

TEACHING PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE THROUGH CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF MALALA YOUSAFZAI'S SPEECH

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Abstract

On July 12, 2013, a student and education activist from Pakistan, Malala Yousafzai, delivered her memorable speech in the United Nations Headquarters in New York, highlighting the necessity of universal education among children and women all over the world. This speech was the first speech delivered by Malala since the shooting incident on the left side of her forehead done by Taliban on October 9, 2012, compelling her to have such a long recovery. This paper seeks to 1) analyze Malala's speech by using critical discourse analysis, and 2) discuss the possibility of using this material in ELT. The results of the study show that Malala used language to 1) show her strength, power, and courage in the face of adversity, and 2) persuade her fellows to continue studying, and some related parties to guarantee the girls and children's right to get education. Besides, this speech can be used as teaching material to teach all English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) by focusing on persuasive language.

Keywords: Speech, Malala Yousafzai, critical discourse analysis, persuasive language.

1. INTRODUCTION

Discourses play a primary role in education (van Dijk, 1981, p. 1). Since most of our learning material consists of texts and talks e.g. manuals, textbooks, instructions, classroom dialogue, etc. the role of discourse analysis in education becomes crucial (van Dijk, 1981; Yao, 2013). For teachers, analyzing discourse is a prerequisite since it will help them understand the language use comprehensively and critically, not only linguistically, but also contextually. Such a deep and critical analysis will ease them in using discourse as teaching materials in EFL classroom. With regard to this, a critical discourse analysis is one of the field of researches (van Dijk, 2008) which is suitable for teachers to analyze the discourse.

Theoretically, critical discourse analysis is a study of discourse which primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (van Dijk, 1996, 2015). Power can be defined as a property of relations between social groups, institutions or organizations. What is meant by power in CDA is not individual power, but it is merely a social power (van Dijk, 1996, p. 84). Social power itself has a close relationship with dominance. Dominance is a form of social power abuse, that is, as a legally or morally illegitimate exercise of control over others in one's own interests, often resulting in social inequality (van Dijk, 1996, p. 84). Dominance may be enacted and reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear natural and quite acceptable. As a result of power abuse and group dominance, social inequality appears as the main issue in CDA. To make it clearer, the core concept of inequality in CDA is that a limited access of a particular group because of the domination of another group (van Dijk, 1994, p. 23).

This paper seeks to analyze a memorable speech delivered by a female student and education activist from Pakistan, Malala Yousafzai, who struggled for an equality of education for women and all children all over the world. Malala delivered her speech on July 12, 2013, to celebrate her 16th birthday and Malala Day – a day declared by UN officials. On that day, Malala gave

her first public speech, highlighting the necessity of universal education at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. This speech is chosen since it is clearly identified that there was a social inequality revealed by Malala in her speech, that is, inequality of education among women in Swat Valley, Pakistan. Therefore, to analyze the speech, CDA will be best applied considering that CDA is aimed at investigating a social inequality as a result of social, political, and cultural group dominance (van Dijk, 1996, 2015).

The main focus of this research, however, is not merely analyzing the speech by using CDA. More meaningfully, we give a large discussion on how to use this speech as teaching materials in EFL classroom. Thoroughly listening, Malala's speech contains lots of persuasion. She frequently tried to persuade the listeners either children, women, or all related parties to struggle for better education in the world. Persuasive language itself is one of the materials being taught in ELT in Indonesia. By considering this fact, an analysis of this speech will be an effective and appropriate material. This research, therefore, will also discuss the possibility of using this material to teach a specific language aspect, that is, persuasive language.

With regard to the main focus of this study; applying CDA in EFL classroom, we need to learn the previous studies to find the gap and the need for further research. Ali (2013) conducted a study to investigate the significance of developing students' critical language awareness through explicit teaching methodology of some procedures of critical discourse analysis. This study was designed to discuss CDA techniques as an important aspect of reading skills. The findings revealed that the participants' power of critical thinking increased in comparison to the pre-test. Their motivation level was also enhanced and they were able to decode the message of the text. They were able to deal with challenging tasks rather than mere passive tasks. It was concluded that about 90% of the students' critical language awareness rose after becoming familiar with CDA techniques.

Another study related to CDA in language teaching was conducted by Al Ghazali (2007). In this study, an authentic text is critically analyzed following the framework proposed by Fairclough. The text being analyzed is a news story from (The Daily Telegraph) newspaper, and is 434 words long. It demonstrates the current statistics of drug use, particularly cocaine, among the urban middle classes. After providing the text's analysis, the researcher explained the role of CDA in language teaching, especially teaching reading as follows: (1) giving strategic guidance for the improvement of discourse production through identification of discourse patterns, clause relations and genres, (2) improving students' reflective critical reading, and (3) encouraging students to move away from focusing on form to using language to explore and provide evidence of the text's ideological positioning.

To conclude, the previous studies we have briefly explained studied the application of CDA in language teaching. Both studies, however, only focus on applying CDA in teaching reading. Therefore, it appears a gap that there has been limited or almost no study which focuses on applying CDA in teaching all language skills. To fill this gap, this paper is made to analyze Malala's speech by using CDA, and to provide some explanations of how this material can be used to teach either listening, speaking, reading, or writing. As what we have explained before, however, we will specify the material of the discussion by focusing on a language aspect namely persuasive language, since this aspect of language are the heart of the Malala's speech.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

A video taken from www.youtube.com entitled *Girl Shot in Head by Taliban, Speaks at UN-Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013* was chosen as the main tool of this study. Besides, the transcript of the speech was also used in this study. This speech deserves to be listened, read, and learned for its incredible message, and incredible public speaking skills of 16-year-old girl.

In analyzing either text or talk, there are plenty of aspects in CDA which are needed to take into account. Doing 'full' analysis of the speech, however, seems undoable in a short time. Instead,

it might take months and hundreds of pages (van Dijk, 2015, p. 99). As the typical characteristic of CDA, that is, the way some speakers or writers exercise power in or by their discourse (van Dijk, 2015, p. 99), this study will focus on analyzing Malala's speech by following van Dijk approach (top-down approach) namely 1) mental model, 2) macrostructure, 3) superstructure, and 4) microstructure.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 *Mental model*

To explore Malala's mental model, we need to know who Malala is comprehensibly. To begin with, Malala is a Pakistan girl. She is a student, and education activist as well. Since March 2013, Malala has been a student at the all-girls' Edgbaston High School in Birmingham. Besides, she was also a former blogger for BBC Urdu (a news and information provider of Pakistan). As a blogger in BBC Urdu, on 3 January 2009, Malala posted her first writing about how girls dared to attend school because of the Taliban, and how the Taliban had forced the school shut ("Malala Yousafzai Biography," n.d.). After her first writing, she continued writing in BBC Urdu blog until finally the blog ended on 12 March 2009. It was noted that she successfully posted more or less seven writing in BBC Urdu blog from 3 January 2009, until 12 March 2009. The topics were almost the same; the Taliban's cruelty that resulted in the loss of peace, safety, and rights for getting education.

Malala has a good affiliation with the United Nations. On 15 October 2012, UN Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown, visited Yousafzai while she was in the hospital (because of the shooting incident), and launched a petition in her name and in support of what Malala fought for. Even, on 12 July 2013, Malala's 16th birthday, she spoke at the UN for the first time after the shooting incident. Her speech was intended to call for worldwide access to education. Proudly, the UN named the event "Malala Day".

Watching Malala spoke at the UN, we may presuppose that Malala is a well-educated girl. It can be seen from the way she used a good formal language. Moreover, we may think that Malala has a high self-confidence speaking in front of the delegates from many countries, and the UN elites as well. From the way she spoke, we also may think that Malala is a true activist who is highly passionate in campaigning for the equality of education.

To end, Malala has an impressive track record. In three consecutive years (2013, 2014, and 2015), she was figured as one of "The 100 Most Influential People in the World" by Time magazine. The most impressive achievement of Malala is that the Nobel Prize awarded to her in 2014 for her struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education. At that time, Malala became the youngest-ever Nobel Prize receiver.

3.2 *Macrostructure; Topic*

The topic of the Malala's speech in the UN, in general, is the importance of equality of human's right including education. This is signaled by Malala herself by saying, "...*today I am focusing on women's rights and girls' education...*" In her speech, Malala told the audiences her story about the cruelty of the extremists who banned girls from attending schools in her native town, and she finally emphasized the power of education which frightens the extremists.

The implication of the topic being talked about is that she persuaded some big organizations such as governments, communities, and world leaders to do real action to protect girls and children's human right including to get education. Besides, Malala also persuaded her fellows to empower themselves with good education. She strongly persuaded other girls and children that education is the only solution to face the world.

3.3 Superstructure; Text Schemata

Broadly speaking, Malala's speech belongs to formal persuasive speech. The convention in making a formal speech, in general, consists of three parts; introduction, body, and conclusion. In introduction, formal persuasive speech usually consist of grabbing audiences' attention. In her speech, Malala tried to grab the audiences' attention by delivering a startling statement, "*Malala day is not my day. Today is the day of every woman, every boy and every girl who have raised their voice for their rights.*" Besides, she also tried to grab the attention by telling a dramatic story, "*Thousands of people have been killed by the terrorists and millions have been injured. I am just one of them.*"

In the body, Malala tried to include satisfaction and visualization of what she had experienced; this is the common strategy in delivering persuasive speech. In satisfying the audiences, she tried to propose a solution and show the audiences how it will work. In her speech, Malala says, "*... when we were in Swat, the north of Pakistan, we realized the importance of pens and books when we saw the guns.*" This solution will more make sense to the audiences by giving visualization of how this solution works. Regarding to this, in her speech, Malala says, "*The extremists are afraid of books and pens. The power of education frightens them. They are afraid of women. The power of the voice of women frightens them. And that is why they killed 14 innocent medical students in the recent attack in Quetta. And that is why they killed many female teachers and polio workers in Khyber Pukhtoon Khwa and FATA. That is why they are blasting schools every day. Because they were and they are afraid of change, afraid of the equality that we will bring into our society.*" By referring to those visualizations, the audiences will think that education clearly can be a good solution. Even though the proposed solution caused Malala in trouble, the audiences may still believe that education is the best weapon to fight against the extremists.

The last part of common persuasive speech consist of the call to action. In this case, Malala used some different types of speech acts. Broadly speaking, Malala's speech consist of requests, suggestions, assertions, and promises.

3.3.1 Request

"We call upon the world leaders to change their strategic policies in favor of peace and prosperity."

"We call upon the world leaders that all the peace deals must protect women and children's rights. A deal that goes against the dignity of women and their rights is unacceptable."

"We call upon all governments to ensure free compulsory education for every child all over the world."

"We call upon all governments to fight against terrorism and violence, to protect children from brutality and harm."

"We call upon the developed nations to support the expansion of educational opportunities for girls in the developing world."

"We call upon all communities to be tolerant – to reject prejudice based on cast, creed, sect, religion or gender. To ensure freedom and equality for women so that they can flourish. We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back."

"We call upon our sisters around the world to be brave – to embrace the strength within themselves and realize their full potential."

Representing other girls and children, Malala asked all communities to be tolerant, and asked girls to embrace the strength within themselves and realize their full potential. Moreover, Malala asked all governments to ensure free compulsory education for every child, to fight against terrorism, and to protect children from violence. Furthermore, Malala asked developed nations to support the expansion of educational opportunities for girls in the developing world, and asked the world leaders to change their strategic policies in favor of peace and prosperity, and to protect women and children's right. In delivering her requests, Malala took the advantage of the setting where she delivered her speech, the persons who attended the meetings, and the media which reported her speech so that she could effectively persuade all related subjects to do something related to equality, tolerance, education, etc.

In addition, Malala used another strategy in requesting, that is, by using the phrase "let us" like in these utterances "...let us empower ourselves with the weapon of knowledge and let us shield ourselves with unity and togetherness," and "...let us wage a global struggle against illiteracy, poverty and terrorism and let us pick up our books and pens." A bit different from the previous persuasive strategy which uses phrase "we call upon" which means to ask someone to do something, the use of "let us" in the last two sentences is a way how Malala emphasized that she is also a part of girls who have been suffering a lot from wars. However, she did not portrait herself as a victim. Bravely, Malala claimed to be the champion, and told the world that she, together with girls and children in the world, are in full charge of struggling against ignorance, poverty, and terrorism.

3.3.2 Suggestions

"We must believe in the power and the strength of our words."

In addition, Malala also tried to persuade other girls by giving suggestion to always believe in their power, and the strength of knowledge. She strongly persuaded all girls in the world to be brave against anything by maximizing their knowledge.

3.3.3 Promises

"We will continue our journey to our destination of peace and education for everyone."

"We will speak for our rights and we will bring change through our voice."

In some other parts of the speech, Malala, representing other girls and children, has a commitment to struggle for education. In other words, Malala, together with girls, and children all over the world, will continue to study, be brave in speaking for their rights, and bring change in the future.

3.3.4 Assertions

"Our words can change the world."

"One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world."

"Education is the only solution."

At the ending part of this speech, Malala made some personal statements in the form of assertions. Assertion is a statement that we strongly believe is true. Malala used assertions since she wanted

to convince the audiences that education is simply very effective and powerful solution to change the world, and also to encourage the audiences to earn knowledge as much as possible.

3.4 Microstructure

3.4.1 Stylistic

There are some words which are repeatedly uttered by Malala e.g. call upon, let us, and dear sisters and brothers. The phrase 'call upon' means that Malala asked someone in a formal way to do something. This is a good choice of words since Malala spoke in a formal situation, so that any requests that she delivered must be in a formal and polite way. The next phrase uttered repeatedly by Malala is 'let us.' This choice of words is also a formal way in persuading others. The use of 'let us' is a signal that Malala is a part of the girls and children who have been suffering a lot from wars, so that she invited the girls and children, including herself, to act. The last phrase which characterizes Malala's speech is the use of 'dear brother and sisters' phrase. In this choice of words, Malala wanted to emphasize that she was among many girls and children in the world. She wanted to address her speech to all girls and children in the world who suffered a lot as a result of wars. To conclude, Malala's lexicalization multiply signals her power, her moral position, as well as her persuasive strategies in influencing all related parties. It is clear that her lexical choice is appropriate for the genre of a formal speech.

3.4.2 Syntactic

Malala's speech is also marked with the use pronoun either singular or plural. In early part of the speech, Malala has frequently used first person singular pronoun "I" that shows that she wanted her audience to realize her contribution, sacrifice, and struggle against Taliban. However, she does not want to get credit of herself like what she says, "*I am here to speak up for the right of education of every child,*" "*I speak – not for myself, but for all girls and boys,*" and "*I raise up my voice – not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.*" Obviously, Malala wants to represent the girls, boys, and children, not to only get credit and salutation. Besides singular pronoun, Malala also used plural pronoun e.g. we, us, and our. The use of these pronouns clearly signal Malala's solidarity among girls and children in the world. Again, she wanted to emphasize that her position was a representation of girls and children. Besides, the use of possessive pronoun "*our*" in some parts like in "*our voice*" and "*our words*" obviously show that Malala signals herself as participating in the struggle of getting education, which refer to all girls and children who have less access to education because of wars. In this case, position and identification also determine the use of pronouns. The use of plural pronoun promotes mutual support and reduces a sense of indifference among the audience (Haider, 2014, p. 112).

3.4.3 Rhetoric

In many parts of the speech, especially in expressing persuasion, Malala used parallelism strategy (using same syntactic form repeatedly) such as in "*we call upon*", and "*let us.*" The use of this same syntactic form in several times is one of the characteristics of spoken language (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 17). This can also be called as a kind of repetition that strengthens the credibility of the speaker (Haider, 2014, p. 115). Besides, Malala used some repetitions to arouse the emotions of the audience like in the following utterances.

"And that is why they killed 14 innocent medical students in the recent attack in Quetta. And that is why they killed many female teachers and polio workers in Khyber Pukhtoon Khwa and FATA. That is why they are blasting schools every day."

This kind of repetition is used by Malala to convince the audiences that what the extremist had done is clearly a cruel thing. Then, in other part of the speech, Malala used another following repetition.

“Their right to live in peace.”

“Their right to be treated with dignity.”

“Their right to equality of opportunity.”

“Their right to be educated.”

This repetition is used by Malala to strengthen her message. Using this kind of rhetoric, Malala could effectively deliver her message, and persuade the audiences.

3.5 Application of the Speech Analysis in Teaching Persuasive Language

Indeed, analyzing discourse critically is a challenging activity for teachers since it takes time and needs deep thinking on how a discourse is constructed. However, such an analysis will help teachers in setting classroom activities. In this paper, we will elaborate the possibilities of using the speech as the main material in teaching English skills. As we have explained before, however, the focus of this discussion is only on teaching persuasive language, since it is considered as the heart of Malala’s speech. In addition, this speech deserves to be listened, read, reread and appreciated because it has a surprising maturity of oratory and substance (Haider, 2014, p. 107) and thus it is appropriate to be used as teaching material.

3.5.1 Teaching Listening

In teaching listening, teachers can play the video of Malala’s speech and ask the students to pay attention to the way how Malala delivered her speech. This speech can be used to teach language in authentic context. Before asking students to watch, teachers should explain about who is Malala, and talk a bit about Malala’s intention in her speech to activate students’ schemata. Besides, teachers should explain in advance that this speech contains lots of persuasion, so that students can pay attention to the way how Malala persuaded the audiences. Listening for gist, listening for specific information, and then summarizing are the recommended ways for listening activities (O’Malley & Pierce, 1996, p. 80).

Using this speech, by focusing on persuasive language, students can take some notes of the contents of Malala’s persuasion such as to whom she addressed her persuasion, and what her requests are. In playing the video, teachers can pause the video at any time when it is necessary. Then, teachers can integrate listening activity with writing activity by asking students to summarize what they have listened to. The content of the summary, of course, should include the aforementioned contents of Malala’s persuasion. In addition, students can also be facilitated to learn paralanguage properties such as stress and intonation that can nuance meaning or convey emotion especially in delivering persuasion.

3.5.2 Teaching Speaking

After watching the video and identifying the persuasive utterances from Malala, teachers can move to teaching speaking. To set speaking classroom activities by using Malala’s speech as the main material, teachers can ask students to practice delivering persuasion. In this case, teachers can ask students to imagine as if they were Malala (role play). The following is the clear instruction of how to do this task.

You are Malala.

You don't think that the girls (as well as boys) should be banned from attending school.

- a. *Try to explain your opinion and to persuade some related parties to give equality for girls (as well as boys) in getting education.*
- b. *You can also accuse the extremist of stealing the girls and children's right in getting education*
- c. *Use your own language. It is better for you to use emotive language.*

Basically, the rationale of conducting this activity is to give meaningful experience for students. They will not only hear and understand, but also they will be able to perform. This activity will be effective to improve students' self-confidence as well. Students can do this task individually or in pairs, and it is appropriate for all levels of student.

3.5.3 Teaching Reading

In teaching reading, teachers can distribute a copy of Malala's speech transcript and have students read it silently for 10 minutes. After students are done reading, teachers can group the class into some small groups. Teachers can give chance for each group to discuss the following questions:

- a. *What type of speech does Malala's speech belong to?*
- b. *What is the generic structure of the speech?*
- c. *In the beginning, Malala used singular subject pronoun "I", what do you think of Malala's intention?*
- d. *In the rest of the speech, however, Malala used pronoun "We" as well. Why did Malala use plural subject pronoun "We"?*
- e. *What do you think "We" refers to?*
- f. *What strategies did Malala use in arousing the audiences' emotion?*
- g. *What is the topic of the speech?*
- h. *What did you learn about Malala that you did not know?*
- i. *Why do you think the Taliban does not want girls to get an education? What do you think about that?*
- j. *To whom did Malala address her persuasion?*
- k. *What do you think Malala will do in the future?*

The first six questions deal with skimming by which students can learn how this speech is constructed. The rest of the questions deal with scanning by which students can learn to identify the detail information of the speech. Teachers can add some more questions, ignore some questions if they are too difficult, or modify the questions (depending on students' level). It should be noted that the questions given to students should lead them to be more critical.

In addition to comprehension questions, teachers can integrate reading activity with speaking activity. Here, teachers can ask students to retell what they have read. It can be done individually or in pairs, and it is appropriate for all levels of student (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p. 100)

3.5.4 Teaching Writing

Basically, the form of written and spoken persuasion are similar; introduction, body, and conclusion. All teachers need to do is to give context. The context, of course, must be relevant to students. The following is the sample instruction of writing a persuasive letter. The context is provided.

Now write a formal letter to the government and other related parties on the topic of discrepancy of between students in the city and in the village in Indonesia. Use persuasive language to give your opinion and to suggest solutions to the problems. The following guidelines will help you in writing

The form of letter:

- a. Your school name
 - b. Your school's address
 - c. School's city, State, and Zip Code
- (Give space)
- d. Today's date
 - e. To whom you address your letter
 - f. Introduction

Open your letter by introducing topic and context

- g. Body

Explain the following things:

- a. Issues
- b. Your solution
- h. Conclusion

Conclude your letter by listing what related parties should do (people, students, governments, communities, etc.)

(Give Space)

- i. Greeting (the common word is "Sincerely")
- j. Your name

Notes:

Language and style

You are writing to your government, so the tone must be formal. You are also writing to persuade. Remind yourself of the language used by Malala. Think about including the following techniques:

- a. Emotive language (use repetition)
- b. Positive opening statement and clear conclusion
- c. Personal pronouns (to give a personal tone)
- d. Evidence and justification

Useful phrases

- a. I'm writing to make you aware of... (introduction)
- b. I'm sure you recognize that... (body)
- c. I have no doubt that you will agree when I say that... (conclusion)

4. CONCLUSION

This paper suggests that critical discourse analysis can be applied in ELT. Doing critical analysis of a discourse is a pathway that can help teachers in designing meaningful classroom activities. The main advantage of doing CDA is that teachers can lead students to be more critical. By focusing on a particular aspect of Malala's speech; persuasive language, students will learn persuasive language comprehensibly in all skills either listening, speaking, reading, or writing. Hopefully, some classroom activities that we propose can be valuable resources that can help teachers in conducting teaching and learning process. However, we suggest that teachers should do CDA

by themselves so that they deeply understand the discourse that they want to use as teaching materials. Indeed, doing CDA is challenging, but it offers plenty of advantages for language teachers.

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