The Impact of Ideology on Repetition in the Political Discourse of Arab Leaders

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the ideological function of lexical repetition in two Arabic leaders’ speeches. The frequency of repetition in Arabic is explored in terms of its various formalistic approaches. However, little or less or no attention has been paid to the relationship between repetition and ideology. This paper argues that repetition is deliberately used to reinforce the leaders’ different political strategies, which have been devised to address various Arabic peoples, groups and factions. Repetition in Arabic is always related to stylistic and rhetorical function; however, this semantic function between and repetition ideology has been insufficiently considered. This study is new in its nature and topic in that it touches the ideological orientations which were not, in some way or another, related to the linguistic/semantic aspects of language. This study employs a qualitative approach in the analysis of the speeches to uncover the rhetorical strategies deployed and the ideologies underlined. CDA methods are employed to reveal underlying ideologies and persuasive strategies used in the speeches. The paper also argues that the speaker had used different discourse registers to address various audiences. The prevalence of lexical repetition has been deliberately employed in the leader’s speeches to promote their ideological and political stance. This paper reveals how these politicians purposefully and deliberately use repetition to persuade their audiences of their political agendas, to transmit their ideologies and stay in power.

Key words: Repetition, Political Speech, Ideology

INTRODUCTION

Political discourse is one of the fields that intersect with discourse linguistics; however, some linguists relate it with the contextual domain. Generally, it is a type of discourse that deals with political matters, actions, beliefs and practices of certain political members or groups. It covers different types of genres like; elections, campaigns, speeches, press conferences, political debate… etc. This paper deals only with one type, i.e., political speeches, which is a form of public speaking represented by a politician like a president, a prime minister or one who is in charge of doing so (van Dijk, 2007). In the political speeches leaders mostly rely on the spoken rhetorical words which can help them transmit their ideologies and impress their audience and persuade them of some points in the sake. Charteris-Black (2005) states that “politics have relied on the spoken word to convince others of the benefits that arise from their leadership”.

Language is the best device for conveying ideas and ideologies particularly in the political speeches. Therefore, political speeches are composed by a team of professional speech writers who are educated in the use of persuasive language. Hence, political speeches are not necessarily a success because of correctness or truth; rather it may be a matter of providing valid arguments (Beard, 2000). Languages and politics cannot be conducted separately. Both language and politics are highly interconnected, and power can be seized. This can be featured by ingenious use of language. According to Beard (2000) language of politics can be a merit that characterizes this kind of discourse among others. Through language ideologies can be constructed, that will affect and condition the way people think; it also affects and determine the way people react. In the same token, Mazrui (1975) describes language as the vehicular expression of politics. In this paper, the attention is paid merely to the repetition of the lexical words that might be produced due to the ideological or political backgrounds with reference to the implied purposes and function behind such repetitions. Beard (2000:2) contends that it is important to study the language of politics because it enables us to “understand how language is used by those who wish to gain power, those who wish to exercise power and those who wish to keep power.

Paper Objectives

This paper aims at connecting the ‘repetition device’ as a semantic device to the ideology of leader’s speeches. It attempts to address and achieve the following objectives:

1. To discover the way repetition, as a rhetorical device in the political speeches, acquires ideological and political trends.

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2. To find out how do leaders use repetition to persuade and impress their audiences of their ideological goals?
3. To illustrate to what extent repetition is deliberately used to reinforce the leaders’ political strategies and why they all adopt to use this rhetorical device rather than others.

Paper Questions
1. How do CDA approaches help to connect the semantic/linguistic repetition with the non-linguistic aspect ‘context’ to detect the ideological notion within the speech?
2. What is the definition and function of the rhetorical device repetition in Arabic and how do leaders use them to achieve their political intentions?
3. What are the used repetitive-ideological strategies? And how could CDA helps to reveal the ideological notion of the different leaders?

Statement of the Problem
This study investigates the political speeches of the two major Arab leaders in the Middle East during the Arab Spring revolution and Lebanese-Israeli conflict. This study is very rare of its kind, since it is an attempt to investigate the linguistic features of those Arab leaders’ speeches during that period of time. Many political speeches have been investigated by various researchers from different political or social perspectives. However, this paper deals with the significance of the lexical device ‘repetition’ throughout the leaders’ speeches and the relationship between such repetition and leaders’ ideologies and purposes. This study tries to reveal the features of the language used by these leaders during the period of people’s uprising against their governments and the Arabic-Israeli war in 2006.

Methodology and Data Analysis
This paper analyses two major speeches delivered by different Arab leaders in the last few years during the wave of uprisings and Arabic-Israeli conflict which the region had witnessed. These major speeches are analyzed for the sake of identifying mostly repeated lexical words in their speeches and identifying the purpose behind such a kind of rhetorical device ‘repetition’. These repeated words are selected deliberately for the purpose of understanding the connection between them and the leader’s political ideologies and intentions with which they attempt to persuade their addressees. This study employed a qualitative approach in the speech analysis to reveal the rhetorical strategies deployed and the ideologies underlined. CDA methods are also employed to display underlying ideologies and persuasive strategies. In brief, this paper seeks to examine the ideological motives behind the use of repetition. In doing so, it will draw on Fairclough’s (1992) framework in order to explain the relationship between repetition and ideology in the leaders’ speeches.

Procedure
The procedures of analyzing the collected data are as follows: first, the two selected speeches of the Arab leaders were collected and downloaded from the internet. Second, the collected data was transcribed from its oral mode into written form. Third, the Arabic texts were transliterated using English language symbols. Finally, all the collected speeches were analyzed in light of the CDA theories and models mentioned above. The information and data necessary to conduct this paper is derived and collected from various books, magazines, articles and internet periodicals as well as TV records.

Literature Review
In this part, we are going to demonstrate and review some significant concepts related to the topic repetition as a rhetorical devices and the political discourses; as well as what has been said and discussed by linguists and discourse analysts with respect of the aforementioned items.

CDA and Political Discourse
CDA can be seen as a general label for a special approach to the study of text and talk. Analysts state that it emerges from critical linguistics, critical semiotics, and in general from a socio-politically and oppositional way of investigating language, discourse and communication. Work in CDA is usually characterized by some criteria like issue-oriented and rather explicitly critical approach, position or stance of studying text and talk. In order to study social problems adequately CDA is interdisciplinary especially focuses on relation between discourse and society (social cognition, politics and culture). CDA focuses highly on the text that has political and social dimensions. Therefore, linguists and analysts differentiate between CDA and critical discourse approach in the way it examines ideology, power and dominance within the text, and how it is expressed via language. It is not only a structural study of the text but also a systematic analysis of it within its socio-political dimensions. In other words, CDA has a social aspect which studies the problematic discourses for society such as political discourses in order to display and discover the aspects of power and ideology within the discourse. Almost CDA methods are applied on the basis of van Dijk (1988) socio-cognitive approach and less more upon Fairclough’s (2001) approach. Hence and from this model of Van Dijk we tried to connect the linguistic aspects of text to the context level. i.e. connecting the linguistic cohesive device ‘repetition’ to the contextual side of leaders’ speeches, their ideologies and social actions.

An adequate account of studies and analysis deals with CDA and political discourse are two interrelated levels. Once discourse analysis is taking place, political discourses are seen as favorable instances of CDA for linguists and discourse analysts. In considering political discourses one should think of some issues which are mainly underlined by this concept such as power, ideology, conflicts and domination Feirclough (1992a, van Dijk, 1993). Some linguists overestimate this term of political discourse to state that almost all discourse may be considered political, and then analyses of discourse are potentially political, therefore, all discourse analysis is political discourse. Critical linguists
(Fairclough, 1995b) or critical discourse analysis (vanDijk, 1993, Wodak, 1995) connects directly to work on political discourse, not only because the material for analysis is often formally political but also, perhaps, because the analysts have explicitly made themselves political actors (see van Dijk, this volume). Political discourse has received some features which might characterize it from other discourses. What Atkinson calls the contrastive pair, which uses repetition in some way or another, and what classical Greek and Roman used on rhetoric is one common feature of political discourse. In the same token, Fairclough’s (1989) in his view of critical linguistics/discourse, for example, political discourse can be as a form of social practice with a malign social purpose. This view has been taken as a criticism of a political discourse. Political speeches are often accused of being like claptrap, in the sense that speakers use such device of language as a trick to catch applauses and employ it for their own advantage. CDA analysts usually focus on those features to the fabric of discourse to adopt or challenge some dominant ideologies where contradicting ideologies also coexist. However, they sometimes say that the relation between ideologies and discourses are not direct, yet it cannot be discovered and understood quickly.

Politics cannot be conducted without language. In looking at the analysis of Political discourse, it deals with a language which might be described as political language concerned conceptually with the most moral sense than anything else, thus it carries information to communicate with audiences, and deals with peoples’ affairs and issues such as war and peace issues. The political discourse is the kind which uses the persuasive language, incomprehensible and emotional words Paul Chilton (2008). Beard (2000) argues that the language of politics is a merit that distinguishes itself from other kinds of discourse. Besides, political language has a number of functions are mirrored in the speech itself. It disguises, transforms and heightens a particular issue, and mainly used to persuade audiences with some ideology or idea by employing some techniques such as repetition, explanation and analysis. Therefore politicians make choices of different levels of discourse to represent actions in a way that corresponds with their ideologies. Butt et al. (2004) claims that the very use of language is ideological. Seidel (1985) points out that a political speech may constitute a genre, a domain, or a field. This genre, in Christina Schaffner’s view, is one of the complex genres; she relates this complexity to the non-linguistic social factors which are ideology and power; some other analysts look at it as a complex form because politicians represent the government sound and ideology and it is designed to orient audience to a certain direction of beliefs, thoughts and ultimately actions.

**Function of Repetition in Arabic**

Repetition in any language refers the reoccurrence of some lexical items in the same discourse either for rhetorical purposes or as cohesive devices which are often functioned as generating lexical cohesion Halliday (1994). For Halliday and Hassan (1976) this kind of devices (repetition) creates the cohesion of the text, whereby lexical items across sentences and paragraphs form a cohesive link which assists readers to understand the meaning and ideas. Hoey defines lexical repetition as happening when ‘two lexical items share morphemes but are not formally identical (…) or when they are formally identical but with different grammatical function. This paper, with its limited scope, mainly concerns the reiteration (mostly lexical) repetition in the Arabic leaders’ political speeches rather than any other forms of reiteration. Johnstone (1991) states that repetition in Arabic is often considered as part of language structure. Lahlali (2005) adds that it is a stylistic feature in Arabic language. It is so because of the high frequency of reiterated items in one discourse compared with other discourses in other languages. The multiple occurrences of an idea or a lexical item (word), according to Reynolds (1995) attract the attention and enforce the meaning. In his analysis of lexical strings in English and Arabic, Williams (1989) concluded that Arabic uses lexical strings as a cohesive device more than English. This conclusion might be considered either in the analysis of political discourses or any other kinds of Arabic spoken or written discourse. Repetition has different uses between Arabic and English. In Arabic it is considered as a linguistic and rhetorical feature which is usefully and purposefully used in the political discourse in particular. However, in English it is unfavorable stance. English grants its speaker more lexical variants than recurrences Alkhafaji (2005), which means that Arabic language employ more reiteration items such as lexical repetition than English. On the other side, English speakers employ more various lexical devices such as synonyms and antonyms than Arabic.

Repetition is seen as one of the manipulative and rhetorical tools which Arabic politicians use to deceive their audience. Feldman (1998) states that it is a merit in which Arab politicians take use of this linguistic feature to impress their people and deliver their ideologies through indirectly. Therefore, it is employed purposefully and functionally in a political discourse and used differently as a rhetorical device in different languages. Furthermore, linguists declare that repetition in political discourses symbolizes power; it echoes the sound of political power and aims to gain political strength and domination. To take an example from Husni Mubarak’s speech, he overused the lexical items like “Egypt”, ‘homeland’, ‘people’, ‘settlement’ ‘peace’... etc. aiming at transmitting a message of being powerful and yet controlling the scene as well as achieving the protestors’ sympathy towards their country and their president. This kind of repetition in the leader’s speech sounds of high significance for two reasons: first from the linguistic and cohesive point of view, such recurrences are meaningful since they attract the audiences’ attention and keep the speaker’s fluency prominent. Second, these recurrences cooperate in adding style and rhetoric to the discourse and delivering the speaker’s political ideologies and ideas implicitly. An example for the ideological intentions which can sometimes be stated explicitly is the purposeful repetition of some religious or political items in Hasan Nasrullah’s speech; such as يا الشرف الإسلامي يا أفجر الناس يا أكرم الناس (translation: you honorable people, you generous people, you immaculate
Repetition as a Rhetorical Device of an Ideology and Persuasion Strategy

Repetition can be defined as ‘multiple instances of an idea or word, and the greater the number of repetition the more we notice it’ (Reynolds 1995: 185). It is clear that repetition is favoured by political speakers for several purposes like emphasising the importance of certain ideas of persuading audience to accept certain ideologies or transmit some messages of threatening or warning which they think might lead to some expected serious consequences. As we mentioned earlier, repetition in Arabic is employed differently from English. Linguists think that this feature is language dependent in the sense that while Arabic language sounds to prefer recurrences, English usually prefers lexical variation (Al-Khafaji 2005). One can notice that the frequent recurrences of some lexical items in any leader’s speech rise from his hidden ideologies and political ideas that he is trying to deliver and convince others with. Al-Khafaji adds that repetition can have didactic, playful, emotional, artistic, textual and rhetorical functions. It is obvious here that repetition can be described as a persuasive strategy or persuasive linguistic device usually used to convince audience and make the speech favourable in some contexts if employed efficiently.

The research also deals with ideology since it is the hidden part as van Dijk (2008) explains. The politicians often use a manipulative and indirect language to deliver their ideologies. Ideologies are usually referred to socially-shared mental representations of a social group and the basic social cognitive basis for the identity of a group. Ideologies used to control the other groups’ social representations such as knowledge, attitudes and social practices as well as discourse. Therefore, examining ‘repetition’ in the political discourse is the powerful way to uncover the disguised ideologies. One of the significant linguistic devices that Arab politicians often use is ‘linguistic repetition’. They utilize it to ensure in one way the transference of their ideological notions, or to, in another way, affect their Arab audiences through the language which can be seen as a social practice manipulate to express the speakers’ own beliefs and ideologies. Again Van Dijk (2006) states that ‘probably more than any other kind of discourse political discourse is eminently ideological… and if there is one social field that is ideological it is that of politics’. So he affirms the interrelation and connection between ideology and political discourse. Similarly, Van Dijk demonstrates that there is further connection between ideologies and repetition in the critical discourse analysis approach.

In this paper we will extract and discuss some instances of speeches produced by the two different political-ideological Arabic leaders considering their different ideologies and the way they employ such a rhetorical device ‘repetition’ in their speeches and the purposes behind such strategies. For example, Husni Mubarak, the ousted president of Egypt, in the year of 2011 during the Arabic uprising repeated some lexical items several times in one of his speeches to the public as follows:

وأول من جديد أي أن تهابون في أي قرارات تحظى لكل مصري أو موريمن أهمهم وعمهم وسوف ا_cycles من عمر واستمرارها وأمان معهما فتلك هي المسؤولية والأمانة التي أقسمت بينا أمان الله الوطن بالمحافظة عليها (حسني مبارك: 28/1/2011)

Translation: ‘I say once again that I will not be lenient in taking any decision that safeguards to every Egyptians (man and woman) their security and safety, and I will defend Egypt and its stability and the safety of its people. This is the responsibility and honesty that I swear in front of God and the nation to keep and maintain’.

In the above example, the leader Husni Mubarak had repeated the words ‘الأمان’ ‘الأمانة’. These three lexical items are used to refer to one semantic meaning i.e. ‘safety’ or ‘security’. This kind of recursion is used as a warning code to those who are thinking to unsettle the country by creating uprisings and bringing more crises. We could notice that Husni Mubarak had a military background and his political ideology might be implied into the military one rather than any other ideologies. Therefore, we could find such an example represents the speaker’s hidden political military ideology. This point can be seen more clearly in the repetition of the word, كلفت. تكليف (meaning: put onus and responsibility) these items represent a powerful fragment which might reflect the disguised military ideology. Meanwhile, most military leaders do not like to expose their military background when they become on the top regime of the country, even though, it appears clearly through their speeches and interviews.

Another example from Husni Mubarak’s speech:

أما الأمر الذي يائزه الفرد بالحفاظ على أمن مصر واستقرارها: وعده بالمال والسلام الاجتماعي.. وعليها ان تحدد ما يحيط من امتثال اتفاقات المفاوضات والانقلاب (حسني مبارك:28/1/2011)

Translation: ‘I am committed to maintain the security and the stability of Egypt and not to jeopardize the nation and its people to dangerous slope which may threaten the public security and social stability... we must be alert of the several examples around us which slipped the people into chaos and retrogradation’.

people). It is known that Nasrullah’s speech never lacks to such kind of repeated words or phrases which are ideologically religious. He repeats not only the phrase format; he rather repeats the same lexical item several times in one individual speech to propitiate his audiences and encouraging them for more stability and resistance against the Israeli insolence. The next part will show more instances of such recurrences. Brown and Yule (1983) mention that repetition of some lexical items can be a feature of the spoken discourse; it is more common in spoken than written discourse. He adds that not only lexical items repeated though syntactic structures as well. Lahalii (2005) adds that repetition is a valued feature in Arabic culture and language. It displays the capability to use the language properly and effectively. Berque (1978) assures that this feature lies in the heart of Arabic language and discourse, and it cannot be easily changed or separated from the language itself.

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You are all welcome – from the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon: you are all welcome – from Syria, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, and every country that came to us to celebrate and rejoice (Speech: 22 September 2006).

In above examples, we could recognize the existing of such a political ideology behind this recurrence of some words. This leader has a famous military and political background which is reflected through his choice of terms and repeating them continuously throughout his speech. Husni Mubarak’s speech lasted for 10 minutes only, meanwhile our critical discourse analysis reveals that the speaker tended to use this strategy in order to convince his audience and persuade them of his beliefs and expected them to translate his speech into social actions. In this respect we could see Van Dijk and Feirclough argue that language is a representation of the social actions, whereby Van Dijk discusses two concepts: manipulation and persuasion which are one of the crucial aspects of CDA approach. In the persuasion aspect Dijk considers the legitimate mind control, whereas manipulation aims at persuasion and dominating group interest. El Mustafa Lahlali (2011) in his investigation on repetition in the speeches of two Arabic leaders found that they used this technique to address the unrest demonstrators and convince them to stop it, so they would let those presidents live politically longer. In the same speech of Husni Mubarak in 2011, he intended to repeat lots of words such as the SULTAN (sovereignty, authority), ZURUF ASIBA (hard circumstances), ALHEWAR (dialogue), ALFOUDHA (the mess), ALDUSTOOK (the constitution), ALWATAN (Egypt), ALSHA‘AF (people), DAWA‘AF (call, invitation) and many other repetitions. Analysts usually state that repeating such words in one speech results from some hidden fears, ideologies or purposes such as the word WATAN (homeland, country) in a sign to the audience that he (the leader) represents this country and what they are calling to and demonstrating for is against the fare of this country whatever legitimate calls they raise. He tried to affect the audiences’ sympathy by repeating words like ‘Egypt’, ‘the mess’ and calling ‘call’. His undeclared purpose was to put an end to these protests and to mute the voices calling him to oust. Besides his linguistic and rhetorical styles of speech delivery, Husni Mubarak also employed lots of gestures and bodily expressions to achieve his purposes and transmit his ideology even though time was too late for that.

Similarly, Hasan Nasrullah’s speech was full of these rhetorical and cohesive devices which he usually uses in almost all his speeches on public. Let us look at these extracts and discuss them in more details.

You are a great people, and you are a proud people, and you are a loyal people and you are a courageous people. (Speech: 22 September 2006).

In above example, the word people” was repeated four times in four very subsequent phrases. It indicates that such a repetition of lexical items not only creates a cohesive
link between different morphemes in the discourse but also indicates the speaker’s creativity, though it is a feature of elevated discourse (Beeston 1983, Al-Khafaji 2005).

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the above analysis proves that the language in the two leaders’ speeches shapes and is shaped by the social, cultural, religious and political factors surrounding him. In this paper, repetition as a semantic (rhetorical/lexical) device is argued to have been employed extensively in the Arabic leaders’ speeches not only to elevate their language style, or impress and propitiate addressees but also to serve various ideological purposes. Through the analysis, it has been noticed that leaders employ repetition rhetorically and proficiently to impress their audiences. The analysis reveals that lexical repetition has been extensively used by leaders to reinforce their various strategies, and to influence and persuade their audience. The use of different discourse registers in the two leaders’ speeches, combined with extensive use of repetition, shows clearly that language as a means of communication can be purposefully employed, not only to demonstrate the stylistic, rhetorical command of the speaker, but also to convey his/her views, manifested in his/her attempt to have a lasting impact on the audience and recipients of his/her speech. Their military and religious discourse register can be said to have been used to promote their political and religious identity with their followers. It has been noticed through this study that the political discourses represent the core of the social fields which can be ideological. The study has revealed that the different forms of repetition used in the leaders’ speeches are deliberately employed to reinforce and achieve different political strategies and ideologies such as the strategy propitiating and sometimes warning or threatening the protestors in a political way. It has also been noticed that repetition and ideologies, political in particular, are highly related; and the former is widely manipulated by the latter. Leaders always adopt this way for they know how to touch the peoples’ feelings and achieve their satisfaction of accepting the leaders’ intentions easily.

Repetition has proved to be one of the most effective strategies used by leaders to convince followers and forward their orientations to the fare of the rulers.

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