



Power and Ideologies in Discourse: A Political Discourse Analysis of Biden's Selected Speeches

Mamona Yasmin Khan¹, Anab Fatima²

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Political discourse analysis is a field of critical discourse, used to interpret political text and talk in a political and social context. The present study aims to analyze the hidden ideologies and elements of power that reside in the political discourse of American president Joe Biden, which occurred during the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. Qualitative content analysis is employed within the framework of Fairclough (1989). Core findings of the study have suggested Biden's ideology of portraying his positive image and Afghanistan's negative image. Power relations are illustrated accumulatively in three stages of analysis through linguistic choices. This study is beneficial for raising the awareness of people regarding political context. Future researchers may explore persuasive strategies used in the same speeches of president Biden.

¹Associate professor, Department of English, The Women University Multan.

²Research Scholar, Department of English, The Women University Multan

INTRODUCTION

Language is a crucial element in the lives of human beings. For purpose of communication and reflecting notions of people, it is used as an instrument (Tariq, et al. 2020). The religious, political, and individual identity of a person can be observed via language. The transmission of ideas from one person to another is possible through various mediums and public speaking is one of them. Nikitina (2011) in his work described public speaking as an ability possessed by dominant and powerful figures of society for the sake of satisfying their interests. It is evident in the study of Wrence (2011) that important constituents of speechmaking are the speaker, institution, audience, the message, and the impact of words on the audience. The purpose of its delivery whether it is delivered to persuade or to get some benefits is also a crucial element.

Politicians speak publically on different occasions to fulfill different purposes. Presidents, as power-holding figures of the country, frequently hold the stage for confronting the audience to deliver policies and happenings in the country. So, it is the need of time for them to make their speaking efficacious and follow doctrines of public speaking. Leaders in the world have a different style for conveying the message, that holds different ideologies in them. “The United States of America” is a superpower with a giant structure so, its president holds all the power. He has authority over all the institutions, and his policies are followed without any objection (Haq, 2020). His policies also have hidden ideologies and elements of power either positive or negative. To know the ideologies and other elements hidden in the statements of presidents, a critical analysis of the political discourse is necessary.

Political discourse analysis is a subcategory of critical discourse analysis to analyze the text and talk of different power holders that uncover their hidden motives and objectives. Discourse is defined by Fairclough (1992) as a whole practice of interaction between persons; it gives the complete meaning and information about the event for which the communication occurs. Ideology is the core concept in CDA. Van Dijk (1998) mentions that ideology reflects someone’s knowledge, thinking, or views and explained by Fairclough (1992) that it is considered a place for exercising the power. It means ideology and power are closely linked.

Aims and Objectives:

- To inspect the hidden ideologies entrenched in his selected statements related to the evacuation mission of Biden
- To investigate the explicit and implicit elements of power reflected in these selected statements.

Research Question

The research question formulated for the current study is:

- What are the hidden ideologies and elements of power depicted through the selected linguistic choices of President Biden?

Statement of the Problem

As Fowler (1985) asserts that taking control, being dominant over less powerful masses, and influencing their conduct is power.

Joe Biden was facing another turmoil related to Afghanistan and America during his presidency. He made different policies and decided to evacuate his troops and other allies from Afghanistan. During this evacuation mission, he delivered many statements and remarks to inform the audience about the scenario and progress of the mission. He declared the cessation of twenty years long battle between America and Afghanistan (Zucchini, 2021). These statements of Joe Biden are loaded with ideologies and depict power relations.

A lot of research on political discourses by various politicians is conducted to explore ideologies and strategies used by politicians. Earlier research has focused on different political contexts and scenarios. The current study has bridged the existing gap by exploring the ideologies and power relations in the discourse of Joe Biden projecting evacuation mission and, the political statements and context under the study are less explored. Therefore, it is imperative to explore these political statements because these statements are strong enough to be considered a policy.

Significance of the Study

The present study has significant contribution in a way that theoretically it has provided a source of critical discourse analysis specifically of Fairclough three-dimensional model. This study is also important, as it has contributed in raising the awareness among the masses regarding the political context. Lastly, future researchers of linguistics can take help from the current study to see how a political narrative can linguistically be studied.

Limitations of Study

The current study has a handful of limitations. It is limited to the statements of one politician Joe Biden and only one approach of critical discourse analysis given by Fairclough (2001).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Wodak & Meyer (2009) have jotted down that critical discourse analysis of which political discourse has an important role, was developed in 1990 when the theorists Van Dijk, Fairclough, Wodak, and Kress had a meeting in Amsterdam. According to Fairclough (1989) language is practiced in society and used to produce political discourse. As stated by Jones and Peccei (2004), political artists from the very beginning used language as an instrument of persuasion and to exercise power in social and cultural surroundings. So, political discourse analysis is used to explore ideologies and power elements in political speeches.

Concept of Ideology

Jacob and Manzi (1996) explained that Critical discourse analysis reveals the ideologies and recognizes the different perspectives present in social and cultural settings. As Van Dijk (1996) described this analysis is ideological because the production of ideologies is in discourse like text and talk. The work of Sarfo and Krampa (2013) studied that aim of CDA is to describe the connection between power dominance and events of discourse in a social setting, and power relations are also depicted through ideologies presented in discourse. Discursive events and practices help in reproducing the imbalanced power in the different social contexts.

Ideology and Political Discourse

As explained by Van Dijk (2004) process of politics is itself ideological. In political discourse, the topics are mostly related to the events and activities that are happening in the country (Fairclough, 1997). Van Dijk (2004) gave the idea that political talks have certain embedded ideologies and are also reproduced by politicians. As described by Van Dijk (2001) political discourse is only a category of discourse, not the whole process. Wilson (2001) described that the term politics itself reflect the concept of power as dominant, unequal, and abusive.

An approach to CDA given by Van Dijk (1993) is the socio-cognitive approach for

critically analyzing the discourse. In this model central principle for analysis is mentioned by Van Dijk (1993). In analyzing the text different aspects like historical, cultural, mental, and economic are taken into account keeping in view the specific context. This approach deals with the mental image of members in the discourse and deals with the socio-psychological strategy for constructing a negative image of others and a positive self-image. In this model, he (ibid) explained that the attitudes, social issues, and facts are used to generate the other's opinion. According to him (ibid) analysis of the text is done on two levels named macro and micro. The micro-level analysis deals with the verbal communication and interfaces while macro analysis deals with the global semantics like analyzing the power abuse and violence. Society and discourse are related by the context in which discourse occurs.

Fairclough is another proponent of CDA. He has given three-dimensional models for analyzing any text. (Fairclough, 2001). According to him, discourse is a social process and language is only a tool in the whole process of discourse. He has explained the concept of power within the discourse and the power behind discourse. In power within discourse word choices are analyzed and the power behind discourse context and social values are taken into account. He (2001) gave the concept that analysis of any text is drawn at three levels; description, interpretation, and explanation. The description is dealing with the textual level including vocabulary, grammar, and the whole structure of the text. Interpretation deals with the situational and institutional context and explanation deals with the social values and norms of the society in which the text is produced.

The historical model, propounded by Wodak (2000) is distinctive in itself in the way that it systematically assimilates all the previous background knowledge and gives multi-layered analysis. Wodak and Ludwig (1999) described that the historical model of analysis depicts interaction in the society and processes. For analyzing the language presented in discourse, three parameters are described that are concerned with ideology. Wodak and Ludwig (1999) explained that the first way is related to the concept of power and ideology that every discourse retains power and some kind of ideology. Secondly, discourse is history-oriented, it has a relation with other events of communication and thirdly discourse interpretation depends upon the background knowledge of the hearer, as every person's interpretation is different from the other due to different background (Wodak, 2000).

Further Review of Related Literature

Anggraeni, Citraresmana & Koeshandoyo (2022) have researched analyzing the language used in news broadcasting for president of France Emmanuel Macron, related to his backing for a teacher, who performed some immoral and unethical acts, under the approach of critical discourse analysis. The study has concluded that different linguistic strategies were used in news to represent the boycott of Islamists with products made by France.

Sravani, Kameswari & Mamidi (2021) have studied code switching and code-mixing in the language used by politicians. Political speeches of Telugu have been critically analyzed to fulfill the purpose. Findings of the research described that to get intimate relation with Telugu people, Telugu dialect was used by politicians and in communicating with CBC politician's English dialect was highly impressive.

Contrastive research is accomplished Rababah and Hamdan (2019) speeches of war in Gaza were taken as data for analysis. The speeches delivered by the president and prime minister named Abbas and Netanyahu for contrastive study. The model of Van Dijk, ideological square model and Halliday systemic functional linguistics concepts were also used to depict the "self and others". The findings of the study revealed that both politicians depict themselves as positive, respectable, and strong while others as weak and vicious agents. Transitivity analysis by Halliday depicted that material process was more prominent in the statements of Abbas which represented that he was concerned with the actions and happenings in the society.

Kanwal and Garcia (2019) represented gender via framing by analyzing the speeches of Hillary Clinton critically. In this study, the analysis of speeches delivered by Hilary Clinton during her campaign right gender is presented. The sample of the study was her first and last primary speeches during the presidential election in the year 2016 in America. Fairclough's (2015) model for the analysis was used in the study and for framing Gee's tool (2014) was used. Results of the study revealed that family and fight frames were used. By using this frame, she represented herself as a strong and brave woman and claimed that by becoming the president of America the future of America would be in safe hands and she would work without any prejudice.

The study of Naeem and Raffi (2019) deals with the speeches of Musharraf and Zia related to Afghanistan. The objective of the study was to illustrate the politician's intentions to gain legitimization and power. After analyzing the study critically, it is established that politicians used different linguistic choices on purpose to shape the specific form of real-world in front of the

audience.

Hassan (2018) investigates the news headline's impact on the Pakistani audience. The current study elucidated ideologies in the news bulletin of three different news frequencies by critically analyzing them. The framework applied in the study was Fairclough's (1989) 3d, model. This study concluded that news bulletins had ideologies in abundance and viewers show abhorrence towards the exaggeration, commercialization, and unnecessary coverage. The study suggested that authorities of media in Pakistan should work for bringing peace and strength through media.

METHODOLOGY

Current research relies on the interpretive paradigm. According to Whitely (1984), this paradigm focuses on the intentions and attitudes of people. Qualitative content analysis is applied to the present study as a method for achieving the objectives of the study.

Research Design

As expounded by Walliman (2011) designs for research are numerous like experimental, feministic, descriptive, etc. The **present research is qualitative and placed under interpretive paradigm**. It has described the ideologies and elements of power that occur in Biden's statements by applying the qualitative method. Analysis has taken place in three steps that are description, interpretation, and explanation. Also, summative content analysis by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) is also conducted along with qualitative analysis to make the study more systematic and reliable.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored within the model of Fairclough to comprehend the ideology and power elements embedded in political address. According to Fairclough (2001), while analyzing the discourse, the connection between ideology and power can be experienced. He has given two terms for power illustration one is power within discourse and power behind discourse. These powers are illustrated by people in their language use and their status in any intuition.

Furthermore, Fairclough (2001) asserts the point that when an analyst analyses the text focus should not only be on the surface of text but also on the interrelatedness among text, how the text is produced and how it is to be interpreted, and also on the context in which it is produced socially. Based on these concepts Fairclough (2001) has developed a three-layer model as a

framework for critical discourse analysis. Fairclough has given 3 steps for critical discourse analysis. The first step is the description, which deals with the linguistic properties of language like words, grammar, and structure of the text, the second is interpretation, in this stage relation between the production of discourse and its consumption is described and the third is explanation, the relation between discursive practices and social context is explained. Harmony among the three steps makes a discourse. The concept of content analysis by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) is also used to analyze themes.

Data Collection

It is outlined by Given (2006) that in systematic study collection of specific information is data. For the current study, data is collected from the official website of America containing all information about the presidents and other official members. Press conferences and transcripts of all statements by the president are also contained on this website. So, the researcher has collected the two speeches of Joe Biden regarding the Afghan issue for the current study.

Sample of Study

For the current study, the researcher has chosen two speeches by president Joe Biden delivered during the withdrawal of troops and allies from Afghanistan. Selected speeches are delivered on 30 July 2021 and 14 August 2021 by Biden. Following are the selected speeches made by Biden during the withdrawal mission:

- i) Statement of President Joe Biden on the Arrival of the First Flight of Operation Allies Refuge in briefing Room of White House Washington, D.C. on 30 July 2021.
- ii) Statement by President Joe Biden on Afghanistan in Briefing Room of White House Washington D.C. on 14 August 2021.

Sampling Technique

In the concerning study, the most sterling technique for sampling is purposive sampling which belongs to the category of non-probability sampling. The researcher has included those sample in the current study that serves the purpose of the study and are loaded with ideologies and depict power relations.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Two speeches by Biden are analyzed from the lens of Fairclough (2001). He (ibid) described the concept of power and steps for analyzing the discourse. Content analysis by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) was also applied.

Description

A. Vocabulary

Fairclough (2001) mentioned that vocabulary is noticed immediately in the text has some ideologies, and power is exercised through them.

Joe Biden started the speech by declaring his accomplishment and using the word “*promise*” in the starting line (1) to portray his positive image to the audience that he is capable of their leadership and true to his words. The next positive term that he has used is ‘*safety*’ in line (8) for showing his concern and gaining the audience’s support. He used the word ‘*new lives*’ in line (15) which shows that Afghans will have all the basic facilities and comfort in the USA that they didn’t have in Afghanistan which implicitly shows the negative image of the Afghan Government. In line (2), an anaphoric reference is used. “Who” is used as a relative pronoun that is referring to the “*Afghan nationals*” to explain that they have worked with American troops and this explanation is given to make emphasis his point, which shows his power implicitly.

In line (22) ‘*Humanitarian and development,*’ both words belong to the same surrounding in terms of aid and Joe Biden used them purposefully in his speech to emphasize the point that he is fully agreed to support Afghanistan and ready to provide every kind of aid which shows that he has many resources and depicts his power explicitly.

Joe Biden used the term “*protect*” in line (2). This term is used ideologically depicting that he is the savior for all the Afghan Americans who want to come to America. Also shows his power at the implicit level. In line (8) term “*Taliban*” is used purposefully to show his positive image. This term is used ideologically, depicting that the Taliban are terrorists and a threat to Americans that’s why American Government is working to save their people from the Taliban.

In line (25) the word “*that*” is used by president Joe Biden as a reference. He is referring to the mission which was started in reaction to the 9/11 attack and resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden. The reference here is used to show the hidden ideology that they have taken their revenge years ago and afterward they are working for ending terrorism in Afghanistan and other

regions. Collocation can also be noticed in the discourse of Joe Biden and it is also pinned ideologically. In line (32) the term “*soldier and police*” is used by Biden. These terms belong to the American forces and depict a positive image of the American government that forces of America are working tirelessly to save the lives of Afghan Americans. Also, it depicts the power of Joe Biden implicitly.

B. Grammar

According to Fairclough (2001), there are two types of modality that are relational and expressive modality.

In line (6) expressive modality is used. Speaker is giving the information to the audience about the work which has been done under his orders and describing the fact that he and his diplomats worked very quickly in this chaotic time and he tried to show his efficiency to portray his positive image. Pronoun ‘*we*’ is used in lines (1), (6), (21), and (24) by the president for himself and the diplomats, officers, and other persons who are tirelessly working in this evacuation mission to honor and appreciate them and create a sense of intimacy between himself and them. The next pronoun which is ideology contested is ‘*I*’. This pronoun is used in lines (15), (18), (28) and (29) for himself to make show his dominance across the world. He intends to demonstrate to the audience that he is the one who holds the power to guarantee well-being and honor to Afghans and other diplomats. And he is the one who has the power to save Afghans from the future threats and inequality that they were facing in Afghanistan.

In line (9) expressive modality is employed by Joe Biden to show his authoritative attitude and power. In speech (2) pronoun “*we*” is used to show the collaborative behavior of Joe Biden that he and his forces are working together for the progress of the mission. This is used to show his positive self. The pronoun “*I*” is used that depict his authoritative behavior.

Interpretation

According to Fairclough (2001) interpretation is based on the situational context. Situational context involves ‘what is going on, who is involved, their relationship, and, the role of language. In this scenario, the speaker is delivering a speech in the briefing room of the White House related to the issue of Afghanistan and America. Participants involved in the current discourse are the speaker president Joe Biden and the hearer are the general masses. In such a complicated situation president’s discourse was necessary to inform the nation about the progress in the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan. There is an unequal relationship between

the participants as the speaker is the president of the country while the listeners are the general masses.

Explanation

According to Fairclough (2001) explanation reveals the discourse within the context of society. The analysis gives information on the social class of the speaker, political identity, and also cultural distinctiveness. It rotates around the political and cultural norms.

Speaker started the speech by describing the fulfillment of the promise which he had made to the his people. It reveals that the president has moral values and he knows how to fulfill these values. The major theme that was highlighted within his statements was related to the Afghan national and the troops who were evacuated from Afghanistan and settled in the United States. He wanted to make aware all the public about his ongoing achievements, this shows his collaborative nature. In the second speech, the speaker mentioned at the start of the speech about the protection of interest and values, depicting that he looks after the values that are an important asset of any society. It means he is well aware of the cultural norms and works to guard their values. Also, he is in favor of preventing bloodshed as he mentioned in line (12) “*seeks to prevent further bloodshed*” in Afghanistan and other regions to promote peace in the society.

Content analysis

Latent content analysis by Hsieh & Shannon (2005) is adopted for analyzing the content and themes. The major themes highlighted from the chosen sample are Biden's policies regarding ending the war between America and Afghanistan, and the promotion of peace by the American government.

In the selected speeches of Joe Biden, he mentioned the fulfillment of his promise of withdrawing the troops and later on thanked the allies who were working in Afghanistan on behalf of the American government. He informed the audience about the progress related to the withdrawal mission. Also, he made clear to the audience that he ordered his workforce to maintain the order and work quickly for the culmination of the conflict. Furthermore, he described the history of his ancestor's work regarding the evacuation of troops.

Findings of Biden's Speeches on Evacuation Mission

In the light of Fairclough's (2001) framework and the concept of content analysis by Hsieh and Shannon (2005), it is drawn out that Joe Biden has implied many linguistic choices on purpose to create his image as positive and exercise his power. Textual analysis revealed his choice of

words, reference, modality, and pronouns are present in his speeches in abundance, also the interpretation stage of analysis depicts the situational context and lastly explanation of the study revealed that he tried to be a person who follows cultural values and norms. So, hidden ideologies that emerged from all the analysis are that he tried to portray his positive image in front of the public and a negative image of the Afghan government. Elements of power can also be analyzed from the diction used by Biden. He tried to uphold himself as a peacemaker.

CONCLUSION

The current study concludes that the approach of critical discourse analysis is most appropriate for knowing the hidden ideologies of politicians as it sees linguistic choices by placing them in social and cultural contexts. As in the present study by taking a guide from the framework of Fairclough (2001) ideologies and elements of power are unveiled and Biden's intentions are exposed.

Future Implications

The future researchers may analyze the statements of other politicians that are important and need to have some concentration in the light of the Fairclough (2001) model. Also, future researchers can work on the same data and find other strategies of persuasion by taking guides from other approaches in CDA.

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