Ideological Strategies in Barack Obama’s Cairo Speech: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Hassan A. H. Gadalla

Associate Professor of Linguistics

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0. Introduction:

This discourse analytical study attempts to explore the ideological strategies in Barack Obama’s Cairo speech. It applies van Dijk’s (1998, 2006) model to the analysis of political discourse in that speech to uncover the ideologies hidden in it and to evaluate the adequacy of van Dijk’s model in analyzing ideologies in political speeches. The first section attempts to situate the paper in the field by offering a theoretical background on critical discourse analysis and ideologies. Section 2 establishes the analytic framework by introducing the approach that will be applied. Section 3 displays the study aim and technique. Section 4 applies van Dijk’s (2006) ideological framework to the chosen speech. Section 5 provides a modified approach that can be applied in the analysis of ideologies in political speeches. The last section summarizes the main findings of the study.

1. Critical discourse analysis and ideologies:

Discourse analysis is concerned with “the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used” (McCarthy 1991: 5). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse, which views “language as a form of social practice” (Fairclough 1989: 20) and focuses on the ways social and political domination is reproduced by text and talk.
The most famous writers on CDA are Norman Fairclough (1995, 2003), Teun van Dijk (1995, 2006), Ruth Wodak (2009, 2011), Paul Chilton (1985) and many others. Political discourse has been critically analyzed by many researchers, especially Nimmo and Sanders (1981), Chilton (1985) and Chilton and Lakoff (1995). Political discourse analysis has been simply defined by Wollacott (2011) as “the study of politically-related writings and speeches. These can be by a single individual or by multiple individuals, but relating to a single event or topic. … The aim of the analysis is to better understand political thought.”

The term ‘ideology’ refers to “a system of interrelated beliefs and values belonging to an individual or group, usually but not exclusively in the political realm” (Jost 2007). It was first introduced by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy to denote a new discipline that would study ‘ideas’: idéologie (as stated by van Dijk 2004). It has also been defined by Langrova (2010: 18) as “a consistently structured system of thoughts, beliefs or ideas, characteristic of a group or society, backed up by a set of theories that explains and rationalizes the existence of the group and pursues the ideal, the conceptions of what ought to be.” Political ideology, in particular, is “a set of ideals, principles, doctrines, myths or symbols of a social movement, institution, class, or large group that explains how society should work, and offers some
The study of ideology is at the core of CDA because, as van Dijk (2006: 115) puts it, “people acquire, express and reproduce their ideologies largely by text or talk.” Earlier, he considers ideological discourse analysis as “one specific type of socio-political analysis of discourse” (van Dijk 1995: 135) and shows the aim of ideological discourse analysis:

Such an analysis, among other things, attempts to relate structures of discourse with structures of society. That is, social properties or relations of, e.g., class, gender or ethnicity, are thus systematically associated with the structural units, levels, or strategies of talk and text embedded in their social, political and cultural contexts. (Ibid: 135-36)

But what are ideologies according to van Dijk? He defines ideologies as “belief systems” that are “socially shared” by the members of a collectivity of social actors” (2006: 116). He also shows how ideologies are classified “by the social field in which they function. That is, we have political, educational, legal, religious and health care ideologies, among others” (van Dijk 2004). Examples of ideologies are capitalism, socialism, feminism, racism, pacifism, conservatism, nationalism, ecologism, aristocracy, autocracy, democracy and liberalism.
2. Van Dijk’s model of ideological discourse analysis:
Van Dijk (2006: 126) assumes that “ideological discourse is generally organized by a general strategy of positive self-presentation (boasting) and negative other-presentation (derogation).” This strategy has the following abstract evaluative structure which he calls the “ideological square” (1998: 33) and can be represented as in Table 1:

Table 1. *Van Dijk’s ideological square*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Us</em></td>
<td>Emphasize our good properties/actions</td>
<td>Mitigate our bad properties/actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Them</em></td>
<td>Mitigate their good properties/actions</td>
<td>Emphasize their bad properties/actions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This theoretical ideological square has been represented by a practical model that van Dijk offered in (2006: 125). That model is provided here as it is in Table 2. As will be shown from the analysis of Obama’s speech, the model requires a lot of additions and modifications. The modified model is presented in Section 5.

Table 2. *Van Dijk’s model of ideological discourse analysis*
• Context: Speaker speaks as a member of a social group; and/or address recipient as group member; ideologically biased context models: subj. representations of communicative event and its participants as members of categories or groups.
  • Text, discourse, conversation:
    Overall strategy: positive presentation/action of Us, negative presentation/action of Them
    • Emphasize Our good things, and Their bad things, and De-emphasize Our bad things, and Their good things

**MEANING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics (semantic macrostructures)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select/Change positive/negative topics about Us/Them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local meanings and coherence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive/Negative Meanings for Us/Them are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manifestation: Explicit versus Implicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Precision: Precise versus Vague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Granularity: Detailed/fine versus Broad, rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Level: General versus Specific, detailed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modality: We/They Must/Should...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidentiality: We have the truth versus They are misguided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local coherence: based on biased models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disclaimers (denying Our bad things): 'We are not racists, but...'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**O Lexicon:** Select Positive/Negative terms for Us/Them (e.g. 'terrorist' versus 'freedom fighter')

**FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntax: (De)emphasize Positive/Negative Agency of Us/Them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleft versus non-cleft sentences ('It is X who...')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active versus Passive ('USA invades Iraq' vs. 'Iraq invaded by USA')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full clauses/propositions versus nominalizations (The invasion of Iraq)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| O Sound structures: Intonation, etc., (de)emphasizing Our/Their Good/Bad things |
| Format (schema, superstructure: overall form) |
| Positive/Negative meanings for Us/Them in: |
| • First, dominant categories (e.g. Headlines, Titles, Summaries, Conclusions) versus last, non-dominant categories. |
| • Argumentation structures, topoi (stereotypical arguments, e.g. 'For their own good') |

| O Fallacies that falsely conclude Our/Their Good/Bad things, e.g. overgeneralizations, authority, etc. |
| Emphasizing or de-emphasizing Our/Their Good/Bad things by |
| • Forms: Repetition |
| • Meanings: Comparisons, metaphors, metonymies, irony, euphemisms, hyperboles, number games, etc. |
ACTION
- Speech acts, communicative acts, and interaction
- Speech acts that presuppose Our/Their Good/Bad things: promises, accusations, etc.
- Interaction strategies that imply Our/Their Good/Bad things: Cooperation, Agreement

The first part of van Dijk’s model deals with general aspects of discourse, though he does not call them thus. So, it is better to gather these aspects under the title “general level”, as shown in the modified model in Section 5. There are three other levels of analysis according to van Dijk: meaning, form and action.

At the general level, the context represents the most important discourse structure. Herman (1995: 14) argues that the idea of context includes “extra-linguistic co-ordinates like the immediate spatio-temporal setting of speech, the roles and status of participants, etc”. After that, she says:

Context can also refer to the cognitive context, the set of beliefs, assumptions, presuppositions, frames, which participants activate or draw on to interpret actions. The linguistic environment within which a linguistic feature is located has also been termed the context of that feature (Ibid)

At the meaning level, van Dijk (1995: 147-49) reports that ideological discourses will be semantically oriented towards topics and local meanings related to descriptions of self-identity, activity, goal, norm and value, position and relation, as well as resource. At the form level, van Dijk (2006: 126) shows which strategies are utilized: “Syntactic structures and rhetorical figures such as metaphors, hyperboles or euphemisms are used to emphasize or
de-emphasize ideological meanings.” Finally, the action level includes speech acts, communicative acts and interaction.

Generally speaking, van Dijk (2006: 126) has offered two main ideological strategies that characterize ideological discourse: positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. He describes the former as “boasting” and the latter as “derogation”. A brief account of these strategies is given below.

2.1. Positive self-presentation strategy:
As reported by van Dijk (2006: 126), this strategy of self-presentation operates in such a way that “our good things are emphasized and our bad things de-emphasized.” Previously, in van Dijk (1995: 143), he indicates that in general “ingroups and their members, as well as friends, allies, or supporters, tend to be described in positive terms.” Then, he unveils how this strategy operates: “This may not only show in adjectives or nouns used to describe ingroups … and their properties, but also in the complex structures that relate these groups with specific actions, objects, places, or events” (Ibid: 143-44).

2.2. Negative other-presentation strategy:
Van Dijk (1993: 264) reveals how the strategy of negative other-presentation is employed:

One of the ways to discredit powerless groups, for instance, is to pay extensive attention to their alleged threat to the interests and
privileges of the dominant group; we will get less (or worse) work, housing, education, or welfare because of them, and they are even favoured, e.g. by special attention or affirmative action.

Later, van Dijk (2006: 126), indicates that this strategy operates in such a way that the bad things of the Others “will be enhanced” and their good things “will be mitigated, hidden or forgotten.” Then, he gives an example to show how this works in both meaning and form: “We may enhance the negative properties of terrorists by reporting gruesome acts of them (a question of meaning or content), but then do so at great length, on the front page, with big headlines, with grisly pictures, repeatedly so, and so on, which are formal characteristics” (Ibid: 126-27). Earlier, van Dijk (1995: 143), reveals how lexical selection is utilized to achieve the aim of negative other-presentation: “outgroups, enemies or opponents are described in negative terms.” Moreover, he displays how syntax can be used in the operation of this strategy:

We may also do this by syntactic means, for instance by reporting their gruesome acts as being accomplished by active, responsible agents, that is by referring to them in first, topical positions of clauses and sentences, and not as implicit agents or in passive sentences in which agents are de-emphasized (van Dijk 2006: 127).

3. Study Aim and Technique:
By adopting a CDA perspective, this study aims at unveiling the ideological strategies that Barack Obama has utilized in his Cairo speech. It also aims at evaluating van Dijk’s (1998, 2006)
theoretical and practical models of analyzing ideologies in political speeches. I have downloaded the video and text versions of the speech from the White House website. The method of analysis will follow these steps: First, the discursive features in the selected speech will be identified and the frequency of occurrence of each feature will be counted using a computer program called “Word Count Machine 2.5.1” from Count Machine. After that, how these features contribute to the ideology of the speech will be explained using van Dijk’s (2006) model. Finally, the results of the analysis will be provided to help the reader recognize the distribution of the ideological features identified and realize the modifications that must be made in van Dijk’s model.

4. Ideological strategies in Obama’s Cairo speech:
In this section, the analytical framework proposed by van Dijk (2006) will be applied to Barack Obama’s Cairo speech. The general level will be applied here and the other levels will be applied in the following subsections. Context is the first structure under the general level. In relation to the context of the speech, it was delivered at Cairo University, Egypt on June 4, 2009. The recipients were mainly Arab and Muslim audience. It was claimed to be a new beginning in the relationship between America and the Muslim world after the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. Obama says:
(1) a. *I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world.*

b. *Today, America has a dual responsibility: to help Iraq forge a better future -- and to leave Iraq to Iraqis.*

In (1a), Obama’s call for a new beginning at the outset of the speech echoes his phrase in the inaugural address: “*To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect.*” This is an example of intertextuality which van Dijk has not included in his (2006) model of CDA. It should be added to the meaning component of the modified model, as will be shown in Section 5. In (1b), the use of the temporal deictic adverb ‘today’ gives an atmosphere of a fresh start, opens the door for a new treatment which is different from that of his predecessor, George W. Bush and affirms the new beginning with the Muslim world.

Considering ‘intentionality’ as one of the problems of ideological discourse analysis, van Dijk (2006: 128) asserts that “choice of overall topics is obviously more ‘intentional’ than the detailed syntactic structure or intonation of a sentence. Selection of words falls in between.” The present study attempts to discover Obama’s intention through his speech. Obama cannot say “this is not my intention” since, as van Dijk (Ibid: 128-29) affirms, “there is no doubt that in an important political speech of
a president or presidential candidate practically each word is chosen as a function of its ideologically [sic] and communicative presuppositions and implications.” Thus, after analyzing Obama’s Prague speech, Langrova (2010: 45) declares: “Obama himself seeks to communicate that he is above ideology. Yet if we state that ideology is a set of beliefs it is clear that something as Obama’s ideology exists. He only wants to avoid the negative connotation ideology used to have.”

Obama’s ideology has been described as “proving difficult to pinpoint” (Balz 2008). Before starting the analysis of the speech, one has to identify Obama with a particular group, since as van Dijk (2006: 117) indicates, “ideologies are not personal beliefs of individual people. … They organize and ground the social representations shared by the members of (ideological) groups.” Obama belongs to the American Democratic Party which is characterized by the ideology of social liberalism. This ideology views international relations as a “non-zero sum game. It is the environment where soft power - cooperation and diplomacy - is utilized to benefit all” (Langrova 2010: 22). After Obama became president, the United States foreign policy has undergone a great change and there has been a “radical departure from the confrontational style of conducting foreign policy that
characterized the Bush era” (Vasconcelos 2009: 11).

Political discourse is “a mixed product of personal development and the relevant social environment in which an individual grows. Any individual political discourse is the result of personal development in certain social settings,” as declared by Zheng (2000). Hence, considering the social environment in which Obama grew up, being the son of a Muslim father and living in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country, for nearly five years, one can understand why he is keen on trying to win the hearts of the Muslims around the world. Obama himself explains how his own experience affected his beliefs and ideologies:

(2) a. My father came from a Kenyan family that includes generations of Muslims.
b. As a boy, I spent several years in Indonesia and heard the call of the azaan.
c. As a young man, I worked in Chicago communities where many found dignity and peace in their Muslim faith.

Analyzing Obama’s Cairo speech reveals how he uses ideological techniques in gaining Muslim public support or feeling of reconciliation after the feeling of bitterness they have acquired from the discourse and deeds of his predecessor, George W. Bush. Nevertheless, some have considered Obama’s speech “A Bush in
sheep’s clothing” as it “shows little real change. In most regards his analysis maintains flawed American policies” (Abunimah 2009). Analysis of that speech will disclose that he has utilized two ideological strategies: positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. In the following subsections, these strategies will be analyzed and the results of the analysis will be provided in the conclusion.

4.1. Positive self-presentation in Obama’s speech:
According to the ideological square, positive self-presentation is achieved by accentuating self-positives and minimizing self-negatives. Obama’s ideologies of liberalism, democracy, humanism and Christianity are reflected in the discursive tactics he employs in his Cairo talk. At the meaning level, he selects positive topics to describe himself, his country and the Occident in general. These topics include the goodwill and tolerance of the American people, the progress and equality in America, the freedom of religion and democracy in the West, the protection of women’s rights as well as the maintenance of economic development.

As for the lexical component, Obama employs positive terms to describe himself, his country and the West. For instance, he says at the outset of the speech:
(3) a. I’m … proud to carry with me the goodwill of the American people.

b. America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles -- principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings.

In (3a), Obama presupposes that the Americans are a people of goodwill towards Muslims. In (3b), he shows that America and Islam share common principles and human values. This is a reflection of his humanitarian ideology.

Obama boasts of his own wide knowledge and long experience in these excerpts:

(4) a. I have known Islam on three continents before coming to the region where it was first revealed.

b. I saw it [Islam’s tolerance] firsthand as a child in Indonesia.

To stress the tolerance of Americans towards Muslims, Obama says:

(5) a. There is a mosque in every state in our union, and over 1,200 mosques within our borders.

b. Islam is a part of America. … All of us share common aspirations.
These two examples also reveal Obama’s ideology of multicultural and inclusive nationalism.

In addition to the discursive tactic of emphasizing the good qualities of ingroups, van Dijk mentions ‘disclaimers’ as a means of denying the bad qualities of these groups. This is related to an avoidance tactic, a technique commonly used by politicians:

One of the most common techniques embraced by politicians is to ignore any positive attributes found in opponents and to loudly decry their negative traits and failings, whilst simultaneously denying the existence of any flaws or negative aspects present in one’s own character or set of beliefs (Zheng 2000).

This avoidance tactic is apparent in Obama’s disclaimers in the following excerpts:

(6) a. America is not the crude stereotype of a self-interested empire.

b. America is not -- and never will be -- at war with Islam.

In (6a), Obama negates the belief of many people around the world that America is a self-interested empire and considers that belief as a mere “crude stereotype.” In (6b), he claims that America is not fighting Islam, without stating how many Muslims have been killed by the Americans in their wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In addition to disclaimers, Obama resorts to the avoidance tactic in the use of general statements, a strategy not stated by van Dijk but will be added to the modified model in Section 5:
(7) a. When one nation pursues a nuclear weapon, the risk of nuclear attack rises for all nations.

b. When it comes to nuclear weapons, we have reached a decisive point. ... It’s about preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

In (7a), Obama speaks of the threat of nuclear weapons in general without stating that America is the most dangerous nuclear power in the world or that it was the only country that used such weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In (7b), Obama calls for the prevention of nuclear arms in the Middle East without mentioning that Israel, America’s ally, has the largest arsenal of nuclear weapons in the region. That is why Chomsky (2009b) affirms that Obama’s “comments pointedly excluded Israel, which is not a signer of the NPT, along with India and Pakistan, all of them supported by the US in their development of nuclear weapons.”

Moreover, Obama utilizes the strategy of ignoring important issues such as the separation wall in the West Bank, the Palestinian refugees in other countries and their right of return. Above all, as pointed out by Chomsky (2009a), he avoids mentioning the role of the United States in the Arab-Israeli conflict:

Obama called on Arabs and Israelis not to "point fingers" at each other or to "see this conflict only from one side or the other." There is, however, a third side, that of the United States, which has played a decisive role in sustaining the current conflict. Obama gave no indication that its role should change or even be considered.
This strategy has not been stated by van Dijk, and will be added to the modified model.

The avoidance technique is also apparent in Obama’s statement about Israeli settlements:

(8) The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. … It is time for these settlements to stop.

Chomsky (2009a) explains the avoidance hidden in this saying:

The strongest position so far enunciated by the Obama administration is that Israel should conform to Phase I of the 2003 Road Map, which states: “Israel freezes all settlement activity (including natural growth of settlements).” … Overlooked in the debate over settlements is that even if Israel were to accept Phase I of the Road Map, that would leave in place the entire settlement project that has already been developed, with decisive U.S. support, to ensure that Israel will take over the valuable land within the illegal “separation wall” (including the primary water supplies of the region), as well as the Jordan Valley.

After that, Chomsky adds: “Unmentioned as well is that Israel is taking over Greater Jerusalem … displacing many Arabs, so that what remains to Palestinians will be separated from the center of their cultural, economic and sociopolitical life. Also unmentioned is that all of this is in violation of international law.” Though Obama spoke about democracy, he didn’t mention anything about his host, President Mubarak, whom Chomsky (2009b) considers as “one of the most brutal dictators in the region” and whose dictatorship led to the outbreak of the Egyptian revolution on January 25, 2011.
Returning to the lexical structure, it has been discovered that Obama selected 79 positive terms to describe Americans, Occidentals and Jews, such as justice, progress, tolerance, dignity, security, democracy, religious freedom and women’s rights. The Jews, in particular, have been treated as victims, being persecuted, tortured and gassed to death. Table 3 reveals the positive terms used by Obama in reference to America, the West and Israel, as well as their frequency.

Table 3. Positive terms Obama used for proponents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proponent</th>
<th>Word/Phrase</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obama himself</td>
<td>speak the truth (1), humbled (1), firm in my belief (1), speak clearly and plainly (1)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America/</td>
<td>goodwill (1), peace (12), justice (3)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americans/</td>
<td>prosperity (2), progress (4), tolerance (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>dignity (4), civil rights (1), equal/equality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5), freedom (5), women’s rights (2), human rights (2), security (2), help (8), support (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The West</td>
<td>liberalism (1), modernity (1), globalization</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1), democracy (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel/Jews</td>
<td>tragic history (1), persecuted (1), anti-Semitism (1), Holocaust (1), enslaved (1)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tortured (1), shot (1), gassed to death (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moving to the level of form, one observes that Obama employs certain syntactic structures to draw a nice picture of his country and the West in general. These structures are represented in the emphasis on the positive agency of himself and his country, as can be seen in the following excerpts:
(9) a. That is what I will try to do today -- to speak the truth as best I can.

b. I have unequivocally prohibited the use of torture by the United States, and I have ordered the prison at Guantanamo Bay closed by early next year.

(10) a. The United States has been one of the greatest sources of progress that the world has ever known.

b. We were founded upon the ideal that all are created equal, and we have shed blood and struggled for centuries to give meaning to those words.

In (9a), Obama emphasizes his intention to speak the truth in his speech that day, and in (9b), he lists his good deeds of prohibiting torture and ordering the closure of the infamous Guantanamo prison, though this order has not been executed until the time of writing this article (June 2012). In (10a), he underlines America’s position as a great source of progress, and in (10b), he affirms the establishment of his country on equality and struggling for it. This mirrors his progressive and liberal ideologies.

Syntactic structures are also represented by the use of the active voice to stress the good deeds of America, as in:
(11) a. *The United States government has gone to court to protect the right of women and girls to wear the hijab and to punish those who would deny it.*

b. *America respects the right of all peaceful and law-abiding voices to be heard around the world, even if we disagree with them.*

In (11a), Obama talks proudly about his country’s efforts to give Muslim women one of their rights. In (11b), he stresses America’s support of the freedom of expression all over the world. These excerpts reflect his pluralistic and liberal ideologies as well as the ideology of equality between men and women.

As for the format structures, Obama always mentions his country before Muslim countries although it is customary and courteous in polite discourse to say “you and I” when talking to someone. Thus, he should have mentioned Muslims before America, but he has done the opposite, as in:

(12) a. *We meet at a time of great tension between the United States and Muslims.*

b. *I’ve come here … to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims.*

Moreover, Obama adopts the format strategy of narrative illustration, as opposed to no storytelling, which has not been
provided in van Dijk’s model and will be included in the modified model. Obama uses this strategy to draw that rosy picture of America, as in these historical references:

(13) a. In signing the Treaty of Tripoli in 1796, our second President, John Adams, wrote, "The United States has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Muslims."

b. When the first Muslim American was recently elected to Congress, he took the oath to defend our Constitution using the same Holy Koran that one of our Founding Fathers -- Thomas Jefferson -- kept in his personal library.

Van Dijk refers to repetition and figures of speech as expressions of format, but does not indicate that they belong to the structure of ‘rhetoric,’ a very significant device used by politicians. So, this structure will be added to the structures of form in the modified model. Regarding the rhetorical structure, Obama uses a lot of repetition to glorify the good deeds of America, as in:

(14) On education, we will expand exchange programs, and increase scholarships. … On economic development, we will create a new corps of business volunteers to partner with counterparts in Muslim-majority countries. … On science and technology, we will launch a new fund to
In this extract, Obama repeats the structure “On + Noun + We will + Verb + Object + Complement” so as to emphasize his promises that America will do many good deeds for Muslim countries.

Concerning the action level, Obama utilizes the speech act of promise nearly 30 times so as to offer a good image of America as a humanitarian and very merciful country. To stress the goodwill of the American people towards Muslims, Obama gives a lot of promises that America will help Muslim countries and their peoples, including:

(15) a. We plan to invest $1.5 billion each year over the next five years to partner with Pakistanis to build schools and hospitals, roads and businesses, and hundreds of millions to help those who’ve been displaced.

b. We are providing more than $2.8 billion to help Afghans develop their economy and deliver services that people depend on.

c. We will help Iraq train its security forces and develop its economy.

d. America will not turn our backs on the legitimate

   Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own.
It can be clearly noticed that these promises are directed to the major areas in the Muslim world where America has created a lot of hatred and humiliation. They are directed towards the four Muslim countries where America caused a lot of turmoil and destruction, either by itself or through its ally, Israel.

4.2. Negative other-presentation in Obama’s speech:

In the ideological square, negative other-presentation is accomplished by minimizing other-positives and accentuating other-negatives. So, this strategy is simply about exaggerating the mistakes and bad deeds of others, and attenuating their good deeds. At the meaning level, Obama chooses negative topics to describe his country’s opponents. Such topics involve the terrorism practiced by Al-Qaeda, the violence practiced by Palestinians and seeking nuclear weapons by Iran. He magnifies Al-Qaeda’s attacks on 9/11, Saddam’s dictatorship, Hamas’s rockets against Israel and Iran’s hostage-taking to derogate those opponents. Negative meanings are attributed to the three major opponents in the following statements:

(16) a. *Al Qaeda killed nearly 3,000 people on that day [9/11].*

… *Al Qaeda chose to ruthlessly murder these people … and even now states their determination to kill on a massive scale.*

b. *Palestinians must abandon violence. … It is a sign neither of courage nor power to shoot rockets at sleeping children,*
or to blow up old women on a bus.

c. Iran has played a role in acts of hostage-taking and violence against U.S. troops and civilians.

In (16a), Obama states the number of people killed by Al-Qaeda but he never mentions the number of people whom the Americans murdered all over the world. He avoids reference to the bloody history of America in the killing of innocent people in Germany, Japan, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc. (Abu Farha 2009). In (16b), he denounces the use of violence by Palestinians, but never mentions the massacres and atrocities perpetrated by Israel in Gaza or other parts of Palestine. All three examples reflect Obama’s anti-terrorism, pacifism, and anti-violence ideologies.

As for the lexical structure, Obama has selected 42 negative terms to describe his country’s opponents, especially words like extremism, murder, kill, violence, etc. Table 4 offers a list of the negative terms Obama used to describe Al-Qaeda, extremists, Palestinians and Iran.
### Table 4. Negative terms Obama used for opponents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Word/Phrase</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Qaeda</td>
<td>kill/killing (6), ruthlessly murder (1)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremists</td>
<td>violent (6), violence (2), attacks (1), pose a grave threat (1), threaten our people (1), kill/killing (5)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinians/</td>
<td>violence (5), killing (1), constant hostility (1), attacks (1), shoot rockets at sleeping children (1), blow up old women on a bus (1)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>opposition to my country (1), tumultuous history (1), hostage taking (1), violence (1), nuclear weapons (5)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moving to the formal level, it can be observed that Obama has underlined the negative agency of his opponents by using sentential topicalization, as in:

(17) a. Violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims.

b. Al Qaeda killed nearly 3,000 people on that day [9/11].

Sentential topicalization, as opposed to de-topicalization, is a strategy that has not been offered by van Dijk and will be added to the modified model in Section 5.

To emphasize the danger of violent extremists, Obama gives it priority and adopts it in the headline of the issues he has to confront:

(18) The first issue that we have to confront is violent extremism in all of its forms.
The examples in (17) and (18) convey Obama’s ideologies of anti-violence, anti-extremism and counter-terrorism.

Regarding the rhetorical structures, Obama deploys much repetition to underscore the bad deeds of America’s opponents:

(19) a. *Al Qaeda killed* nearly 3,000 people. … *al Qaeda chose to ruthlessly murder* these people, and even now states their determination to *kill* on a massive scale.
   
   b. *They [extremists] have killed* in many countries. *They have killed people of different faiths* … *they have killed Muslims.*

One can also notice the repetition of the word ‘violence’ in reference to Palestinians, the opponents of Israel, America’s strongest ally:

(20) *Palestinians must abandon violence.* *Resistance through violence and killing is wrong.* … *Violence is a dead end.*

Finally, at the action level, Obama utilizes the speech act of accusation to deform the image of his country’s opponents:

(21) a. *The victims [of 9/11] were innocent men, women and children from America and many other nations who had done nothing to harm anybody.*

   b. *Violent extremists in Afghanistan and now Pakistan [are] determined to kill as many Americans as they possibly can.*
c. *The Iraqi people are ultimately better off without the tyranny of Saddam Hussein.*

In (21c), Obama states that Iraq is much better after Saddam Hussein. This is in contrast with the fact that at least 1.4 million Iraqis have been killed in America’s war in Iraq (Just Foreign Policy Website), in addition to the millions who have been disabled and those who have been dislocated.

Obama also adopts the speech act of promise to vow the destruction of America’s opponents:

(22) a. *We will … relentlessly confront violent extremists.*

b. *Despite the costs involved, America’s commitment will not weaken.*

5. **Modified model of ideological discourse analysis**

After the analysis of Obama’s speech, one can provide a modified framework of the discourse levels, structures and strategies that can be employed to represent ideologies, as in Tables 5 and 6. In both tables, the underlined items are my additions and modifications. Comparing the two tables with that of van Dijk presented in Table 2 above, it can be noticed that I have developed his model by adding and reorganizing some items. Most importantly, I have added the terms ‘levels, structures and strategies’ to describe the three elements of discourse.
The two tables reveal that CDA can be performed on four levels: general, meaning, form, and action. Table 5 introduces the modified version of the discourse structures and strategies that are related to the general and meaning levels.

Table 5. Discourse structures and strategies related to the general and meaning levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Levels</th>
<th>Discourse Structures</th>
<th>Discourse Strategies/Expressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Speaker, recipients, occasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text, discourse</td>
<td>- Positive presentation of Us/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>conversation</td>
<td>- Negative presentation of Them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Emphasize Our good things, and Their bad things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- De-emphasize Our bad things, and Their good things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEANING</td>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Selection of positive/negative topics about Us/Them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local meanings and coherence</td>
<td>- Positive/Negative Meanings for Us/Them are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Manifestation: Explicit/Implicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Precision: Precise/Vague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Description: Detailed/Vague, General/Specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Modality: Must/Should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Evidentiality: We have the truth/They are misguided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Local coherence: based on biased models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Avoidance: disclaimers, general statements, ignoring important issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Assertion/Denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lexicon</td>
<td>Selection of positive/negative terms for Us/Them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intertextuality</td>
<td>Borrowing positive/negative meanings for Us/Them from other texts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36
In Table 5, I have utilized the term ‘general’ to label the general level of discourse. I have added the term ‘occasion’ as a strategy related to context structures, as occasion is usually defined as the time, place and occasion of an utterance. So, occasion is an important element of context. I have mingled van Dijk’s terms ‘granularity’ and ‘level’ into ‘description’ to avoid confusion with the ‘discourse level’. I have included ‘disclaimers’ under a new strategy called ‘avoidance.’ I have also attached ‘general statements’ and ‘ignoring important issues’ as expressions of avoidance. Inspired by van Dijk (1995: 144), I have also added the strategies of ‘assertion/denial’ to the local meanings. Moreover, I have added ‘intertextuality’ as one of the structures of the meaning level, represented by borrowing positive/negative meanings for Us/Them from other texts. Table 6 introduces the modified version of the discourse structures and strategies that are related to the form and action levels.

Table 6. Discourse structures and strategies related to the form and action levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Levels</th>
<th>Discourse Structures</th>
<th>Discourse Strategies/Expressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>- (De)emphasis of Positive/Negative Agency of Us/Them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Cleft/Non-cleft sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Active/Passives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Full clauses/Nominalizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Sentential Topicalization/De-topicalization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 reveals that, at the formal level, discourse structures include syntax, sound structures, format (schema, superstructure, overall form) and rhetorical structures. I have added the strategy of ‘sentential topicalization/de-topicalization’ to van Dijk’s syntax structures. I have also added ‘stress’ as an expression of sound structures. I have attached the strategy of ‘narrative illustration/no storytelling’ to his format structures. I have added ‘rhetoric’ as one of the structures related to the level of form, since it is an important device used in political speeches. Finally, the action level involves the structures of speech acts, communicative acts and interaction.

6. Results and conclusion:

This study has attempted to analyze the ideological strategies used by Barack Obama in his Cairo speech. It has applied van
Dijk’s (1998) ideological square and his (2006) model to provide such an analysis. It has been discovered that although van Dijk’s (1998) ideological square is theoretically perfect in relation to the ideological analysis of political discourse, his (2006) practical model needs a lot of additions and modifications. The following results have been obtained.

Obama uses a wide range of strategies and techniques in his speech to achieve his political objectives. These strategies unconsciously reflect his ideological agenda. He adopts two major ideological strategies: positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. He employs some discursive tactics to create that ideological polarization represented in ‘Us’ vs. ‘Them.’

Regarding the positive self-presentation strategy, he resorts to two major tactics: emphasizing the good properties and actions of himself, his country and the West, and mitigating their bad properties and actions. He utilizes the tactic of selecting positive topics and lexical terms to venerate himself, his country and the West in general. He also uses the avoidance tactic of disclaimers to deny the existence of negative traits in himself or his own country. Moreover, he depends on syntactic structures, including the emphasis of the positive agency of himself and his country. He adopts the active voice to stress the good deeds of America.
In relation to the format structures, he mentions his country before Muslim countries, which is against courtesy principles. Furthermore, he uses narrative illustration to draw a nice image of his country. Concerning the rhetorical structures, he employs a lot of repetition to underscore the good deeds of America. Finally, at the action level, Obama deploys the speech act of promise to glorify the rosy picture of America as a humanitarian country. Therefore, Obama’s ideologies of liberalism, democracy, humanitarianism and Christianity are reflected by his discursive tactics.

In relation to the negative other-presentation strategy, he depends on two major tactics: emphasizing the bad properties and actions of Al-Qaeda, Hamas and Iran, and mitigating their good properties and actions. He chooses negative topics and terms to describe his country’s opponents and attributes negative meanings to them. He emphasizes their negative agency and refers to their danger in the headlines of his speech. As for the rhetorical structures, he employs a lot of repetition to emphasize the bad deeds of America’s opponents. Finally, at the action level, Obama adopts the speech act of accusation to deform his country’s opponents and the speech act of promise to vow their destruction. Hence, Obama’s ideologies of anti-terrorism, anti-violence, pacifism and humanism are mirrored in his discursive tactics. In short, it is obvious from the
analysis of Obama’s Cairo speech that it is loaded with ideological messages that affect, control and manipulate his audience’s mentalities. It deploys “soft diplomacy” to brighten the image of America and its allies. Simultaneously, it creates a very negative and horrific image of Muslim extremists and their allies.

Though van Dijk’s ideological square is theoretically ideal in laying the grounds for the ideological analysis of political discourse, his practical model needs a lot of modifications and additions. The modifications involve adopting the term ‘general’ to label the general level of discourse, and mingling ‘granularity’ and ‘level’ into ‘description.’ The additions include ‘occasion’ as a strategy of context, ‘assertion/denial’ as a strategy related to local meanings, ‘intertextuality’ as a structure of meaning, and ‘sentential topicalization/de-topicalization’ as a strategy related to syntax structures. I have included ‘stress’ as a strategy of sound structures and ‘narrative illustration/no storytelling’ as a strategy related to format structures. I have also incorporated ‘disclaimers’ under a new strategy labeled ‘avoidance,’ involving other expressions like ‘general statements’ and ‘ignoring important issues.’ Finally, a significant addition is that of ‘rhetoric’ as one of the structures of form.
7. References


<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jun/04/barack-obama-middleeast>


