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A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Speeches of Three Egyptian Leaders: Saad Zaghloul, Mohamed Nageeb and Hosny Mubark

M.A dissertation in Linguistics

Submitted of the Department of English Language and Literature

Faculty of Women for Arts Science and Education

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2018

Abstract

Language is a powerful means which shapes politics. Both of them interact and depend upon one another. Hence, the present research examines the linguistic usage of the political speeches of three Egyptian leaders during the three revolutions, to clarify their domination of their people's mind. It applies the analytical tools of Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). After comparing the three speeches, the differences become clear. The results reveal that, on the one hand, the first two speeches of Saad Zaghloul and Mohamed Nageeb are declared for the sake of the people's freedom. They utilize certain discursive strategies to convince the public of their ideas, and this appears vividly in their lexical and grammatical choices. On the other hand, the results show that the third speech of Mubarak is declared to impose his ideologies. He uses manipulative discursive strategies in an attempt to control and dominate his people and influence their opinion and knowledge. In the first two speeches the people encourage their leaders, while, in the case of Mubarak, they insist on his stepping down.

Keywords: Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), Discursive Strategies

Acknowledgements

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious

First of all, I would like to express my deepest feeling of gratitude to Allah, the most merciful, who helped me to finalize this piece of work.

I would like to acknowledge my greatest appreciation to my supervisors. No words can express my deepest gratitude to Professor Ali Ezzat for his great guidance, advice and consideration in the process of completing this dissertation.

I would also wish to extend my sincere appreciation and utmost gratitude to Dr. Heba Ibrahim for her great support, her enormous help, and her valuable suggestions that helped me to improve on the study.

I owe my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Neveen Allam for her kindness, help and concern. She was always there when I needed her.

Special gratitude is due to my parents. I also wish to thank my husband and my two daughters Farida and Layan for their patience, support and help.

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List of abbreviations:

SFG: Systemic Functional Grammar

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

DHA: Discourse Historical Approach

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Introduction

0.1. Preamble

Language is a tool of expressing meaning, so whenever it is used, it conveys a message. The importance of language for man and society cannot be minimized. Society is a web of social relationships which imply development of social contacts. Shelly Shah (2016) states that language has simplified the conveyance of ideas and smoothed social contacts. This form of communication is the most important part of man's being; people connect effectively with their words, gestures and tone of voice. In addition, language reflects the character, identity, and personal feelings of the speaker whether he is happy, sad or angry (pp. 1-4). Overwhelmed by these feelings, the speaker chooses his words, which are also affected by his own ideology.

One of the most vital fields in which language is used is politics. Fatih Bayram (2010) states that "Politics is a struggle for power in order to put certain political, economic and social ideas into practice" (p. 24). From this perspective, language plays an important role, because every political action is played, influenced and accompanied by language. For a leader, who wants to have his domination over his country, must first of all dominate people's thoughts and ideas. That is why many linguists' concern is to analyze political discourses within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis.

In fact, powerful speakers can control the minds of their recipients. van Dijk (2006) states that Critical Discourse Analysis