse of a particular group, after reading the text data and researching the background of this group, it was reasonable to expect that key terms would include words such as : *Falun Dafa*, *people, ordinary, cultivation , practice , qigong*…etc. Indubitably, the computer-run result confirms that. The concordancer provides a new avenue to reinvigorate the analysis because it enables the researchers to pursue even the most uncertain direction. It manages the sizable data to a controllable scale and makes the result 'visible'. For example, though it is not difficult to distinguish in the text that 'ordinary people' contributes to a negative connotation; using concordance allows the researcher to confirm this finding. Wordlist provides a frequency list which allows just such leads. For example, in the study, it is evident that the first five content words

in the frequency list are: *cultivation, ordinary*, *qigong, body* and *cultivat*e. Within the first few most frequent words, the ideology and the message hidden in the text are revealed. To prevent being 'ordinary' one must 'cultivate' and only the true 'cultivation' can elevate one's mind and 'body'. Also the *qigong* practice is one way to 'clean the body'. The use of computer word list helps reorganize and spring clean the discoveries of close-reading.

Kennedy states: "with modern software, computer-based corpora are easily accessible , greatly reducing the drudgery and sheer bureaucracy of dealing with the increasingly large amounts of data used for compiling dictionaries and other information source. In addition to greatly increased reliability in such basic tasks as search, counting and sorting linguistic items in text" (1998, p5). The issue of computer technicalities is not part of the discussion but is acknowledged as a useful tool to detect the 'frequent and salient' and in larger projects to ascertain the quantitative in interpretations.

Also another reason for using text as data (quantitative) and interviews as verbal data (qualitative) is as Flick stated that : " the interpretation of data is the core of the empirical procedure"(1998, p178). Flick also states that : "interpretation is the anchoring point for making decisions about which data or cases to integrate next in the analysis and how or with which methods they should be collected" (1998, p179). That is to say, how you want to interpret your data determines what methodology you use. Different data represent a different research focus. In this particular study, the researcher is asking whether the perception of Zhuan Falun by its followers is in accord with the presentation of the script itself – whether the internal dialogue equates to the external manifesto/text. Therefore, the quantitative data, which represent the world of *Fa*, is as important as the qualitative data – the interview, the internal dialogue.

The final analysis will rely on the proposed qualitative research method, which is CDA, and the quantitative statistics ascertain what happens in coherent discourse. To all intents and purposes, it is a fact that the more we know about the texts in the corpus as well as the discursive and social practice the more specific and more effective our computer assistant research becomes. CDA completes the interpretation and the computer evidence redefines the nature of interpretation, transforming the subjective mono-analytical process of individual into a multi-dimensional, pragmatic one.

5.5 A methodological justification

5.5.1 Benefits of qualitative data

There are doubts about the validity of qualitative exegeses. The nature of hermeneutics is based on historical links, therefore the variables involved in interpreting the data vary to a vast degree. Nonetheless, quantitative analysis narrows down the 'categories' of the central concept of the phenomenon that is analysed. Quantitative analysis commonly attempts to give 'directions' (Kracauer, 1952, p23). However, 'oversimplified' categories cannot match the principles of CDA – a multidisciplinary concept. Though quantitative research methods are assumed to be more reliable due to their quantification, they may ignore the unique nature of the meaning potential of human historical and social perspectives.

Grbich(1999, p254) stated that "qualitative researchers' emphasis on diversity, on representativeness, small numbers, minimal stratification and self-selection and the focus on thick ethnographic description, suggests that quantification is a waste of energy , and that such transformation produce unrealistic versions of the original". Moreover, Kracauer (1952, p634) also articulated : "If the content is set in historical

perspective, its 'latency' will immediately increase so that quantitative procedures no longer suffice to describe it adequately". The most compatible methodology with CDA is thus qualitative interpretation. In the context of religious language, the cultural and historical perceptive of the data rests with the researcher's elucidation. In this case, quantitative analysis is solely confirmatory.

5.5.2 The role of quantitative data

The study aims to detect not only how people engage in religious beliefs but also wishes to uncover strategies used to facilitate such behaviours. Because word behaviours embedded in text carry ideological interpretation, computer corpus analysis is beneficial for relating the believer's interpretation based the grammatical – lexical features used in the text by the believers themselves. Some scholars such as Chomsky, argue that the variables that affect linguistic performances are erratic and Kennedy pointed out that statistics might mislead peoples' understanding of language usage (Kennedy, 1998, p23). The specialised corpus is designed to study consistent language use in a particular context by particular members of the group. This study investigates people's perception of text reading and the ideology the text represents.

6   Findings

6.1 Introduction

The Falun Gong basic text, <u>Zhuan Falun</u> (Li, 2002), is not in the genre of original religious literature (such as the Bible), because of its intertextual relation with other traditional Chinese religions and its modern use of language. As such, it is what Holt (1999) categorised as 'secondary' religious language, instead of 'primary'**.** <u>Zhuan Falun</u> solely provides explanations of the morality passed on by the traditional religion of Buddhism. "Only 'the Buddha Fa' has been able to perfectly provide a clear exposition of humanity, every dimension of material existence, life and the entire universe", according to Master Li (2002, pii), the founder of Falun Gong.

<u>Zhuan Falun</u> is essentially language about 'Buddha Fa', which resonates with what Taoism traditionally called '*Tao*', and philosophical insights into 'goodness'. According to Master Li, the *Falun Dafa* (the great law) is the fundamental law of the universe.

Falun Gong members strongly deny that what they are practising is a 'religion'. However, in the book <u>Zhuan Falun</u>, the 'Buddha Fa' is expounded and it is stated that "Falun Dafa is one of the eighty-four thousand cultivation ways in Buddha school" (Li, 2002, p38). Does this mean that Buddhism is not a 'religion'? Is this an oxymoron? Is religion synonymous with religious belief? In fact, the book explains that the Buddha Fa is "an insight into all mysteries" (Li, 2002, pi); it "encompasses everything and leaves out nothing - from particles and molecules to the universe, from the even smaller to the universe" (Li, 2002, pi). Therefore, the book explains that to all the 'not yet discovered' super human power, the level is too high for 'everyday people' to understand. Moreover, Li (2002, p95) explains the reason why the school

of 'Falun Dafa' is not "Buddhism in the *Dharma-ending period*" by saying it is because Falun Dafa disciples "should not observe religious forms". However, if religion is merely a form of practice, then practising Falun Dafa is a form of religion, too.

The number of Falun Gong followers has increased rapidly within the last ten years, domestically and internationally (Irons, 2003; Lowe, 2003). The transformation of traditional religious concepts into modern religious discourse is basic to Zhuan Falun. In the following section, the strategic structure of Zhuan Falun is revealed by qualitative and quantitative data.

6.1.1 Corpus analysis

The 500 most frequent words were calculated using the computer software programme 'WordSmith Tool' (Scott, 1996) created to estimate the most frequent content words (i.e. nouns, verbs or adjectives/adverbs) by making a 'word list' and the ways they collocate together (by the concordance, collocation and cluster). Disregarding the grammatical features, the study is mainly interested in the semantic implications and importance indicated by the content words and the ideologies they apply to. This computer assisted analysis helped the researcher to detect important content words, which have significant semantic indications for the qualitative analyses (CDA approach) involving an interview and close-reading.

6.1.2 Interviews

To complement analysis of the Falun Gong's basic, official written text, interviews were also conducted with adherents or practitioners of the sect. The interviews were conducted using one open-ended question: what does Zhuan Falun mean to you and how do you feel after practising Falun Gong?

The strategy behind this approach was to trigger the informant's freer, subjective, general meanings and feelings rather than impose a fixed grid through a series of questions.

6.1.3 A CDA examination of the text

A close reading of the text reveals that it uses strategies integral to both CDA and persuasive communication studies generally: *intertextuality, power and consumerism* and *the development of identity and commitment* (see Heather, 2000).

6.2 A stylistic analysis

The stylistic analysis is correlated to the CDA features that this study focuses on. The main or generic style of the text examined is 'sales-pitch' and 'infomercial', which sells the convenience of the product and the guaranteed good health. It uses and explains many terminologies significant to the practice of Falun Gong and the 'target audiences' (*see section 6.3.2 below*). The tenor of language used in the text appears to be 'casual' and 'down –to – earth', aimed at cultivating a feeling of 'groupness'. Jargon used in the text is a representation of an elitest appeal, in that only members who consume the product can understand the jargon.

Furthermore, the text also represents 'self-promoting' material of Master Li. For example, Master Li wrote:

> "What does the master give you? He gives you the Gong mechanism that develops your Gong" (Li, 2002, p35).

> "There is one thing that I must also point out: At present, no other person is truly teaching people toward high levels like me. In the feature you will realise what I have done for you" (Li, 2002, p47).

This further relates to the text's claim to be authoritative teaching; to participants, this book is a guide to their ways of living, thinking, behaving and so on. The most common collocates with *qigong* are '*master*' or '*masters*', as in: 'some qigong masters' or 'fake qigong masters', and 'sham qigong master' indicating that there are many qigong masters but a lot of them are 'sham' or 'fake', and reinforcing the text author's authority. Thus Master Li also wrote:

> "Of course, I am not saying that their ways of practice were not good, I am only pointing out that they did not teach anything at a higher level" (Li, 2002, p1).

To practise Falun Gong is to '*cultivate*[1]', which is an important ideological word in the text. In a word list, the common feature found in '*cultivate*' and '*cultivation*' is that they are followed closely by three content words: *people, discipline* and *ordinary*. The close relation between '*people*' and '*ordinary*' manifests, too, the text's emphasis on the 'insider and outsider' relationship.

'*Discipline*' collocates closely with '*cultivation*', '*cultivate*' and '*cultivating*', which indicates the principle in Falun Gong of cultivation involving denial and suffering and only true practitioners can discipline themselves to reach the true enlightenment or '*higher level*'. The term '*higher level*' appears more often than 'low level' in collocation. '*Higher level*' is a vague state and not clearly defined and ways to achieve it are equally vague: a 'breakthrough' is made, 'filthy things' are cleaned and people are 'saved', as in typical examples from concordance data like:

> "One needs to continue making breakthroughs towards higher levels in cultivation".

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[1] 'Cultivate/ Cultivation' - meaning to practise Falun Dafa/Falun Gong and raise spiritual and physical strength.

"If you want to reach a higher level, you must abandon your ill thoughts and clean your filthy things…".

"We are, however, truly bringing people toward higher levels, which is to save people".

"How can you, with such an impure, dark body and filthy mind, practise cultivation toward a higher level?"

'Higher level' is also a transient, ephemeral state, where ideologies change depending on which particular 'higher level' you are at. This continuing upgrade of position/ status offers endless flexibility. For example:

"Whenever he upgrades himself to a higher level, he looks back and realises that the Dharma he just taught was all wrong".

"Before his cultivation reaches a higher level he thinks that those things do not exist and are not believable; this is determined by his level…"

Not only the idea of *'higher level'* is vague, but also the idea of *'karma'*. The word *'karma'* is often clustered with 'a lot of' as in *'a lot of karma'*. It is clearly understood that the karma is the consequences of the *'black matter'* the *'bad things'*. Whoever has more karma is viewed a bad person, as in the concordances:

"With more karma, how could you practise cultivation?"

"With the large amount of karma, an average person could not succeed in cultivation".

Karma needs to be enlightened and transferred through cultivation, therefore:

"One must first suffer hardships and eliminate karma, so as to transform it into the white substance".

However, what are the referents for 'black matter' and the 'white substance'? The definitions are in the readers' mind. To all the problems one encounters, "they are all caused by you own karma" (Li, 2002, p152). This concept is also typically vague in that its reference is open to any personal interpretation. One example is that of one practitioner who said in interview:

> "One day I went to a friend's house, saw her son and thought her son is a handsome child. Afterwards, when I got home, the next day, I had a cold. It must be the punishment of having such a thought of lust".

Also, if you lack experiences of a certain type, it is because you have not reached the relevant level of cultivation; as the text says: "a practitioner whose cultivation has reached a particular level can only see manifestation at that level. He is unable to see the truth beyond that level, and neither will he believe it"(Li, 2002, p48). The book also says "some people can feel it while others can't" (Li, 2002, p40) . This kind of argument is irrefutable; 'cultivation' or its lack explains everything. Thus, it literally explains nothing.

Table 6.1 below illustrates the general content of each chapter in Zhuan Falun and their strategies / styles:

Table 6.1 :The content and style of <u>Zhuan Falun</u>

Content	Style
Ch1 • Genuinely guiding people toward high levels • Different levels have different Fa • Zhen-shan-ren is the sole criterion to discern good and bad people • Qigong is prehistoric culture • Why doesn't your Gong increase with your practice? • Characteristics of Falun Dafa	Chapter 1 is self-promotional with regard to Master Li himself and to the benefit and convenience of Falun Gong. It points out that cultivating by following Master is the only way and explains the idea of qigong and the characters of Falun Dafa. However, the status of cultivation is vague, because 'some people can feel it while others cannot' (Li, 2002, p42).
Ch2 • The issue of the celestial eye • The supernormal ability of clairvoyance • The supernormal ability of precognition and retrocognition • Transcending the five elements and the three realms • The issue of pursuit	This chapter explains terminologies that are important for cultivation followed by 4 subheadings, which are supernormal powers. If you are truly, highly cultivated, you can gain these powers. The last subheading is the issue of pursuit.

Ch3 • I treat all practitioner as my disciples • The Buddha school qigong and Buddhism • Practising only one cultivation way • Supernormal abilities and Gong potency • Reverse cultivation and gong borrowing • Spirit or animal possession • The cosmic language • What has the teacher given to practitioner? • Energy field • How should Falun Dafa practitioners spread the practice?	Chapter 3 clearly appeals to the 'in-group' and authorizes the master's respective position. Master wrote: 'I treat all practitioners as my disciples'(Li, 2002, p93). Also he claims that a person can only practise one cultivation way. Master gives the disciples the spiritual protections that can prevent them from getting 'hit by a car', and to spread the practice one can only use master's original words. This chapter also contains talks of fictional and supernatural ideas.
Ch4 • Loss and gain • Transformation of karma	The main talk here is of 'gain and loss', which directly relates to the transformation of 'karma' and the upgrading of 'xingxing'. Matters of this

• Upgrading xingxing • The placement of the mysterious pass	kind are common and collective in everyday life. Then, the talk of 'quanding' and 'mysterious pass' is just another explanation of jargon.
Ch5 • The Falun emblem • The qimen school • Practising evil cultivation • Double cultivation of a man and woman • Cultivation of mind and body • Consecration • Zhuyou ke	Chapter 5 explains the Falun emblem and other types of cultivations and the supernatural powers involved.
Ch6 • Cultivation insanity • Demonic interference in cultivation • Demonic interference from omne's own mind • Your main consciousness should predominate	Issues talked about here focus on the cultivation of 'mind' (insanity, good/right mind, interference from the mind, consciousness). One must have strong consciousness. The interference is caused by 'evil thought' or spirit

- your mind must be right - martial arts qigong - The mentality of showing off	
Ch7 - The issue o killing - The issue of eating meat - Jealousy - The issue of treating illness - Hospital treatment and qigong treatment	This interesting chapter discusses the sensitive issues of: killing/eating meat and treating illness. Killing is forbidden in all kinds of cultivation, but Master also wrote 'this issue doesn't concern me, as I am teaching the Fa to practitioners instead of casually telling everyday people how to live' (Li, 2002, p269). Master also said that the followers can't treat illness with their 'gong'; however, it is fine if you are a 'practitioner'. This double standard utterance explains nothing.
Ch8 - Bigu - Stealing qi - Collecting qi - Whoever practices cultivation will attain Gong - Heavenly circuit	The first part of this chapter talks about some terms which are exclusive to 'practitioners' followed by a 'sales pitch' talk of gaining 'gong ' and good health. Finally it says 'our practitioners should be sure to never behave very abnormally among everyday people' (Li, 2002, p339).

• Attachment of zealotry • Cultivation of speech	
Ch9 • Qigong and physical exercise • Mind-intent • A clear and clean mind • Inborn quality • Enlightenment • People with great inborn quality	Chapter 9 highlights the cultivation of 'mind' and 'body' and eventually one will be 'enlightened'.

The styles are the combination of fiction, promotion/sales, teaching and common speak. Jargon used is from all sorts of social fields. Speeches are to be inclusive to 'practitioners'. The supernormal powers one gains by cultivation is beyond comprehension and the explanations of phenomenon after the practice of 'gong' are vague and often contradictory.

To summarise, the text's main stylistic features may be tabulated as follows:

Table 6.2 : Stylistic features of <u>Zhuan Falun</u>

Feature	Main	Minor/sub -
Function	Persuasive	Sales-pitch Instructional regulative
Tenor	Casual/ natural	Formal Authoritative
Field	Semi-technical	Cultural Casual
Mode	Written	Speech-like
Genre	Religious Conversion Apologetic	Self-development/help Imaginative fiction

6.3 <u>Zhuan Falun</u> and CDA

To understand the macro-structure of the text, several key features of CDA are
revealed below: intertextuality, power and consumerism, psychology of language
(identity and commitment).

6.3.1 Intertextuality

The use of technical terms or jargon in the basic Falun Gong text, derived from
Buddhism and Taoism**,** is a manifestation of interrelation between texts. Numerous
words are culturally significant such as: *Buddha Fa, Tao, de, karma, qigong*, and so

on. Intertextuality is also evident in the index of the book, which includes words and features from other fields of Chinese culture, such as: popular Chinese religions, acupuncture, classical Chinese folk stories. This strong relationship is also evident in the fact that untranslated Chinese words are used in the English version because they are assumed to be untranslatable representations of moral values that are embedded in Chinese people's everyday life.

All interviewees' statements relate to certain intertextual chains: such as Confucius, Buddhism, Taoism, Marxism, Christianity, yoga, and other social contexts. For example, one practitioner mentioned that 'God created humans in his own image', which is a Judaic-Christian idea. Another participant pointed out that '*zhen-shan-ren*' (truthfulness-benevolence-forbearance) is a higher level than '*zhen-shan-mei*', which is the Buddhist trinity of truthfulness-benevolence-beauty. '*Zhen-shan-mei*' also is a formulation for the Tao in Taoist philosophy. Culturally, all of the participants mentioned often how Zhuan Falun explains the ideas of Buddhism and Taoism. Eight participants clearly pointed out they had other religious beliefs before becoming a member of Falun Gong, mainly Buddhist or Taoist. Other participants culturally acknowledged that Falun Dafa explains the Buddhist and Taoist tradition.

Another concept that is interrelated with intertextuality is 'presupposition' which Fairclough (2003) calls assumptions, which covers any statements that do not have ostensible references. By tacit cultural consent, the references are assumed to be 'common'. Thus, in the text it is assumed that 'scientific' evidence supports Master Li's beliefs that we human beings know very little about the world we exist in; there are inexplicable phenomena that belong to mysterious different dimensions, such as:

> "…an American scientist has discovered a trilobite fossil with a human
>
> footprint". (Li, 2002, p19)

"…in 1972 , a French manufacturer imported its uranium ore. After lab tests,
the uranium ore was found to have been extracted…in the end, this uranium
mine was verified as a large scale nuclear reactor…Even our modern people
cannot possibly create this....It was constructed 2 billion years ago…those are
astronomical figures and they cannot be explained at all with Darwin's
theory". (Li, 2002, p20).

"…yet modern medicine has, after all, already recognised that there is an eye
in the middle of the human brain". (Li, 2002, p51)

Though there are no references for these 'evidences', these 'evidences' are assumed
to be true and the references are assumed to have been given somewhere else. For
instance, the first example above, the 'American scientist' is assumed to be a real
person who has 'actually' discovered a trilobite fossil with a human footprint. The
premise is that the propositional assumption of 'a trilobite fossil with a human
footprint' has to be true. Meanings that are related to Buddhism and Taoism are also
taken as given. The term 'actual fact' thus generally relates to non–ostensive
reference.

'Collective experiences' is another strategy that relates to the intertextuality. The text
contains statements that describe everyday life, which makes whoever reads it feel
connected; somehow the text is about them. Like horoscopes in the newspaper –
everyone can thus 'cherry-pick' a little bit of what relates to themselves via
descriptions that are very vague. Because the interpretation of the text can vary vastly,
due to differences in individuals' background, the implications of the vague
statements can be adapted to anybody. For example, it is mentioned that practising

'gong'[2] can help you clean your body, so that if you have diarrhoea, it is your body doing 'cleaning' for which the Gong is responsible. One participant used this as the evidence of her having been cultivated.

6.3.2 Power and Consumerism

In a good deal of modern discourse, readers are constructed as 'consumers'; they consume texts and the ideologies the text intends to sell. Three crucial aspects of consumerism in modern discourse have been identified as: *democratisation, commodification* and *technologization* (Heather, 2000; Fairclough, 1995).

6.3.2.1 Power struggle

*Democratizatio*n is the removal of apparent power-asymmetrical words (Fairclough, 1992). In Zhuan Falun, it is found that inequality is strongly indicated by the usage of 'practitioners'. The use of such a word elevates the group and makes them sound prestigious. Another example of an anti-democratise feature is the use of prohibitive modal verbs '*can't*' and '*don't*'. In a word frequency analysis based on the whole Zhuan Falun text, 'don't' and 'cant' appear as two of the three most frequent modal verbs*,* indicating a strongly directive tone. This opposes democratisation by setting up a dominant, authoritative voice which dictates the group ideologies. The higher frequency of the plural 'you'(4th) as opposed to the plural 'we'(39th) is noteworthy, the implication here being an authoritative narrator prescribing behaviours to subservients. The most prevalent collocations with '*know'* are 'you/they/people don't know', reinforcing again the superiority of the in-group.

The collocates of '*must'* are '...therefore one/you must', which likewise produces a strong obligation to perform and adhere to the hierarchical philosophies of Master Li

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[2] 'Gong' – 1) cultivation energy; 2) a practice that cultivates such gong.

– the author of <u>Zhuan Falun</u>. The cluster of *'must'* as in 'one must be', 'there must be' and 'you must cultivate' is also common. Furthermore, as in: 'it is said that cultivation depends on one's own effort', the grammatical feature 'it is said' invokes normalisation and depersonalisation; the content is taken as given, therefore what is said is indubitable. The authority of the statement is not able to be questioned.

During the interviews, when asked 'what does <u>Zhuan Falun</u> mean to you?' more than half of the participants replied that it explained what they have always been looking for but couldn't reach or understand before practising Falun Gong. When asked 'what have you been looking for?' participants either repeated the *zhen-shan-ren*, which is the main principle of Falun Gong, or merely replied by saying 'just what's said in the book, such as being a good person'. It is noteworthy that in the book <u>Zhuan Falun</u>, it is written: "once they learn our Falun Dafa, they will understand at once many questions in life that they have wished to understand but could not answer" (Li, 2002, p337). It seems to be apparent that the book interprets itself. Instead of letting the readers do the extraction of the meaning of <u>Zhuan Falun</u>, the book literally suggests or draws conclusions for its followers/readers. When replying to the interviewer during the interviews, the participants were thus trying to use the exact words that were originally said by the Master. It was thought to be a sin if they changed the words that the Master says even if the meaning was intact, presumably because the Master said:

"…you can only say it this way" (Li, 2002, p142)

Nonetheless, a clear democratization feature found in the text is informality and the use of colloquial language. The style of the text is in an 'everyday-talk' tenor and humour is another informal element Li uses which indicates 'in-groupness' (Cutting, 2000):

"…with regard to cultivation insanity,…if a someone can produce fire…, I would say that this person is quite awesome.….can light a cigarette with a finger, I could call it a supernormal ability" (Li, 2002, p227).

Humour presupposes people with similar status knowledge, attitudes and values, thus the response and the presentation of it is a marker of a particular discourse community. Stylistically, these two paradoxically contradictory uses of language (the high modality and the informality) is an interesting contrast. The hybridity of text is a new phenomenon in modern religious text.

6.3.2.2 Discursive commodity aesthetics

In order to sell, the 'product' has to be commodified. The aesthetics of *commodification* is to manipulate readers into believing that they can accomplish their unfulfilled wishes by consuming and to attach thereby their unsatisfied hopes to the product. The product that Zhan Falun is 'selling' is good morality, good health and especially conservative conventions. (Homosexuality, for example, is defined as an 'evil thing' and is equated with drug abuse and killing).

Commodification is also unavoidably related to the idea of *technologization.* Discourse itself has become a technology used as strategic means for accomplishing a specific discursive goal (Fairclough, 1992).Utilising the discourses from other social fields helps authorize the 'proficiency' of the presenting discourse. In Falun Gong text the strategy of using a '*sales-pitch*' is marked, for example, as in:

" I have several books, audio tapes and videotape. You will find that after watching and listening once, they still guide you as you watch and listen again after a while" (Li, 2002, p38).

"…our *Falun Dafa* can solve this problem and shorten the course of practice. Meanwhile , it is also a cultivation practice of mind and body" (Li, 2002, p44).

"we do not require facing certain direction for practice or require certain way to end the practice…if there is a phone call or someone knocks on the door, you may go ahead and take care of it right away" (Li, 2002, p45).

In the examples above it is observable that the 'product' sold here places emphasis on its convenience and efficiency. The product says that you can achieve the expected outcome in an easier way (you don't need to read it again and again; read it only once and it will guide you for a long time; it shortens the course of practice; you don't need to face a certain direction or require a certain way to end).

Additionally, the expected outcome will be the guarantee of 'youth and health'– the product promises to make:

"you look younger than those at your age"(Li, 2002, p40).

Also, Master Li, the inventor of the book does it all for you. It is an easy achievement with the Master's help:

"…cultivation depends on one's own efforts, while the transformation of *gong* is done by one's master" (Li, 2002, p34).

"…what does the master give you? He gives you the gong mechanism that develops your *Gong*" (Li, 2002, p35).

Interestingly the target audience, mainly elderly people and women is selected, somewhat 'obscurely', as perfectly matched to the selling point:

"Normally, supernormal abilities are more likely to develop for two groups of people: children and the elderly. In particular elderly women usually maintain

good *xingxing* without many attachments among everyday people (Li, 2002, p83).

"All of the people in reverse cultivation were over fifty, at a relatively old age. They had very good inborn quality and carried in their bodies very good things" (Li, 2002, p107).

"Usually, there is a prerequisite for '*true insanity*[3]'. It is that this person must have superb inborn quality and must be quite elderly" (Li, 2002, p224).

Consumerist responses of participants also illustrate the intake and consumption of ideologies in the book Zhuan Falun. One participant said:

"I have been looking for a '*Fa*' which you can cultivate in your present life that can help you reaching immortality".

The utterance is in accord with the main ideology of the book – guaranteed good health and morality and once one reaches the highest level of cultivation, one's spirit is immortal.

The immediate reward, such as good health, is a further appeal to the practitioners. Falun Gong differs from Buddhism is that you don't have to re-incarnate to another life; you can have a better life in this life. Unlike Buddhism, one does not need as much prohibition as Buddhism (one can kill because one cultivates in everyday life); therefore, it is relatively convenient when compared to Buddhism. One practitioner said:

"Master talks about the problem of 'killing'. We can kill, but under a condition of human survival".

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[3] 'True insanity' - A highly cultivated status. People who reach this status behave strangely amongst normal people

The compatibility of Falun Gong with modernity was often stressed by participants, in common expressions like:

"It breaks old/outdated ideas".

"It explains the idea of U.F.O.'s".

The personal endorsement from the Master is another 'hook' that catches people's attention. The Master's statement:

"I treat all practitioners as my disciple" (Li, 2002, p93)

was understood by one interviewee as:

"Master is responsible to all practitioners".

Falun Gong's moral principles and the promises of good health are the most common reasons people are attracted to joining Falun Gong. All of the practitioners are convinced by the health benefits they gain.

The combination of sales style discourse, colloquialism, informality and the revelation of target audiences creates an ideal 'mercantile' style. (The product is Falun Gong; the expected outcome is youth, health and good social value; the process is simple; the target audiences are the elderly and women).

6.3.3 Identity and commitment

It was found that the three most frequent content words are: *people, cultivation*, and *ordinary*. The frequency of 'people' would seem to be accounted for by the general, anonymous audience the book is aimed at and by the persuasive, personable tone adopted. 'Cultivation's' salience is clearly related to the fact it is the key concept for Falun Gong. As is said by the Master "only through cultivation can your life be altered" (Li, 2002, p73). 'You'(4th) and 'they' (11th) illustrates the contrast between

the insiders and outsiders. 'You' is the inclusive personal pronoun referring to the readers, and members of Falun Gong, as opposed to 'they' – the 'ordinary people or the everyday people.

'Ordinary', the most frequent adjective is clearly used so often because there are only two facets in the universe*s*, according to master Li. The 'ordinary' represents the opposite of the enlightened 'true practitioner' who has cultivated and reached a higher level of cultivation. Surprisingly, 'practitioner' has a much lower frequency even though it is a very important ideological word.

In addition to the frequency analysis of individual words, a collocational analysis of the most frequent words was undertaken. 'Ordinary' clustered most frequently with 'people/ person', as, for example, in:

"Do you think you are dare to touch them with an ordinary person's hand?"

"It is master who actually does this, as you are simply unable to do it. With an ordinary person's body like yours, how can you transform it into a higher life's body made of high energy-matter?"

"Why can we do such a thing for a practitioner but not for an ordinary person?"

"It is something beyond ordinary people".

"Yet, an ordinary person cannot see it".

"An ordinary person cannot see this point and always believes that he should do exactly what he is able to".

"…with high-level celestial eye can see beyond our dimension into other time-space, and he can see scenes that ordinary people cannot see".

"How should our practitioners treat losses and gain? It is different from

ordinary people".

"Therefore, in dealing with specific conflicts we should be forgiving instead of

act like ordinary people".

"You cannot understand it with an ordinary person's mentality".

"What is *xingxing*? It includes de (a type of matter), tolerance, enlightenment

quality. Sacrifice, giving up ordinary people's different desires and

attachments, being able to suffer hardship, and so on".

The word 'people' mostly points to non-specified individuals (e.g. some people, many

people). However, when it collocates here with 'ordinary', it says something different.

The findings show that the concordance 'ordinary people' carries negative meaning.

Not only are the most likely collocates of 'ordinary' ': 'people' and 'cant', but also

the concordance manifest that ordinary people denotes un-cultivated, lower level

people. Therefore, to avoid being ordinary, 'you must cultivate'. Irons (2003) would

thus seem to be supported in his assertion that people practise Falun Dafa because

they don't want to be 'ordinary', or, in other words the text appeals to a flattering

elitest identity.

The use of inclusive language is also linked to the creation of an exclusive group

identity. Not only does the language used in the text acknowledge the people in the

group, but also the social practice (the practice of Falun Gong) empowers people in

that particular group. Thus, a strong commitment frame is established within the

group (Heather, 2000). The frequent word 'practitioner' is a symbol of group devotion

and so elitism. The example below illustrates this self-identification of Falun Gong

followers:

"…you are practitioners, shouldn't you be required to meet higher standard?" (Li, 2002, p157).

"As true practitioners, we should look at issues from, a very high level instead if from the perspective of everyday people" (Li, 2002,p217).

It appears that the practitioners are claimed to have a 'higher standard' than 'ordinary people' or 'everyday people'. The instance above is also an example of creating group conflicts – the conflict between the 'elite' and the 'ordinary', the 'chosen people' and the 'everyday people'. In Li Hongzhi's universe, there are two forces – good and evil/bald and white – true practitioners and ordinary people. It shows how the self-identification and inner coherence of the follower is altered though the 'practice' of Falun Gong. A fated relation exists between the 'true practitioner' and Falun Gong. In order to avoid being 'ordinary' a person has to 'cultivate':

"only through cultivation can your life be altered" (Li, 2002, p73)

Using circular argument it is asserted that if a person chooses to be cultivated and have a life that is 'altered', which means it is in a different category from 'the ordinary', he/she must only go with one group – Falun Gong:

"religion cannot be mixed … one must choose only one cultivation way" (Li, 2002, p102).

If they can remain faithful to Master Li's teachings and truly practise Falun Gong, the gnostic 'elite' will become 'enlightened'.

Once they are members, however, group identity becomes important and beneficial too. As Kernberg (1998, p3) pointed out: 'people in mobs have an immediate sense of intimacy with one another that is derived from the projection of their ego ideal onto the leader and from their identification with the leader as well as with their fellows'.

This was supported by evidence from those interviewed. They viewed their group affiliation in elitest terms and referred to themselves as 'practitioners', therefore having higher *xingxing*[4] or understanding of cultivation, defined as: 'It includes *de* (a type of matter), tolerance, enlightenment quality, sacrifice, giving up ordinary people's desires and attachment, being able to suffer hardship, and so on' said Master Li (see Concordance *xingxing*). One of the practitioners articulated, "because Falun Gong people are all good people, therefore, I feel I am a good person", while another person said, "because Falun Dafa is great, so I feel I am great too". Some informants used statements such as:

"because *zhen-shan-ren* is great, therefore I am great, too"..

"…unlike others".

"I am a practitioner, I wouldn't / shouldn't/ do…..".

"The book is for true partitioners, if you are only an ordinary person, you only see it is black and white".

"…if you are not a practitioner, you should go to a doctor when you are sick. We are practitioners, we don't need to go to doctors because we are well".

"…cultivation is suffering, we are practitioners therefore we are not afraid of suffering".

"…you cannot mark the book when you are reading it because ordinary people's pen will contaminate the book, marking books when reading is things that ordinary people do, besides , every word in the book is precious".

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[4] xingxing – moral character.

The statements are self-positioning. By differentiating the categories of 'practitioners' and 'ordinary people' the idea is created that '*we are better than you*'. It is certain all practitioners are affirmative and proud of being part of the group.

7 What's going on in Falun Gong text

7.1 The Analysis – what is going on in <u>Zhuan Falun</u>?

Studying religion with a view to understanding its historical, social and psychological influence has special significance today since religion is an aspect of human group behavior which can shed light on social phenomena generally. We can see similar trends in other religions whose linguistic characteristics carry the implication of rapid developments of society and technology, which do not in any significant way lessen the people's interests in religion. The newly developed religion *Falun Gong* or *Falun Dafa* in China shows similar trends in the development of religion in modern society to those illustrated by Heather (2000) in relation to Christian fundamentalist groups. This phenomenon is enough to raise interest in the need for a better understanding of modern religion.

A useful key to this understanding, it is maintained, is the CDA approach which explores the dialectical relationship between language and ideology, which has implication for people's cognitive processes and identity. The general conclusions of the present study's application of the CDA approach to Falun Gong are presented below in relation to the key meta-concepts of : genre, intertextuality, power and identity.

7.2 Genre

7.2.1 Multi-modality

Genre is distinguished by its social function. Different genres have different ways of deploying language to achieve certain goals. The <u>Zhuan Falun</u> text is not, as categorised by Holt (1999, p80), a 'primary' religious text, rather it alludes to

philosophical and religious traditions, such as Buddhism and Taoism, for connotative, legitimising purpose. Additionally, it borrows the styles from other discoursal activities, such as fictitious genre, marketing genre, Chinese common topics, and religious talk. In each genre/style the modality used is different. This multi-modality is effective in reinforcing people's understanding since our thinking process is based on our memory (Condor & Antaki, 1997) ; the more genres one can deploy, the more effective will be the personal associations. The creativities of human beings generate new orders of discourse. The 'hybridity' of texts relates to their multifunctionality, particularly in response to social changes and is a fairly new phenomenon(Fairclough, 1992; Heather, 2000; Wodak, 1996).

The main style of the Falun Gong basic text is 'everyday-talk' or 'conversational'. It is easy to understand for many participants. Unlike other Buddhist literature, this book uses colloquial language, which is not typically religious but rather philosophical talk about morality and social phenomena. It includes dimensions that involve everyday life. The biggest difference between Falun Dafa and other traditional religious literatures is that Falun Dafa is the '*fa*' (universal law/ way of living) in 'everyday people's' life; its appeal is thus pragmatic and 'real'.

The mix of high and low democratised language (e.g. 'we' and 'you', high modality verb usage and informality) means that the target audience must identify with both 'common speak' (democratisation) and aspirational hierarchy (non-democratisation). This contradictory double discourse disseminates both egalitarianism and elitism.

7.2.2 A genre exempted from being true

 Both language and religion are products of society. Language creates religion linguistically and verbally; religion also creates a particular genre and discourse

structure for language (Heather 2000). The interpenetration of language and religion

is like that of one who is trying to run away from one's own shadow. Even though

language conveys information and is the means of communication, when the referents

are beyond the concrete, sometimes it is difficult to communicate successfully.

Nevertheless, when dealing with the supernatural, language is sufficient in its

linguistic entities and characteristics, thus making religion not different from stories,

epics or poetries. These kinds of literary exercises contribute to specific genres, which

are exempted from 'being truth'. "Devils can be controlled by language, as can

physical matter", as Crystal (1956, p121) stated.

In the text, statements about superhuman power are taken as self-evident. The

statements give people a vision of their own 'illusion' or 'view of the world'. That is

to say a physical and physiological world is created by the text. As readers read the

text, they, at the same time, experience the reality existing in the chimera of the text

creation. And "if literature's peculiar function , like art's generally, is to externalise a

vision of the world, to make this experienceable and to 'de-automaticise' our

perception in the interest of a perception of things as they really are, undistorted by

conventions of description or representation, they are perhaps 'truer' than the normal,

discursive language" (Holt, 1999, p14). Cognitively, it is understood that it is a new,

altered life that Falun Gong followers are looking for, and the current life is rebuilt

through the linguistic activities of text consumptions.

7.2.3 Language game

Religion is something a person 'does', thus, linguistically, people 'practise' *Falun

Dafa*. Wittgenstein (1968) would thus identify religious language a peculiar form of

discoursal activity that constitutes a form of life. The text is not only an informative

guide; it is also a guide for a life style. The participants believe their life is different from others since they have gained higher *xingxing* by reading the book <u>Zhuan Falun</u>. Though some statements in the text might sound discursively vague to one person, to others it is a coherent understanding of the philosophy of life, the morality of social commitment and the explanation of the universe. Because religious language is a 'language game', it is 'practice' that gives words their meaning (Wittgenstein, 1968). The use of the language in <u>Zhuan Falun</u> is thus immune from criticism. *Falun Dafa*, combined <u>Zhuan Falun</u> (the principles) and Falun Gong (the *qigon* practice) relevantly demonstrates the 'way of life' and clearly represents the discoursal activities as a social practice, which attributes to each practitioner's life rationality and identity. To practise the '*Gong*' and '*Falun Dafa'*, the practitioners thus understand the language as embedded in social action, which involves the pursuit of progressively 'higher levels'.

7.2.4 A genre that always sound true

People need justification to verify the rightness of their behaviours and their beliefs. Using language that encompasses collective experience in the text gives everybody a chance to relate what is said in the book to their everyday life, thus their inner consistency is stabilised through the linguistic 'fortification'. This type of 'horoscopes-language' appears commonly in modern consumerism verbal text, such as magazine, newspaper, horoscope booklets, internet chatrooms, and so on. People are able to integrate a general statement into any personal experience or phenomenon. Examples like this are evident in the previous section (chapter 6). One practitioner said that once when she shook hands with others she gave them an electric shock. She interpreted this as the energy she carried after cultivating Falun Gong, although a more pertinent explanation might relate to humidity and temperature causing static.

However, it is easy for a person to choose what he/she wants to believe instead of believing what is true. "Ferre pointed out a religious metaphysical unification would be subject to the normal validity criteria for explanations generally, namely: internal consistency and coherence, as well as external applicability to experience and being adequate to all ongoing possible experience"(Holt, 1999, p8). Further, as Holt stated "religious language is thought to be self-involving, or performative for the self" (Holt, 1999, p6).

As it is said in Zhuan Falun "the practitioner whose cultivation has reached a particular level can only see manifestation at that level. He is unable to see the truth beyond that level, and neither will he believe it" (Li, 2002, p48). This statement is self-validating in that it provides one with all the possibilities in the universe, so that one can easily relate one's ideological goal to the 'product' or 'outcomes' it manufactures. In other words, the statement does not explain anything. Because it explains nothing, therefore it is irrefutable. Since the meaning of the understanding inserts in the physical world, therefore, if one physically experiences the 'sense' of '*fa*', one can claim the undeniable truth of their personal experience; as Clack noted "religion is to be understood, not in terms of some underlying dynamic which may be unknown or alien to the believer, but in terms of the ideas expressed by the believers themselves" (1999, p80).

7.3 Intertextuality

In the Zhuan Falun text, the most visible intertextual evidences are the use of Buddhism and Taoism terminologies. Sources of Falun Gong terms point to a generalized borrowing from several non-secular traditions, without necessarily borrowing the same meaning senses. It is not difficult to see the intertextual chain

merely by reading the index section. Master Li deploys this kind of cultural memory to create an intertextual relation that exist between many different Chinese traditional genres and encompasses many different social fields. Therefore, everybody (whoever you are, whatever background you are from) can link to a certain extent the talk in the book with their personal experience; by so doing, the text appears to be 'informative'.

From the horizontal and vertical intertextual perspectives (Fairclough, p302; Heather, 2000, p110), the cultural-historical linkage is rigidly tied together. Without the understanding of such background knowledge, it would be difficult to create consensus. This also represents an element of historicism, meaning that ideas and attitudes are part of social practices that are historically and culturally distinctive (Heather, 2000). To non-Chinese practitioners, the borrowed forms from other Chinese conventional religion and literary practices might be inconceivable because of the cultural-gap. However, to Chinese practitioners, the text reinforces general social and psychological 'programming'.

Fairclough (1992; 2003) argued that the idea of intertextuality included the idea of *presupposition* and *assumption*. Text responds to a presupposed reality which is based on a notional assumption. The *assumed-to-be-true* scientific statements (see chapter 6) that are claimed by the author to be proved 'to be true' exemplify this. First, grammatically, the depersonalised passive form 'it is proved' is typically used suggesting that the evidence has been given elsewhere convincingly. Second, without giving references, the established schemes are taken as given in other texts. Examples of this are Li's assertion about the metaphysical structure of reality. This is similar to, say, the false logic of first documenting the benevolence of Jesus, thereby assuming the proposition of the existence of Jesus is to be understood as a truth. Examples

presenting certain findings demonstrate the idea of 'presupposition'. The premise of all the' propositional statements' are thus 'assumed to be true'; such as, the trilobite fossil with the human foot print, the eye in the middle of the human brain, the uranium having been extracted, and so on (see chapter 6).

7.3.1 Propaganda

Propaganda is not merely about government, political parties or politics. It is also a form of consumerism, a play on language, a manipulation of the truth by language, intertextuality, and cultural interpretation (Cunningham 2002). Though the idea of propaganda is used politically to describe the strategies used to control or manipulate people's attitudes, the significance of propaganda relates to the skills of persuasion and manipulation; as such it concerns ideology and hegemony and has a close relation to language (Cunningham, 2002).

The text, Zhuan Falun, uses language to show its modernity with technologized features such as the scientific statements. However, the 'modern evidences' are not given reference or reliable source. The ideology behind it is to persuade people that believing in '*fa'* is not being superstitious. The text does exert its power to control people's behaviours and often to control their mental processes of belief and attitude. Falun Gong text uses intertextual, persuasive, consumeristic devices to manipulate the external truth by language and to control people's values and attitudes by reinforcing existing values (traditional Taoist, Confucian and Buddhist concepts). In interviews, people say, it is easy to understand; compared with traditional Buddhism literature it is in layman's language. People think it is easy to understand because they have the comparison with other familiar religious literature, thereby, consuming the idea in the

book and its convenience. Because they think what is said has been proved, they avoid being ridiculed for being superstitious.

7.4 Power and consumption

One major feature of consumerism in the text is the use of colloquial language, relevant to the idea that "powerful groups are represented as speaking in a language which readers themselves might have used, which makes it so much easier to go along with their meaning"(Fairclough, 1992, p110). All practitioners agree with what Master Li presented in the book because they understand the language he uses. The language in the text does not de-familiarise the readers. It is not theological or poetical. Van Dijk (2001, p302) pointed out that "dominance may be enacted and reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear 'natural' and quite 'acceptable'". By consuming the text, readers consume the ideologies of the author – the dominant one. During the interviews, the participants were trying to use the exact words the master said because Li clearly articulates in his book 'how Falun Dafa practitioners should spread the practice' (see chapter 6). This exemplifies who is dominant. The readers are subordinate consumers who are made 'not able' to reconstruct the '*fa*' in this hierarchical structure. "Cultivation depends on one's own efforts, while the transformation of *gong* is done by one's master" (Li, 2002, p34), Li said. Without a doubt, Master 'always' has more power than the followers.

One of the features of consumerism is *democratisation*. The idea of democratisation is that in order to encourage people to participate, power-asymmetrical words are avoided, such as high modality words. However, findings show that the book uses 'can't' and 'don't' often, which are high-power unequal words. These high modality words prohibit practitioners' behaviours. Nonetheless, to 'not do' something is also

something to do. Thus, by choosing to 'not do' certain things, participants own the powers to participate in their beliefs. Prohibitions and exclusion are tactics that preserve the importance of particular discourses (Wodak, 1996).

Combining colloquial use of language and the high modality style of wording in the text demonstrates the trends of hybridity of discourse (Fairclough, 1992, p98) and the phenomena of technologization of discourse (Fairclough, 1992).

The text and the ideologies in the text are commodified to sell. The text utilised language from other social fields, such as infomercial (which is known as *technologization*). According to the findings, the result of cultivation and practising Falun Dafa or Falun Gong will give a person 'guaranteed satisfaction' (Heather, 2002) and 'immediate outcomes', such as looking younger, healthier and living a better life. The 'product' sold highlights its own effectiveness (you don't need to read it again and again, read only once and it will guide you for a long time; it shortens the course of practice; you don't need to physically face a certain direction and don't require a certain way to end when practising) and the outcome is remarkable (you look younger than those of your age). The purpose of this marketing language is simply to make the 'religion' *saleable* (Heather, 2000).

The conceptual idea of *commodification* is the '*production, distribution* and *consumption*' of the product (Fairclough, 1992; Heather, 2000). The products are produced by Master Li and the followers, and are then distributed to individuals. Once individuals have consumed the ideas or ideologies, the same cycle starts again. A person tells another person. They tell their friends how good Falun Dafa is – they re-commodify it. By consuming the text, each person then inherits the power to reproduce the process of *commodification* (production, distribution and consumption). Thus, the ideology of Falun Gong perpetuates itself.

One unique quality of consumerism is 'regulation' (Fairclough 1992). Master Li states (Li, 2002, p142):

> "you can only use my original words to say it, adding that this is how *Teacher* says it or how it is written in the book. You can only say it this way. Why? Because when you say it this way it will carry the power of Dafa. You can not spread the things that you know as Falun Dafa, otherwise, what you pass on is not Falun Dafa, if you say something according to your ideas and your mind, it is not the Fa and cannot save people; neither will it have any effect. Therefore, nobody else can teach this Fa".

That is to say if you don't do it a certain way, 'it's not gonna work'. Because of the nature of this product, it is regulated by rules – the rules set up by the dominant.

7.5 Commitment at personal and group level

Cutting (2000, p10) mentions that linguistic in-group markers, such as the use of 'we' are features reflecting tendencies and global assessments (e.g. we are better than…). Also the use of 'specificity' (e.g. 'practitioner' instead of 'these people' or the use of a person's name 'Peter' instead of 'that person') indicates 'immediacy' or 'intimacy'. Findings show that the use of 'people' points to non-specific people (some people, many people); however, the use of 'practitioner' is a clear in-group marker signifying a strong in-group affiliation, and the use of 'we' contains a positive value to the speaker. The participants use statements such as: 'we are practitioners, we don't need to go to a doctor because we are well' or 'to cultivate is to suffer, we are practitioners therefore we are not afraid of suffering' to show a strong group relationship. Due to the goodness of the *'Dafa'*, therefore, each individual/ practitioner is linked with the

goodness. Furthermore the use of jargon and specific lexicon choices are evidence of 'in-house language', promoting identification.

Humour is another important in-group marker. Cutting (2000, p24) demonstrates "humorous utterances are markers of in-groupness because humour usually implies an expression of knowledge of values and attitudes and therefore emotion, and expressions of emotion are markers of intimacy". The use of humour requires the collective experiences of the participants as well as other topics that are discussed in the text. Therefore immediate intimacy is established by the pre-existing shared ownership of a mute, discoursal consent of the implicit 'form of life' or 'world view'.

The shared interpersonal knowledge creates a 'discourse community', which in the study is termed 'elitism'. In conventional discourse settings, this group is perceived as 'privileged'. Furthermore, Heather (2000) illustrates the idea of 'identity-by-exclusion' meaning the imposition of negative 'other' presentation (e.g. unlike those others, we have higher standard). According to findings, the participants identified themselves as 'practitioner'. The sturdy solidarity implies a strong commitment within this discourse and it is necessary to hold their ideological DNA – identity and social programming (Heather, 2000).

"Words produce meanings via social-discursive practice" (Philip & Jorgensen, 2002, p103). The meaning produced affects the physical reality. Meaning and social action mingle together and apply to the social realms. One cannot say that meaning is merely a 'side effect' or an 'after event' of society. The meaning of 'we' and 'practitioner' is socially and linguistically recognised as a different group of people from an established discourse community. However, without the ostentatious social practice of Falun Gong, the promised enlightenment and consequent superiority will not be fulfilled.

The discursive practice and social construction offers a framework for the participants' cognitive processes (Heather, 2000). The value and attitude participants have and how they see themselves are constructed socially and interactively. This mental process is known as *social cognition*. Social cognition is a shared ownership; it means the process of comminication in social world (Condor & Antaki, 1997). What is shared is the social consent and the consent is generated by specific discourse (van Dijk, 1997, 2001). People who share a certain background and memories tend to reach agreement on their social identification. In a group, people are intellectually involved as well as emotionally, the characteristics of a group are subjective. The readers are socially constructed as 'insiders' and thus consuming the text helps them in gaining coherence. Van Dijk points out that social cognition is normally associated with the exercise of power. When people put effort into a consumable item or 'idea', the person has to re-assess the value of the item and maintain it in order to maintain the inner consistency and coherence (Philip & Jorgensen, 2002). Once one cognizes his or her position in relation to others, his/her identity is appreciated by his/her own explanatory recourse.

Condor & Antak (1997, p327) pointed out *attribution of cause* as a feature of social cognition, meaning "we take information about the event and work out what rationally is the most likely cause". Such mental process helps us to understand our world and respond to it properly. Moreover, such mental process is useful when maintaining internal coherence. The findings illustrate how the statements of collective experience in the discourse influence participants' explanations of natural phenomena (if one has an upset stomach, it is the Gong that is cleaning the body; if one has a cold, it is something one has done wrong; if one cannot feel the Gong, one has not reached the level). As Condor & Antak (1997, p328) stated:

"The relevance to discourse of this is that it gives a deterministic mechanism that explains why people arrive at a certain explanation merely as a matter of the idiosyncrasies of the mental apparatus they are saddled with".

The attitude of seeking the causation of events and giving plausible reasons is to be 'knowledgeable'. That is to say, if one has read Zhuan Falun, one should understand why these events/phenomena happened; likewise, if one has not engaged with the 'knowledgeable' *Falun Dafa* one may not agree, will not have the same 'knowledge' or would not experience the same thing. Therefore, the participants' intellectual judgements are convinced and are ultimately reliable, impregnable, rather than simply superstitious. Holt (1999, p.6) characterised religious language as "self-involving, or performative for the self, in the sense that it provides persistent grounds for action". An implication of this is that one can only criticise religion if one views it from the 'inside', because this type of language is self-involving and represents a way of living, a form of life, it not only serves people at a linguistic level but physiologically and psychologically as well. Statement like "you are practitioners, shouldn't you be required to meet a higher standard?" (Li, 2002, p157) is leading the reader to self-cognise as a 'practitioner', subsequently cultivating to meet a higher standard, and consequently living an 'altered life'.

Social cognition is also the combination of intertextuality and consumerism. Our values and evaluation of others are intertextually connected by an assertion regarding the existence of other social-discursive activities. In the particular Falun Gong text, intertextuality is shown by the lexicon choices and the cultural – linguistic grammar (Heather 2000, p297). The intertextual relationship is connected with assumption and presupposition. The accumulated consumptions of (other) texts are like filler that fill the slots of our inner consistency and coherence. To consume the text is to consume

the ideology. By accepting the idea given in the text, readers (practitioners) locate their identity; ultimately readers find an inviolate explanation for what they believe, so that conclusively, "what people perceive as real is real in its social consequences"(Hewstone & Giles, 1986, p10).

7.6 Conclusion

Falun Gong is a newly developed religion. It markets many of the virtues of old religions, such as, doing good to others, being generous, having good social and moral values, and provides a utopic image of society. The marketing strategies of Falun Gong have been spectacularly successful in such a short time (about 10 years). With the help of CDA analytical tools, the study has found that the main ways Falun Gong seeks to recruit and maintain a burgeoning membership are:

- The use of intertextuality and hybridity of text, which utilises language from various traditional Chinese religions and other social fields, such as scientific evidence, fictional narrative and medical dialogue, thus reinforcing the existing belief(s) of the followers.

- The use of consumerist language for marketization of a new religious product. This strategy makes this new religion 'saleable'. The sales language involved constructs 'belief' as a 'consumable commodity'.

- By consuming the text, readers form identities and a commitment frame. Followers identify themselves as an 'elite' and maintain this identity as part of their 'world view'.

Interestingly, these techniques of ideological formation are strikingly similar to the strategies of new Christian fundamentalist churches (Heather, 2000).

Though Falun Gong is a modern day religion, it connects the traditional values with a broadly new-age point of view. The product it creates linguistically is the promise of access to a person's innately good nature along with good health and good interpersonal relationships, through the following of a vague 'universal law', which is the ultimate truth in the universe.

As a modern-day religion it is challenged to provide a view that is progressive and compatible with modernity's scientific development. The Falun Gong text thus appeals in various allusions to striking scientific evidence, thereby reassuring converts of its up-to-dateness.

Since organised religion should have a philosophical base of its own, the teaching of the Masters seems to contain a well-organised system of ideas; even though the logic of the details is very dubious.

The study of the characteristics of Falun Gong is useful in enabling us to understand the similarities of all distinctively modern religious discourse, which represents a new genre. By analysing its characteristics we are able to illuminate the salient features of this type of neo–discourse. To succeed in the persuasive use of such language, one must accentuate the intertextual relation between not only normal reality and the liberating potential of the new ideology, but also their relationship with traditional culture, belief systems and patterns of thought. This study provides evidence for the usefulness of CDA as a suitable methodology for whole text analysis, especially when the subject is at a cultural-linguistic level.

7.7 Suggestion for further research

1. Comparing Falun Gong with other modern Chinese religions such as 'Yiguandao'.

This study utilised Heather's (2000) work as a guideline; however, Heather focuses on the traditional western religion – Christianity. The precedent of Heather's work is helpful in providing a general understanding of 'what's happening in religion in the modern world'. To compare Falun Gong with other modern Chinese religions will give insights into modern religious movements in a cultural-specific context. Also by so doing, the distinctive characteristics of Falun Gong can be sounded, as opposed to cultural generalisation.

2. Using sets of questions to conduct interviews as opposed to using open-ended questions. (e.g. Did you previously have another religious believe? Do you feel any difference in your body /mind condition?)

When talking about topics that are abstract, an open-ended question sometimes does not give a direction for interviewees to follow, thus misunderstanding occurs and time is wasted. This is not to say the researcher should 'lead' the interview, but to make the interview more organised specific questions could be styled.

3. An investigation of hostility towards the Falun Gong 'religion/philosophy': socio-cultural, political correlates of specific criticism.

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APPENDICES

Appendix One: Word Frequency and Collocational List

       (A) Word Frequency Lists

       (B) Concordance Lists

       (C) Collocates Lists

       (D) Cluster Lists

Appendix Two: Sample of Six Interviews