

POWER, IDEOLOGY, AND DISCOURSE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN'S SPEECH AT 74TH SESSION OF UNO

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Abstract

The researcher has employed the framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in this research, to examine the speech of the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the General Assembly session of UNO. This study aims at to investigate the use of language by the President of Turkey to to gain a deeper comprehension of the influence of language on our perception of important political issues and cultural artifacts. The discourse strategies, ideological structures, and power relations were analyzed in Erdogan's address. Scholar used this study to analyze the discursive construction of terrorism by Erdogan, his ideological underpinnings, and the power dynamics he employs. The present investigation scrutinizes Erdogan's discourse in the process of dissecting terrorism, his ideological underpinnings, and the power dynamics inherent in his speech. The results of the study provide insight into Erdogan's rhetoric on terrorism, its association with authority and belief systems, and its extensive societal and political implications.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Power, Ideology, Discourse, United Nations

Introduction

The speech by a well-known political leader of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan during the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019 is of utmost significant in the context global diplomat ties of Turkey. The president of Turkey portrayed his nation as an autonomous participant in international affairs, along with the authority of Western nations. This paper employs CDA to scrutinize Erdogan's speech, with a particular stress on the complex relationship between power, ideology, and discourse. The study is an attempt to analyze the linguistic characteristics, rhetorical techniques, and discursive methodologies utilized by Erdogan to reveal the fundamental ideologies and power dynamics that influence Turkey's global identity. Therefore, the researcher investigates into the manners in which political rhetoric shapes and challenges these belief systems and systems of authority.

According to Wilson (1990) it is common for politicians to deliberately use first-person pronouns as a means of fostering the perception that they are legitimate leaders who are capable of making decisions in the best interest of the populace. Various tactics and strategies are used by politicians for this purpose (Wilson, 1990; Partington, 2003; Wilson, 1990 as cited in Partington, 2003). On the other hand, political leader's utilization of the inclusive pronoun 'we' can be seen as a result in the exclusion of certain individuals. Furthermore, another thing can be the marginalization of additional demographics, thereby establishing a dichotomy between those individuals and ourselves. Therefore, the research is aimed at to analyze the way Erdogan has made his speech impactful and persuasive with the help of language and linguistic techniques to persuade his audience and how successful he can be in delivering his ideology.

Background of the Study

In the current era, where there is the misconception against Muslim world and the concept of Islamo-phobia is recurrent, the topic of terrorism has been a subject of significant debate in the realm of international politics. In recent times, it has become a subject of ideological debate and political maneuvering. So, in the same debate, the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan's speech at 74th session of UNO is of great importance and it has played a significant role in shaping the dialogue surrounding terrorism and the involvement of Turkey within the region. Though there is a contradiction between his followers and critics upon the concept of either being democratic and proponent of human rights or authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism, but still his speech has involved people in a kind of dialogue about terrorism and the involvement of Turkey within the region.

As far as terrorism is concerned, it has been taken as disputed discourse surrounding. So, it is crucial to conduct a thorough analysis on the basis of language to understand the underlying presumptions, discursive strategies, ideological frameworks, and power dynamics that influence the formation of this concept. Therefore, the researcher has aimed at to make a scholarly contribution to the aforementioned critical analysis by utilizing the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in order to scrutinize Erdogan's discourse. This study endeavors to illuminate the wider social and political ramifications of Erdogan's discourse by examining how he formulates the notion of terrorism and its connection to Turkey's regional position. Furthermore, the research aims to enhance our comprehension of the interplay among power, ideology, and discourse in molding our perception of significant political matters.

Statement of the Problem

CDA is considered to be one of the potent methodologies that scrutinize the interconnection between power, ideology and language. It studies the way language is utilized to construct meaning and the way it influences social fabric. As the speech of the president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan is considered of utmost importance in developing a discourse against terrorism and Turkey's position in Western nations, the study is aimed at to analyze the speech with the help of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its methodology to examine the discourse and its influence in the wider social fabric.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To conduct a critical analysis of the discursive strategies employed by Erdogan in his speech to construct the concept of terrorism
2. To critically analyze underlying ideological foundations in the speech
3. To explore how these ideologies are manifested and strengthened through his linguistic choices
4. To examine the power dynamics inherent in Erdogan's discourse on terrorism, with a focus on the linguistic strategies employed and their manifestation in the wider social and political milieu

Research Questions:

The research questions for the study are following:

1. In what ways does Erdogan utilize language as a tool for constructing the notion of terrorism within his discourse?

2. What specific discursive tactics does he implement to mold audience's comprehension of this concept?
3. What are the underlying ideological frameworks that form the basis of Erdogan's discourse on terrorism, and how does his language usage serve to reflect and reinforce these ideologies?
4. To what extent do power-dynamics influence President Erdogan's rhetoric regarding terrorism, both domestically and internationally, and how do these dynamics materialize in his linguistic choices?

Significance of the Study

The current study puts up with noteworthy theoretical and practical implication for the domain of discourse analysis and the wider social sciences. The researcher seeks to enhance comprehension of the intricate relationship between language, power, and ideology by utilizing a critical discourse analysis (CDA) methodology to analyze Recep Tayyip Erdogan's address at the 74th Session of the United Nations. The main aim of the study is to investigate the discursive strategies, ideological frameworks, and power dynamics that influence the development of the concept of terrorism and Turkey's regional involvement.

The paper's discoveries have the potential to enhance comprehension of the complex and ambiguous concept and characteristics of terrorism discourse (as it is considered to be disputed discourse) and its correlation with power and ideology. With the help of investigation of prevailing discourses and power hierarchies, the study can additionally serve to advance principles of fairness and parity within society.

Review of Literature

This study offers a thorough examination of the current body of literature pertaining to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and the speeches delivered by Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The purpose of this activity is to ascertain any deficiencies in knowledge and to amalgamate the current research discoveries. The evaluation has been conducted through a methodical exploration of pertinent scholarly resources, such as peer-reviewed articles, books, and other academic publications. The literature analysis is structured thematically, with a focus on identifying and discussing the prominent themes and trends. The aforementioned serves as a fundamental basis for conducting research and plays a significant role in augmenting the existing knowledge within the respective field.

Sociolinguistics considers language as a social phenomenon and it has shown a keen interest in exploring the correlation between language usage and social construction. Language utilization plays a role in shaping the perception of identity and interpersonal connections among individuals as well as collectives. There are various factors including power dynamics, cultural and social background, region, and social status which may exert an influence on the discourse utilized by an individual (Bayram, 2010).

The objective of Terki Turkia's (2019) master's thesis is to analyze the discursive structures present in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speech regarding Libya in 2011. The study endeavored to uncover the latent linguistic characteristics and persuasive strategies utilized in the discourse, utilizing Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework. The literature review elucidated the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of critical discourse analysis and its effectiveness in analyzing political discourse with the special focus on rhetoric and politics.

Recent studies have observed the political discourse as potential instrument utilized by the political leaders to lead public opinion according to their political agendas. To this particular context, the analysis through CDA serves as a valuable instrument to observe the language play by the political

leaders in the establishment of social power dynamics. The present study discusses prior research endeavors that have employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to scrutinize political discourse. This serves as a basis for the examination of Erdoğan's speech.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study relies on the theoretical framework proposed by Fairclough (1989) of Critical Discourse Analysis. The primary data for analysis was obtained through transcription of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speech delivered during the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The analysis was conducted using the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis as presented below. The focus of the research was on the detection of discursive tactics, ideological structures, and power relations utilized by the President of Turkey.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework refers to a conceptual structure that offers a theoretical foundation for research investigations. A system of interrelated ideas, presumptions, and assertions that constitute a cognitive framework for approaching a specific issue. The identification of key variables, relationships, and mechanisms that are pertinent to the research question and the formulation of testable hypotheses are crucial for researchers. Additionally, it furnishes a structure for comprehending the outcomes of the investigation and for formulating suggestions for subsequent research and application. In layman's terms, it is regarded as the fundamental underpinning for conducting research investigations on any given subject matter. The theoretical framework for this study was based on the concepts of Fairclough (1989, 1992, 2003) and van Dijk (1997, 2001) in the domain of critical discourse analysis. The discourse analysis of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speech at the 74th Session of the UN has been conducted using Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model comprising of text, discourse practice, and social practice. The social cognition approach developed by Van Dijk has also been utilized to analyze the ideological foundations of Erdoğan's discourse where the specific focus was on power dynamics and social relationships (Van Dijk, 2001). Moreover, during the analysis part Wodak's research on the function of discourse in shaping and perpetuating societal identities (Wodak, 1997) was also considered. The integration of these theoretical frameworks had facilitated a thorough examination of Erdoğan's discourse and its effects on power dynamics and societal identities.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

The analysis of political speeches through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has a significant importance within the realm of sociolinguistics. It involves the analysis of the speeches of the political leaders where one may examine the fundamental ideologies, underlying assumptions, power dynamics and discourse tactics. This research aims to examine the ways in which Erdoğan employs language as a means of establishing power dynamics, conveying his ideological beliefs, and constructing discourse strategies.

Text Analysis: The First Dimension of Fairclough's Framework

This framework's first dimension concentrates on the analysis of texts to reveal the linguistic characteristics and discourse tactics employed by the speaker. In Erdoğan's speech, he employed a few rhetorical techniques in constructing his argument including various rhetorical strategies, such as metaphor, hyperbole, and repetition. It seemed to help him in constructing a compelling discourse. He used a metaphorical expression to bring out a sentimental reaction from the audience as he asserted that "the matter of Palestine remains an open wound on the conscience of humanity." Other than this, he utilized hyperbolic language to assert that "Islamophobia" has transformed into a novel manifestation of racism akin to "anti-Semitism". In this way, he amplified the matter to inculcate a sense of exigency.

In the text analysis, one may see the discourse of the President's political party in Turkey, the AKP, which has held power in Turkey since 2002. The AKP is a political party considered to be of Islamist fundamentalist ideologies that places significant emphasis on Turkey's Islamic identity and historical legacy as a regional power. His speech distinguished a rhetorical approach used by Erdogan. It was persuasive, expressive, and frequently challenging, which mirrored his aspiration to establish Turkey as a significant participant in worldwide affairs.

Erdogan's speech is notable for its utilization of metaphors and symbols as prominent linguistic features. He mentioned Turkey as a regional leader and mediator of conflicts. Erdogan characterized his nation as the "umbrella of peace" and "a lighthouse of stability." The utilization of metaphorical language was employed in order to validate the foreign policy goals of Turkey. The speech depicted the government led by Erdogan as a magnanimous entity that advances stability and security within the area.

Another significant linguistic characteristic pertains to the utilization of pronouns by Erdogan. He employed the inclusive pronoun "we" to denote the citizens of Turkey. It highlights a collective identity and a shared sense of cohesion. Conversely, the pronoun "they" is utilized to refer to Western powers. It helped in establishing a dichotomy between Turkey and the foreign powers. This strategic approach aims to establish a dichotomous contrast between Turkey and the Western world. Through this strategy, he strengthened the perception that Turkey is subjected to external menaces and must assert its autonomy and self-determination.

Erdogan seemed to employ rhetorical inquiries as a means of questioning the validity of Western powers and their undertakings in the area. He poses a question, inquiring about the authorization for intervention in Syria. His statement positions Turkey as a protector of the Syrian people's rights. On the other hand, his statement also seems criticizing Western powers for their military involvement in the Middle East. The aforementioned approach used by the President of Turkey aims to undermine the legitimacy of Western powers and establish Turkey as a more credible participant in the region.

In addition to this, Erdogan employed religious allusions and Islamic iconography in his speech as well. He seemed to utter this in order to attract his domestic constituency and depict Turkey as a savior of Ummah (the Muslim community). He cited Jerusalem as the "apple of our eye," a reference of religious significance for Muslims, and situates Turkey as a guardian of the city's Islamic legacy. This approach seems to galvanize the Islamic sentiments of the local populace and portrays Turkey as a protector of the Muslim community.

Discursive Practice Analysis: The Second Dimension of Fairclough's Framework

The second part of Fairclough's framework analyzes the speaker's discursive practices to examine social practices and power relations in the speech. The present study analyzed Erdogan's discursive strategies employed in his speech to ascertain the manner in which he constructed his desired impression. According to scholarly research, Erdogan has employed framing, assumption, and implicature as tools to establish power dynamics.

Erdogan's discourse is framed by the assertion that "the world is greater than five". It indicates a perceived inequity in the hierarchy of the existing global power that warrants reassessment. He utilized presupposition in his assertion that "Turkey is the sole nation advocating for the protection of Palestinian rights," implying that other nations are not adequately supporting the Palestinian movement.

Erdogan's statement also shows how power and authority impact discourse. Erdogan assumes a prominent position as a national figure and utilizes his authority to present the conflict in a manner that is consistent with his political goals. The individual references international law and the United

Nations Charter as the foundation for Turkey's participation in the Libyan conflict. Furthermore, Turkey is depicted as a responsible international actor committed to promoting peace and stability in the region.

Moreover, it is evident that Erdogan utilizes the discursive strategy of inter-textuality in his oration, employing diverse discursive tools to construct his assertions. He has utilized allusions to historical events and figures, such as the Ottoman Empire and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, as a means of establishing a cohesive and authoritative foundation for their position. He quoted several international agreements and conventions, such as the Geneva Conventions and the Responsibility to protect doctrine, to substantiate their claim that intervention in the Libyan conflict is warranted. Along with discursive practices, the social context of speech is important. President Erdogan was speaking at the UN General Assembly, a major international forum. The social setting produced by world leaders and diplomats shapes the discourse. Erdogan must balance international power dynamics with other nations' interests and views.

Social Practice Analysis: The Third Dimension of Fairclough's Framework

The third dimension of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis examines socio-cultural practices and power relations that shape discourse. By utilizing this dimension of the theoretical framework, the researcher has analyzed the discourse with respect to the broader social and political context i.e. historical, cultural and institutional factors that affect discourse generation and interpretation.

The Social Practice Analysis of Turkey's President's Speech investigates the impact of power relations and socio-cultural practices in his discourse. To analyze Erdogan's speech, it was placed within the context of his political trajectory and the larger Turkish political environment. The historical and cultural determinants were also taken into account that had influenced Turkish people.

One of the most essential elements of Erdogan's discourse pertains to his utilization of nationalist rhetoric. He mirrored the prevailing discourse within the realm of Turkish politics. Erdogan seems to highlight the significance of Turkey's position as a regional power and expresses disapproval towards external challenges to Turkish sovereignty. It may include the Kurdish separatist movement and the perceived threat emanating from the Syrian conflict. The aforementioned statement is indicative of the broader cultural and historical milieu in which Turkish nationalism has functioned as a prevailing discourse since the establishment of the Turkish Republic.

Moreover, an examination of Erdogan's discourse can be conducted in connection with his role as the head of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and his interactions with the Turkish media, with consideration given to the socio-cultural customs that influence them. The discourse of Erdogan is influenced by the political and institutional factors that delineate his position as a leader, encompassing his authority over the AKP and his rapport with the media.

Van Dijk and Wodak have proposed two concepts, namely the ideological square and strategies of legitimation. The concept of the ideological square is concerned with the manner in which a speaker formulates their ideology by situating themselves in relation to various categories. According to the research findings, Erdogan formulates his ideology by positioning himself as a champion of democracy and human rights. He depicts Turkey as a nation that is dedicated to combatting terrorism and advancing peace within the surrounding area. Likewise, the individual assumes the role of an advocate for the Palestinian movement and expresses disapproval towards the actions of Israel within the area. The aforementioned study demonstrates that Erdogan utilizes various methods of legitimization in order to rationalize his actions and policies. The individual in question invokes the legitimacy of Turkey's military operations in Syria by citing the authority of international law and the United Nations.

Conclusion:

Recep Tayyip Erdogan's speech at the 74th session of the United Nations was examined in this study using Fairclough's framework for critical discourse analysis as well as the ideas of Van Dijk and Wodak. The analysis has revealed how Erdogan uses linguistic features and persuasion techniques to strengthen his authority and worldview while developing a certain discourse on Turkey's domestic and foreign policy. The study has also highlighted how important language is in shaping our thoughts and creating our personal and community ties.

Findings:

The findings suggest that Erdogan employed a number of strategies to expand his sphere of influence and advocate for his political beliefs. Religious and nationalist rhetoric was employed, together with the demonization of the "Other" as an existential threat to Turkey, and the rewriting of history to provide a pretext for Turkish aggression. As Erdogan's speech at the United Nations highlighted, context and audience are crucial in shaping discourse. His speech was aimed at both his domestic base of support and the international community. Moreover, Erdogan's statement was founded on his political faction's conservative and authoritarian worldview, demonstrating the effect of ideology on language usage.

Recommendations:

This investigation's findings provide policymakers, language educators, and media professionals with specific recommendations that may prove advantageous.

1. It is crucial for policymakers to recognize the impact of language on the formation of perceptions and policymaking, and to use language with care and deliberation.
2. In addition, the research indicates that language educators may desire to include critical discourse analysis in their curricula.
3. Students may be able to analyze and evaluate language usage in a variety of contexts if they acquire this ability.
4. Media professionals must be more vigilant in their coverage of political discourse and avoid perpetuating dominant narratives that reinforce stereotypes and prejudice.
5. The current research has demonstrated that language has a significant capacity to promote positive change and progress. In addition, the application of Critical Discourse Analysis can be a powerful tool for examining and evaluating political discourses.
6. These results emphasize the significance of language in political communication.
7. By comprehending the dynamic relationship between language, power, and ideology, individuals can strive to promote a more inclusive and democratic society.

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