Analysis of Speeches by the Former President of the US, Barack Hussein Obama, Regarding the Middle East and Northern Africa

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ABSTRACT

The main intention in this article is to critically analyze the ex-president Barack Obama’s speeches regarding the Middle East and (North) Africa and see how US-America, Middle East, and Africa are framed in political ideologies. Data is collected from the four speeches delivered by the ex-president of the USA in different places and settings. The data is analyzed using critical discourse analysis (CDA). The findings revealed that political ideology sleeplessly aspires to safeguard the interests of America and her “true” allies to sustain their world power and to suppress the “others” in the counterfeit names of tolerance, engagement, aid and support, democracy and freedom, knowledge-driven economy, peace and security, etc., that targets the younger generation. Contemporary pretexts and extensions have been done with discourse manipulations and real-life interventions.

KEYWORDS

Allay, Discourse, Engagement, Ideology, Power and Hegemony, Regulation and Emancipation, Representation

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Barack Obama, President of the United States of America since 2008 has made customary to deliver relatively longer remarks when it comes to issues of turmoil: peace, security, prosperity, engagement and change in many occasions since his presidential candidacy and the two-term seats at the White House. Likewise, the seventy-three paragraphed speech, delivered with frequent and extended “applauses” (about 85 applauses) to the young Israelites mentioning Israel more than 190 times directly and indirectly on March 21, 2013 at Jerusalem Convention Centre (Jerusalem), could be taken as the best substantiation; the others likewise.

In the following section, I would like to pinpoint, synthesize and analyze his key sample speeches regarding the Middle East and (North) Africa. Even if it is all about these tsunami regions of relevance to America, it reflects America’s clear international political and economic interests reaffirming that “though these countries may be a great distance from our shores, we know that our own future is bound to this region by the forces of economics and security, by history and by faith”.

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Hence, it is important to note in the following section about the analysis of Obama’s speeches concerning the Middles, which you can easily decipher, that the discursive event and discursive structure interrelatedness of ideas proposed by Norman Fairclough, have been due to the results of the analysis. To put it in clear terms, the speeches which are called the discursive events shaped the texts that are the discursive structure, and the discourse became subject of interpretation by the audience, which shaped the discourse practices of President Barack Hussein Obama and the target people (region).

Based on Wodak’s (2002:3) three fundamental concepts that figure indispensably in all CDA are “the concept of power, the concept of history, and the concept of ideology.” As Fairclough (2002), Fowler, Hodge, Kress, and Trew (1979), and Wodak (1989) agreed, binding in power use or abuse are political office, political rhetoric, economic power, interference in the affairs of other countries, and selective ally making to mention but a few. For Fairclough (1989, 1992), nothing is capable of changing and influencing people’s mind except language use. Countries with big power can also make big change and put big influence on other countries. Taking US America and the historic president of that country is the best sample for a research analysis.

Considering the fore mentioned variables vital, this study employed them all dialectically in the analysis to bring forth the real intent of President Barak Hussein Obama’s speech delivered to key personalities and the world. That is, the main objective of this study is to critically analyze the discourses (CDA) of President Barack Hussein Obama regarding the Middle East and (North) Africa via the world in exercising real and assumed power. Very specifically, the study has tried to discover with whom Obama is Pro-ideology in de facto in the Middle East and North Africa (either be called Middles), uncover Obama’s representation and justification of America and it’s “allied” power and cooperation in Middles, explicate Obama’s personal, state and international interests and envisaging (doctrines), and to unpack Obama’s emancipatory and regulatory strategies of the Middles.

It is presumed that when situations demand people (especially politicians) tend to grab to the “pro-one” of the mass. Their ideology and political discourse dialectically articulated can be a vehicle towards achieving that ultimate end. The adequate exploitation of language manipulation politics could grant a political benefit and firmly regulate people against their interests or totally emancipate to be vibrant citizens in their own. The researcher inquired the following questions to be answered. First, how does Obama stand for, envisage and legitimizes national and international security, peace and prosperity, and intervention in the affairs of “sovereign countries” in discourse? What are the real agenda behind the allied and collided US- “Arabs”- Israel? How does Obama represent world change, power/hegemonic contestations and envisage operationalisation for “change, peace, security and prosperity”? What kind of discourse Obama wants to emerge in Israel and the Arab (Muslim) World? And what are the general and specific, covert and overt discourses drown up on and combined or not done so?

To analyze Obama’s discourse in Middle-East and the world, I have used the analytical framework for CDA which is represented schematically below by Fairclough (2002, p. 125) which has been “modeled upon the critical theorist Roy Bhaskar’s concept of “explanatory critique” (Bhaskar, 1986; Chouliaraki and Fairclough cited in Fairclough, 2002). These generally are: Focus upon a social problem which has a semiotic aspect, identify obstacles to it being tackled, through analysis of (the network of practices it is located within, the relationship of semiosis to other elements within the particular practice(s) concerned, and the discourse (the semiosis itself). Bhaskar (1986) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) take the discourse in itself as a consideration of a structural analysis. That is, it is the analysis of the order of discourse (Richardson, 1996), the interactional analysis (Tannen, Hamilton, & Schiffrin, 2015), the inter-discursive analysis (Wudak & Meyer, 2002; Bhatia, 2016), and the linguistic and semiotic analysis. Besides, the CDA considered whether the social order (network of practices) in a sense ‘needs’ the problem, identified the possible ways past the obstacles, and reflected critically on the whole analyses (Greve & Salaff, 2005).
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