

**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF A TEXT ENTITLED
“PAKISTANI GIRL SHOT BY TALIBAN CLAIMS TRIUMPH OVER
TERRORISTS”
USING VAN LEEUWEN’S 2009 METHOD**

Euis Rina Mulyani
STKIP Siliwangi - Bandung
euisrinamulyani@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This analysis was motivated by the previous studies which suggest that texts are never ideology-free nor objective; and meanings are constructed through social languages or discourses and are socially constructed, not neutral and often privilege some while marginalizing or excluding others. The analysis was done to the text entitled “Pakistani girl shot by Taliban claims triumph over terrorists”. The present analysis concerns: (1) the actions which are attributed to the participants in the text, (2) the participants’ actions which are de-agentialized and objectivated, (3) and the ideology behind the text. The text was analyzed by employing Van Leeuwen’s 2009 Method of Critical Discourse Analysis. Both qualitative and quantitative procedures were used to analyze the data. The conclusion of this study is that the ideology of *egalitarianism* or *equalitarianism* can strengthen its believers – even young believers – to fight against discrimination using various efforts including their verbal, physic, and mental to get their rights.

Key Words: Van Leeuwen’s method of Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology

A. Introduction

Texts are never ideology-free (LoCastro, 2012) nor objective (Treadgold 1989; cf. Paltridge, 2006). Everything has certain meanings. The meanings themselves are constructed through social languages or discourses; and are socially constructed, not neutral and often privilege some while marginalizing or excluding others (Bakhtin, 1986; Foucault, 1972; cf. Burns and Morrell, 2005). A set of tools for analyzing a discourse, written and spoken text, is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Machin and Mayer, 2012). CDA sees discourses as ideological or is concerned with hidden agenda (Lukmana, 2003; Burns and Morrell, 2005; Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 2001; Cameron, 2001) because they represent a writer or speaker’s meaning or the systems of thought that are manifested in language use (Burns and Morrell, 2005; Lukmana, 2003). In addition, CDA sees language use as a form of social practice (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; cf. Wodak and Mayer, 2009) and aims to dig the reasons of why a discourse has certain structures, and finally it comes to the analysis of social relations, power relations, power struggle, and ideologies among parties involved in a discourse production (Lukmana, 2003).

This paper tries to examine a text entitled “*Pakistani Girl Shot by Taliban claims Triumph Over Terrorists*” using a method of Critical Discourse Analysis, especially Van Leeuwen’s 2009 method. Halliday’s work *Systemic Functional Linguistics*, especially transitivity, is used in this paper (Eggins, 1994;) because one of Leeuwen’s tool to analyze text is Halliday’s transitivity (van Leeuwen, 2009).

This paper tries to answer two questions: 1) what actions are attributed to participants in the text, (2) what actions are objectivated and de-agentialized? The purposes of this paper are to

investigate the actions which are attributed the participants in the text, and to investigate the action of the participants which are de-agentialized and objectivated.

B. Critical Review

CDA (Critical Discourse analysis) views ‘discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of social practice’ (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; cf. Wodak and Meyer, 2009). It has seven shared dimensions: (1) an interest in the properties of *naturally occurring* language use, (2) a focus on *larger units* than isolated words and sentences, (3) the extension of linguistics *beyond sentence grammar* towards action and interaction, (4) the extension to *non-verbal* (semiotic, multimodal, visual) *aspects of interaction*: gestures, images, film, internet, multimedia, (5) a focus on *dynamic* (socio)cognitive or interactional moves and strategies, (6) the study of the functions of (social, cultural, situative, cognitive) *contexts* of language use, and (7) an analysis of a vast number of phenomena of text grammar and language use: coherence, anaphora, topics, macrostructures, speech acts, interactions, turn taking, signs, politeness, argumentation, rhetoric, mental models, and many others (Van Dijk, 2007a, Wodak, 2008a; cf. Wodak and Meyer, 2009). By employing Critical Discourse Analysis, the practices and conventions both in and behind text can be drawn out and described, and therefore political and ideological value can be uncovered (Machin and Mayr, 2012).

There are many experts of CDA. One of them is Theo van Leeuwen. One of van Leeuwen’s works related to CDA is “Discourse as the Recontextualization of Social Practice: A Guide” (Van Leeuwen in Wodak and Mayer, 2009). He introduced the approach to discourse based on the idea that discourses are recontextualizations of social practices. The crucial elements of social practices are (1) actions, (2) performance modes (specific ways of how an actions are performed), (3) actors, (4) presentation styles (the way in which actors present themselves, e.g. dress, grooming, etc.), (5) times, (6) spaces, (7) resources (specific tool and material needed), and (8) eligibility (specific qualities of the concrete elements of social practices).

As previously stated, van Leeuwen (in Wodak and Mayer, 2009) sees discourse as transformation or recontextualizations of social practice. He divided transformation into three types. The first is deletion. It means that some components of a social practice may not be represented in a particular discourse. The second is substitution. For example, an actor is represented as a specific individual or as a type of a person. The third is addition. Discourses can add *reactions* and *motives* to the representation of social practices. Further, he stated that the main ways in which social actions can be transformed are various. They are: (1) actions and reactions, (2) material actions (actions as doing) and semiotic actions (actions as meanings), (3) objectivations (actions and reactions are represented dynamically, as actions) and de-activation (actions and reactions are represented in a static way, as though they are entities rather than actions), (4) agentialization (actions and reactions are represented as brought about by human agency) and de-agentialization (actions and reactions are represented as brought about in ways that are impermeable to human agency, e.g. through natural force, unconscious process, etc.), (5) concretization and abstraction, and (6) overdetermination (a given social practice stands for more than itself).

C. Research Methodology

This analysis is a critical discourse analysis. It employed van Leeuwen’s 2009 method of CDA. In analyzing the data, both quantitative and qualitative procedures of data analyses were employed. The quantitative strategy employed in the present analysis involved

frequency and percentage. This was used to identify tendencies. The qualitative dimension of the analysis constituted an extension of its quantitative counterpart. It related the results of the quantification with social practices.

1. Text Analysis

As it is stated previously, this paper tries to examine a text entitled “*Pakistani Girl Shot by Taliban claims Triumph Over Terrorists*”. The text was written on July 12, 2013 by Carol J. Williams. The text was retrieved on 20 June 2014 from Los Angeles Times website (<http://www.latimes.com>).

The text genre is a news item since it is constructed by lead, followed by quotations and series of detailed events, then end part of the text (Emilia, 2012). The text tells the readers about a sixteen years old girl, Malala Yousafzai, from Pakistan who fights for the right of girls or women’s education. She is the teenager who survives and rises after being shot for the right of female’s literacy. The participants who exist in the text are Malala Yousafzai, Taliban men/terrorists/extremists, thousands of strangers and world leaders, doctors, God, youthful-would be diplomats, United Nations Education, Scientific, and cultural organization, God, women, civilized world, young delegates, and Islamic societies.

a. Data and discussion about actions attributed to participants

Based on the analysis of actions attributed to participants in the text, it is found that the actions are mostly attributed to Malala Yousafzai. The emergence of actions which are attributed to her is 23 out of 37 actions (62%) attributed to all participants in the text. On the other hand, the frequency of actions which are attributed to Taliban men is 10 (or 27,1%). Four other participants: thousands of strangers and world leaders, doctors, young delegates and UN, each of them perform one material action (each of the four participants’ action constitutes 2,7% of the total actions. The last other participants: civilized world, God, women and Islamic societies, all of them are not as the doer or the agent of any action in the text

Among the 23 actions attributed to Malala Yousafzai, 13 actions are verbal actions (56.5%), 6 material actions (36.1%), and 4 mental actions (17.4%). The detail data is presented in the appendix, table 1 and 2. The verbal actions which are used by Malala Yousafzai are represented by the verbal processes like *proclaim, said, declared, raised, and is telling*; whereas material/physical actions are represented through material processes like *emerge, defying, celebrated, and pick up*; while mental actions are represented through mental processes like *learnt, love, bore, and be peaceful*.

Based on the findings above, it can be inferred that the text focuses on Malala. Specifically, Malala is the actor who is active in fighting for women’s education. She acted as a saver or a preacher, as the actor or doer, and the senser for women’s education. She used not only her verbal or words, but also her physic and body and feeling and thought for women’s literacy. More specifically, because Malala’s actions are dominated by verbal actions (13 out of 23), it means that her ability and power are mostly demonstrated through her words. It is appropriate because she is only a girl, a 16 years old girl. Using words is easier and safer for her than other actions.

The second focus of the text is Taliban men. In the text, the actions which are attributed to them are 10 actions, consisting of 5 material and 5 mental actions. This means that the text presented their actions, physical and mental actions in a balanced way in reaching their goals. In addition, this group of people is presented negatively in the text since they are called as *terrorists, extremists, and attackers*. Besides, the actions which are attributed to them are also negative. For example: *The Pakistani girl shot in the head by Taliban gunmen..., ... and shot her repeatedly in the head..., and ... they (Taliban) would change my*

aims and stop my ambitions. Their actions are contrast to and to fight against Yousafzai's actions.

The last, the action employed by thousands of strangers and world leaders, doctors and UN is presented once in the text, and young delegates. Their actions are all material actions: *have sent, helped, release, and gathered.* Their actions helped and support Yousafzai, as in ... *the thousands of strangers and world leaders who have sent her good wishes, doctors in her homeland and in Britain who helped her recover from the attack, and in the youthful would-be diplomats gathered to mark the first "Malala Day."* In addition, because their action occurrence is presented only once in the text, these participants are not the main actors in the text. They are presented as the complements of the text and as supporter of Yousafzai's actions.

b. Data and discussion about the objectivated and de-agentialized actions

Based on the data, it is found that most actions are activated (32 out of 37, equals to 86.5%) and all actions (37 or 100%) are agentialized. There are only 5 out of 37 actions (13.5%) which are objectivated; 4 are Yousafzai's actions and 1 is UN's. The four Yousafzai's objectivated actions are *defying, appeal, casting, and exhibiting.* For example the clauses *with an uplifting appeal for universal education ... ,... for defying their ban on girls' education ... , and ... casting confident glances over her audience and exhibiting little evidence of lingering injury ...* On the other hand, the UN's objectivated action is presented by the noun *release* as in the clause *with release of a report by the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on schooling deficits.*

Because the data shows that there is no action which are de-agentialized, and therefore all action are agentialized, it means that this text represents the actions as brought about by human agency. The writer tells clearly to the readers who are the doer (in this text is the actor, the sayer, and the senser) of each action in social practice.

And because most of the actions (32 out of 37, or 86.5%) are activated; it means that most of the actions in the text are represented dynamically, actions are represented as actions. In contrast, there are only 13.5% (5 out of 37) actions which are objectivated, meaning that there are a few actions represented in a static way, as though they are entities or qualities rather than actions. Three out of five objectivated actions relate to education and schooling as in *with an uplifting appeal for universal education ... ,... for defying their ban on girls' education ... , and with release of a report by the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on schooling deficits.* The rest two objectivated actions relate to Yousafzai's belonging (glance and injury) as in ... *casting confident glances over her audience and exhibiting little evidence of lingering injury....*

2. Ideology

As previously stated that CDA sees discourses as ideological (Lukmana, 2003; Burns and Morrell, 2005; Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 2001; Cameron, 2001). Ideology is encoded and realized in linguistic choices in the texts (Eggins, 1994).

In this text, Malala Yousafzai is presented as an agent (a sayer, an actor, an a senser) who actively fight for the right of education for girls in Pakistan. She appealed for universal education, she defied Taliban's ban on girls' education. She said "all are equal" meaning that all people have equal right for education. The main actor of the text, and probably also the writer of the text, influenced by the ideology of *egalitarianism or equalitarianism*, the belief or thought that favors equality for all people (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia), especially *egalitarianism or equalitarianism for all people for education.*

D. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it was found that the main actor in this text is the 16 years old girl, Malala Yousafzai. She employed her verbal, physic, and mental in her effort to the right of education for girls. However, she fought mostly through her words. Her actions are supported by various parties like world leaders and UN whose actions are represented in the text dynamically and agentedly. The actions of those participants are probably inspired by the ideology of *egalitarianism* or *equalitarianism* for education. In conclusion, the ideology of *egalitarianism* or *equalitarianism* can strenghten its believers – even young believers – to fight agaist discrimination using various efforts including their verbal, physic, and mental to get their rights.

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**APPENDIX
THE TEXT**

Retrieved on 20 June 2014 from <http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-pakistani-girl-malala-taliban-un-20130712-story.html>

Pakistani girl shot by Taliban claims triumph over terrorists

CAROL J. WILLIAMS

July 12, 2013, 11:38 AM

Malala Yousafzai isn't the first to proclaim the pen mightier than the sword, but she is probably the only teenager to emerge defiant after taking a bullet for the right of literacy. The Pakistani girl shot in the head by Taliban gunmen nine months ago for defying their ban on girls' education celebrated her 16th birthday Friday with an uplifting appeal for universal education in a speech to more than 1,000 young delegates to the United Nations.

"Let us pick up our books and our pens. They are our most powerful weapons," declared the diminutive teen from the rostrum of the U.N. General Assembly forum, given over to the youthful would-be diplomats gathered to mark the first "Malala Day."

Yousafzai, cloaked in a pink, traditional shalwar kameez and a white shawl that belonged to slain Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, thanked God -- before whom, she said, "all are equal."

She praised the thousands of strangers and world leaders who have sent her good wishes and the doctors in her homeland and in Britain who helped her recover from the attack. Gunmen boarded her school bus near her hometown of Mingora on Oct. 9, looking for the defiant teen, and shot her repeatedly in the head in an incident that shocked the civilized world and raised consciousness about the plight of girls in fundamentalist Islamic societies. "The extremists were, and they are, afraid of books and pens," she said in the address webcast by the United Nations. "The power of education frightens them. They are afraid of women."

Still, she said, she bore no hatred of her attackers, having learned compassion from the models of Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

"This is what my soul is telling me: Be peaceful and love everyone," she said, casting confident glances over her audience and exhibiting little evidence of lingering injury beyond a slow-opening left eyelid.

"The terrorists thought they would change my aims and stop my ambitions," she said. But all that has changed, she said, is that "weakness, fear and hopelessness died and courage was born."

The events dedicated to the aim of "education for all" coincided with release of a report by the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on schooling deficits. It noted that the number of primary-school-age children not accorded an education dropped from 60 million to 57 million over the three years up to 2011 but that 50% of the children in conflict-racked regions of the world aren't getting educated.

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