A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nationalism in Selected Political Speeches

Prof. Dr. Qasim Obayes Al-Azzawi

University of Babylon, College of Education for Human Sciences,
Department of English

dr.qasim_tofel@uobabylon.edu.iq

Asst. Lect. Samah Mohammed Abbas

University of Kufa, College of Arts, Department of English

semahm.alismail@uokufa.edu.iq

تحليل خطاب نقدي للقومية في خطب سياسية مختارة

أ.د. قاسم عبيس العزاوي

جامعة بابل، كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية، قسم اللغة الانجليزية

م. م. سماح محمد عباس

جامعة الكوفة، كلية الآداب، قسم اللغة الانجليزية

Abstract

This paper provides a critical discourse study of the ideology of nationalism as it is presented in a selection of political speeches. One of the issues with the current research is that the ideology of nationalism that is expressed in these political speeches has not been subjected to a critical analysis. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to demonstrate how the ideology of nationalism is portrayed in political speeches. In addition, it makes an effort to recognize the numerous micro-strategies that are indicative of the ideology of nationalism. In this study, an eclectic model that was based on Van Dijk's (2000, 2006) research was utilized. This research concludes that these political speeches' nationalist ideology is best portrayed using micro approaches, which feed into macro-strategies of negative other representation and positive self-representation. Distancing, victimhood, repetition, national self-glorification, metaphor, and dominance are the micro-strategies that are used in these political speeches. These strategies are indicative of the ideology of nationalism.

Keywords: CDA, micro-strategies, ideology, nationalism, macro-strategies

المستخلص

تقدم هذه الورقة دراسة نقدية لأيديولوجية القومية في مجموعة مختارة من الخطب السياسية. إحدى القضايا التي يتناولها البحث الحالي هي أن أيديولوجية القومية التي تم التعبير عنها في هذه الخطب السياسية لم تخضع لتحليل نقدي. إن الغرض من هذه الدراسة على وجه التحديد هو إظهار كيفية

تصوير أيديولوجية القومية في الخطب السياسية. إضافةً إلى ذلك، فإن هذه الدراسة تسعى للتعرف على العديد من الاستراتيجيات الصغيرة التي تدل على أيديولوجية القومية. تم استخدام نموذج انتقائي يستند إلى بحث فان دايك (٢٠٠٠، ٢٠٠٦) في هذه الدراسة. تخلص هذه الدراسة إلى أن أفضل تصوير للأيديولوجية القومية في هذه الخطب السياسية هو استخدام الاستراتيجيات الصغيرة التي تغذي الاستراتيجيات الكلية في التمثيل السلبي للآخر والتمثيل الإيجابي للذات. تتمثل الاستراتيجيات الدقيقة المستخدمة في هذه الخطب السياسية بالإبعاد والمظلومية والتكرار وتمجيد الذات الوطنية والاستعارة والهيمنة وتشير الى وجود الأيديولوجية القومية.

1. Introduction

Because of the ongoing transformations that take place in our society, there is a never-ending conflict between the various political factions. Within the realm of social sciences, politics is considered to be one of the subjects that is closely connected to ideology. Political beliefs are communicated to the rest of the world through the medium of speech.

Ideologies are made tangible, particular, and influential through the use of discourse as a method (van Dijk, 2005, pp. 731–34). An ideology is a set of shared worldview beliefs held by a group of people (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017, p.88). Ideologies include preconceived notions, theories, and practices.

As stated on page 208 by Özkirimli (2010), discourses are defined as assertions made within a social context and shaped by that social environment. Thus, discourses cannot be considered in a merely verbal sense. It provides a "specific way of seeing and interpreting the world, a frame of reference that assists us in making sense of and organizing the reality that surrounds us" (Özkirimli, 206). Issues like nationalism are framed as rhetoric, which leads to this. Nationalism, according to Jaffrelot's (2017, p.159) definition, is "the effective allegiance of a group of people

to a nation," whether that nation is a state or one that is trending toward separatism or independence. Being part of a larger political entity—a state, a nation, or even an overt national project working towards a specific national trend—is crucial for any organization. Consequently, according to Jaffrelot (2017), nationalism is an ideology, even though some nationalist thinkers have sought to downplay the significance of ideology in fostering this sense of national loyalty. According to Van den Berghe (1995, p. 360), a nation is essentially a group of people who band together to establish and perpetuate a group identity based on "pre-existing or invented" geographical, cultural, sociopolitical, and historical traits.

Halbwachs (1985) argues that a group's collective memory best exemplifies its national identity. This exemplifies the group's sense of national identity. With an emphasis on specific political speeches, this study aims to examine the linguistic, social, and historical aspects of national identity in political discourse. Using a thorough investigation, we can better understand why different ethnic groups have adopted similar national identities. According to Van Dijk's (2006) eclectic framework notion of the discursive creation of national identity, politicians have used tales of nationalism as a rhetorical tool to promote either similarity or difference.

One form of social action that Fairclough (1989, p.22) identifies as language is its use. Three things can be inferred from this perspective: Because of the interconnected nature of language, society, and language itself, it is impossible to isolate one from the other.

In his argument, Fairclough (1989) asserts that text is not a process but rather a result. In accordance with the explanation provided by

Fairclough (1989), discourse is a word that encompasses text, interaction, and the social context. The process of social interaction is therefore incorporated into discourse analysis, which incorporates text analysis as a component of the process (Fairclough,1989).

The critical discourse analysis approach tackles a range of societal problems, including nationalism. An authoritative authority on the subject, Kohn (1965, p.9), describes nationalism as "a state of mind, in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due to the nation state.". Critical discourse analysis (henceforth CSS) has a dearth of literature and linguistic studies that explore its implications. Therefore, the impetus for this endeavor is to address that knowledge gap.

Additionally, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there have been very few linguistic studies into nationalism as an ideology that have been carried out. For this reason, it is essential to learn as much as possible about it. The current study fills a gap in the literature by analyzing the ideology of nationalism in a small number of carefully chosen political speeches.

In light of this, the research endeavors to provide responses to the following questions:

1. In what ways does the concept of nationalism manifest itself in political speeches?
2. Which micro-strategies in these political speeches are characteristics of nationalism, and how do they manifest themselves?

The study comprises of seven sections. The first section is the introduction to the study. The second section is mainly concerned with a background of critical discourse analysis. The third section is concerned with the power of ideologies within critical discourse analysis. The fourth section is mainly concerned with the core ideology of the study which is

'nationalism'. The fifth section is concerned with research methodology and van Dijk's eclectic model of analysis. The sixth section is mainly concerned with the quantitative analysis of the study. The seventh section is mainly concerned with the conclusions resulted from the analysis.

2. Critical Discourse Analysis

Most people think of "discourse" as a catch-all word for a lot of different things in linguistics and other disciplines like anthropology, philosophical thought, and psychology. Many linguistic studies have shown that there is more to language than what can be contained in a single sentence. When discussing an issue at a level beyond the phrase, discourse is a useful tool. Various viewpoints on discourse and discourse analysis exist, as stated by Tannen et al. (2001). The reason behind this is the wide diversity of domains in which speech can be found. Discourse analysis examines the social and political legitimization, reproduction, and abuse of power through verbal expression, be it in a conversation or a written document (van Dijk, 2015, p. 466).

Rash (2012, p.1) states that the primary objective of establishing Critical Speech Analysis (CDA) is to analyze political speech. Critical discourse analysts are primarily interested in examining how discourse reflects and perpetuates power structures within society. Meyer (2001, p.29) states that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is not a rigid or static technique. Instead, it is a problem-oriented approach that incorporates several methods that are appropriate for the specific issue being studied. Relevant theories for CDA and this study include Critical Linguistics (CL), van Dijk's (2005) Socio-Cognitive Approach, Fairclough's (1995) Sociocultural Approach, Wodak et al. (2009) the discursive construction

of national identity approach, and the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA).

An influential school of thought in the study of language is critical linguistics. Fowler, Hodge, Kress, and Trew's 1979 study is the source for this. Fowler (1991, p.5) defines Critical Linguistics (CL) as the study of how social and historical circumstances impact the structure of speech and how signs and meanings are interconnected in his work. A particular method of language analysis is utilized in this investigation. In order to analyze speech, this technique applies Halliday's (1984) Systematic-Functional Grammar.

Fairclough (1995, p.56) examines how speech reflects social struggle from a Marxist perspective. He focuses his emphasis on concepts such as dominance, differentiation, and opposition. Additionally, he posits that discourse emerges as a result of the construction of many facets of the social framework. This positive role is manifested in three distinct manners, namely the construction of social identity, the establishment of social connections among individuals, and the development of belief systems within a certain group.

Van Dijk (1998, p.69) states that a primary objective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to employ text analysis in order to reveal the origins of power and inequality within a certain culture. He employs several levels of analysis in his method, seeing them as instruments to illuminate his concepts of "Us" and "Them". Van Dijk (2005, p.730) primarily examines mental models as the foundation for constructing various social activities, speech, and interaction. Moreover, these cognitive frameworks provide the tools for communication to shape and perpetuate the collective beliefs and ideologies. Ideological systems exhibit distinct

social and cognitive attributes. Therefore, ideology plays a fundamental role in shaping the identity of communities.

When dealing with CDA complexity, Wodak (2001, p.64) suggests using DHA. This plan calls for an all-encompassing study that draws from a variety of theoretical frameworks and research techniques. A complex social analysis is produced by its integration of related parts. In DHA, according to Rash (2012, p.2), there are three levels to the textual meanings and structures: the theme level, the discursive techniques, and the language forms. One can learn a lot about the strategies people use to show themselves and others through this method. An improved version of DHA, according to Wodak et al. (2009), is needed for the analysis of research on nationalist speech and the discursive construction of national identity.

3. The Power of Ideology

Ideology, as defined by Van Dijk (1998, p.78), encompasses a collection of views that are communicated via language and put into action by a certain community. Here, ideology is defined based on cognition, society, and speech. Essentially, ideology refers to a collection of concepts that define a specific group of individuals and are evident in their choice of language (Van Dijk, 1998). In addition, according to Simpson (2004, p.28), ideology refers to the framework of ideas that we employ to understand the world and the systems of values that guide our interactions within society. Therefore, ideology may be defined as a collection of principles and convictions that we employ to understand the universe.

According to Van Dijk (2006, pp.120-121), ideology refers to the ideas that shape the way social groupings are seen and represented in society. Social representations serve as the foundation for both speech and

social activity. Analyzing discourse is crucial because it encompasses ideas that both shape and are shaped by ideologies.

Bloor & Bloor (2007, pp.10-11) argue that critical discourse analysts need to recognize that most conversations are influenced by ideology. Ideology shapes many people's views and opinions, although few realize it.

Critical discourse analysis aims to uncover hidden ideologies in the discourse that supports social interaction and bring these ideologies to light (Bloor & Bloor, 2007).

4. The Ideology of Nationalism

Smith (1989, p.343) highlights the ways in which the ideology of nationalism seeks to create nations:

One definition of nationalism is an ideology that seeks to establish and maintain a nation's autonomy, solidarity, and identity. In its many forms, nationalism often precedes and seeks to establish the country, even while it pretends that the nation does not yet exist. He claims that nationalists can't unite, establish nations, and realize their goals of independence. He maintains that nations can't be built on top of anything other than basic networks of association and culture.

The ideology of nationalism is defined by Spencer and Wollman (2002, pp.2-3) as following a particular vision of the community, placing a premium on this collective identity over others, and seeking political power in its name, ideally as a nation-state.

المجلد السادس عشر
حزيران، ٢٠٢٤
العدد ٦٥

مجلة كلية التربية الأساسية للعلوم التربوية والإنسانية

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nationalism in Selected
Political Speeches

مجلة علمية محكمة تصدر عن كلية التربية الأساسية – جامعة بابل

According to Kacowicz (1998, p.10), nationalism is the feeling of pride that a nation feels in itself and the strong connection it has with its members. Moreover, it may be observed in the aspiration to enhance the quality of life in a country. The study is conducted according to this definition.

According to Ernest (1983, p.1), nationalism is basically a political notion that has two primary components: political units and national units. Nationalism is a complex emotion that may manifest as either rage when principles are violated or happiness when they are fulfilled. It might also be a motion that is triggered by such a mood. In addition, Ernest (1983) asserts that the nationalist concept might be infringed upon due to several factors, such as the absence of governmental authority over national borders and the ruler's preference for minority groups over the majority. This can lead to an unacceptable level of tension between different groups.

Ngouo (2020, p.62) explains that nationalism is derived from the term "nation," which is distinct from the notion of a state. A nation is a sociological concept that denotes a collective of individuals who possess a shared feeling of affiliation and interconnectedness. This relationship can be established based on factors such as language, ethnicity, culture, or geographic closeness. Conversely, the term "State" encompasses four essential components: individuals, land, governance, and sovereignty. Essentially, the term 'nation' represents the social cohesion of a group of people, but the term 'state' politicizes that unity.

5. Research Methodology

The current study focuses on doing qualitative analysis. The model employs an eclectic approach by including chosen tactics from Van Dijk's (2000) and (2006) models. These tactics can be classified as macro and micro as represented in the following framework. The data was collected from political speeches of Barak Obama (2010, 2012, 2014), Theresa May (2017), David Cameron (2014), George W. Bush (2001), Nelson Mandela (1990), Boris Johnson (2016).
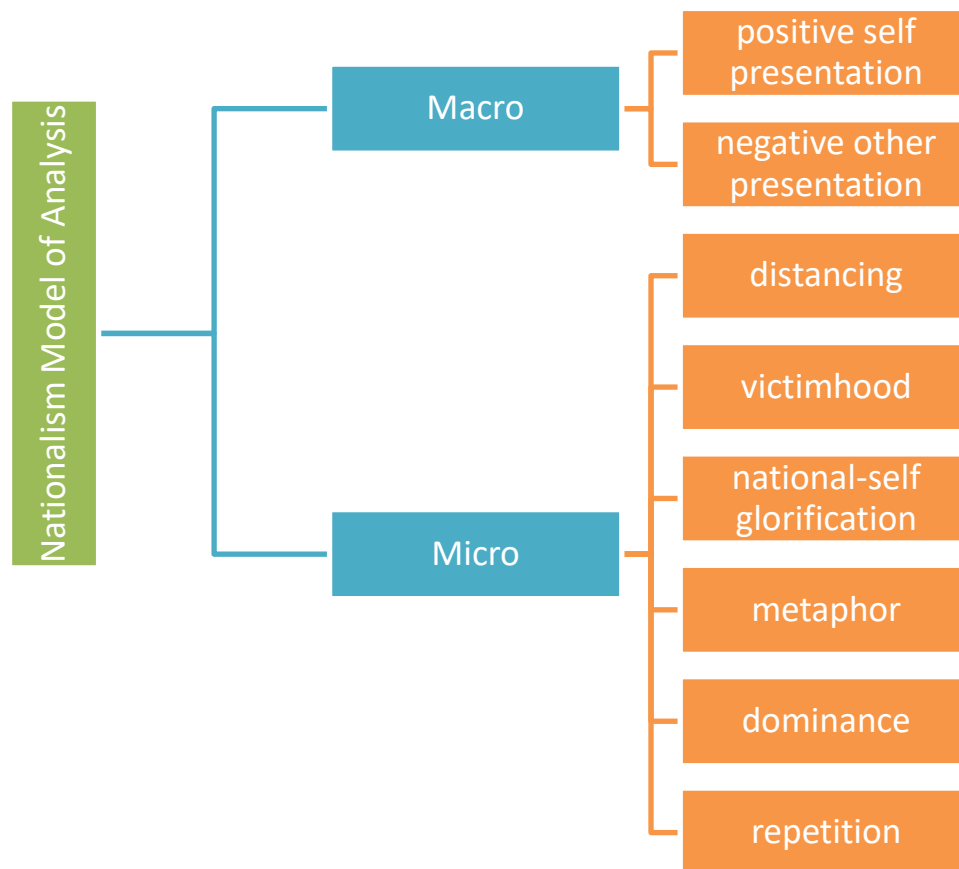
6. Data Analysis

This section involves a qualitative study where data is examined in a descriptive manner to uncover micro strategies and their role in the development of macro strategies. These macro tactics express the ideology of nationalism in certain political speeches.

The forthcoming analysis will employ micro methods exclusively. This entails selecting sample extracts and thereafter subjecting them to analysis based on the eclectic framework of the study.

1. *"That is what <u>we</u> have done. <u>We</u> have removed nearly 100,000 U.S. troops from Iraq. <u>We</u> have closed or transferred hundreds of bases to the Iraqis. And <u>we</u> have moved millions of pieces of equipment out of Iraq."* (**President Barak Obama's speech on Iraq war, Aug. 31, 2010).**

Distancing presents in this extract. Among the several interpersonal markers, the "commentary markers" are the most commonly utilized. Specifically, the marker "we" is widely employed. The purpose of a president utilizing is to foster rapport with the audience by reducing the perceived gap between them, irrespective of differences in age or socioeconomic rank, and to create a sense of intimacy with the speaker. The use of the pronoun "we" is extensively repeated in the commentaries.

2. *"The UK will pursue a bold and ambitious free trade agreement with the European Union. I want Britain to be free to establish our own tariff schedules on the World Trade organization."* (**British Prime Minister Theresa May, 2017**)

In this extract, metaphor exists. The essay discusses the use of the modal auxiliary verb "will" to express a future promise, specifically in relation to the United Kingdom's commitment to pursue a free trade deal with the European Union. The pronoun "I" is employed to denote the British Prime Minister, Theresa May. Moreover, the verb "pursue" is employed as a transitive verb. In terms of meaning, clichés are employed in the context of

"free trade agreement" and the World Trade Organization. The phrase "I want British to be free" employs a metaphor to liken Britain to an individual desiring freedom.

> 3. *"Scotland voted for a stronger Scottish Parliament backed by the strength and security of the United Kingdom and I want to congratulate the No campaign for that for showing people that our nations really are better together …. We now have a chance - a great opportunity - to change the way the British people are governed, and change it for the better"* (**British PM David Cameron, 2014**).

The topic of national glory portrays Scotland as a significant component of the United Kingdom. This emphasizes the presence of the Scottish identity as a distinct entity within the United Kingdom. Cameron portrays "Scotland" as an entity that embodies the characteristics of a democratic agency that made a conscious decision to remain integrated within the United Kingdom. The author employs the motif of a collective present and future to illuminate the advantages of being a constituent nation of the United Kingdom. The author underscores the significance of Scottish national identity by making reference to its Parliament. The author employs the evaluative term "stronger" to underscore the notion that Scotland gains strength by being a constituent of a larger entity. Cameron uses the term "the No campaign," coined by Scottish nationalists to describe the Better Together initiative, in reference to the independence referendum in Scotland, where the majority of votes were cast against independence. It was the competing "Yes" and "No" campaigns, he stresses, that caused the friction.

4. *"American power can make a decisive difference ... We can best support Iraqi security forces.* **(President Barak Obama's Speech, September 10,2014)**

Dominance and ability exist in the speech of Obama. Obama employs the word 'can' to convey the might, supremacy, and capability of the United States in undertaking tasks and providing assistance to others. To stress the United States' position as a world power, the modal verb "can" is used, which emphasizes the idea of capability.

5. *"Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts."* **(George Bush on 9/11 attack, 2001)**

This statement serves as an excellent example for the remainder of this speech, as Bush intentionally addresses multiple aspects of victimhood. The speaker designates the victims as members of our community, our way of living, and our fundamental liberty, so fostering a feeling of solidarity within the group and instilling a sense of national pride ('our fellow citizens'). He portrays the attacks not just as a direct assault on American citizens, but also as an assault on the fundamental values and principles that define the American way of life. This exemplifies the process of constructing terrorism as a rhetorical threat to the American 'way of life', including freedom, liberty, democracy, and even civilization. Terrorists not only commit acts of murder, but they also pose a threat to cultural preservation. Bush strategically presents a favorable self-image when associating the in-group with 'our very freedom', which carries a positive implication.

6. *"we've built the best-trained, best-led, best-equipped military in history." (Barak Obama, 2012)*

It is important to highlight that these texts have numerous parallel structures. These structures not only capture the audience's attention and emphasize the issue, but they also contribute to the balance and rhythm of the sentences. Additionally, they serve to clarify and enhance the beauty of the phrases. Simultaneously organizing components into parallel constructs leads to their unification, as they either convey a similar image and efficiency or deliberately attract comparative analysis.

When you see subjects, verbs, adverbs, or direct objects that are all moving in the same direction, you know that there is parallelism.

The excerpt provided is taken from a speech where the speaker intentionally uses it to convey and enhance clarity, justice, emphasis, significance, harmony, persuasion, concentration, and aesthetics.

7. *"Our struggle has reached a decisive moment. We call on our people to seize this moment so that the process towards democracy is rapid and uninterrupted. We have waited too long for our freedom. We can no longer wait. Now is the time to intensify the struggle on all fronts. To relax our efforts now would be a mistake which generations to come will not be able to forgive. The sight of freedom looming on the horizon should encourage us to redouble our efforts." (**Nelson Mandela, 1990**).*

Nelson Mandela uses the interpersonal pronouns such as 'we' and 'our' repetitively to give the impression that he and his people are one entity and one body. Nelson Mandela's speech resonates deeply with his people as he

attentively listened to everyone's complaints before formulating a profoundly transformative and optimistic political vision. The listener's display of astute psychology demonstrates an understanding of the vital role it plays in forging a robust connection with their audience. The leader employs a transparent speech that openly communicates his objectives, enabling him to advocate for a novel paradigm where, by his command over the circumstances, a more secure and healthier society may be established, capable of surmounting all forms of inequality.

8. *"I pay tribute to the fortitude and patience of my predecessor and her deep sense of public service. But in spite of all her efforts, it has become clear that there are pessimists at home and abroad who think that after three years of indecision, that this country has become a prisoner to the old arguments of 2016 and that in this home of democracy we are incapable of honouring a basic democratic mandate. And so I am standing before you today to tell you, the British people, that those critics are wrong."* (**Boris Johnson, 2016**)

In the provided excerpt, Boris Johnson used the technique of utilizing metaphors to elucidate concepts for his audience. He highlights the erroneous policies implemented by the previous administration that constrained the capabilities of this nation. Furthermore, he promotes the idea of individuals assuming accountability for their forthcoming choices. Furthermore, by invoking the phrase "this country has become a prisoner to the old arguments from 2016," he draws a parallel between his nation and a captive, highlighting the prolonged period of indecisiveness endured under the previous administration for three years. According to his perspective, his government is actively working towards eliminating the

"old argument from 2016" that imposed limitations on freedom within his country.

In addition, the Prime Minister used metaphor to demonstrate his affection for his country through the critique of the previous government's decisions. Therefore, this approach improves the overall strategy of countering alternative viewpoints, which essentially conveys a sense of patriotism in his speech.

7. Conclusions

The study reaches the following conclusions:

1. That the ideology of nationalism in some political speeches is reflected in micro strategies, which in turn contribute to macro strategies of portraying oneself positively and others negatively.

2. Furthermore, the chosen political speeches employ several micro techniques, such as distance (to reduce the perceived gap between the politician and the audience), repetition (not only capture the audience's attention and emphasize the issue, but they also contribute to the balance and rhythm of the sentences), dominance (to convey the might, supremacy, and capability of the dominant country in undertaking tasks and providing assistance to others), national glory (the presence of the identity as a distinct entity within the other countries), metaphor (to make the country as man who search for freedom), and victimhood (to foster a feeling of solidarity within the group and instilling a sense of national pride), to convey the ideology of nationalism.

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