A Critical Discourse Analysis of The Victory Speech of Al- Julani:

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

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Abstract

Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) has progressively got widespread as one of interdisciplinary approach to gain perception into several types of discourses. This study aims to examine the CDA of The Victory Speech of Al- Julani by applying Fairclough three-dimensional model (1989) Such as description (textual level), interpretation (discursive practice), and explanation (social practice). The data analysis was conducted by a qualitative method. Finding of the current study illustrate that al- Julani applied linguistic features such as uses of the inclusive pronouns, rhetorical questions, metaphors, modality, repetition, and declarative sentences. Discursive analysis disclosed that al- Julani speech addresses Syrian people while he focusing on unity, suffering, so on. Furthermore, social analysis represented the socio-political power by showing Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) as the real representative of Syrian, and ideological structures.
Key words: CDA, Discourse, Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model, Victory Speech.

INTRODUCTION

CDA defines as a cross-discipline proposed in the early 1990s by a group of scholars including Gunther Kress, Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk and Theo van Leeuwen (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). At that point in time, theories and approaches of CDA formulate to distinguish this paradigm from other theories and methodologies in Discourse Analysis. Later, CDA has known under numerous classifications. In line with their fields of research or areas of study, some scholars choose the notion Critical Linguistics (hereafter CL), others prefer to utilize the designate Critical Discourse Studies (henceforth CDS). It has followed from this to explain that CDA is an interdisciplinary approach which, as declared by Bloor and Bloor (2007), is used by professionals from a various background for example, politicians, historians, business institutions, lawyers, etc., to examine societal difficulties concerning their work (Al-Mayali and Sultan, 2024).

In fact, CDA is emerged from the school of critical linguistics (Kress and Hodge, 1979; Fowler et al., 1979: p.195-196) which draw on Halliday's (1978 and 1985) systemic functional linguistics and approaches of ideologies (Fairclough, 1993; Rogers, 2003). Critical linguistics concentrates on power and ideology, and improving the social meanings expressed in discourse by analyzing the linguistic structures in the light of their concern and wider social context (Fowler et al.,1979: p.195-196).

The origins lie in classical rhetoric, text linguistics and sociolinguistics, in addition to applied linguistics and pragmatics. The terms of ideology, power, hierarchy, gender, and static sociological variables are all realized as related for an explanation or interpretation of text (Wodak and Mayer,2001).

The purpose of this study is to analyze the Victory Speech of Al- Julani. Consistent with Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model in which each stage is associated to the other in discourse analysis i.e., textual, interpretational, and social level that require a completely dissimilar way of analysis but they are interconnected to one another. The study aims at answering the following questions:

1.What strategies does Al-Sharaa speech utilize to build collective identity and political authority?

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2.How does the victory speech reproduce socio-political power and ideological structures?
In relation to these questions, it aims at:
1. finding out the strategies that employ to build collective identity and political authority in Al-Sharaa speech.
2.Identifying the socio-political power and ideological structures in the victory speech.

2.Literature Review

2.1 *Discourse*

Discourse is "all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds" Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p.7). As per Marin (1983, p.132), discourses are linguistics sets of a higher order than the sentence. As stated by Billing et al (1988), discourse has concealed or implied meanings instead of explicit meanings (p.23). In accordance with Foucault (1972, p.49), "discourses are "practices that methodically form the objects of which they speak."

According to Fairclough (2015, p.51) discourse is a social practice and a part of social change: discourse has effect on social structures, as well as being determined by them, and so contributes to social continuity and social change. For van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach of discourse (1997, p.2), discourse is a form of spoken language, what is said in public speeches or indicates the ideas of certain school of thoughts: discourse analysts want to include some other essential components such as who use language, how, why, and when.

2.2Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

The model consists of three stages (Fairclough, 1989, p.26)

1.Description: the first stage is dealt with investigation of the formal linguistic features of the texts or "discourse fragment" including the visual verbal, and visual texts. This stage supplies the researcher with aa quantity of liberty and powerfulness of selecting whatever linguistic elements that are appropriate and suitable for the besieged data as Fairclough himself shows that this stage is "selective."

2. Interpretation: the second stage is interested in the examination of the processes of production (writing, speaking, and designing) and consumption (reading, listening, and viewing) of texts, i.e., the discursive practice level which comprises the connection between text and interaction.

3. Explanation: the third stage is concerned with the level of the sociocultural practice characterized by hidden ideologies of "power behind discourse" that are beyond the whole method and dominates the connections of power in discourse. Investigating critically at this

level intents at showing the forming of ideological patterns and the socio-cultural practice. The contextual analysis, therefor, infers " the situational context (enquiries about time and place), and the intertextual context (seeking for other texts/ information about or from producers and their product) as an essential for the process of interpretation" (Janks, 1997: p.37). See figure (1)
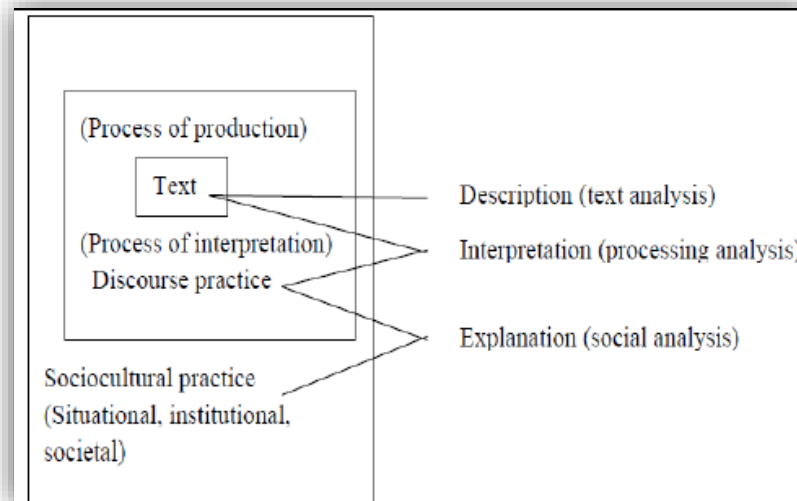

Figure (1): Levels of Analysis in CDA (Fairclough, 1992:73)

METHOD

This study is qualitative in nature as a result. The researcher utilizes critical discourse analysis to analyses the victory speech by applying Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1989). First, the description of the text (textual analysis). Second, the interpretation level (discursive analysis). Third, the explanation level (social analysis). The victory speech of al-Jolani delivered on 8 December, 2025 at Umayyad Mosque in Damasus retrieved from Middel East Syrian Rebel Leader, Al-Julani Declares "New History for the Region" while giving Victory Speech - Observer Diplomat.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

At the **textual level**, linguistic features such as vocabulary, syntactic patterns, and rhetorical devices applies in the given speeh are examined. Al-Sharaa tried to employ bvious, diract language to carry the intended meaning. In addition, the victory speech was inspirational, motivational, and encourging.

"We are the rightful owners"
"We will not stop fighting until all the rights of the great Syrian people are secured"
"Today, we have been rewarded with this victory by the grace of God Almighty"
In the above examples, Al-Sharaa applies the inclusive pronoun "we" to shape harmony and unity, introducing himself as a part of the Syrian people rather than separate from them. It legitimizes the victory as joint and exquisitely rewarded, and it activates the spectators by

performing them cooperatively to endure the fight. Therefore, "we" purposes as a tool of inclusion, legitimation, and activation the speech.

"By the grace of God Almighty"
Rather than assigning triumph to himself or his group, Al-Sharaa transfers power to God. This makes him look humble, reinforces his bond with a religious audience, and shape the consequences as a portion of a divine aim, beyond individual dominance.

"How many people were displaced across the world?"
"How many drowned in the seas?"
Without giving exact numbers, Al-Sharaa uses rhetorical question to emphasize the scale of suffering, arouse sympathy and unity with the victims, and permit the victory as a just for that misery.

Ahmed Al-Sharaa utilizes a clear dichotomy between positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Syrians are represented positively as in *"rightful owners of the country"* while Assad regime and its allies are represented negatively.

The speaker employs several metaphors in the speech. First, the phrase *"playground for Iranian"* depicts Syria under external effect (Iran, Hezbollah) as a place of careless misuse. Second, *" Syria is being purified"* portrays the triumph as emptying Syria from deterioration and strangers, connecting to moral redemption. Third, *"Syria became the largest factory of Captagon"* shows Syria as corrupted country. Lastly, *"beacon for the Islamic nation"* visualize Syria as a guiding light for the wider Islamic nation. The word *"beacon"* proposes hope, direction, and brilliance, rotating Syria into a symbol of leadership and motivation. These metaphors drive Syria's fight into an ethical and political task, not just a military occasion.

"We will not stop fighting until all the rights of great Syrian people are secured"

"There should not be vengeance "
"Building a new country will be hard work"
Al-Sharaa applies modality in these examples. He emphasizes three tangled themes. First, through resistance, the fight will last until fairness and rights are entirely accomplished for Syrians. Second, restraint; vengeance must be evaded, inclosing the relocation as ethical and concentrated on harmony instead of retaliation. Third, accountability; reconstructing the country is recognized as a hard, lasting duty that needs commitment. Together, they project a vision of determined yet well-organized leadership.

Repetition of the terms such as *"we"*, *"by the grace of God"*, and *"Victory"* aims to strengthen shared unity and naturalize the group's authority via religious legitimacy. Also, the speaker has repeated these phrases to highlight the significance of the ideas he was talking about.

Furthermore, the speaker utilizes declarative sentences to emphasize authority and offer ideological allegation as fact.

Discursive Practice

Discursive practice refers to analyzing the interpretation and interaction of text in society. This stage analyses the production process as the relationship between the product and recipient of the text.

In a historic moment, Abu Mohammed al-Julani, leader of Syrian Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group, delivered a victory speech at the iconic Umayyad Mosque in Damascus following the ejection of President Bashar Al-Assad. Addressing a crowed of supporters, al-Julani, now employing his actual name Ahmed al-Sharaa, stated that Syria had entered a new chapter in its history after 13 years of cruel struggle. Al-Assad, who escaped to Russia earlier that day, was at the helm of Syria for over two decades, continuing his family's strict rule. The HTS-led aggressive, which ended in Damascus on December 8,2024, concluded his grip on power. Moreover, the chief subject that examined in al- al-Julani speech are unity, suffering, sacrifice, resistance, national identity, and religious legitimation in order to attract the attention of the Syrian people.

The speaker creates a patriotic discourse of reform, shaping Syrians as evicted yet validate successors of their homeland. His assertion, *"we are the rightful owners",* build cooperative ownership and reiterates a bond between individuals and region. The employ of the pronoun "we" recurrently through the victory speech combines unity and places HTS as the real illustrative of the Syrian people.

Correspondingly, the speech is extremely implanted in religious legalization. Statement like *"today, we have been awarded with the victory by the grace of God"*, mark political achievement within a sacred frame, thus adapting Islamic discourses, where triumph is explained as a divine for persistence and immolate, promoting the ethical radiality of HTS among religious addresses.

Likewise, Al-Sharaa concentrates on discourses of sacrifice and suffering, involving rhetorical questions for instance *"How many people were displaced across the world?" "*

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How many drowned in the seas?" to shed light on the human cost of struggle while converting suffering into an ethical means that rationalize sustained conflict.

Moreover, the speech includes a resistance discourse against external domination and corruption. It criticizes the Assed regime for transforming Syria into a *"playground for Iranian ambition"* and *"the largest factory of Captagon in the world",* he positions HTS within a broader provincial description of anti-Iranian conflict. This interdiscursive deriving from geopolitical and anti-corruption discourses permits HTS to bring into line its conflict with wider provincial complaints.

Social Practice

Social practice indicates the analysis of socio-political viewpoints to disclose the power incident that is happened via the text or discourse. Through social practice, Al-Sharaa discloses on how speech works within wider socio-political and ideological structure.

The victory speech of Abu Mohammed al-Julani functions as socio-political act of legitimization, positioning HTS as the real protector of Syrian authority against the Assed regime and external involvement. Ideologically, his statement *"by the grace of God Almighty, victory has been granted"* forms the accomplishment within a religious framework. Consequently, permitting HTS's authority as divinely allowed. The speaker reform's social identity through this discourse, visualize HTS equally as future builder of their nation and impedance power.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions has been arrived at as follows:

1. At the textual level, al-Julani's uses several linguistic and rhetorical strategies to build a collective identity while enhance political authority. Collective identity via inclusive pronouns such as "we" and metaphors like *"playground ", " purified", "factory of Captagon", and "beacon"* which drive Syria's struggle into an ethical and political task, not just a military occasion. In addition, he employs other linguistic features such as modality, repetition, and declarative sentences. These strategies integrate proponents and strengthen al-Julani's ideological and political leadership.

2. In discursive practice, al-Julani is concentrating on unity, suffering, sacrifice, resistance, national identity, and religious legitimation in order to attract the attention of the Syrian people at Damascus.

3.Lastly, for the social practice, the speaker replicates socio-political power by showing HTS as the real representative of Syrians. It supports ideological structures via religious, resistance and nationalist discourses, whereas highlighting external involvement and deterioration.

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