THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF "AL QAEDA": A STUDY FROM CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The present article is a study of one political speech delivered in 2002, right after the 11 September Attacks ,by Abu Ghayth, one of the spokesmen of AL Qaeda. The study proposed three research questions which revolve around the Ideology of AL Qaeda, the implications of the processes types used and the linguistic and semantic techniques used in this political speech. By making recourse to Critical Discourse Analysis mainly Halliday's transitivity as adopted by Fairclough and "Interpretation", the study revealed that Abu Ghayth's speech is a good representative of AL Qaeda's Ideology based on power and dominance. The study revealed also that AL Qaeda was for this kind of operations which are Islamically legitimate according to it. In terms of "transitivity", the processes used were meant to blame USA and to justify the 11 September Attacks. As for the language used, it was full of irony, sarcasm and metaphors.

KEYWORDS: Politics, Discourse, AL Qaeda, Transitivity, Ideology

الملخص

المقال هو دراسة وتحليل الخطاب السياسي لأبو الغيث أحد أهم المتحدثين باسم "القاعدة" والذي ألقاه سنة 2002 أي مباشرة بعد أحداث 11 شتنبر 2001.وتركزت أسئلة البحث حول أهم أسس إيديولوجية "القاعدة" من خلال هذا الخطاب والتقنيات والسمات اللغوية للخطاب.للإجابة عن هذه الأسئلة وغيرها، استعملت هذه الدراسة منهج تحليل الخطاب النقدي (CDA)خاصة عند "فايركلاف".وخلصت هذه الدراسة إلى أن هذا الخطاب يمثل نموذجا جيدا لإيديولوجية منظمة القاعدة.كما خلصت هذه الدراسة إلى أن "القاعدة" تعتبر "هجمات 11 شتنبر"مشروعة وتلوم الولايات الأمريكية على كونها السبب في ذلك.بالإضافة إلى ذلك تطرقت الدراسة إلى اللغة المستعملة في هذا الخطاب والمتمثلة في توظيفها للاستعارة وأسلوب التهكم وغيرها من التقنيات.

كلمات مفاتيح:إيديولوجيا، منظمة القاعدة،الخطاب السياسي،تحليل الخطاب النقدي

INTRODUCTION

"AL Qaeda "has been regarded as the responsible for many attacks against civilians all over the world among which those of the 11 September. The study explores the ideology of this organization through a political speech delivered in 2002 by Abu Ghayth, one of the spokesmen of AL Qaeda. The choice of this particular speech is based on many criteria among which that it appeared right after the 11 September Attacks and it summarizes somehow the Ideology of AL Qaeda. The analysis is done by making recourse to Critical Discourse Analysis and particularly Halliday's transitivity which was adopted by Fairclough (1989).The analysis will rely also on another important tool in Critical Discourse Analysis which is "Interpretation" as discussed by Fairclough (1989,2003) and others.

To do this research, I have started from the following hypothesis:

Political discourse is strictly linked to ideology.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- How can we define the Ideology of AL Qaeda via Abu Ghayth's speech ?

- From "transitivity" options, what implications do the processes types used in this political discourse suggest in terms of identity, power and dominance?

- What are the linguistic and semantic techniques used in this political speech?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Discourse

Political discourse which relies primarily on language is:"*a form of social action ,always determined by values and social norms, by conventions (as naturalized ideologies) and social practices and always delimited and influenced by power structures and historical process"* (Wodak,1995).

Political discourse is represented in many communicative means such as: treaties, speeches, election campaigns and editorials, commentaries in newspapers, interviews and conferences. Politicians usually use an easy language, direct and mixed with colloquial language. They use also proverbs and idioms. These characteristics make their language very informal. Therefore, politicians mostly often use two types of style; a rhetorical style which can include for instance the vernacular language and also the language of politics (Fairclough 2001:8).Words are in fact consciously and politically informed. In other words, languages are not ideologically free.

So, discussing political discourse means to make a kind of Derridean deconstruction of it and divide it into two main components which it comprises: politics and discourse.

Discourse

First of all, what is a discourse?

In Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, it is defined as being "a long and serious treatment or discussion of a subject in speech or writing."In linguistics, discourse takes other dimensions and it is studied from other perspectives. Ferdinand De Saussure (1959) for instance makes a difference between language (langue) and speech (parole) whether spoken or written. But before that, he insists that language (langue) must not be confused with human speech (language).

"Speech" is an important part of language; it is "heterogeneous" and linked to various acts mainly physical, physiological and psychological."Parole" or "Speech" for De Saussure belongs then to the individual and to society at the same time. Language remains for him a general term which cannot be classified and it is a set of principles that engender all acts, rules and elements of communication as a theory and practice (p.9).

Yet, it seems very necessary to point out that the Saussurean "parole" is dealt with from a linguistic perspective. Therefore," parole" does not at this stage fully correspond to the dimensions of discourse. It needs indeed more research and elaboration. This leads us to go through the works of Michel Foucault who gives another definition of discourse which seems to be more developed. He (1969) describes discourse as a way of representing social practices, or as a form of knowledge. He also regards it as:"an *entity of sequences in that they are announcements (énoncés)"* (p.141).

What is more interesting in the approach taken by Foucault is that he relates discourse to what he calls "discursive

practices" and "discursive formation". Discourse is linked to practices in society. The analysis of discourse for Foucault (1972) is also the analysis of 'statements 'which are represented in texts, utterances: "*I believe I have in fact added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements"(p.80).*

Discourse is also linked to power especially in the analysis of scientific discourse like "The Human Sciences" in the sense that when the latter make descriptions and identifications of individuals, they are in fact exercing a certain power on them (Foucault, 1978).

Jacques Lacan (2007) insists first of all on the fact that speech necessitates the existence of a speaker and a receiver or someone spoken to:*"What I'm trying to articulate is that what dominates [society]is the practice of language"*(p.239).

For him, any subject is determined by discourse in terms of thought, enjoyment, meaning and identity.*"[I]t is on discourse that every determination of the subject depends"(p.178).*

Jan Blommaert (2005) argues that discourse cannot be studied outside society, culture and politics: *"discourse is what transforms our environment into a socially and culturally meaningful one"(p.4).*So, Blommaert makes a *connection* between discourse and other external aspects like the social ,the historical and the cultural ones. Therefore, discourse for him is but a manifestation of language or what Hanks (1996, cited in Blommaert, 2005) calls "language-in-action" and of course the study of discourse needs to give great importance to both language and action. Blommaert (2005) stresses that the new theories of discourse are a result of the developments achieved at the level of Linguistics and Pragmatics (2005, p.2).This is in fact true with the influence of Halliday's Functional grammar for instance on the study and analysis of discourse. New elements in language are to be studied like: coherence, cohesion, lexical choice and transitivity.

Furthermore, Blommaert (2005) considers discourse as being associated with any meaningful semiotic activity seen as a real manifestation of what is cultural, social and historical (p.3).He agrees in this view with Foucault's conception of discourse. For him, what is important is how these semiotic instruments are used in order to appear meaningful (p.3).In this respect, Blommaert (2005) gives the example of newspapers advertisements which contain written texts in diverse modes from headlines to colours which are indeed meaningful (p.3).

Fairclough (2003) considers discourses as manifestations of the world in general:

I see discourses as ways of representing aspects of the world - the processes, relations and structures of the material world, the 'mental world' of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world. Particular aspects of the world may be represented differently, so we are generally in the position of having to consider the relationship between different discourses (p. 124).

- In fact, to follow Fairclough's theory, discourses are considered as being different perspectives on the world. Fairclough (2003) also emphasizes that discourses apart from representing the world, they try to imagine and represent other worlds. Discourse for him is in turn like a tie that links people to each other.

- So, according to Fairclough (1992), discourse is manifested in the relationship that exists between the text and social practice. His conception of discourse takes three dimensions:

Discourse as Text: That is to say the study for instance of the linguistic features of discourse ,lexical choices, vocabulary (wording, metaphor),grammar (transitivity, modality),cohesion, coherence…

Discourse as Discursive Practice: Fairclough agrees with Foucault in considering discourse a discursive practice. So, the study of discourse is done through its dialectic relationship with all practices of society.

Discourse As A Social Practice: Here he analyzes discourse within the ideological effects by making emphasis on the works of Gramshi and Althusser (p.73).

From what precedes, Fairclough (1989) is refuting the Saussurean parole which is according to his theory incapable of giving a full definition of discourse mainly in being after all a social practice: *"My view is that there is not an external relationship between' language and society, but an internal and dialectical relationship. Language is part of society; linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena are (in part) linguistic phenomena" (p.19).*

So, for Fairclough, society and social practices exist inside language because we produce an idea or utter a statement from a social perspective not just from a linguistic basis .In other words, discourse as a social practice is but to translate this truth.

Politics

Politics is defined in Oxford Dictionary as being "the activities associated with the governance of a country or area, especially the debate between parties having power". Chilton and Schaffner (2002) define politics *"as a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it"* (p.5).Like the last definition, Paul Chilton (2004) defines Politics in terms of power ;for him it is a struggle between two groups, one dominates and the other is dominated (p.3).Chilton (2004) also argues that Politics is a question of "conflict" and "cooperation" .This relationship is in fact very prominent in political theory.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to language from a critical perspective. It examines the relationships between dominance, power and control as represented in language. Jaworsky & Coupland (1999) claim that the emergence of CDA was in the late 1980's and was represented by scholars like: Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Djik and others. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) aims at analyzing "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Wodak1995:204).More specifically, CDA :"studies real, and often extended, instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is distinctive in its view of (a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analyzed" (Wodak1997:173).

Generally speaking, CDA is a critical approach to language which enhances its existence through social theory .In this perspective, Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) argue that CDA gives great importance to the theories of power and ideology. In this respect, they make reference to the works of Foucault (1971;1977) mainly his formulations of "Orders of discourse" and "Power Knowledge" and also the notion of "hegemony" and "concepts of Ideological Apparatuses" and "Interpellation "as adopted by Althusser (1971).In these theories ,there is a great connection between discourse and power(pp.451-452).

Speaking about CDA obliges us to speak about different theories among which the linguistic tradition represented by: Fowler, Hodge, Wodak, Fairclough, Teun Van Dijk and Simpson. This theory tries to depict the relevance of some aspects in discourse like: implication, modality, mood, transitivity options, choice of lexis and grammar may be used by one dominant social group to persuade other dominated groups in terms of power of course. So the work of "the Critical Linguists" as Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) argue: *"was based on the systemic-functional and social-semiotic linguistics of Michael Halliday, whose linguistic methodology is still hailed as crucial to CDA practices because it offers clear and rigorous linguistic categories for analyzing the relationships between discourse and social meaning (see, e.g. Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999)"*(p.454).

Interpretation is a key word in CDA approach, but it has to be detached from "common sense understanding". In this respect, Stef Slembrouch (2001) points out that:

since interpretations of discourse always draw upon members 'resources, one of the pitfalls to be avoided in critical discourse enquiry is that of reproduction, as a likely but undesirable side-effect of interpretations which are based on common-sense understandings. To the extent that members' resources are conceptually affected and distorted by relationships of domination, they can be called ideological" (p.39).

Among CDA's preferred topics: political discourse, racism, economic discourse, education, gender and of course ideology. In fact, we cannot discuss CDA without talking about ideology mainly because ideologies exist in discourses, in communication, in pictures, in movies, in photographs. We can define ideologies as being "**interpretation frameworks"** which organize sets of social attitudes. Van Dijk (1995) speaks about functions of ideologies which are according to him cognitive and social. They are representations of cognitive constituents and processes embodied in discourse.van Dijk (1995) argues that ideology can also be studied in the relationship that exists between *"macro level analyses of groups of, social formulations and social structure, and micro level studies of situated, individual interaction and discourse"* (p.18).

So, to analyze a discourse mainly a political one is to depict its ideological implications. To do so, we need to put emphasis on the peculiarities of a particular discourse at the level of syntax, pragmatics, semantics, word order, lexicon and rhetoric.

As for the relationship between discourse and ideology, it is generally indirect. This is what Van Dijk (2001) stresses in fact; he argues that in terms of ideology, discourse is influenced indirectly because when ideologies influence attitudes ,they become like personal opinions capable of making control of written and oral communication. So, any response to a particular discourse is done through an ideological basis from the receiver (p.17).

In the process of expressing a certain ideology, we have to bear in mind that the context is an essential element what Van Dijk (2001) calls "Context models":

People not only form mental models of the events they talk about, but also of the events they participate in, including the communicative event of which their ongoing discourse is an inherent part. That is, people subjectively represent the social situation in which they now verbally participate: a chat with a family member at home, a lesson at school, reading a newspaper at the train, participating in a meeting ,or in a service encounter in a shop, among many others. These subjective, mental representations of the communicative event and the current social situation as it constrains current discourse, will be called context models, or simply "contexts" (pp.17-18).

Transitivity

Before talking about transitivity, it is necessary first to define Functional Grammar. It is a general theory of the organization of natural language developed by Simon C.Dik and others. Johanna Nichols (1984) argues that Functional Grammar is a theory that: "*broadens its purview. It too analyzes grammatical structure. But it also analyzes the entire communicative situation*: the purpose of the speech event, *its participants, its* discourse context" (p.97).

For Halliday, "Transitivity" is part of the ideational function of the clause which is in turn concerned with "the transmission of ideas". Juan Li (2010) argues that:

As a key analytical component of the ideational function of language in Halliday's systemic-functional view of language, 'transitivity'' is a semantic concept that looks at how meaning is represented in the clause. According to Halliday, transitivity shows how language users encode in language their mental picture of reality and how they account for their experience of the world around them (1994:106).Concerned with how ideas are transmitted/represented and the power and semantic relations in ''who does what to whom,' 'transitivity provides language users with the potential for categorizing and evaluating the infinite variety of occurrences into a finite set of process types. Transitivity analysis, therefore, can reveal how choices in texts and discourse represent the states of being, actions, events and situations concerning the given society and show the bias and manipulation in the representations (p.3447).

Transitivity is then a very important key in analyzing different representations of reality. According to Halliday (1994) there are three semantic processes in the clause which are:

The process itself, which is expressed by the verb phrase in the clause; the participants involved in the process, which are typically realized by noun phrases in the clause; and the circumstances associated with the process, usually expressed by adverbial and prepositional phrases. Halliday further suggests that processes can be classified according to whether they represent actions, events, states of mind or states of being. Material, mental and relational are the three main process types in the English transitivity system, referring respectively to actions or events in the external world, the inner experience of consciousness, and the processes of classifying and identifying. Located at the borderlines between the three processes are three less clearly set apart, yet distinguishable, processes: behavioral (those that represent outer manifestations of inner workings), verbal (symbolic relationships constructed in human consciousness and physiological states), and existential (processes concerned with existence) (Juan Li, 2010).

Therefore, transitivity enables us as readers to analyze a particular discourse in a way that meets our inquiries. In this respect, our perceptions of actions, events and situations are to interpret the meanings of the discourse in terms of semantics and ideological implications.

METHODOLOGY

Data Sampling and Collection

My study is based on one political speech. This choice is based on the following three important elements:

- It was given in 2002 by Sulaiman Abu Ghayth, one of Al Qaeda's spokesmen and husband of one of Bin Laden's daughters.

- In my opinion, this particular speech broadcasted at that time on Al Jazeera T.V channel summarizes in a way or another the Ideology of AL Qaeda which is an Islamist organization founded by Osama Bin Laden and other

militants and which was considered as the responsible of the 11 September Attacks.

- The time when that speech was delivered: 2002; that is to say right after the 11 September 2001 Attacks.

Analytical Method

The analysis is based on Fairclough's (1989) Critical Discourse Analysis framework and particularly from Halliday's transitivity perspective which Fairclough adopted. Besides, the study makes use of another important tool in Critical Discourse Analysis which is "interpretation".

Abu Ghayth's(2002) Speech and Analysis

(1)Those who were surprised, astonished and did not expect [the September 11 attack], those simply do not know the reality of humanity and human nature, or the effect of tyranny and oppression upon its feelings…they apparently thought that tyranny breeds submission and that force yields resignation…those have missed the mark twice: once, because they are ignorant of the reality of derision towards a person, and another time because they do not know the ability of a person to achieve victory. (2) This is [with regard to] any person, let alone who believes in God as Lord ,in Islam as religion and in Muhammad as Prophet.(3)[He]knows that his religion refuses lowliness and does not permit humiliation for him, and rejects degradation .(4) How could it, when he knows that his community [Islam]was brought forth to be at the center of leadership and trail blazing, at the center of hegemony and domination, at the center of giving and receiving?(Abu Ghayth 2002).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Transitivity Options

Table 1

Sentence	Actor	Process	Type	Goal	Circumstance
1a	Ø	Were surprised	Mental internalized reaction process	those	Ø
1b	Ø	astonished	Mental internalized reaction process	Ø	Ø
1c	Those (senser)	Did not expect	Mental internalized cognition process	The September 11 Attack (phenomenon)	Ø
1d	Those (senser)	Do not know	Mental internalized cognition process	The reality of humanity and human nature (phenomenon)	Ø
1e	They (senser)	thought	Mental internalized cognition process	Ø	Ø
1f	tyranny	breeds	Material action intention process	Submission	Ø
1g	force	yields	Material action intention process	resignation	Ø
1h	those	Have missed	Material action supervention process	The mark	Ø

1i	They(carrier)	are	Relational intensive process	Ignorant (attribute)	Ø
1j	They (senser)	Do not know	Mental internalized cognition process	They: ability of a person to achieve victory (phenomenon)	Ø
2a	Not applicable (this is)because there is no action				
2b	One (senser)	Believes in	Mental internalized cognition process	God as Lord, in Islam as a religion and in Muhammad as Prophet and Messenger (phenomenon)	Ø
3a	He (senser)	knows	Mental internalized cognition process	No phenomenon	Ø
3b	His religion	refuses	Material action intention process	lowliness	Ø
3c	His religion	Does not permit	Material action intention process	Humiliation for him	Ø
3d	His religion	rejects	Material action intention process	degradation	Ø
4a	He (senser)	knows	Mental internalized cognition process	No phenomenon	Ø
4b	Ø	Was brought forth to be	Material action intention process	His community(Islam)	At the center of leadership and trail blazing,at the center of hegemony and domination ,at the center of giving and receiving

First of all, we have to say that this political speech tries to legitimize the September 11 attack and give a picture of a typical Muslim; that is of an active individual who must reject passivity, humiliation and submission, and a strong believer whose duty is to defend Islam and defy "enemies".

- Mental internalized cognition process:07

- Material action Intention process:06

- Mental internalized reaction process:02

- Material action supervention process:01

- Relational intensive process:01

As we see, most of the mental internalized cognition processes are linked to "those who" or "they" which refer both of them to Americans or the political system in USA in particular. Abu Ghayth refuses to say:"those Americans" for instance, for him they do not deserve to be identified or defined.

Moreover, even if the Americans are powerful, they are a failure because they could not understand or accept the new reality. In fact, they are victims of their own beliefs and their conception of power and dominance.

Concerning the material action intention processes, three of them are done by "Islam" which affects lowliness; humiliation and degradation by material action intention process; two processes are done by tyranny and force which affect even indirectly Muslims by material action intention process. Semantically and syntactically speaking, all of these processes are represented in a way to justify the September 11 attack. Another thing which seems to me very important is the absence of circumstance; the only one is kept till the end and which is:"At the center of leadership and trail blazing, at the center of hegemony and domination, at the center of giving and receiving?"It is associated indeed to Muslims. This is the truth which Abu Ghayth wants to deliver to the Americans that of the Muslim's domination, power and hegemony".

Interpretation Remarks

- The text is blaming the West represented by the Americans who are in a way or another responsible for the September 11 attack because of their "tyranny", "force", "lowliness", "humiliation" and "degradation" of the others mainly of the Muslims.

- The structure of the text is presented in a very logic way ,from general to particular, from speaking about humanity or a person in general till talking about Muslims in particular which means that this attack can be done by a person suffering from degradation and humiliation. As for the Muslim, it is his duty to do so because he should be "at the center of hegemony and domination".

- The text does not say directly that AL Qaeda is responsible for the September 11 attack, which means that the importance is given to why this attack was done not by whom it was done.

- The text gives us two realities: one represented by the West or the Americans who were:"surprised, astonished, did not expect, do not know, are ignorant of, thought"….and the other by Muslim who "believes.., knows, his religion refuses, does not permit…so, this shows a kind of paradox between uncertainty and weakness of the Americans and certainty and power of Muslims.

- The text is somehow advising Americans to be rational in order to understand certain realities by the use of certain verbs and adjectives like: surprised, astonished, ignorant, do not know…

- There is an overuse of personification of words like: tyranny, force, religion…this technique puts AL Qaeda in a powerful state; it is giving lessons to Americans who are presented in this discourse as ignorant and weak.

- The text has indeed a very symbolic ending which stresses that there must be one reality: it is that Muslim should be at "the center of hegemony and domination" and not the American.

- From a religious perspective, the text emphasizes the power and supremacy of Islam as a religion in comparison to other religions mainly Christianity.

- The language used in the text is very strong; there is a good vocabulary which is useful for persuasion like: surprised, astonished and did not expect which serve in a way or another for the same meaning. Besides, many techniques were used to deliver AL Qaeda's ideology which are meant in turn to persuade recipients such as:

- Metaphors:"tyranny breeds submission" and "force yields resignation"

- Alliteration: surprised/astonished, reality/humanity…

- Anaphora: those/those

CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, we can say that this political speech gives the assumption that it is wrong to call operations like that of the 11 September a "suicide" attack. This kind of operations is in fact Islamically legitimate. This discourse is also meant to deliver a direct message to the West in general and USA in particular that AL Qaeda is capable of doing more than the 11 September attacks in the future. It is in fact a question of legitimation and this is what Theo Van Leeuwen (2008) points out:

Recontextualization involves not just the transformation of social practices into discourses about social practices, but also the addition of contextually specific legitimations of these social practices, answers to the spoken or unspoken questions "Why should we do this?"or Why should we do this in this way?"(p.105).

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