SOCIAL COGNITION ELEMENTS OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN BARACK OBAMA'S SPEECH AT *THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION 2020*

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ABSTRACT

This paper employs one strand of Critical Discourse Analysis as a framework to discuss a discourse of political figures. It is a speech delivered by Barack Obama with regard to the issue of 46th president election in 2020 between Trump and Biden. That approach is van Dijk's (1993) social cognition theory that is focused on the elements of social cognition contained in the speech. In line with Memon, *et al.* (2014) findings on analyzing Benazir Bhutto's last speech, there are nine elements of social cognition. Meanwhile, the findings of current study show that there are three social cognition elements in the speech. They are social attachment, mind control, and glorification. In conclusion, social cognition can explore mental awareness of the scenario writer which then forms the text.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, social cognition, speech

INTRODUCTION

Language as a communication medium can be applied in two ways, direct and indirect communication. It can be used for exchanging information and being connected to each other in a communication activity. Speech is one mode of spoken communication by which discourse is managed to be created. Speech is considered as a model process of oral communication (Abdullah, 2017). Regarding information, it will later refer to the relationship between the social context of understanding language which is commonly known as discourse. Discourse is a language unit that is larger than the sentence. According to Eriyanto (2017), text, context, and discourse always become the central elements in communication. Text can be any form of language, while context enters existing situations either from outside the text or from within the text itself and it is discourse to combine the two.

The speech of political discourse as the object of current discussion has become popular among discourse analysts, not to mention critical discourse analysts. Fairclough (2006: 33) stated that the concept of politic as well as political discourse has extended beyond the politic itself into the "life world" domain. Political discourse in Fairclough's (2012: 1) opinion is seen as mainly a form of argumentation, and it particularly involves practical argumentation, there are discussions for or against specific practices and reasoning for basic decisions.

Politics is always associated with activities that influence the behavior and policies of those in power who may be represented by government and society in general. One of the aims of politics is to exercise power over others by governing their behavior. In politics, society needs to formulate a political strategy, and certain methods depend on goals. Political strategy involves many strategic points of view, among which the basic strategy is a way to find goals and use them to achieve them (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Political strategy is an important tool for campaigns and elections. One of the forms of campaign is speech. Speech in a campaign enable the public to learn the candidate's program, vision and mission. By giving a speech, the public will feel that the candidate is standing next to them and have the same ideas. This strategy can evoke the empathy of public with this, they will soon inherit the power (van Dijk T. A., 2008).

Sipra *et al.* (2013) said that critical discourse analysis (hence CDA) of the selected speech constitutes the relationship between language and power. CDA which is largely due to the relationship between social context, speaker's ideas and language strategies, can observe language phenomena considering three layers, they are textual analysis, social cognition and social context (van Dijk, 2015). He further observed the way social structure, domination, and power exercised in the society and the way consciousness of cognition was influenced and formed by particular discourse. Thus, this paper will specifically identify the social cognition elements in Barack Obama's speech at the Democratic National Convention, a moment before the presidential election in the US. The campaign period drew public attention because of the presence of Barack Obama as the success team of Biden (former vice president). Barack Obama explained in his speech what problems the previous leader, Donald Trump, had left to the country that generated tasks to the next.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) has long become powerful method and theory at the same to analyze how language is practiced in the society. Persada & Syahrudin (2014) states that CDA has the ability to disclose how power, dominance and inequality are exercised, reproduced or contrasted in texts of any kinds in whatever the context. CDA is also mentioned as a research method to analyze both spoken and written language and to relate them to their social context (Bouvier & Machin, 2018). The purpose is to understand the way people use language to achieve their goal and how it works in any situations of whatever the context. Ardiansyah (2020) said that

discourse involves correlation between situation, organization, and the society, thus, it emphasizes that social representativeness is established by discourse. The CDA focuses on studying larger unit of language, such as conversations or texts rather that its smaller part such as sounds, words, or phrases.

The CDA has been developed into many strands and one of them is that proposed by van Djik (2008) by his socio-cognitive approach. He said that social cognition is "the general social representative of the social environment, groups and relationships, and psychological activities such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inference and learning". Van Dijk (2008) emphasizes three levels of discourse structure, they are macrostructure: thematic, microstructure: semantics, syntax, stylistics, and rhetoric; and superstructure: schemata.

Macrostructure is defined as the meaning of a text in general that can be identified from the topical or thematic elements of the text. One text can have more than one themes. The theme according to van Dijk (1993) is the main part of macrostructure which refers to word theme. Theme is the first identifiable element of a discourse that constitutes macrostructure of the text.

Microstructure refers to more specific meaning of a discourse, consisiting of four areas: semantics, syntax, stylistics, and rhetoric (Eriyanto, 2017). Semantics is the study of meaning in the level of word and sentence meaning both in spoken and written form. Syntax elaborates the relationship between words in a clause and the functions of each element in a clause or sentence unit. Several previous studies that employed van Dijk's framework indicate that styles of syntax are often used in politics to manipulate, for example the actor, through the use of active and passive sentence, coherence and pronoun. Meanwhile, stylistics means the style of writing. Van Dijk (1998) defines style as a specific features of social properties of speakers and of the sociocultural situation of the speech event. Rhetoric refers to ways of persuading and strengthening certain information to be shared to the audience or reader by using particular language style (Sarah, 2019).

Superstructure is the medium of connecting macrostructure and microstructure which contains introduction, content and conclusion (van Djik, 2015 in Widiastuti, 2020). This schema is similar to the text outline. To analyze superstructure means to identify the schema of the text which is seen from its headline, main topic as commonly found in text genre of news report (Sarah, 2019).

To analyze socio-cognitive approach, CDA argues that the close relation between power and discourse access model to discourses of the community of different social groups (Van Dijk, 1993). Thus, the aim of socio-cognitive approach is to explain how power and discourses relate to each other. The stages of socio-cognitive analysis of political speech as proposed by Memon, et al. (2014) which are relevant to the current study are emotional attachment, mind control, mitigating evidence, glorification and contradiction.

Emotional attachment is defined as a relationship behavior between two parties who pay attention to each other intending to produce something responsive to each other (Semium, 2006) it is carried out to influence the

reader or listener to agree with the speaker's argument. The form of the speaker's strategy for accepting what the listener is saying is mind control. Speakers also try to control the thoughts and attention of the audience. This strategy is carried out by connecting past and real events so that the text is structured in one way. Glory applies after the speaker conveys his or her wishes or expectations to the audience. The speaker makes the final assessment so that the audience knows what the central meaning of the context is. In this assessment, presenters breed as a background to bring the problem into a high level of defense.

METHOD

The study used descriptive qualitative methods to describe and explain phenomena to obtain in-depth data, namely the actual meaning of data and actual data relating to the application of critical discourse analysis theory. The data sources of this research are Obama's speech broadcast at NBC News Youtube channel entitled "Watch Barack Obama's Full Speech At The 2020 DNC" and the script which was available blog CNN Politics blog.

Data were collected by firstly browsing the video in YouTube, then searching the script, and having deep reading on it to match it with the video. The data analysis was conducted by employing Van Dijk's model to find its specific features of socio-cognitive elements, describing and explaining them then ended by drawing conclusion of the overall analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings and discussions of social cognition elements in Barrack Obama's speech by referring to Memon, et al. (2014) that there are at least several elements that can be identified from political discourse. They are emotional attachment, mind control, mitigating evidence, glorification and contradiction (Table 1).

Table 1. Findings of Social Cognition Elements

Social Cognition	Data
Emotional attachment	..what I know about Joe and Kamala is that they actually care about every American. And they care deeply about this democracy. (data 45)
Mind control	And what I want you to know is that for all its messiness and frustrations, your system of self-government can be harnessed to help you realize those convictions.(data 46), They'll get this pandemic under control (data 47, 48, 49), We are going to bring those words, in our founding documents, to life. (data 50), Donald Trump hasn't grown into the job because he can't. And the consequences of that failure are severe. 170,000 Americans dead. Millions of jobs gone while those at the top take in more than ever.

		Our worst impulses unleashed, our proud <u>reputation around the world badly diminished, and our democratic institutions threatened like never before</u>. (data 51), So they're hoping to make it as hard as possible for you to vote, and to convince you that your vote doesn't matter. That's how they win. (data 52), he's chosen an ideal partner who's more than prepared for the job; (data 53).
	Glorification	They understand that in democracy. (data 54), … our ability to work together to solve big problems like a pandemic (data 55), Joe and Kamala will restore our standing in the world. (data 56), Joe and Kamala have concrete policies that will turn their vision of a better, fairer, stronger country into reality. (data 57)

The next part is the explanation of social cognition dimension of the speech. From the findings, it is found that there are three elements among others that lie in that political discourse. They are emotional attachment, mind control, and glorification.

Emotional Attachment

The study found two data which indicate emotional attachment in Obama's speech. They are related to the content of the speech, showing Obama's attachment and belief.

1. But more than anything, **what I know about Joe and Kamala is that they care about every American. And they care deeply about this democracy.**

In data 1, Obama said the phrase "what I know about" that shows a statement involving his emotions. The phrase became the highlight of the statement that made him look like he was expressing what he knew about the Joe and Kamala couple. The confirmation of his emotions is increasingly seen in the next statement which says that "And they care deeply about this democracy." which can be seen based on what he already knows from the pair of candidates and coupled with the reasons for Obama's personal experience with Joe knowing each other and having been together in carrying out their duties as president and vice president.

2. For you, it's a given -- a conviction. **And what I want you to know is that for all its messiness and frustrations, your system of self-government can be harnessed to help you realize those convictions.**

The expression given by Obama in the quote above shows a feeling that contains hope. "for all its messiness and frustrations, your system of self-government can be harnessed to help you realize those convictions." from the sentence, it can be seen that Obama made his listeners able to re-install new hope amid adversity. All the things of sadness, frustration, and government policies that felt failed were all expressed by Obama as if they could be things

that would happen again as the opposite of what is being felt at this time. And Obama said that what Americans were worried about could turn out to be something they could help and hope for in the future. This statement has a very high emotional value because Obama has again said that the reason is that he understands what he is talking about.

Mind Control

Mind control observes the speaker's efforts in using speech to control people's minds. Data and discussion related to the contents of Obama's speech areas in the data below.

3. They'll expand health care to more Americans,

In data 3, the word "they" here also still refers to the couple, Joe Biden and Kamala. In his words, Obama means that these promises and actions will be realized if Joe and Kamala are elected, then they will do their best to carry out this health care was suitable and fairly in America. In the situation, the speaker tries to control the thoughts and attention.

4. Tonight, **I am asking you to believe in Joe and Kamala's ability to lead this country** out of these dark times and build it back better.

The sentence uttered by Obama in the speech was indeed an informative and persuasive speech. If we look at the whole text it describes the state of Obama as a Joe Biden's success team who wants to promote his colleague as the 46th US presidential candidate. Obama's invitation in his speech can be described in the words he said "I am asking you" shows that Obama asks the public to believe that and gives confidence to "believe in joe and kamala's ability to lead this country.." here Obama gives confidence to his audiences that the couple Joe and Kamala are both have the skills to be the next American leader. The emphasis on the words "asking" and "believe in" is evidence of Obama's call to emphasize to the public not to doubt the leadership of the pair Joe and Kamala for America. The element of social cognition occurs in who conveys the utterance. As we know, Obama is a former president who during his leadership was considered quite successful in carrying out his office, so when Obama asks the public and advises the public to believe in what he says, it will unconsciously make the American people believe and believe who will they chose it because they felt they had the leadership that could make America rise again.

Glorification

The glorification is done because in delivering his oration, especially to convince the public, the speaker must do the glorification. As in the content of this speech, Obama directs the glorification of the pair Joe Biden and Kamala. It can be seen with the data and discussion as follows.

5. **They understand that in this democracy, the Commander-in-Chief doesn't use the men and women of our military, who are willing to risk everything to protect our nation,** as political props to deploy against peaceful protesters on our soil.

It shows that Obama strongly believes that Joe and Kamala are a couple who understands America very well. Their understanding of how to create a real democracy is like a military that is willing to fight for its nation. Likewise, what Obama described for this couple is that they will fight their best to fight for the United States in fixing democracy in Uncle Sam's country.

6. Along with the experience needed to get things done, **Joe and Kamala have concrete policies that will turn their vision of a better, fairer, stronger country into reality.**

Seeing the experiences that Joe and Kamala have had, Obama feels that they will be able to bring America back to glory, this is evidenced by Obama who said "Joe and Kamala have concrete policies that will turn their vision of a better, fairer, stronger country into reality." The United States of America requires action to recover for the better for the welfare of the American people. Obama uses the word "have concreate policies" which describes that the capabilities that these candidates have been capable of carrying out their vision, namely "their vision of a better, fairer, stronger country into reality."

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, there are three explanations focusing on the social cognition critical discourse analysis proposed by Teun Van Dijk in Obama's speech held at the 2020 Democratic National Convention. In this research, there are three social cognition elements found in this analysis, namely emotional attachment, mind control, and glorification. In emotional attachment, Obama said "what I know" and "for all its messiness and frustrations, your system of self- government can be harnessed to help you realize those convictions". Obama's speech which indicate mind control are "They'll expand health care to more Americans" and I am asking you while the utterances "They understand that in this democracy" and "have concrete policies" show glorification.

Social cognition is form of mental awareness and the scenario writer. Obama as speaker examining how the cognition in participating in understanding the events that will be presented and explains how Obama took advantage of his role in attracting public attention in the 46th US presidential election. There are parts related to social cognition: emotional attachment showed how Obama influenced the audiences to agree with the speaker's argument, mind control was found in the way Obama's strategy trying to control the thoughts and attention of the audience to accept what he said, and glorification which Obama did the final assessment and made the topic form of defense at high level.

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