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RESEARCH PAPER

A Critical Discourse Analysis of President Barack Obama's Cairo Speech *"A New Beginning"*

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to uncover language and power relationships by looking into hidden ideologies present in President Barack Obama's political speech at Cairo University. Language has a significant impact on what and how people speak, and others' perceptions of this use of language in political discourse can be either positive or negative. In any system, politicians frequently use language as a tool to establish their authority and persuade the public of their beliefs. The paper focus on Mr. Obama's spoken political discourse qualitatively in order to understand his word choices and determine how they represent his intentions in the political sphere. For this reason, the Fairclough three-dimensional model served as the theoretical foundation for an analysis of Mr. Barack Obama's "A New Beginning" speech at Cairo University. The Investigation demonstrates a number of conclusions, including Mr. Obama's use of language and rhetoric to influence the audience, forge strong ties with the Muslim community, and assert US dominance over global affairs.

| **KEYWORDS** | Fairclough's 3-Dimensional, Language and Power, Muslims, Political Discourse, Rhetorical Strategies, Spoken Text |

Introduction

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) views language as a basic component of social and cultural practices. It was formerly known as critical language study or critical linguistics (Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough, 1995; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). According to Fairclough (1989), the goal of this method is to raise awareness of exploitative social interactions generally by emphasizing on language. Additionally, he makes the case that CDA is concerned with examining the connections among language's dominance, discrimination, power, and control (Fairclough, 1992; 1999). Making the relationship between social practice and discourse practice explicit is the goal of CDA. (Fairclough, 1995).

A form of discourse analysis research known as critical discourse analysis (CDA) focuses on how text and talk are used in social and political contexts to enact, reproduce, and fight social power abuse, dominance, and inequality. Critical discourse analysts adopt an explicit stance with such dissident research, seeking to comprehend, reveal, and eventually oppose social equality. (Van Dijik, 1985).

A language is a means of communication. Putting ideas and thoughts in front of other people is beneficial. A person's language is a reflection of their cultural identity. Language functions in a variety of societal contexts, including politics, institutions,

education, religion, and a host of other domains. Because language use is so instinctive, it can be challenging to pinpoint the many roles that languages play in a community. Discourse is the language of action in a particular setting. It encompasses a number of texts and is used to indicate language that is more complex than a phrase (M. Imran Sha, Rafia Alyas, 2019). Political speakers use language to transmit their prearranged, staged, and controlled objectives to the audience in an effort to provoke, win over, and influence them towards their intended meanings and purposes. (Woods, 2006). Language doesn't have power on its own; politicians, orators, and other influential people utilise language to their advantage. This explains why it is possible to critically and closely examine how those powerful individuals use language. For example, a text's genre or its linguistic structures can indicate power (Renkema, 2009).

The information comes from a speech given on June 4, 2009, at Cairo University in Cairo, Egypt, by US President Barrack Obama titled "A new beginning." Although this information is readily available on other websites, it is selected and extracted from the "official" White House website for a variety of reasons. However, in order to make sure that every word matches exactly what is published on the page, listening, watching, checking, and embedding have all been done. Regarding the text's content, Obama's Cairo speech is a significant address to a Muslim audience with the goal of mending the "break" that the previous president George W. Bush created by fostering new ties between the USA and the Muslim world. His lecture is titled "A New Beginning" for this reason. Millions of people worldwide have been greatly impacted by this speech, particularly Americans and Muslims.

The study aims to investigate the speech's "power" and the precise message Obama intended to convey to the Muslim community. Given that Fairclough (1992) contends that language must be viewed as an instrument of power in addition to being a means of communication, it is intriguing to evaluate this speech using the CDA framework from a variety of angles. There is actually a strategy behind language use that tries to influence participants to take specific activities. There are many researchers conducted on Obama speeches but they used Van Dijik model of CDA as theoretical framework. On the other hand, few researches used 3-D model of CDA by Fairclough as research methodology. These researches used not all the features of the 3-D model like lexical sets, modality, cohesion and coherence and grammatical structure. But present study analyzes the speech with different perspective and try to find out the hidden ideologies behind this speech. The Aim of this study to find out what rhetorical strategies used by Obama and how through lexical choices he articulates USA power.

Literature Review

Massoud Sharififar and Elahe Rahimi (2015) conducted a critical analysis of Obama and Rouhani's 2013 United Nations remarks. Analysing the two political leaders' speech-based power displays is the main goal of this study. The researchers employed the methodology of Halliday's systemic functional linguistics. The transitivity and modality systems were primarily used in the analysis to demonstrate how language functions to create power and an ideology in the speeches. The researchers compared the language usage of the two leaders statistically using a quantitative approach. After comparing the two politicians' studies, the researcher notes that both of them employed personal pronouns to establish a rapport with the public.

Sipra & Rashid (2013) conducted a different study used Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis model to evaluate the opening section of "When I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King. The study made an effort to examine "Martin

Luther King's speech" in light of social issues. The researchers came to the conclusion that unique textual and stylistic elements were employed during a speech to achieve particular goals.

The researchers Rehman, Ahmed, Shahzad, Azam, Iram, Ahmed, (2021) carried a qualitative investigation of "Accidently (Ga Sengaja)," a hilarious discourse film by Bintang Emon, using Norman Fairclough's discourse analysis methodology. The plan was to utilise Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA to analyse this text and determine whether or not Bintang Emon employed rhetorical figures. The researchers came to the conclusion that Bintang Emon cleverly employed rhetorical devices to convey his ideas in a lighthearted manner.

Al-Majali (2015) studied the political speeches given by the three deported Arab presidents between 2010 and 2012. For examination, the researchers choose the speeches given by Libyan President Muammar Al-Gaddafi, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarik, and President of Tanzania Zain Al-Aberdeen Bin Ali. The study's findings demonstrate that these presidents' everyday lives are not like the political statements they gave during the Arab Spring. Repetition, harmony, and enchantment were commonly employed as symbolic aspects, and the president's address was divorced from political beliefs and tactics intended to scare opponents.

Another study by Syarifuddin (2016) employs a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to critically analyse Barack Obama's Cairo speech, concentrating on important linguistic components such lexical choices, modality, cohesion, coherence, and the text's generic structure. It highlights the importance of Obama's well-chosen lexis, implying that it is crucial in determining how his audience interprets his message and proving his awareness of their faith. In addition, the research emphasises how the speech's cohesiveness is well-organized and supported by transitional and additive conjunctions, which enhance overall coherence. There is recognition that the general structure is well-organized, probably according to the introduction, body, and conclusion format. Although the essay offers a thorough examination of the key elements, it also recognises that more research may be necessary to examine other grammatical characteristics or elements within the CDA framework.

Kashmalah Ashraf, Durr-e-Nayab, Sana Tahir (2022) conducted a research with title of "Analyzing Language and Power Relationship; A Critical Discourse Analysis of Imran Khan's Speeches". This study focuses on two significant speeches given by former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan at major political gatherings: the 76th United Nations General Assembly (2021) and the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing (2019). By applying Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis model, the investigator pinpoints the language and rhetorical techniques that Khan utilises to establish his authority and sway. According to the analysis, Khan deliberately use politically charged language to promote foreign relations and highlight economic progress in order to present a favourable picture of Pakistan. The study comes to the conclusion that Khan demonstrates great leadership traits by carefully selecting phrases to motivate and influence others.

Theoretical Model

Fairclough 3-D model of CDA

The greatest analytical tools for examining the underlying motive conveyed by language are provided by CDA, as previously indicated; it sees language as a type of "social

practise." The Lancaster School of Linguists, of which Norman Fairclough was regarded as the most notable member, was largely responsible for the introduction of CDA. Fairclough (1995) asserts that language analysis as a "social phenomenon" in speaking and writing should be done via the prism of discourse. It was he that presented the three-dimensional CDA model. According to Fairclough (1989), every communicative event has three dimensions that should be examined in order to fully comprehend the discourse's or text's hidden meaning and to identify the rhetorical and ideological structures that are hidden in the language within a social, cultural or political context.

There are three levels of CDA in this three-dimensional model: social practise, discursive practise, and descriptive stage. First of all, the text description stage concentrates on linguistic elements including the vocabulary selection (us vs. them), text structure, grammar, and theme selection. The text is the object at this point, and the analysts should examine these linguistic characteristics methodically. The provided text may take any form, including spoken word, written word, visual picture, or a mix of these. Second, there is the discursive stage, also referred to as the interpretation stage, which is primarily concerned with the text and how it relates to the production process as well as serving as a tool for interpretation (Fairclough, 1989). Put another way, it is concentrated on the process of production, the people who make the discourse, who the consumers are, and how they consume it. This interpretive and analytical investigation of the text is quite detailed. Thirdly, speech and its society are crucial to the social practice, also referred to as the explanation stage. We examine conversation in this stage in the context of society (Ashraf, K., & Tahir, S.2022). Fairclough's approach is a three-step analytical procedure linked to the three interrelated discourse aspects listed below.
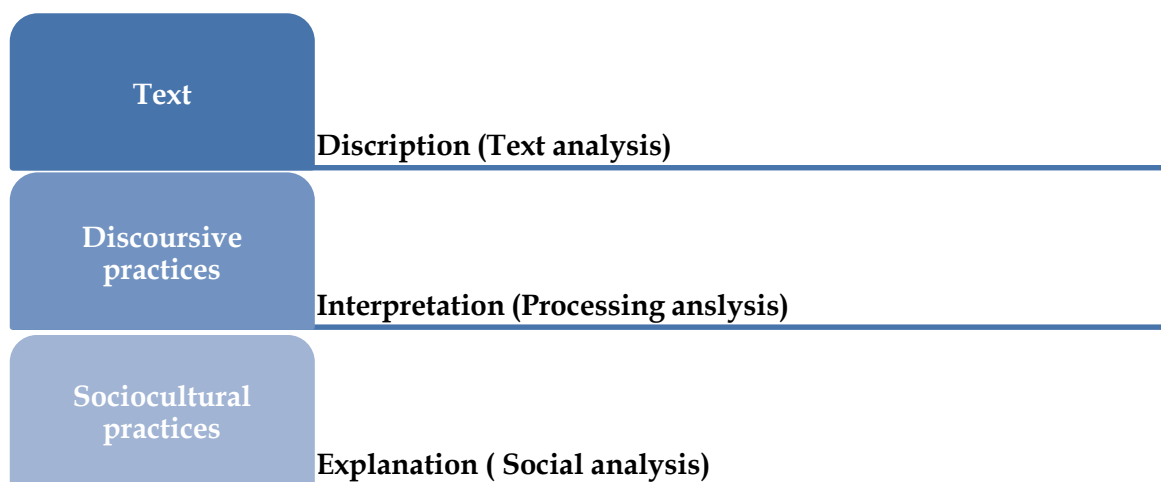
Text	Discription (Text analysis)
Discoursive practices	Interpretation (Processing anslysis)
Sociocultural practices	Explanation (Social analysis)

Figure 1: (Fairclough's 3D model, 1989 & 1995)

Material and Methods

The study is qualitative in nature as a result. The researcher will adhere to Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theoretical framework. Fairclough's 3D model provides analytical tools such as "description, interpretation, and explanation and a variety of other tools that are offered by CDA," which include strategies

for persuasion and referential language like positive and negative self-presentation, as well as the number of times they repeat themselves and how they assert their power. Through an analysis of Obama's use of rhetorical devices, language, and leadership language to convince and inspire people to believe in his political ideology and leadership qualities, the researcher hopes to expose the hidden meanings and ideologies that are purposefully inserted into the text.

Results and Discussion

Background and description of text

US President Barack Obama gave a speech titled "A New Beginning" on June 4, 2009, at Cairo University's Major Reception Hall in Egypt. The event was co-hosted by Al-Azhar University. In his 2008 presidential campaign, Obama pledged to deliver a significant speech to Muslims in his first few months as president, from a capital city of Muslims. This speech fulfils that commitment.

Egypt was picked because, according to White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs, "it is a country that in many ways represents the heart of the Arab world." Egypt is regarded as a major beneficiary of US military and economic assistance, as well as a prominent participant in the Middle East peace process. The speech would aim to repair U.S. relations with the Muslim world, which Reuters writer Ross Colvin stated were "severely damaged" under George W. Bush's presidency.

Interpretation and explanation

Main themes

Seeking a New Beginning: The need for a fresh start in relations between the US and nations with a majority of Muslims is the speech's main focus. Here are some textual references.

"I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition."

"The question is whether we spend that time focused on what pushes us apart or whether we commit ourselves to an effort, a sustained effort to find common ground, to focus on the future we seek for our children and to respect the dignity of all human beings."

Addressing Historical Tensions: The speech addresses topics like colonialism, the Cold War, and current conflicts while acknowledging historical difficulties between the US and countries with a majority of Muslims. It seeks to resolve these conflicts and create a more gratifying and cooperative partnership.

"There is so much fear, so much mistrust that has built up over the years."

"More recently, tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims and a Cold War in which Muslim majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations."

"Al Qaida killed nearly 3,000 people on that day. The victims were innocent men, women, and children from America and many other nations who had done nothing to harm anybody."

Confronting Violent Extremism: Obama stresses that the United States is not at war with Islam but rather with those who use violence against civilians as he denounces violent extremism and terrorism. He advocates teamwork in the fight against extremism.

"Violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims. The attacks of September 11, 2001, and the continued efforts of these extremists to engage in violence against civilians……….."

"When violent extremists operate in one stretch of mountains, people are endangered across an ocean. When innocents in Bosnia and Darfur are slaughtered, that is a stain on our collective conscience."

"We will, however, relentlessly confront violent extremists who pose a grave threat to our security because we reject the same thing that people of all faiths reject, the killing of innocent men, women, and children…………"

Fostering Middle East Peace: The speech discusses the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, urging a two-state resolution and stressing the necessity of both parties carrying out their obligations. The cycle of violence must also halt, according to it.

"Now, the second major source of tension that we need to discuss is the situation between Israelis, Palestinians and the Arab world."

"The only resolution is for the aspirations of both sides to be met through two states, where Israelis and Palestinians each live in peace and security."

"America will align our policies with those who pursue peace, and we will say in public what we say in private to Israelis and Palestinians and Arabs."

Nuclear Non-Proliferation: Obama says he is committed to working towards a nuclear-weapons-free world and talks about how important it is to stop a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. He discusses the issues raised by Iran's nuclear programme and urges communication and diplomacy.

"The third source of tension is our shared interest in the rights and responsibilities of nations on nuclear weapons. This issue has been a source of tension between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran."

"It's about preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that could lead this region and the world down a hugely dangerous path."

"And any nation, including Iran, should have the right to access peaceful nuclear power if it complies with its responsibilities under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. That commitment is at the core of the treaty. And it must be kept for all who fully abide by it."

Promoting Democracy: The speech emphasises the value of democracy while pointing out that every country has a unique method of putting it into practise. Obama encourages countries to respect minorities, represent popular will, and engage in compromise and tolerance in governance.

"I know there has been controversy about the promotion of democracy in recent years. And much of this controversy is connected to the war in Iraq. So let me be clear. No system of government can or should be imposed by one nation by any other. That does not lessen my commitment, however, to governments that reflect the will of the people."

"And we will welcome all elected, peaceful governments, provided they govern with respect for all their people......."

Religious Freedom: Obama is a supporter of religious freedom and tolerance in both Muslim-majority nations and around the world. He highlights the significance of resolving conflicts within the Muslim community and preserving the richness of religious diversity.

"The fifth issue that we must address together is religious freedom. Islam has a proud tradition of tolerance. We see it in the history of Andalusia and Cordoba during the Inquisition. I saw it firsthand as a child in Indonesia where devote Christians worshipped freely in an overwhelmingly Muslim country."

"Freedom of religion is central to the ability of peoples to live together. We must always examine the ways in which people protect it".

"That's why I'm committed to work with American Muslims to ensure that they can fulfill zakat."

Economic Development and Opportunity: Obama talks about the potential and problems presented by globalization, highlighting the value of creativity, education, and economic growth in nations with a majority of Muslims. He declares programme aimed at achieving these objectives.

"Finally, I want to discuss economic development and opportunity......."

"Trade can bring new wealth and opportunities but also huge disruptions and change in communities."

"On economic development, we will create a new core of business volunteers to partner with counterparts in Muslim majority countries."

Hope for the Future: The optimism for a better future, especially for young people, is a recurrent topic throughout the speech. Obama exhorts people to rethink the world and strive for harmony, understanding, and a common ground.

"Today, I'm announcing a new global effort with the organization of the Islamic Conference to eradicate polio. And we will also expand partnerships with Muslim communities to promote child and maternal health."

"All these things must be done in partnership. Americans are ready to join with citizens and governments, community organizations, religious leaders, and businesses in Muslim communities around the world to help our people pursue a better life.

"The people of the world can live together in peace. We know that is God's vision. Now that must be our work here on Earth."

Rhetorical strategies

Greetings

Another powerful rhetorical tool that leaders employ to convey unity with other individuals or leaders is the greeting. Here are a few citations from the provided context:

Barack Obama greets people with "Assalamu-alaikum" in the transcript of his address that is available. The exact textual reference is as follows:

"I'm grateful for your hospitality and the hospitality of the people of Egypt. And I'm also proud to carry with me the good will of the American people and a greeting of peace from Muslim communities in my country: Assalamu-alaikum."

Muslims frequently greet one another with the Arabic word "Assalamu-alaikum," which means "Peace be upon you" in English. Obama uses this salutation to convey his wish for harmony and goodwill between the Muslim and American communities.

Use of Pronouns 'we', 'us' and 'our'

Throughout the address, President Barack Obama frequently employed the pronouns "we," "us," and "our" in an effort to collectivise. Here are a few instances from the book:

"But I am convinced that in order to move forward, we must say openly to each other the things we hold in our hearts and that too often are said only behind closed doors. There must be a sustained effort to listen to each other, to learn from each other, to respect one another, and to seek common ground."

"Islamic culture has given us majestic arches and soaring spires, timeless poetry and cherished music, elegant calligraphy and places of peaceful contemplation."

In this instance, "us" refers to the United States, highlighting the importance of mutual understanding, communication, and collaboration amongst many communities and nations.

"And if **we** understand that the challenges **we** face are shared and **our** failure to meet them will hurt **us** all."

"For peace to come, it is time for them and all of **us** to live up to **our** responsibilities."

"**We** can't disguise hostility towards any religion behind the pretense of liberalism. In fact, faith should bring **us** together. And that's why **we**'re forging service projects in America to bring together Christians, Muslims, and Jews."

"All of **us** share this world for but a brief moment in time."

"The people of the world can live together in peace. We know that is God's vision. Now that must be **our** work here on Earth."

"Of course, recognizing **our** common humanity is only the beginning of **our** task………..And if we understand that the challenges **we** face are shared and our failure to meet **them** will hurt **us** all."

The terms "we" and "our" imply shared accountability for resolving issues and pursuing shared objectives.

Obama engages the audience and communicates that he and the groups he mentions are a part of a larger endeavour by using inclusive language.

All things considered, the use of these pronouns promotes solidarity, shared ideals, and a cooperative strategy for tackling global issues.

Model verbs

The word "must" is a modal verb that expresses necessity, obligation, or imperative in the passages taken from Barack Obama's speech. When Obama uses the word "must," he's expressing a forceful suggestion, a moral or ethical requirement, or a demand for action. Here are a few instances from the passage:

we **must** not be prisoners to it. Our problems **must** be dealt with through partnership, our progress **must** be shared.

Now, that does not mean we should ignore sources of tension. Indeed, it suggests the opposite. We **must** face these tensions squarely. And so, in that spirit, let me speak as clearly and as plainly as I can about some specific issues that I believe we **must** finally confront together.

The fifth issue that we **must** address together is religious freedom.

The richness of religious diversity **must** be upheld, whether it is for Maronites in Lebanon or the Copts in Egypt.

All these things **must** be done in partnership.

The word "must" emphasizes a sense of urgency and the significance of acting in a particular way to address the topics covered in the speech.

Lexical choices

The text contains numerous references to Islam, including terms like "Islam," "Muslim," "Holy Koran," "azaan," "assalamualikum," "zakat," and so on. The majority of these terms are Muslim(s), appearing 46 times, and Islam(ic), occurring 23 times. In contrast, the speaker makes reference to Christians six times, Jews nine times, and the Holy Bible just once. In relation to this word choice

Conclusion

The study in question has shown the covert motivation that former President Barack Obama utilized in his essay. Based on a detailed examination of the terms and phrases used in their political discourse, the research revealed that Obama has employed concealed ideologies and points of view. The researcher examined a spoken text to reveal the concealed viewpoint and the language politicians employ as a form of authority and control over others. The spoken text features the "A New Beginning" speech by Barack Obama in Cairo. In order to extract the hidden meaning from the spoken text, the researcher employed Critical Discourse analysis. Fairclough's three-dimensional model served as the main theoretical foundation for the investigation.

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that Obama's international speech gave the United States a positive international image. Obama's deft word choice and audacious ideas demonstrated his strong leadership abilities and ability to articulate his views for the country. Barack Obama tried to influence Muslims' perceptions of America by using politically charged rhetoric in his leadership style. His speech focused mostly on eradicating misconceptions between Islam and America and forging strong ties with Muslims around the globe. He discusses the radicals who assaulted Americans and were instrumental in taking advantage of the ties between Muslims and Americans. Obama made frequent references to Islam, the Quran, and Muslims throughout his speech. He also quoted numerous Quranic verses to sway the Muslim audience and convey his sincerity about the connection between the Muslim world and the United States. He employed rhetorical tactics in his address to convey the idea that America is a powerful nation that will not put up with bloodshed from fanatics.

According to the analysis and discussion, the choice of language may have an effect on how the listeners perceive and understand what the speaker says. It may also demonstrate to the listeners that the speaker is aware of their religion, that he is serious about establishing "a new beginning" with Muslims worldwide, that it leaves a positive impression on the audience, and that he values the Muslim audience. The usage of must in the phrases has deontic modality functions since the speaker is attempting to avoid making subjective judgements and talk as objectively as possible in order to convey a generic or logical viewpoint. Ultimately, additional study is still required to identify other grammatical traits or the CDA framework.

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