FAMILY DYNAMICS THROUGH DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN 'HOW TO MAKE MILLIONS BEFORE GRANDMA DIES' MOVIE

Salsabil Putri Setiawan
Universitas Negeri Medan

Nurul Nabila Lubis *[1]
Universitas Negeri Medan
nurulnabila0609@gmail.com

Grace Fanesya Ginting
Universitas Negeri Medan

Efani Margareth Ginting
Universitas Negeri Medan

Abstract
This study applies Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the complex interplay of economic struggles, inheritance dynamics, and societal expectations within familial relationships as depicted in the movie 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies.' Through a qualitative examination of characters' dialogues and actions, the analysis reveals how economic pressures profoundly impact family dynamics, often leading to conflicts driven by financial necessity over traditional values of filial piety. The discourse on inheritance further illuminates entrenched gender biases, highlighting the preference for male heirs in the distribution of familial wealth and property. Fairclough's framework facilitates a nuanced understanding of power dynamics embedded in these discourses, emphasizing their role in shaping identities and relationships within the family unit. This research contributes insights into the broader implications for familial cohesion and societal norms, underscoring the challenges posed by economic inequalities and the evolving nature of familial roles in contemporary contexts.
Keywords*: culture, discourse analysis, economic pressure, family dynamics, inheritance.

INTRODUCTION

The intricacies of family dynamics are often reflected in the ways members communicate with each other. These interactions, laden with nuances of power, emotion, and aspiration, provide a window into the complexities of familial relationships. In the film 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies,' directed by Pat Boonnitipat, these dynamics are vividly portrayed as characters navigate their ambitions amidst familial bonds. Through the lens of discourse analysis, this article

---

[1] Correspondence author

delves into how language and communication patterns within the film shed light on the evolving relationships and tensions within the family. By examining key dialogues and interactions, we explore themes of ambition, generational conflict, and emotional dynamics, offering insights into the universal complexities of family life depicted in this compelling narrative.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) serves as the lens through which we examine the dialogues, interactions, and linguistic choices of the characters. CDA is a research methodology that scrutinizes the use of language to uncover power dynamics, ideological influences, and social structures embedded within discourse. Writer will apply CDA to 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies,' we aim to uncover how language shapes and reflects familial relationships, sheds light on underlying tensions, and portrays the characters' aspirations and conflicts. Through this analytical approach, we illuminate the broader implications of family dynamics depicted in the film, offering nuanced interpretations and valuable insights into the complexities of familial interactions and aspirations portrayed on screen.

According to (Fairclough, Critical Discourse Analysis - The Critical Study of Language 2nd Ed., 2010) theories, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) combines social analysis with linguistic studies to explore how discourse reflects and shapes social power dynamics and ideologies. Drawing from Marxist theory, Fairclough argues that social realities are mediated through language, involving both material and semiotic elements. His CDA method involves a detailed analysis of texts, examining their linguistic features, the context of their production and consumption, and their broader social implications. Key concepts in Fairclough's CDA include interdiscursivity, ideology, and power, and the analysis of genres and styles within texts. Fairclough's work, such as his analysis of political speeches and public finance discourse, demonstrates how language can simplify complex issues and promote certain ideological perspectives. Over time, Fairclough's CDA has evolved, influencing numerous scholars and extending its application across various fields. His interdisciplinary approach, which bridges linguistic analysis with social critique, provides a robust framework for understanding and addressing social inequalities and injustices through the lens of discourse.

The film 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies' exemplifies Krzyżanowski's insights. It portrays economic behaviours and decisions through characters' dialogues and narratives, showing how they justify their financial aspirations. Integrating Krzyżanowski's perspectives on CDA and the economy into this analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between language, power, and economic realities in the film, enhancing our grasp of the role of language in shaping economic perceptions and behaviours.

According to Krzyżanowski, economic phenomena are deeply intertwined with discourse, which reflects, constructs, and legitimizes economic policies and

public perceptions (Samec, Hájek, Kaderka, & Nekvapi, 2017).He emphasizes that examining both micro-level interactions and macro-level structures is crucial for understanding economic discourse. Krzyżanowski suggests that CDA can reveal how language influences economic actions and policies, and how these are communicated and perceived by the public, especially in media representations like films and TV shows.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, chosen for its ability to provide clear and precise analysis and description of the research subject. This study employs Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework, which comprises three interconnected dimensions: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. The first dimension, text analysis, involves scrutinizing textual data to understand how linguistic elements are manifested through representations, relations, and identities. The second dimension, discourse practice, investigates the production and consumption processes of texts. This research focuses on analysing comments pertaining to the film 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies.' The third dimension, sociocultural practice, explores the broader societal, cultural, and political contexts that shape and influence the emergence and reception of texts (Fairclough, Critical Discourse Analysis - The Critical Study of Language 2nd Ed., 2010).

The research design is qualitative, focusing on textual analysis of both the movie 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies' and relevant social media reviews. Data collection involves two main sources: first, the movie itself is analysed extensively to identify language choices, narrative structures, and discursive strategies employed. Second, data from social media platforms are gathered, comprising reviews and discussions posted by viewers after watching the movie. This dual-source approach allows for a comprehensive examination of how discourse is constructed, negotiated, and contested within the film and its reception in public discourse. Ethical considerations include ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of social media users quoted in the analysis. The findings aim to contribute to the understanding of how language and discourse shape perceptions, ideologies, and social realities within contemporary media contexts.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
Micro Level Analysis

In this stage, researchers undertake a meticulous examination of the text, focusing on its vocabulary, grammatical constructions, and structural elements in accordance with Fairclough's theoretical framework. This comprehensive analysis is designed to elucidate the latent meanings and ideological nuances embedded within the article. By scrutinizing the linguistic choices and syntactic arrangements, the

study aims to reveal the power dynamics, social relationships, and discursive practices that the text perpetuates or challenges. This approach not only provides a deeper understanding of the content but also situates it within the broader socio-political and cultural context, highlighting how language functions as a tool of social practice and influence.

1. "Maybe Akong is already happy in his new place, that's why he never comes."
This sentence reflects a sense of resignation and perhaps a hint of sadness. 'Akong' likely refers to a grandfather or an elder, in this case, it's M's grandfather and the speaker seems to be rationalizing Akong's absence by suggesting he is content wherever he is now. This imply Akong has passed away and the speaker is trying to find comfort in the thought that he is happy, even though it means he no longer visits.

2. "I hate the day after Chinese New Year, when everyone left, with leftover food inside the refrigerator. And I have to finish them all alone."
This sentence expresses a feeling of loneliness and the burden of dealing with the aftermath of a celebration. The speaker (Amah) dislikes the stark contrast between the joy and togetherness of Chinese New Year and the loneliness that follows once everyone has departed. The leftover food symbolizes the remnants of the celebration, and having to finish it alone underscores the speaker's sense of isolation.

3. "Why am I not your number one?"
Reflects M's feelings, who has been caring for their grandmother from the beginning but doesn't feel appreciated or prioritized as the grandmother's number one. This understanding indicates that the speaker feels frustrated and hurt because, despite his efforts in caring for their grandmother, he doesn't feel valued or recognized as the most important person by her.

4. "Sons inherit the house. Daughters inherit cancer."
Highlights the unequal treatment of daughters in families. It points out that daughters frequently shoulder caregiving responsibilities without acknowledgment or compensation, often at the expense of their own needs and aspirations. This phrase critically reflects on societal norms and biases that perpetuate gender inequality and the unjust treatment of daughters within familial dynamics.

5. "You also plant to reap the harvest, don't you?"
This sentence is a satire on M who also hopes to get the inheritance (Amah's house) because he suddenly stayed and took care of Amah after Amah got cancer.

6. "This pomegranate was planted when you were born, and you asked me to keep it just for you."

This dialogue occurs when Soei (M's uncle) wants to pick a pomegranate in Amah's yard, but Amah forbids him because she wants to give the fruit to M. This is because the fruit was planted when M was born as a symbol of fertility and abundance. Because in Chinese tradition or culture, pomegranates mean fertility and abundance.

Meso Level Analysis

The meso stage of analysis, writers delve into how the movie directed by Pat Boonnitipat is interpreted by its audience and examines the viewers' reactions to it, drawing upon evidence from social media posts and comments. This stage involves collecting and analysing a diverse array of audience feedback to understand the various interpretations and emotional responses elicited by the film. By examining the discourse present in these online interactions, the writer can identify common themes, sentiments, and critiques, thereby gaining insight into the broader cultural reception and impact of the movie. This evidence-based approach provides a nuanced understanding of the audience's engagement with the film and highlights the social dynamics at play in the interpretation of cinematic works.

juls ☀️   Follow ...

as someone who never had the chance to become a full-time granddaughter, this movie hits hard. it's not a complex story but it really did well in stirring my emotions. it's also amazing to see both the differences and similarities of our culture 😭🫶

Figure 1.

The text from figure 1 expresses a personal reflection on this movie. So, the speaker has never cared for or been close to her grandmother or grandfather. This film is very heartfelt. Although the story was simple, the film was enough to ruffle the speaker feathers. Additionally, the speaker was fascinating to observe the cultural differences and similarities depicted in the film.

Jangan ditahan, keluarin aja semuanya biarlah mengalir deras.

Itu yang gua alami saat nonton how to make millions before grandma dies. Film ini ngebawa kehangatan, nostalgia, kasih sayang, dan sangat personal. Dibawa dengan lembut dengan penceritaan slice of life yang sederhana bikin cerita ini semakin dekat dengan audience karena relatable. Hubungan antar karakter semuanya mengalir secara natural. Semuanya memiliki peran penting untuk perkembangan sang tokoh yang dihighlight. Babak 3rd actnya siap-siap mengganggu emosi, karena akan dikuras.

Figure 2.

The text in figure 2 reveals that viewers experienced warmth, nostalgia, affection, and a deeply personal connection to the movie. The gentle storytelling and slice-of-life narrative resonate with audiences, making the story relatable. This emotional engagement is evidenced by natural and fluid interactions between characters, which are crucial for character development.

Moreover, the film's exploration of family dynamics significantly enhances its relatability and emotional impact. The portrayal of familial relationships, filled with love, support, and sometimes conflict, mirrors the complexities of real-life family interactions. This connection is further reinforced by social media comments and feedback, which highlight how the movie's depiction of family bonds and generational ties resonates with viewers' own experiences. The analysis of these responses indicates that the climax, or third act, is particularly impactful, eliciting strong emotional reactions from the audience. This demonstrates the film's ability to deeply engage its viewers and evoke significant emotional responses through its authentic representation of family dynamics.

Macro Level Analysis

This analysis focuses on the discourse's social decisiveness, and the history and the result of its past struggles. While social structures demonstrate power relations, social progress and practices represent power struggles. As a conclusion, it can be said that discourses are a part of processes of social struggle within matrix of relation of power (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). To summarize, a social phenomenon as movie both to enrich experience and these experiences it's seen as an important way to share people not just entertainment it can also providing thought in addition movies can have positive effects as well as negative effects can be found. (Gupta & Mathur, 2020)

As in the movie 'How to Make Million Before Grandma Dies', the narrative intricately weaves together social commentary and cultural reflections. M's initial exploitation of Amah starkly portrays prevalent issues of familial neglect and the financial exploitation of elderly relatives. Amah's steadfast commitment to selling congee despite her declining health poignantly illustrates broader societal challenges such as elder neglect and the economic pressures facing seniors. The strained relationship between Amah and her children exposes a generational gap where traditional values of filial piety seem eroded, replaced by materialistic pursuits and emotional detachment. However, as M's character evolves, his transformation from self-serving intentions to a genuine desire to care for Amah unfolds a narrative of moral redemption. This shift prompts viewers to reflect on the profound significance of familial bonds and the consequences of neglecting elderly family members in

pursuit of personal gain. Ultimately, the film serves as a compelling critique of contemporary attitudes towards aging, familial responsibilities, and the evolving dynamics of intergenerational relationships in modern society.

By analysing the discourse in 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies' through Fairclough's CDA, we uncover how the film critiques and reflects broader social issues such as elder neglect, changing family dynamics, and societal values. It prompts viewers to critically reflect on the implications of these discourses on individual behaviour and societal norms regarding care for elderly family members.

The Impact of Economic Struggles on Family Relationships

In 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies,' the economic struggles faced by the characters profoundly impact their family relationships, illustrating how financial pressures can fracture familial bonds. The middle son's willingness to take his mother's money for his own needs, despite her medical expenses, highlights how dire financial situations can drive individuals to act out of self-interest rather than familial loyalty. Meanwhile, the first son's obsession with the inheritance over his mother's health underscores the corrosive effect of wealth anticipation on family dynamics. These examples from the film poignantly depict how economic hardship and the lure of inheritance can overshadow emotional connections, leading to conflicts and a breakdown in family unity.

For instance, the middle son's language when discussing his financial needs often masks his exploitation of Amah resources as a form of necessary pragmatism. This reflects a shift from traditional Asian cultural values of filial piety to a more individualistic approach driven by economic necessity. Similarly, the first son's conversations about inheritance are laced with entitlement and disregard for his mother's wellbeing, highlighting a commodification of familial relationships that contrasts sharply with cultural expectations of elder care and respect.

By analysing these dialogues and their context, we can see how economic struggles disrupt traditional family roles and expectations. The characters' speech acts, their choices of words, and the power relations embedded in their interactions provide a deeper understanding of how financial hardship can lead to a reconfiguration of family dynamics, revealing the complex interplay between culture, economy, and communication in the film.

The Role of Inheritance in Shaping Family Futures

The phrase "Sons inherit the house. Daughters inherit cancer" encapsulates a profound commentary on the gendered dynamics of inheritance prevalent in many Asian cultures. This cultural axiom reflects a longstanding tradition where sons are typically favoured in receiving the family's tangible assets, such as property or businesses ('the house'), while daughters often receive lesser substantial

inheritances or none at all, sometimes metaphorically referred to as inheriting 'cancer'— an intangible burden or disadvantage.

In the movie, Chew receives no inheritance from Amah while her son, despite his involvement in wrongdoing, inherits, the narrative poignantly mirrors this cultural reality. This scenario highlights the deep-rooted gender biases within familial structures, where male heirs are prioritized over female heirs in matters of wealth distribution and inheritance. In Chinese customary law, inheritance is defined as the continuation of the heir's identity with all of its effects. It is stated to continue the identity since the Chinese community has a clan, which can only be passed down through boys, but girls, if married, would follow the clan of their husbands, therefore daughters cannot continue their family clan or identity of the heir (Budiarta, 2022). Such practices not only perpetuate gender inequality but also reinforce traditional roles and expectations within Asian societies.

There is another scene from this movie, one tradition that strongly holds the plot of the film. *Cheng Beng*, the concrete meaning of which is cleaning, weeding the grave, they strongly believe in this teaching which is actually serving the ancestors (Suharyanto, Matondang, & Walhidayat, 2018). They strongly believe in this teaching which is actually serving the ancestors. Devotion (benevolence to the ancestors is very important (including respecting the spirits of the ancestors). On this occasion, all the extended family gathered in the same ancestral bond, will go to the burial place to pray. At the *Cheng Beng* ceremony, the number of people in the same ancestral lineage becomes even greater.

Knowing that she was not going to live long, Amah wanted to have a luxurious grave so that when she died, her children and grandchildren would not be embarrassed and visit her grave frequently. Amah tried to visit her older brother to ask for money, but he refused and even chased her away. He told her not to ask him for anything, because of Amah's decision to marry into a poor family. In this case, socially, this tradition encourages the family to maintain solidarity and keeps family relationships intact.

Through the lens of discourse analysis, this disparity in inheritance can be further explored to reveal underlying power dynamics and societal norms. It underscores how inheritance practices serve as a microcosm of broader gender dynamics, shaping individuals' identities and roles within their families and communities. This analysis prompts critical reflection on the persistence of gender inequality and the need for cultural shifts towards more equitable practices in inheritance and beyond.

Economic Pressures and Social Expectation

In the movie, the dialogue "You also plant to reap the harvest, don't you?" satirizes M's desire for his grandmother's inheritance out of economic necessity. M

faces intense economic pressure, driven by his need for immediate funds, possibly to alleviate financial struggles or meet societal expectations of financial stability. This pressure mounts as his mother consistently questions his income, highlighting societal norms where offspring are expected to achieve financial independence and support their families. M's almost reckless decision to consider selling his grandmother's house underscores the lengths he's willing to go to carry out these expectations and alleviate his economic woes, revealing deeper themes of economic pressures and social expectations within the narrative. There are societal or familial expectations regarding financial independence and responsibility. M's mother insistence on knowing about his income reflects these expectations. In many cultures, children are expected to eventually become financially stable and even support their parents or grandparents. The film illustrates how M's financial hardships impact his relationships with his family, especially his grandmother, who feels deeply hurt by her children's lack of involvement in her life.

The study of social transformation processes, as highlighted in the movie's portrayal of economic pressures and social expectations surrounding inheritance, offers crucial insights into societal development (Hasegawa, Shinohara, & Broadbent, 2007). In the movie, M's dilemma reflects broader societal challenges where economic inequalities and familial expectations intersect. By examining how individuals like M navigate these pressures, we gain insights into why some societies successfully transition towards a robust civil society while others struggle. The tensions portrayed—between economic necessity, familial obligations, and societal norms—mirror real-world complexities that shape social structures and transitions. Understanding these dynamics helps illuminate the factors influencing societal evolution, shedding light on the conditions that either facilitate or hinder the development of a cohesive civil society.

Additionally, the movie delves into the social expectations within the family, particularly the patriarchal culture that prioritizes sons over daughters. M's grandmother, Amah, is portrayed as a strong and independent figure who is deeply pained by her children's disengagement. The film highlights the significance of family harmony and the necessity for younger generations to appreciate and respect their elders. The movie's depiction of economic pressures and social expectations resonates with many Asian families, where the values of family and tradition are profoundly embedded.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the application of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies' elucidates the profound socio-cultural ramifications of economic struggles, inheritance dynamics, and societal expectations within familial contexts. The analysis reveals how economic pressures

depicted in the film intricately impact familial cohesion, often prompting conflicts between financial imperatives and traditional values of filial duty. Dialogic exchanges among characters underscore a notable tension where economic adversities compel individuals to prioritize personal economic gains over communal solidarity, reflecting prevalent socio-economic norms that prioritize individualistic pursuits over collective familial obligations.

The discourse surrounding inheritance serves as a microcosm of entrenched gender biases, wherein the narrative portrays a systematic preference for male heirs in the allocation of familial assets. This aspect of the analysis highlights how inheritance practices reinforce and perpetuate gender inequities within familial hierarchies, emblematic of broader societal paradigms and cultural expectations. Fairclough's analytical framework adeptly reveals these power dynamics embedded in discourse, offering insights into their formative role in shaping familial identities and interpersonal relationships.

The study contributes nuanced perspectives on the evolving landscape of familial roles and responsibilities in contemporary society. It underscores the complexities posed by economic disparities and societal pressures, which reconfigure traditional familial norms and behaviours. Through meticulous scrutiny of characters' speech acts, linguistic choices, and negotiation strategies, the analysis unveils the intricate interplay between economic constraints, cultural conventions, and interpersonal dynamics depicted in the film. This research fosters critical discourse on the broader implications for familial coherence, gender parity, and societal values, advocating for transformative frameworks that advocate for societal equity and harmonious familial relations across diverse socio-cultural milieus. Ultimately, this study advocates for deeper scholarly engagement with the socio-cultural dynamics of economic pressures and inheritance practices in influencing familial relationships. By employing CDA as a methodological lens, the research contributes to ongoing scholarly debates in family studies, cultural anthropology, and gender studies, emphasizing the imperative for progressive approaches that champion societal justice and familial solidarity in diverse global contexts.

REFERENCES

Budiarta, L. (2022). Inheritance Law Arrangements for The Chinese Community Regarding Inheritance Not Included In A Will. *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law*, 367-372.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power.* New York: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis - The Critical Study of Language 2nd Ed.* London: Routledge.

Gölbaşı, A. P. (2017). Critical Approach in Social Research: Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis . *The Online Journal of Communication and Media*, 5-18.

Gupta, R., & Mathur, V. (2020). The Social and Cultural Impact of Movie. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry (TOJQI)*, 2187-2190.

Hussein, D. A. (2013). Language Use and Family Dynamics: A Discourse Analysis Study. *Nasaq Journal*, 1207-1222.

Mukhroji, M. (2016). Critical Discourse Analysis on TV Program of Indonesian Lawyer Club in Perspective of Norman Fairclough. *KONSTRUKTIVISME*, 45-54.

Nonhoff, M. (2017). Discourse analysis as critique. *Palgrove Communication*, 11-11.

Samec, T., Hájek, M., Kaderka, P., & Nekvapi, J. (2017). Critical Discourse Analysis and Economy: An Interview with Michał Krzyżanowski. *STUDIE Z APLIKOVANÉ LINGVISTIKY 2*, 65-76.

Sasmitha, N. W. (2023). Analisis Wacana Kritis Norman Fairclough dalam Stand-Up Comedy Mamat Alkatiri pada Program "Somasi". *POLITICOS: Jurnal Politik dan Pemerintahan*, 44-58.

Suharyanto, A., Matondang, A., & Walhidayat, T. (2018). Makna Upacara Cheng Beng Pada Masyarakat Etnis Tionghoa di Medan. *Seminar Nasional Pakar ke 1*, 21-26.

Supachart, W. (2019). The Review Analysis of China's Economic Growth and the Correlations with Thailand's Economy. *Business, Management and Economics Research*, 86-97.

Tunziyah, & Ri'aeni, I. (2019). Analisis Wacana Kritis Konstruksi Konflik Keluarga dalam Film Cek Toko Sebelah . *Jurnal Lontar*, 71-88.