

DAVID CAMERON'S FEMINIST POLICY FROM A CRITICAL DISCOURSE PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Critical Discourse Analysis is a multidisciplinary approach addressing the prevailing social problems with the aim of opposing ideological stances. The present study is a critical discourse analysis of feminist language in Cameron's selected political contexts. It aims to achieve the following (1) Finding out the linguistic structure of political contexts;(2) identifying the lexical strategies used by Cameron (3) finding out the most prevailing grammatical processes used by Cameron (4) finding out the type of pragmatic strategies that are interpreted in the selected contexts;(5) finding out the most frequently rhetorical strategies used in the selected contexts;(6) identifying the selected contexts in terms of their use of contextual analysis.

Consequently, it is hypothesized that: (1) the selected contexts are linguistically organized in terms of micro and macro structures;(2) the use of different lexicalizations can be indicative to uncover the hidden ideologies of Cameron's political contexts.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Feminism, Social Use of Language, Ideology, Political Contexts.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis is a practically-oriented form of discourse analysis addressing a social problem with the aim of resisting it. It is not concerned with language or language use *per se*, but with the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures. That is, the role of structures, strategies or other properties of texts and talk in establishing and maintaining power relations between different groups in society (van Dijk,1993:250). Language, according to CDA, is never neutral and it always has some implications of the world that surrounds its speakers or at least it is not neutral on a personal level. It is, then, a form of social practice that seeks to examine both the manner in which discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideology, and the manner in which discourse actively plays a role in shaping these relations (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 258). Hence discourse is both a mode of action where a person acts upon the world and upon others as well as a mode of representation where it is a reflex of the world in general and the situational variables in particular (Fairclough,1992:63).Therefore, discourse is a practice that does not just represent the world as it is, the world is also signified, constructed and constituted in meaning through discursive practices. These practices contribute both to reproducing society (social

identities, social relationships, systems of knowledge and belief) as it is, as well as to transforming it (Fairclough, 1992:65).

2. FEMINISM AND CDA

As a field of inquiry, CDA is known for its overtly political stance and its concern with different forms of social inequality and injustice. The question being asked is about the relationship between feminism and CDA? To establish a feminist perspective in language and discourse studies is all what feminism about. Motivated by goals of social emancipation, feminist studies and CDA aim to develop a rich understanding of the complex workings of power and ideology in discourse (Lazar, 2007: 1). They both have a political position and a motivation for a particular analysis which brings about change due to the fact that CDA has drawn on research on discourse that it is of use to a feminist linguistics analysing sexism. Rather than seeing sexist language as simply words which convey sexist attitudes, Ainsworth and Hardy (2004: 237) argue that:

Discourse does not transparently reflect the thoughts, attitudes and identities of separate selves but is a shared social resource that constructs identity as individuals lay claim to various recognisable social and shared identities.

However, this does not mean that individuals and their relations to others are constructed in discourse. Sexism is a set of resources which individuals assume to be available to them, which are socially approved of by certain institutions and groups. Thus, the use of sexism by individuals may be a way of associating oneself with particular people within a group or distancing oneself from other people in a group and associating oneself with groups and values outside the group. In this respect, Ainsworth and Hardy (2004: 237) elucidate that:

Individual identity is constructed from social resources and . . . far from being unitary and pre-existent, the individual is a fragmented and ambiguous construction, dependent on context and relationships with others for its self-definition and meaning.

So, a form of CDA which is able to capture this fluidity and the localized working out of identity will be of use to a Third Wave Feminist linguistic analysis of sexism (Mills, 2008: 32-5).

3. THE MODEL AND DATA ANALYSIS

The eclectic model focuses on an ideological analysis of randomly chosen political contexts delivered by David Cameron. The ideological analysis provides a micro-macro dimension. At the micro dimension, Van Dijk's Ideological Discourse Analysis (1995) and Halliday's Transitivity Analysis (1994) are followed. The first is followed to find out the discursive strategies of political contexts for the purpose of uncovering their hidden ideologies. The second is followed to reveal the types of grammatical processes and participants allocated to the political speakers. At the macro dimension, Van Dijk's Contextual Model and Fairclough's Social Analysis (1989) are followed.

4. THE ANALYSIS OF DAVID CAMERON'S EXTRACTS

Extract 1" *The context is about equality. I'm a dad with 3 children, 2 girls and a boy, and I want my girls to grow up with every opportunity that my son has, with no disadvantage, with the chance*

to make everything that my girls can of their lives. And that is really what this is, it's about equality."

The Lexical Level

Self-Identity Descriptions

Cameron identifies his identity and who he is. He says " I'm a dad with 3 children, 2 girls and a boy, and I want my girls to grow up with every opportunity that my son has"

Activity Descriptions

" I want my girls to grow up with every opportunity that my son has, with no disadvantage, with the chance to make everything that my girls can of their lives". Cameron's aim is very obvious as he declares that he is seeking equal opportunities for both women and men.

Goal Descriptions

Cameron states his positive goals towards both females and males " I want my girls to grow up with every opportunity that my son has....."

Norm and Value Descriptions

The positive norms and values of the out-group are mentioned as the speaker states that females should grow up without being disadvantaged.

The Syntactic Level

Clause	Process Type	Participant Role
The context is about equality.	Relational	Identified
I'm a dad with 3 children, 2 girls and a boy,	Relational	Identified
And I want my girls to grow up with every opportunity that my son has, with no disadvantage, with the chance to make everything that my girls can of their lives.	Material	Actor
And that is really what this is, it's about equality."	Relational	Identified

The Pragmatic Level

Speech Act

The speech act of stating is used for the speaker states that " The context is about equality. I'm a dad with 3 children, 2 girls and a boy, and I want my girls to grow up with every opportunity that my son has, with no disadvantage, with the chance to make everything that my girls can of their lives. And that is really what this is, it's about equality.

Politeness

Positive Politeness strategies

Intensify Interest to H

It is obvious that Cameron shows himself as belonging to the same set of the out-group's wants, goals, and values " I want my girls to grow up with every opportunity that my son has, with no disadvantage...."

Extract 2" And there – of course, there are so many things, when it comes to tackling inequality, we need to address, whether it is equal pay or equal rights or fighting discrimination or equal

opportunities, including in political life. But what seems to me is so important about these 2 issues is they are absolutely standing rebukes to our world that they still exist”

The Lexical Level

Self- Identity Descriptions

"But what seems to me is so important about these 2 issues is they are absolutely standing rebukes to our world that they still exist" Cameron stresses the importance of providing equal chances for both women and men and the danger of not providing equal chances.

Activity Descriptions

Cameron feels that his important task is to seek women equality " we need to address, whether it is equal pay or equal rights"...

Goal Descriptions

Cameron shows his positive goals towards the other sex. He declares that " And there – of course, there are so many things, when it comes to tackling inequality....."

Norm and Value Descriptions

Cameron makes clear his real intention as he emphasizes that adhering equality is the norm and he will be the man who paves the way for women to have their rights.

The Syntactic Level

Clause	Process Type	Participant Role
And there – of course, there are so many things, when it comes to tackling inequality,	Existential	Existent
We need to address, whether it is equal pay or equal rights or fighting discrimination or equal opportunities, including in political life.	Material	Actor
But what seems to me is so important about these 2 issues is they are absolutely standing rebukes to our world that they still exist"	Mental	Sensor

The Pragmatic Level

Speech Act

Cameron uses the speech act of stating. He states that men and women should be offered equal opportunities.

Politeness

Positive Politeness Strategies

Intensify Interest to H

Cameron shows approval with the other sex's wants and goals. He wants to address equality among men and women in everything.

The Rhetorical Level

Repetition

Cameron repeats the word "equality" three times to emphasize that his speech is about equality and nothing else.

Extract 3 "And so when we think of the fight for equality, which should be at the heart of the commitments to the Millennium Development Goals, it's absolutely clear to me that we've got to start with outlawing these practices, which is why today's conference is so important".

The Lexical Level

Self –Identity Descriptions

For Cameron, equality is the most vital thing that he seeks to achieve " the fight for equality, which should be at the heart of the commitments to the Millennium Development Goals".

Activity Descriptions

Cameron's task is to think of fighting for equality as he mentions " And so when we think of the fight for equality".

Goal Descriptions

Cameron's goal is to start eradicating those discriminatory practices against women in order to achieve equality.

Norm and Value Descriptions

Cameron tries to show the values of the other sex as he decides to " think of the fight for equality, which should be at the heart of the commitments to the Millennium Development Goals."

The Syntactic Level

Clause	Process Type	Participant Role
And so when we think of the fight for equality, which should be at the heart of the commitments to the Millennium Development Goals,	Mental	Sensor
It's absolutely clear to me.	Relational	Identified
That we've got to start with outlawing these practices.	Material	Actor
Which is why today's conference is so important.	Relational	Identified

he Pragmatic Analysis

Speech Act

Cameron implies the speech act of stating. He states that *"the fight for equality, which should be at the heart of the commitments to the Millennium Development Goals,..."*

Politeness

Positive Politeness Strategies

Intensify Interest to H

Cameron emphasizes the significance of fighting for achieving women's equality.

Extract 4" And here in Britain, we want to be good to our word. It is already illegal to marry as a child. It is already illegal to push someone into a forced marriage. It's already illegal to take part in female genital mutilation"

The Lexical Level

Self- Identity Descriptions

Cameron's words elucidate his way of thinking towards the other sex. He sheds light on those illegal issues from which women are suffering.

Activity Descriptions

Cameron's aim is to show that he is against forced marriage and taking part of female genital mutilation.

Goal Descriptions

"we want to be good to our word." Cameron emphasizes his positive values as a man. He shows that he is against all discriminatory practices against women.

Norm and Value Descriptions

Cameron mentions the values that women should have and men should admit these values " It is already illegal to push someone into a forced marriage. It's already illegal to take part in female genital mutilation".

The Syntactic Level

Clause	Process Type	Participant Role
And here in Britain,	Relational	Identified
We want to be good to our word.	Material	Actor
It is already illegal to marry as a child.	Relational	Identified
It's already illegal to take part in female genital mutilation	Relational	Identified

Pragmatic Level

Speech Act

Cameron uses the speech act of stating as he states the illegal issues that the socio-political system practices against women.

Politeness

Positive Politeness Strategies

Intensify Interest to H

Cameron shares women's wants and needs when he declares that children marriage is illegal, forcing women to get married and participation in female genital mutilation are also illegal.

The Rhetorical Level

Repetition

Cameron repeats the word "illegal " three times to shed light on those illegal practices against women.

Extract 5 "We're here for a very simple reason: women should be able to decide freely, and for themselves, whether, when and how many children they have".

The Lexical Level**Self- Identity Descriptions**

Cameron presents himself as being an adherent to women's freedom.

Activity Descriptions

Cameron's task is to give women their freedom in deciding when and how many children they should have.

Goal Descriptions

"Women should be able to decide freely, and for themselves". Cameron focuses on his positive goals saying that he supports women's freedom and their ability to decide what they want.

Norm and Value Descriptions

Cameron focuses on the values that he wants to achieve for the other sex ; the values of decision making.

The Syntactic Level

Clause	Process Type	Participant Role
We're here for a very simple reason.	Relational	Identified
Women should be able to decide freely, and for themselves, whether, when and how many children they have.	Material	Actor

The Pragmatic Level**Speech Act**

The speech act of stating is used. Cameron states that women should feel free in deciding when and how many children they should have.

Politeness**Positive Politeness Strategies****Claim Common Ground**

Women's face is enhanced for the speaker declares that they should have their freedom in the process of decision making.

5. CONCLUSIONS

feminism is a social ideology which is linguistically realized at two levels: micro (lexical, syntactic, pragmatic, and rhetorical) and macro (contextual factors such as theme, settings, ideology, etc.). Consequently, this validates the first hypothesis which reads: The selected contexts are linguistically organized in terms of micro and macro structures.

The analysis of the micro level reveals that language is operated in Cameron's political contexts through the use of certain discursive strategies which positively present women. This validates the second hypothesis which states: The use of different lexicalizations can be indicative of uncovering the hidden ideologies of Cameron's political contexts.

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