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**ANALYSING ASPECTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATED IN
ROBERT F. KENNEDY'S SPEECHES**

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Abstract

The present research paper is concerned mainly with a critical analysis of Robert F. Kennedy's (henceforth: RFK) speeches against social injustice. Social injustice is one of the most important issues facing a society, which must be prevented and resisted in various ways, the most important of which is the use of language as it has a great impact in bringing about social change.

Accordingly, the current study will show the role of language in RFK's speeches in addressing social injustice and standing against it. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the linguistic forms and styles along with the ideologies that RFK's speeches employed in an attempt to eliminate and resist this issue.

In order to achieve its aims, the study analysed two speeches by adopting an eclectic model consisting of van Dijk (1980, 1997, 2000b), and Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992). Besides, mixed methods research will be followed in analysing the data, which is a sort of combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods; to gain a better understanding of the data

The study shows that the language has a central role in revealing the practices of social injustice and in advocating social justice through the ideologies, linguistic forms and styles it employs, which have an effective power and great impact to achieve the purposed goals. It also reveals that RFK regulates the language of his speeches against social injustice in a way that articulates his ideologies, such ideologies are, anti-racism, equality, social justice, and liberalism.

Keywords: CDA; Social injustice; RFK; Discourse structures.

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Introduction

Social injustice is the unequal treatment of people and the practice of discrimination against them on racial, national, religious, or other grounds. Hence, the strength of the spoken word was and still the most persuasive force behind the long and troubled march of humanity towards winning social justice. So here comes the role of the American statesman: RFK, who was committed to the ideals of democracy and social justice.

He used the language through delivering speeches that were mainly dedicated to address such a humanitarian issue. Hence, this study aims to reveal the linguistic forms and styles along with the ideologies that RFK's speeches employed in an attempt to eliminate and resist this issue. It does so by following an effective approach that serving this cause, which is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The term "Discourse", is fundamental to CDA. 'Discourse Analysis' (DA) is essentially concerned with investigating language used in actual contexts above the level of grammar and semantics in order to capture what happens when these language forms take place in various social, political and cultural domains (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 5). CDA is 'critical' in the sense that it seeks to identify the role of discourse in the preservation of the social world, including those social relations that involve unequal power relations. Its goal is to contribute to social change in line with more equitable power relations in communication systems and society as a whole (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002: 63-64).

The speeches will be analysed on the basis of adopting an eclectic model, van Dijk (1980, 1997, 2000b) and Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992). Van Dijk sees a text consisting of three structures or levels, mainly: The macrostructure (the general meaning which represented by the theme). The microstructure (the meanings of discourse that can be noticed by analysing phrases, clauses, and sentences that make up a text) at different syntactic, semantic, lexical, rhetorical...etc. levels. Lastly, the superstructure (the text structure; the arrangement of elements in the text as a whole). Mixed methods research will be followed in analysing the data, which is a sort of combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods.

In order to accomplish the aims of the study, the following questions are researchable as the focus is on the analysis of the language used in the speeches: (1) what themes and areas of emphasis that RFK's speeches address? (2) What are the most prominent pronouns RFK's speeches use? (3) How can categorisation and victimisation demonstrate social injustice? (4) Which words do RFK's speeches employ to advance their purposes? (5) What rhetorical devices do RFK's speeches rely on to deliver his motivational messages? (6) Does the schematic analysis reflect the purposes of RFK's speeches? (7) To what extent do the linguistic forms in RFK's speeches reflect his ideologies?

The paper is structured as follows. Section two presents a literature review of this study. Section three views the research methodology. Section four presents the results that have been reached to. In section five discussion will be offered. Lastly, the paper ends with conclusions.

Literature Review

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA has its origins in 'Critical Linguistics' (CL), which refers to an investigation of the relationships between signs, meanings, the social and historical factors that influence the semiotic structure of speech (Fowler, 1991: 5). It regards discourse as a "form of social practice" (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258). Furthermore, it is critical in which it is committed to social change (Fairclough, 2001: 230). Catalano and Waugh (2020: 1) show that by critically studying discourse, it highlights how language is implicated in topics such as power and ideology that in turn show how language is used and what impact it has. It shows this from an angle that is aligned with the dominated groups' interests. In addition to that, it draws on the experiences of individuals of such groups, and encourages their struggle against injustice (van Dijk, 2001: 96).

Ideology

The concept of ideology is central in CDA and it is worth mentioning that Destutt de Tracy, Cabanis, and their group coined this term (Althusser, 2014: 171). They coined this term by following the philosophy of the Enlightenment where the notion of genesis occupies an important position, so they meant by it: the theory (-logy) of the genesis of ideas (ideo-), hence: 'ideology' (*ibid.*). Then, Ideology has evolved to signify a collection of common views or attitudes among members of a certain social group (Bloor and Bloor, 2007: 10). This means that ideologies allow individuals, as members of a group community, to arrange a wide range of social views about what is good or bad, right or wrong, and to act on them (van Dijk, 2000a: 8).

Like language, an ideology has a structure and choices, this structure may be mapped and understood by paying attention to how linguistic choices are made (Mooney and Evans, 2015: 16). Such choices are: active, passive voice, foregrounding, choosing a level for formality, register, politeness and so on (Trask, 2007: 114).

Social Injustice

It is understood that the starting point for CDA is social issues and problems that face a society. As a whole, the opposition against social injustice in language-use is the supreme target of CDA, since CDA attempts to examine social inequality as it is expressed by language-use (Wodak and Mayer, 2009: 10). According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2010: 1464), the word 'social' is a term that connects with society and the way it is organised. The word 'injustice' on the other hand refers to a situation when people being treated unequally (*ibid.* 802).

Thus, social injustice is about unfair practices that face a society. It is worth noting here that social injustice is the opposite of social justice. Therefore, the researcher wants to shed light on the meaning of social justice. In this connection, Jost and Kay (2010: 1122) offer a general definition of social justice made up of the following meanings: (a) in line with any distributions, benefits and responsibilities in society are dispersed; (b) procedures, norms, and rules that regulating political and other forms of decision making preserve the basic rights, liberties, and entitlements of individuals and communities; (c) humans are treated with dignity and respect not only by authorities but also by other relevant social actors, including fellow citizens.

As a result, a fair social system should be contrasted with those systems that promote unnecessary suffering, coercion, violence, oppression, racism, and discrimination (*ibid.*).

Brief Introduction to RFK

Robert Francis Kennedy is also known as RFK, and Bobby (Manchester, 2020). He was born on 20 November 1925 in Brookline, Massachusetts, US, the seventh child of Joseph Kennedy and Rose Fitzgerald (Charles River Editors, 2013: 6). As he grew up, RFK became part of an important wealthy and politically liberal but morally conservative Roman Catholic, Irish American family (Ching, 2002: 7). He has shown a talent for observation, analysis, and written expressions. Over and above this, he had a strong identification with the under-dogged (Guthman and Allen, 2018: 24).

For RFK, politics is "an honourable profession" because if properly undertaken and pursued, it can be the most effective avenue through which to advance the broad public interest. Furthermore, to enshrine communitarian values in the public discourse and, in so doing, it will ennoble both the spirit of individuals and the spirit of societies they live in (Paupp, 2014: 29). He believed that the law, above all, would confront and defeat injustice. It is this concept that he relied upon to evoke such change (Goduti, 2012: 6). Through 1967, RFK became increasingly outspoken about the problems facing the

poor in US. After a fact-finding trip to the south where he witnessed the living conditions of blacks and whites in the Mississippi delta, later that year, Senator RFK announced that he would run for president (Facing history and ourselves, 2006:158). RFK wanted change not only because he saw it as the correct thing to do, but also because it proved to be the hard and necessary thing to do in order to create a perfect union (Felsenthal, 2018: 8).

RFK was shot in the early hours of 5 June 1968, shortly after delivering a speech to celebrate his victory in the California primary. He died the next day at the age of 42 (History.com Editors, 2009).

Previous studies

Szócs's (2013) study- entitled "Discourse Strategies and Rhetorical Devices in Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 Presidential Election Campaign Speeches" - analyses three selected speeches of RFK during the period of his presidential campaign. It aims to figure out to what extent are RFK's discourse strategies and rhetorical devices predetermined by factors like topics covered, the speech events and the nature of target audiences. To achieve the aims of the study, the researcher depends on three analytical frameworks based on Norman Fairclough (1989), Jenny Thomas (1995), and Halliday (2009). Following a qualitative research method, the study concludes that RFK discourse strategies and rhetorical devices are quite clear predetermined by the event, the topic, and the nature of his audience.

Sipra and Rashid's (2013) study- entitled "Critical Discourse Analysis of Martin Luther King's Speech in Socio-Political Perspective"- applies CDA for the first part of Martin Luther King's speech 'When I Have a Dream'. It aims to show how the speaker tries to raise his voice with the help of language against the hegemonic attitude of whites against blacks, and how he tries to promote his ideology in the minds of those oppressed blacks. The researchers select Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1992). Following a qualitative research method, the findings of the study show that certain textual and stylistic devices have been used prominently in order to achieve certain purposes, Such as the use of repetition to emphasise the main theme, which is inequality. It also shows that the speaker- by using metaphor and other devices - identifies the relationship among the dominant and the dominated groups. The lexeme is not well ordered according to situation, but also indicates the relational and expressive values of the speaker.

Research methodology

This section of the study describes the data and its selection and provides a theoretical framework of the chosen model.

CDA, as the name implies, is meant to stimulate critical social research that leads to the abolition of injustice and inequality in society (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002: 77). In this regard, one of the most essential topics that has persisted till the present time and considered to be a key focus in CDA is the issue of social injustice. Therefore, this study attempts to analyse some of RFK's speeches on the topic of social injustice. The data are collected from Guthman and Allen's book '*RFK: His Words for Our Times*'. Subsequently, the data are collected by choosing two speeches delivered by RFK. These speeches are selected from the period 1965 and 1966. The selected speeches are: '*Reflections on the 1965 Watts Riots: State Convention, Independent Order of Odd Fellows*'. Spring Valley, New York. 18 August 1965, and '*Day of Affirmation*'. University of Cape Town. 6 June 1966.

In this respect, for this study, the researcher adopts an eclectic model based on two analytical frameworks; van Dijk (1980, 1997, 2000b) and Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992). Van Dijk's model which is the base, consists of three structures with sub-structures or levels to be taken in consideration. These structures are: firstly, macrostructure that is responsible for the thematic structure of a text.

Secondly, microstructure that is responsible for analysing the details of the text, including the syntactic level (pronouns); the semantic level (categorization and victimisation); the lexical level which is supposed to consider certain specific words that the speaker employs for the purpose of his speeches. The last level within microstructure is the rhetorical level in which repetition will be investigated. The adopted model for repetition will be that of Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992). The third and the last structure is the superstructure which is responsible for schematic structure of a text.

The underlying hypotheses of this study are (1) RFK's speeches address themes of social struggle for the purpose of highlighting the need for social change, and achieving justice and freedom. (2) RFK's speeches prominently use pronouns that show unity. (3) The categorisation and victimisation that demonstrate social injustice are reflected in the use of those linguistic forms that categorise and victimise individuals for racial and other reasons related to the nature of the prevailing social system. (4) RFK's speeches employ negative words that show social injustice and positive words that show his support for social justice. (5) RFK's speeches rely on repetition especially the instant one to deliver his motivational messages. (6) The schematic analysis and through the outline reflects the purposes of RFK's speeches. (7) RFK's speeches' ideologies are reflected in different linguistic forms related to the macro, micro, and super structures of his speeches.

To conduct this study, the researcher will follow mixed methods of research analysis, which involves a sort of combinations of qualitative and quantitative research in one project (Patten and Newhart, 2018: 177). The names (qualitative and quantitative) are derived from the key difference in how research results are presented. Thus, qualitative research results are primarily presented through words, while quantitative research results are presented in the form of 'quantities' or numbers (*ibid.* 22).

Theoretical Framework

Macrostructure

Thematic structure

The meaning of speech is not confined to the words and phrases used in it, rather it also includes broader connotations, such as themes or topics (van Dijk, 2000b: 45). Such themes and topics, according to van Dijk, represent the gist or the most important information of a discourse (*ibid.*).

Microstructure

The Syntactic Level

Pronouns

The term 'pronoun' is generally used for referring to several different sets of pronouns such as personal pronouns, possessives, demonstratives, interrogatives, correlatives, etc. (Bhat, 2004: 1). For this study, personal and possessive pronouns will be conducted. Personal pronouns have two sets of case-forms: subjective and objective. The subjective forms- I, you, he, she, it, we, they- are used as subjects of finite verbs and commonly as subject complements, as in this example: "**he** hoped the passenger would be Mary and indeed it was **she**" (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973:103). The objective forms- me, you, him, her, it, us, them- are employed as objects as well as prepositional complements, as in: "I saw **her** with **them**" (*ibid.*).

Coming to possessives pronouns, Quirk and Greenbaum further identify that there are two kinds of possessive pronouns: the attributives (my, their...etc.) are syntactically determiners. And the nominals (mine, theirs...etc.) are employed in the same way as the genitive with ellipsis (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973:105). The present study will focus on the former.

The Semantic Level

In this level, the researcher will go through categorisation, and victimisation.

Categorisation

Categorisation, in general, refers to the act of sorting human experience into basic ideas with corresponding language names (Crystal, 2008: 68). van Dijk puts it clearly that when people tend to categorise people, for instance what speakers do in parliament, especially when others are engaged (immigrants, refugees, etc.), distinguishing and categorising groups, they might be ascribed positive or negative qualities (van Dijk, 2000b: 64).

Victimisation

Victimisation means that when certain group of people are portrayed negatively, especially when they are connected with dangers, they will be shown as a victim of such dangers or a threat (Van Dijk, 2000b: 84).

The Lexical Level

Lexical analysis is one of the most fundamental types of linguistic analysis that carried out in CDA, it entails to examine what kinds of words are there in a text (Machine and Mayr, 2012: 30).

The Rhetorical Level

The final part of the linguistic analysis will be limited to analysing rhetorical devices the speaker relies on through delivering his speeches. This study will focus on repetition.

Repetition

Repetition is a powerful rhetorical technique for producing emphasis, clarity, amplification, or emotional effect (rhetoric.byu.edu). The researcher adopts Cockcroft and Cockcroft's (1992) model to analyse repetition in the selected speeches. This model is about seven types of repetition, these types as Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992: 131) mention are as follows:

- Initial Repetition: A word or phrase that appears at the start of a sequence of clauses or sentences.
- Terminal Repetition: Repeating word or phrase at the conclusion of a sequence of clauses or sentences.
- Random Repetition: The use of a key word or a phrase several times in a sentence or a paragraph to emphasise it.
- Instant Repetition: A word or phrase that is quickly repeated one or more times.
- Refrain: Self-explanatory (repeating the words variously).
- Stop-and-start: Repetition of the previous sentence's last word or phrase at the start of the next sentence.
- Switch-around: The repetition of words or phrases with variation (in different order).

Superstructure

Schematic Structure

The shape that organises the overall meaning of a text (van Dijk, 1980: 108). It entails that Discourse exhibits specific categories, that is, the first category 'introduction' that specifies the necessary presuppositions with respect to which something 'new', 'interesting' that can be said (van Dijk, 1980: 110-111). The middle category constitutes the so-called 'body' of the discourse; this category may also include a new difficulty, an unexpected incident, and so on (*ibid.* 111). The final category is 'conclusion' that concludes the discourse (*ibid.*).

Results

Results of Macrostructure Analysis

Results of the Thematic Analysis

In the first speech 'Reflections on the 1965 Watts Riots', the analysis revealed the theme of addressing riots -one of social injustice practices- and inequality among groups. In the second speech 'Day of Affirmation' the analysis revealed the emphasis on themes of equivalent ideas that aim to present social injustice (i.e. oppression) and the way to resist it by calling for freedom, as well as on hope for not to lose hope and stand for making change for a just world.

Results of Microstructure Analysis

Results of the Syntactic Level

Pronouns

RFK's speech 'Reflections on the 1965 Watts Riots' frequently used personal pronouns, where pronoun 'we' comes in the first place with (34) occurrences, representing (30.09%) out of the total number which is (113), followed by possessive pronouns 'our' and 'their' with (16) occurrences for each, representing (14.16%). Other pronouns used much less and some had never been used which reveals that RFK's speech highly used pronouns that address people as one group. RFK's speech 'Day of Affirmation' also made use of frequent personal pronouns by mentioning pronoun 'we' (39) times, representing (18.84%) followed by possessive pronoun 'our' with (29) occurrences, representing (14.01%) and pronoun 'their' with (16) occurrences, constituting (7.73) out of the total number of pronouns which is (207). Other pronouns used less and some had never been used, these numbers reveal that RFK's speech used these pronouns on a purpose.

Results of the Semantic Level

Categorisation

In speech 'Reflections on the 1965 Watts Riots', the analysis revealed that social injustice can be noticed through the used linguistic forms where people were categorised according to their race and skin colour. In speech 'Day of Affirmation' categorisation analysis, via linguistic forms, revealed that people were categorised according to their social position as well as their profession in a way that clearly present social injustice and oppression.

Victimisation

In speech 'Reflections on the 1965 Watts Riots', the analysis shows that people were victimised because of riots and violent policies as well as they were mostly victimised and denied their rights because of their skin colour as in RFK's words "***the dead and the orphans... the sick and the distressed... The difficulties these people face are far greater because of the color of their skin***". In the second speech 'Day of Affirmation', victimisation analysis revealed that people were victimised because of their skin colour, race, religion, nationality as in RFK's words "***millions of Negroes untrained for the simplest of jobs... lack of freedom of speech, of protest, of religion, and of the press***".

Results of the Lexical level

Lexical analysis of speech 'Reflections on the 1965 Watts Riots' revealed that RFK's speech used specific words that represent the practices of social injustice, inequality, and violence. Such words are: Negro, white, difference, misery, insecurity...etc. In speech 'Day of Affirmation', the lexical analysis revealed that RFK's speech made an equal use of words that show and present the negative situation of the society, such as, discrimination, misery, poverty...etc. Besides words that show positivity in

which they advocate for social justice and freedom. Such words are: freedom, humanity, hope, change... etc.

Results of the Rhetorical Level

Repetition

The analysis of speech 'Reflections on the 1965 Watts Riots' revealed a prominent use of random repetition with (53) occurrences, representing (66.25%) out of the total number of types of repetition which is (80). In the second speech 'Day of Affirmation', the analysis revealed that there is also a frequent use of random repetition with (51) occurrences, representing (67.11%) out of the total number of types of repetition which is (76). This shows that RFK highly relied on random repetition in delivering his motivational messages.

Results of Superstructure Analysis

Results of the Schematic Analysis

The schematic analysis revealed that the outline of speech 'Reflections on the 1965 Watts Riots' was structured in a way that showed the purpose of delivering the speech. It showed RFK's views and opinions on social injustice and the issues the nation and indeed the world go through. The schematic analysis of the second speech 'Day of Affirmation' revealed the aim of advocating social justice among people and creating equality in all rights as well as finding solutions and delivering words that would urge people to take actions to achieve social justice as the outline presents.

Discussion

The primary focus of this paper is to reveal the linguistic forms and styles along with the ideologies that RFK's speeches employed in an attempt to eliminate and resist social injustice, therefore, this study limits itself to investigating two selected speeches presented by RFK in the period of 1965 and 1966, which specifically address the topic of exposing and encountering social injustice.

There are no many studies that are conducted against social injustice by applying CDA, yet there are some studies. Thus, a study by Szöcs (2013) has revealed that RFK sets a great emphasis on building a strong relationship with the target audience. His discourse strategies and rhetorical devices are predetermined by the event, the topic, and the nature of his audience. Sipra and Rashid's (2013) study has showed that certain textual and stylistic devices have been used prominently in order to achieve certain purposes, Such as the use of repetitions and metaphor to emphasise the main theme, which is inequality and to identify the relationship among the dominant and the dominated groups. The lexeme is not well ordered according to situation.

The results of this study, on the other hand, has revealed that RFK's speeches focus on themes of social change and to stand and call for freedom and equality. Moreover, the results show that there is a prominent use of personal pronouns 'we'/ 'our'/ and 'their' to represent one united nation. It also has revealed that through categorisation and victimisation, social injustice can be noticed through the used linguistic forms where people were categorised according to their race, skin colour and their profession. Furthermore, the current study has showed that RFK's speeches employed negative words to present the social injustice and positive words that would call for social justice. It also has revealed there is a prominent use of random repetition where the speaker depended on in delivering his main points. For schematic analysis, the study has showed the main purposes of the selected speeches which are to resist social injustice and calling people to stand and take actions to achieve social justice.

To sum up, the other studies did not analyse (in whole) the three structures of discourse, macro; micro; and super, as well as they follow qualitative research method. However, the current study tackles all the mentioned structures and follow mixed methods research.

Conclusions

In the light of the results the researcher reached to, some conclusions can be drawn as follows:

- At the macrostructure level, the thematic analysis identified the most important themes and areas of emphasis that RFK's speeches intended to refer to, which are the rejection of riots and violence and racial discrimination and most importantly working together to combat inequality and call for change, justice, and freedom. This point confirm hypothesis NO. 1
- At the microstructure level, RFK's speeches prominently use a great number of the personal pronoun 'we', besides possessive pronouns 'our' and 'their' to present unity as it is one form of resisting social injustice. This point confirm hypothesis NO. 2
- RFK's speeches through linguistic forms (words in particular) describe how US and South Africa are becoming increasingly involved in violence and social injustice where individuals are categorised and victimised by means of their race, skin colour and because of the prevailing system . This point confirm hypothesis NO. 3
- RFK's speeches proceed to employ negative words that demonstrate the miserable situation. At the same time RFK's speeches employ positive words that are infused with the enhancement and encouragement for people to stand against injustice. This point confirm hypothesis NO. 4
- Comes to repetition, RFK's speeches use a lot of random repetition; this contradicts hypothesis No. 5 that RFK's speeches rely on instant repetition. What is found is that RFK's speeches mostly rely on random repetition in order to arouse the audience's attention and be connected to the topics he talks about.
- At the superstructure level, the schematic analysis clearly reflects RFK's speeches purposes, which are standing against social injustice and the constant endeavours to advocate for justice as the outlines of the speeches show up. This point confirm hypothesis NO. 6
- RFK's various ideologies such as, equality, liberalism, rejection of social injustice, are revealed in different linguistic forms throughout using all discourse structures (macro, micro, and super structures). This point confirm hypothesis NO. 7

In view of the foregoing points, it becomes clear that the language has a central role in revealing the practices of social injustice and in advocating social justice through the ideologies, linguistic forms and styles it employs, which have an effective power and great impact to achieve the purposed goals.

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