A Critical Discourse Analysis of the 2012 American Presidential Election Debates

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Abstract

This study discusses the Critical Discourse Analysis of 2012 American Presidential Election Debate'. The researcher adopts a model proposed by Van Dijk's (2006 d). Six ideological categories have been selected within the overall strategies of the ideological square are used. The categories are of three levels of discourse structure : (the meaning, the argumentation, and the rhetoric) .They have shown effective criteria for detecting the most disguised systems of racism and manipulation.

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the elite discourses of candidates contribute to the reproduction of domination, Orientalism, and Islamophobia. This can be applied to the three levels of discourse structures by focusing on the ideological polarized structures of positive self-presentation of ˈ us' (civilized and peaceful) and negative other-presentation of ˈ them' (barbarian and terrorists) as means of mind controlling and manipulating the audience.

Key Words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Racism , Manipulation

1.1 Definitions and Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis

Wodak (1995: 204) formulates the definition and the aims of the concept in a similar manner. She argues that CDA can be defined as " fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as manifested in language". In another research conducted by Wodak (2001:2), she explains CDA's aims as " to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, and legitimized, and so on by language use (or in discourse)". Nevertheless, CDA analysts state that discourse is socially constructed as well as " socially conditioned. Furthermore, discourse is seen

as an opaque power object" (Blommaert, 2001:14). CDA thus overtly takes a strong vow to change and stand against domination and inequality (ibid: 15).

It is obvious that most scholars agree that CDA is a field that is concerned with studying and analyzing written and spoken texts as a social practice to decode the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and racism. It examines how these discursive sources are sustained and reproduced within specific social, political, economic, and historical contexts. For the same reason, Van Dijk (2001:352) defines CDA very clearly: is "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context".

Chilton (2005:21) directs powerful criticisms to CDA. He questions whether there is even any aim in CDA. He argues that people are not in need of critical awareness since they are biologically equipped, to distinguish ideological processes behind text-production, thus if people are genetically born with a 'critical' competence, CDA will bring nothing to the table (ibid).

1.2 Key Concepts of Critical Discourse Analysis

Many scholars, throughout time, have proposed various definitions, clarifications, and explanations that are relevant and central to the scope of CDA, as well as handy in the theoretical framework of this study. The following are some of them:

1.2.1 Critique

The term (critical), which is indispensable for Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth: CL,CDA) can be defined as " a shared perspective on doing linguistic, semiotic or discourse analysis" (Van Dijk 1993b: 131).

Wodak (2007:209) uses this concept in a broader sense when he explains critical " as having distance to the data ,embodying the data in the social , making the respective political stance explicit ,and having a focus on self-reflection as scholars undertaking research . Wodak refers to Krings (1973) when discussing this notion, claiming that it denotes 'the practical linking of "social and political engagement" with conducting scientific research   (ibid).Hence, critique is " essentially   making   visible interconnectedness of things" (Fairclough, 1995a:747).

According to Reisigl and Wodak's (2001:265) Discourse-Historical Approach, *critique* " can contribute greatly to answering the question of

what are ˈ good reasons', because such an approach provides criteria, which enable one to distinguish between the manipulative and the suggestive procedures of persuasion and discursive procedures of convincing argumentation" (ibid).

1.2.2 Power

Power is another concept, which is crucial for CDA, as it often analyzes the language use of those in power, who are responsible for the existence of social, political, and/or economic inequalities. Hence, critical discourse analysts tend to emphasize how disciplinary power is discursively created and maintained by power abuse of the dominant groups, and resisted by the dominated ones. For example, Fairclough (1995a: 1), following Foucault (1986), defines power not only as unbalanced authority that exists among individuals who exercise relations of power in the same discursive event, but also in terms of how specific people have different abilities to access and control and how discourses are produced, distributed and inspired.

Van Dijk (1996: 84) argues that power is characterized as relations among social groups, institutions, and organizations. He focuses on social *power* that has a powerful effect on the actions and the cognition of dominated groups . Social power is shared and presupposed by the members of the dominated group; as for the analysis of social problems, this means that understanding the nature of social power is a central presupposition. Such power deals with properties of relations among different social groups, for instance, powerful groups always have exclusive privilege and access to the public minds and a specific social domain through different forms of discourse such as, media, employment, and education to sustain, conceal and normalized power and inequality (Van Dijk,1996: 85).

Van Dijk (1993a:21) explains that the understanding of the notion of power as a prerequisite for the critical discourse analyst to describe the notion of domination, and both power and domination are at the heart of all forms to understand the concepts of inequality and racism.

1.2.3 Ideology.

Ideology is intensively investigated differently by many researchers and scholars , but Van Dijk's (1998a) ideological theory offers comprehensively better understanding of this notion by combining and interfacing among its

three core components that have only been studied separately before and they, according to him (ibid: 58), are:

  i. Cognitively, ideology consists of ideas in people's minds, which are usually studied by cognitive psychologists.
 ii. Societally, ideology also involves a group membership and value judgment, which are generally investigated by sociologists and social scientists.
iii. Linguistically, ideology is not an innate knowledge and therefore it needs to be learnt, acquired, or changed through written or spoken discourse.

The concept of ideology is also closely connected to the question of power, domination, and discourse, since these concepts almost are collocated in CDA research. Fairclough (1992: 87) defines ideologies as " constructions of reality.... Which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination". Discourse is the most prominent way that ideologies are re/produced, maintained, and resisted. The negative notion of 'ideology' has also become the central element in the common sense, social sciences, and political uses of the term, namely as a system of false, misguided or misleading beliefs as opposite to truth of scientific knowledge (Van Dijk, 2006d: 7).

Fairclough and Wodak elaborate on Fairclough's definition as "Ideologies are particular ways of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, relations of domination and exploitation", and they go on "ideologies are often (though not necessarily) false or ungrounded constructions of society". (Fairclough and Wodak: cited in: Van Dijk et al. 1997: 275).

1.2.4 Racism

Racism is defined as the false system of believes (ideology) that human mental and physical abilities as well as personalities can be differentiated and hatred on the basis of ethnicity, skin color, religion and that, as a result, one race is superior to the other. This view is asserted by Essed's (1991:43) statement that "racism must be understood as an ideology, structure and process in which inequalities inherent in the wider social structure are related, in a deterministic way, to believing that different 'races' or 'ethnic groups' are biologically and culturally inferior in comparison to the white race".

The typical example of such racism is the immigrants of non-Western origins and peoples of the Third World countries, since they are being

categorized and (negatively) evaluated in terms of racial and cultural differences, that is, 'ethnic' characteristics. (Van Dijk, 1991: 28).

Carlos (2012:26) draws a distinctive line between racism and prejudice, where the latter is more general than the former. He (ibid: 226) argues that "racism is a particular form of prejudice defined by preconceived erroneous beliefs about race and members of racial groups"

Carlos (ibid: 29) shows the generality of notion of prejudice when he states that "we all have our prejudices, and we can be prejudiced about things, ideas, or people. Hence, anyone, irrespective of color, can hide prejudicial, even hatefully prejudicial feelings about any race". However, to be guilty of racism, one must operationalize his prejudice with power, and power of a special sort. Racism is prejudice plus power leveraged at an institutional level to maintain the privileges of the dominant social group (Carlos, 2012:29). He (ibid) refers to "racism formula" as "R = P + P" meaning **R**acism equals **P**rejudice plus **P**ower.

Van Dijk (1991:28) refers to the important point that structure forms of racism and inequality have been changed dramatically. The more overt and blatant forms of legal and social structures and everyday practices that define ethnic or racial discrimination are gradually replaced by more implicit, indirect, and subtle ones. However, this 'new', 'modern', or 'symbolic' racism is more effective and deceptive form of dominance and inequity. (Wodak et al., 2009:217)

1.2.5 Manipulation

The concept of manipulation receives a greater attention in CDA since it is connected to the notions of abuse of power and social inequality that take place by oral and written discourse.

Van Dijk (2006b:359) defines manipulation triangularly in his socio-cognitive approach: socially as "illegitimate domination confirming social inequality."; cognitively," manipulation as mind control involves the interference with processes of understanding, the formation of biased mental models and social representations such as knowledge and ideologies." ; structurally, "manipulation generally involves the usual forms and formats of ideological discourse, such as emphasizing speaker's good things, and emphasizing other bad things." Hence, manipulation is built on the best interest of the dominated in-group and against the best interests of dominated out-groups (ibid).

Manipulation, among other strategic techniques, the speaker or " manipulator exercises control over other people" to make them believe " or do things that are in the interest of the manipulator, and against the best interests of the manipulated" to change their ideologies and distort reality(ibid:360). In everyday social interaction, the concept of manipulation has negative associations in people's minds " because such a practice violates social norms and principles" (Van Dijk, 2006b: 359) .

Van Dijk (ibid:361) makes the concepts of domination, power, and context as the characteristics of manipulation and the boundary lines that distinguish between (legitimate) persuasion and negatively associated (illegitimate) manipulation. In other words, the manipulation is not only illegitimate because it violates Grece's (1975) conversational maxims of truthiness, relevance and completion and so, but also it is illegitimate, because it (re) produces domination and inequality in society (ibid: 363).

2. MODEL AND ANALYSIS
2.1 Introduction

The model adopted in this study is mostly proposed by Van Dijk's (1995b) *Ideological Discourse Analysis* The analysis aims at showing how various ideologies, especially those of racism, manipulations and misrepresentations of the truth, are expressed in various kinds of structures of presidential election debates related to the East (the Orient) and more specifically, to the Muslim World.

The researchers need to pay attention to those discourse properties and linguistic markers that express or imply the *opinions* of the presidential candidates about minorities, or Third World nations, especially those opinions, or (attitudes) that are shared by a *group* (dominant white in-group) and are about others as an out-group. These discourse properties may characterize the semantic content as well as the argumentative, and the rhetorical properties. Such properties may further emphasize positive information about '*us*' (i.e. the West) and negative about '*them*' (i.e., the East) and de-emphasize positive information about '*them*' and negative about '*us*'.

In his framework, Van Dijk (1995b,2006d) elaborates on the selection of subtle ideological categories among which the fundamental contrast of 'positive self-representation' and 'other negative representation' is prominent. Positive self-representation (or in-group favoritism) is a semantic macro- strategy used for the purpose of 'face-keeping' or 'impression

management'. Negative other- representation is another semantic macro-strategy serves to derogate out-groups, these macro-strategies are formulated by 'ideological square':

- Emphasize/Include *Our* good things or actions
- Emphasize /Include *Their* bad things or actions
- De-emphasize/Exclude *Our* bad things or actions
- De-emphasize /Exclude *Their* good things or actions

These four possibilities form a conceptual square that may be applied to the analysis of all levels of discourse structures. Generally, as to their content, " strategies of manipulative discourse appear to be largely semantic, i.e. focused on manipulating the 'content' of text and talk" (Van Dijk 2006b:376).

Starting with the meaning level, Van Dijk (2006d:61-85) deals with such ideological categories as**, 'disclaimer',** and **'lexicalization',** .In the argumentation level, he focuses on such ideological categories **'fallacies' ,** and **'generalization'.** The rhetorical level covers such ideological categories as **'hyperbole',** and **'repetition',**

Since the discourse of presidential debates is contextually relevant at all levels of text structure, the term **'contextual overview'** is an abroad concept that covers all levels of analysis. These strategies reveal not only the underlying racist ideologies of the debates of the American presidential nominees regarding immigrants and foreign policies, but also how such racist ideologies and their discursive formulations are used manipulatively in a political and public relations strategy. Hence, to gain media and popular support and legitimization for tough foreign policy (wars, sanctions, counterterrorism, etc.) against specific nations in the Middle East, the researcher summarizes each of these three levels as follows:

2.2 Contextual Overview

The presidential debate, as a political discourse " defined in terms of professional politicians and political institutions," should be not usually analyzed at the levels of text, but rather at the level of context (Van Dijk, 2000a:213). The discourse of the presidential debates is contextually relevant because it helps shape the minds of the recipients, the audience, as well as other (elite) groups and institutions (such as the media) and the public. At all the levels of text structure, the researchers may thus examine not only how the presidential candidates express or enact ethnic prejudice, but also how they are geared towards the mind control of the recipients, from preferred mental models of specific events to more general social representations about 'us' and

the 'others' (Van Dijk, 2000a:215).

The time of this debate is at (9:00 pm on October 22, 2012). It is chosen intentionally because it coincides with the 50th anniversary of the United States and Cuba Missile Crisis in 1962, the night when President Kennedy told the world that the Soviet Union had installed nuclear missiles in Cuba. Thus, to send a manipulative message to the audience that America is still right now under an unexpected imminent threat from the Iranian nuclear program and the U.S. may come close to nuclear war with Iran.

2.3 Meaning Level

First of all, the researcher has to start with meaning since discourse meaning , according to Van Dijk (2000c:90), " is the core level for the expression of beliefs, such as personal and social knowledge, opinions, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values". Blommaert (1999:5) argues that " every act of communication is grounded in semantic and pragmatic histories which are not simple and linear, but complex, multi-layered and fragmented". Therefore, it is worth mentioning that Van Dijk (2006d) uses a broad and general concept of ' meaning□ in his ideological model of analysis to cover all types of meanings, whether they are semantic literal sentence meaning or contextual pragmatic one that goes beyond sentence meaning when a speaker says something and means something else.

Thus, the description of others should be carefully examined for the various strategies of separated and polarized perspectives and ideologies that are signaled by the words used in the description (Van Dijk, 1993c: 109), such as how to formulate harsh foreign policy against certain nations. This is sustained by the selected persuasive ideological categories of meaning as defined below:

2.3.1 Disclaimer: It is used to depict the positive description about somebody, then denying it by using coordinating conjunctions 'but' in the second sentence. Disclaimers briefly save face by mentioning his/her own positive characteristics, but then focus rather exclusively, on other negative attributes to avoid being described of racism by the recipients, as is the case for the well-known disclaimers such as the **Apparent Denial** " *I have nothing against X, but...* ". (Van Dijk, 2006d: 67). Other disclaimers are, **Apparent Concession** " they are not all criminal, but... ", **Apparent Empathy** " *they have had many difficulties in their own country*, but... ", **Apparent Excuse** " I am sorry, but..." **Reversal** (blaming the victim), and **Transfer** " *I have no problem with X, but my clients...* " **Apparent Ignorance** " *I do not know, but...* ", and others (Van Dijk, 2000c:92).

In the discourse under analysis, both candidates use another ideological meaning maneuver that instantiate within one sentence or sentences. These maneuvers are labeled 'apparent' disclaimers because the structures of their discourses serve to express, legitimate, conceal, or deny such racist attitudes against the Middle Eastern peoples and nations. They seek to combine two opposed ideological aims, namely the humanitarian values of tolerance or fairness on the one hand, and the reasonable values of practicality on the other (Van Dijk, 1992: 111). The following are some extracts:

1- _We recognize that there are places of conflict in the world. We want to end those conflicts to the extent humanly possible._ **_But_** _in order to be able to fulfill our role in the world, America must be strong. America must lead. And for that to happen, we have to strengthen our economy here at home_ (ROM, L: 460-464)

In the above extract, Romney uses a disclaimer of apparent admission as semantic manipulative technique. In the first part of this type of disclaimer, he apparently recognizes that there are conflicts need to be resettled as humanly as possible. In this extract, he tries sending many implicit messages as face-keeping and positive impression management: first, to avoid being labeled as a warmonger in the eyes of the American public who are exhausted by a decade of the U.S-wars launched, for example, on Afghanistan and Iraq. Secondly, to disguise the U.S. notorious role in invoking and supporting these conflicts directly or indirectly worldwide. He avoids mentioning the U.S-backed Israeli aggressions sustained by the U.S. military and diplomatic support on sovereign Arab nations and the U.S. and Israel are blocking the international consensus on an Israel/Palestine agreement to reach to a regional peace settlement of the oldest conflict in recent history, which has been prolonged for sixty-five years.

The second part of the disclaimer following the conjunction " _but_" implies that peace settlements to these conflicts are rejected as being too idealistic and unrealistic, because of the U.S. economic recession. Romney's argument falsification can be refuted easily when we know that the U.S.-annual foreign aids to Israel are more than one hundred billion dollars over the past forty years.

2- _… I know you haven't been in a position to actually execute foreign policy,_ **_but_** _every time you have offered an opinion, you've been wrong. You said we should have gone into Iraq, despite that fact that there were no weapons of mass destruction_ (OBM, L: 140-143).

In the above segment, Obama uses a disclaimer of an apparent excuse, which is a semantic move that aims at avoiding any bad impression when saying negative things about one's political opponents. Obama states in the first part of this disclaimer the deceptive justification of Romney's foreign policy ignorance. Obama skillfully attacks and derogates his political rival by hinting that Romney is reasonably inexperienced because he did not have the chance to practice practically the foreign policy. In the second part of extract introduced by "*but*", Obama gives an example of an inexpert Romney to imply that if Romney theorizes or executes the foreign policy nowadays or in the future, it is going to be based on wrong assumptions and conclusions as he did in the past. Hence, he is ineligible and unreliable to be in the White House.

2.3.2 Lexicalization: this category can be considered as an overall ideological strategy for negative other-representation through the semantic features of "the selection of (strongly) negative words to describe the actions of the others": *terrorism, destroy, extremism*, *jihadist*, etc. (Van Dijk, 1995b:154). If the lexicalization of the underlying conceptual meanings is analyzed, "few properties of discourse will be as directly revealing about ethnic opinions as the words being chosen to describe *them* and *their* actions and properties" (Van Dijk,2000c:95).

In the debate under analysis, both presidential candidates adopt intensive use of stereotypical negative lexicalizations such as "*terrorists*", "*jihadists*", "*extremism*", "*bad guys*", "*genocide*", "*apartheid*", "*turmoil*" etc. These terms are always associated with Arabs, Muslim World, resistance movements, and defying political leaders. However, the aggressive and racist acts of Israel and other in-group allies are never described as ⸢imperialist⸥ or as ⸢terrorist⸥ acts, not even as a violation of international law. It is biased in a way that "*fundamentalism*" points out only to Muslim fundamentalism throughout the world. No description is given to the Christian or Jewish fundamentalism in the debate, as if it was that "*violence*" and "*extremism*" are being exclusive to Islam and Muslims. Here are some examples:

3- *The right course for us is to make sure that we go after the people who are leaders of these various anti-American groups and these <u>jihadists</u>, but also help the Muslim world* (ROM, L: 104-106).

It can be seen here how the lexical choice can provide insights into the biased attitude and ideological derogating description of others.

Romney's use of " *jihadists*" highlights recurrence of orientalist images of Islam and Muslims in the Western media. In the Western media, Muslims are portrayed as being violent and primitive people who are obsessed with waging a holy war against unbelievers to destroy Western liberal democracy and tolerant values by subjugating them under the rule of oppressive Shari'ah law. The great aim of such propaganda is to make the audience believes that all Muslims distinctively engage in violence because their religion is based on violence and hatred; therefore, promotes audience's Islamophobic ideologies and anti-Muslim racism are similar to those against Germans and Japanese in the 1940s, and communists in the 1950s.

The use of negative lexicalization of 'jihadists' can be largely applied in particular to people who use violence in their resistance against U.S - Israeli hegemony and their recruited terrorist mercenaries in the Middle East. No mention is made to Christian or Jewish imperialists in the debate. The speaker presupposes in his use of " *help the Muslim world* " that □ we' as □ westerners' are peaceful modernized people who can heal 'others' such as " *the Muslim World*" who is ill of fanaticism.

4- *Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism. And for them to be able to provide nuclear technology to non-state actors, that is unacceptable.* (OBM, L: 765-766).

The above extract confirms Gerbner's statement (1991) ' labeling a large group "terrorists" seem to justify terrorizing them. The president repeats the same lexical negative description of the U.S. enemies " *a state sponsor of terrorism*", which was used immediately in the wake of eleventh of September to identify Afghanistan that leads to terrorize the Afghans by the U.S. and NATO bombardment and invasion. Meanwhile the U.S. keeps very special relationship with the Saudis, even though many of the September 11 hijackers were of Saudi origin. In Iran's case, as part of the U.S. ideological policies of out-group derogation and in-group victimization, the speaker implies a linkage between Iran and Al Qaeda, (the alliance of two adversaries with totally contrasting ideologies).

Ideopolitically, Iran's being on the U.S. State Department list of terrorist nations, is not because its alleged connection to Al-Qaida, but, because of Tehran's support for legitimate national resistance movements, such as Hamas and Hezbollah.

This comes to intensifying the audience's fear under the manipulative and the hyperbolic assumption that Iran is going to produce nuclear weapons

to be handed over to " *non-states actors*", who are portrayed as anti-American people terrorist elements. Therefore, it becomes rhetorically accepted to devote perhaps billions of dollars to develop American and allies' nuclear capability to attack Iran under a pretext of 'defending ourselves from Iranian nuclear bombs'. One of the U.S. racist ideoploitical strategies is blaming its victims for what it actually does to serve disclaiming its leading role in sponsoring world terrorism to derogate and exterminate its enemies.

2.4 Argumentation Level

Van Eemeren et al. (2002:23), define argumentation classically as " an ideal of a challenging discourse aimed at resolving a difference of opinion by determining whether the standpoints at issue ought to be accepted or not".

Van Dijk (2006b: 376) views that the argumentative manipulation " effect upon the readers" is graded according to their qualification and critical sense of recipients , because, critical audience who has enough information and arguments are competent to resist manipulative discourse.

He (ibid) argues that " general strategies of manipulative discourse appear to be predominantly semantic" (ibid: 376). However, as is the case for the implementation of ideologies, the preferred or non-preferred meanings may also be de/emphasized by using certain argumentative ideological categories as defined in the following:

2.4.1 Fallacies:

Van Dijk (1995a:29) maintains, " The study of numerous argumentative fallacies has shown that powerful arguers may manipulate their audience by making self-serving arguments more explicit and prominent, whereas other arguments may be left implicit".

Here, both the U.S. major parties' candidates choose one of the distinctive strategies preferred in manipulation when they violate argumentation principles and rules by different types of fallacies such as false analogies, provoking sentiments, blaming the victims. In the data under analysis, the debaters' are based on counter factuality, or overgeneralization from a single example to be applied to all people or all cases to persuade the audience to follow speaker's ideology or do something serves his interest. Practically, this is illustrated by analyzing one extract for each debater:

5- *…I will stand with Israel if they are attacked. And this is the reason why, working with Israel, we have created the strongest military and intelligence cooperation between our two countries in history (OBM, L: 750-752)… And the reason we did this is because a*

nuclear Iran is a threat to our national security, and it is a threat to Israel's national security. We cannot afford to have a nuclear arms race in the most volatile region of the world. (OBM, L: 761-764).

In the above extract, Obama uses the wrong premise in his argument that is based on counterfactual " *if they are attacked*", which leads to the wrong conclusions and racist actions. The speaker's reasoning to the U.S. unconditional support to Israel " *strongest military and intelligence cooperation between our two countries in history*" is established on discriminatory policy because; according to international justice, such hypothetical assumptions " *I will stand with 'X' if 'X' are attacked*" should not be exclusive to Israel since it can be applicable to any nation worldwide. On the contrary, we see that the United States of America, as a superpower, stands with the dominant aggressor against dominated defender. This is a typical example of misusing of power. The speaker manipulatively states " *we cannot afford to have a nuclear arms race in the most volatile region of the world*" to serve positive self -representation and negative other - representation arguments.

He emphasizes that his administration is intolerant to " *nuclear arms race*", hence, underemphasizes the U.S. long history of responsibility of racist policies that lead to the instability of the Middle East.

6- *But Pakistan is important to the region, to the world and to us, because Pakistan has 100 nuclear warheads and they're rushing to build a lot more. They'll have more than Great Britain sometime in the relatively near future. They also have the Haqqani Network and the Taliban existent within their country. (ROM, L: 1049-1054).*

It is an obvious fallacy and twisted logic that Romney, Republicans' candidate, acknowledges and justifies the U.S. long history alliance with the Pakistani military ruler, General Musharraf, under the explanation that Pakistan possesses " *100 nuclear warheads and they're rushing to build a lot more*" and harbor terrorist movements and organizations " *Haqqani Network and the Taliban existent*". The United States simultaneously legitimizes " *imposes the strongest sanctions against Iran in history, (OBM, L: 770)*", stigmatizes nations as " *a state sponsor of terrorism*", or " *axis of evil*", invades two countries (Afghanistan and Iraq) and launches proxy war against Syria. The reasons behind these wars and sanctions are built on skeptical and claims that these out-group nations have nuclear programs, or harbor terrorists. Ironically, this kind of racism and double standards encourages

other nations to possess nuclear warheads and become safe havens for terrorist groups to get the U.S. special military and economic treatments, gain worldwide high political profile and to be the U.S. close ally.

2.4.2 Generalization: According to Van Dijk (1995b:15), generalization is " a strategy that allows writers to go from concrete events and persons to more embracing and hence more persuasive statements about other groups and categories of people".

        In racist discourse, generalization is typically used to formulate prejudice and phobia about generalized negative characteristics of others. This is called the fallacy of generalization from single cases, " in which case a specific concrete example that has made an impact on people's mental models, is generalized to more general knowledge or attitudes, or even fundamental ideologies" (Van Dijk, 2006b: 370).

        It is therefore crucial to illustrate in the debate under analysis, that the debaters generalize selective, stereotypical, or invented examples to emphasize negative other-presentation, whereas they call examples that describe negative self-presentation as random or exceptional ones, such as the Oklahoma City bombing by a Christian fundamentalist. However, the given examples of minor events that emphasize negative acts of another are not exceptional at all, but typical or representative of a whole community, ethnicity, religion, or nations. Hence, both candidates give very negative examples to portray more than a billion Muslims as radicals and jihadists who treat women and religious minorities violently. Below are two detailed examples:

7- *We're going to have to put in place a very comprehensive and robust strategy to help the world of Islam and other parts of the world, reject this radical violent extremism, (ROM, L: 59-61).*

        In the above extract, Romney uses argumentative fallacy of generalization strategy in which the speaker takes the negative actions of specific fundamentalists to be generalized through the whole world of Islam. The speaker's association of " *the world of Islam"* with " *this radical violent extremism"* presupposes that all the Islamic nations are the same as homogenized into one radical, violent extremist group, regardless of their national, cultural, linguistic, ethical, historical, sectarian, and political diversities.

        Moreover, he generalizes to presuppose that all Muslims' negative activities such as violence, political unrest, or economic and intellectual failures are motivated and caused exclusively by the Islamic religion. The speaker excludes ideologically the very human and scientific sides of Islam

and the fact that the overwhelming majority of Muslims is moderate. He also hides the U.S. role of inspiring radicalization in some Muslims by racist double standards policies and excessive use of violence against Muslim and Arab nations. The U.S. empire cannot go on without an enemy who is used to legitimate a gigantic military budget that is, according to Obama's statement, "*more than the next ten countries combined; China, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, (OBM, L: 662-663)*"

8- *We do have to make sure that* <u>*we're protecting religious minorities*</u> *and* <u>*women*</u> *because these countries cannot develop unless all the population,* <u>*not just half of it, is developing*</u> *(OBM, L: 229-231).*

Obama, the democratic candidate adopts the argumentative fallacy of generalization as another ideological method of denigrating Muslims and Arabs. At the same time, he is praising his own nation and in-group culture, tradition and democratic values of living. The speaker's use of "<u>*we're protecting religious minorities and women*</u>" blinds the audience's critical eyes of his support for sectarian polarization and human rights abuse of the same religion minorities in the Saudi Arabia and majorities in Bahrain, as well as the catastrophe of Iraq and Syria's minorities at the hands of the killing machines of foreign mercenaries.

In this extract, Obama repeats the old stereotyped image of oriental and Muslim women who are mistreated and deprived of their rights of free mobility, way of clothing and education. This kind of debating highlights the speaker's manipulative apparent empathy with Eastern women and hides the U.S. responsibility of women's physical and psychological grievances in many non-allied Middle Eastern nations, for instance, the sufferings of more than million Iraqi widows and their five million orphans caused by the U.S. invasion and the U.S. -sponsored sectarian violence in Iraq. Of course, it cannot be denied that there are women whose rights are being marginalized in some Arabs and Muslim nations. However, generalizing this to the titanic geographical size and diversities of the World of Islam not only deemphasizes positive other-representation that most of the women are dignified, get their full rights of living in decent liberal life, but also demonstrates speaker's racist ideologies.

2.5 Rhetoric Level

Van Dijk (2000c:99-100) uses the concept of rhetoric in his modal in a limited , relevant and specific sense in order to "refer to (generally optional) structures at various levels of discourse that result from special

operations", that regulate specific forms of comprehension, for instance in persuasion, discourses aim at influencing opinions such as parliamentary debate. Rhetorical structures that are at the interface with the semantic level (lexicalization, hyperbole, euphemism, etc.) are relevant for presidential debate analysis, " because they manipulatively emphasize and de-emphasize meaning and the expression and the formation of mental models of ethnic events and social representations of in-group and out-group" (ibid).

It can be noticed that " the negative characteristics of the out-group will tend to be expressed in hyperboles, thus, Muslims may be described as fundamentalists, or barbarians, " whereas those of the in-group will usually be expressed in euphemism." (ibid). Hence, rhetorical strategies will typically play a role as part of an overall strategy of persuasion and impression management in this general analytical framework of the ideological square. Rhetorical ideological categories will be defined as follows:

2.5.1 Hyperbole: Van Dijk (1995b:154) defines hyperbole as " a description of an event or action in strongly exaggerated terms." He stresses in (1991:192) that the rhetorical *hyperbole* is used to emphasize strongly negative ideological meanings. The reverse is also true; if opponents' negative actions are to be exaggerated, speaker's negative actions are, of course, need to be softened.

Here, hyperboles are used dramatically by both debaters to overemphasize negative properties or actions of the U.S. enemies, whether they are individuals, groups or nations by using hyperbolic and metaphorical expression such as " *the world's worst actors*", " *missiles raining down from Hamas*", and " *the greatest national security threat*". This is going to be illustrated in following examples:

9- *And then I went down to the border towns of Storok(ph), which had experienced* <u>*missiles raining down*</u> *from Hamas.And I saw families there who showed me there where missiles had come down near their children's bedrooms (OBM, L: 926-928).*

In the above extract, Obama exaggeratedly enhances the negative characteristics of America and Israel's enemy "*Hamas*" by metaphorical expression to describe a few homemade and short ranged-rockets with very limited power of destruction as "*missiles raining down*" to increase the dramatic manipulative effects on viewers, hence, gain their sympathy and support.

The speaker falls in argumentative paradox when he fails to give at least one case of human casualty caused by Hamas' "*rainy-falling missiles*"

because Obama's oxymoron lies in his expression "*missiles had come down near their children's bedrooms*" but nobody is killed or even injured where naturally expected to be. Within the overall strategy of ideological square, the speaker excludes positive other-representation of Hamas when it abided by one-side cease-fire for two years and did not hit back to Israeli missile attacks, looking for initiating peaceful settlement negotiation with Israel. Simultaneously, he excludes negative self-characteristics of targeting Iraq's civilians' infrastructures to destroy the ageless civilizations of Iraq by dropping hundred thousand tons of bombs and sophisticated missiles during the first and the second wars on Iraq.

10- *I met a young woman in Philadelphia who is coming out of college, cannot find work. I have been — Ann was with someone just the other day that was just weeping about not being able to get work. It is just a tragedy in a nation as prosperous as ours (ROM, L: 1448-1452*).

In extract (**10**), Romney uses hyperbole to de/emphasize skillfully positive/negative self and other representations. The use of noun phrase "*a tragedy*"exaggerates the negative description of the speaker's political opponent where one case of an unemployed educated woman is hyperbolized to serve derogating Obama's economic policies which caused 47 million jobless people rely on free food stamps in comparison with 32 million during his colleague George W. Bush . What Romney intentionally misses to mention is that the current the U.S. financial crisis rooted in the Republican administrations era. He glorifies prosperous lives of Americans that may be damaged by President Obama and at the same time, distances the U.S. from the Third World high percentage of unemployment.

This strategy guarantees winning the women's votes and saves his positive face by hiding that he adopts Bush-era tax plans that keep the same high tax ratio for unemployed poor people and reduce it for the big business owners and the wealthiest Americans. These tax plans would make more privilege for the wealthy and widen unequal gaps among the Americans social classes.

2.5.2 Repetition: Van Dijk (1997a:35) considers repetition as " one of the major strategies to draw attention to preferred meanings and to enhance the construction of such meanings in mental models and their memorization in ongoing persuasion attempts or later recall".

Romney and Obama are fully aware of the psycholinguistic effect of repetition or a careful rehearsal of biased meaning encoded in syntactic

patterns or vocabularies because it accelerates information transmission from their temporary status in Short Term Memory to be stored longer in the Long Term Memory of the audience's mind. This repeated information is developed to become as a system of beliefs or ideologies within the overall strategy of emphasizing the speaker's good things and other bad ones. The debaters always repeat their first priority of Israeli security, military advance and strongest alliance with it because Israel is always described as a victim of Iranian nuclear threat hence they reiterates their commitment to curb Iran by harsh sanctions in favor of Israel.

In different topics, Romney keeps associating the world of Islam with 〝*extremism*〞 and 〝*terrorism,*〞 and describing the situation in the Middle East as 〝*rising tide of chaos*〞 many times in the debate. Our analysis also includes quantitative inquiry that reveals speaker's preference of repeating certain words and pronouns that add further to the rhetorical expression of foregrounding the negative aspects and characteristics of out-groups, while leaving implicit or backgrounding the biased role of the U.S. in the Middle East. Below are two typical examples:

11- **Obama:** *We ended the war in Iraq, refocused our attention on those who actually killed us on 9/11 (L: 70-71)… Because we ended the war in Iraq, we were able to refocus our attention on not only the terrorist threat, but also beginning a transition process in Afghanistan. (L: 488-592. We ended the war in Iraq, refocused our attention on Afghanistan. That was facilitated in part because we had ended the war in Iraq. (L: 1066-1068). We were able to pivot to the Asia-Pacific region after having ended the war in Iraq (L: 1311-1313).*

One of the ideological prevailing features of Obama's speech is rhetorically and syntactically sentential repetition to foreground positive self-representation and negative other-representation and background negative self-representation and positive other-representation. In (11), the speaker gives big praise to his administration when he repeatedly verbalizes 〝*we ending the war in Iraq*〞.

He deliberately uses the prepositional phrase ˈ in Iraqˈ instead of neutral description that war was 'on Iraq' to nourish the U.S. propaganda that the U.S-led invasion has saved Iraqi people and put an end to civil war 〝*in Iraq*〞 . He also denies the U.S. responsibility of ethicization and polarization of Iraqi cohesive society and the U.S. responsibility of thousands of Iraqi human actualities.

12- Romney: *we've watched this <u>tumult</u> <u>in the Middle East</u>, <u>this rising tide of chaos</u> occur (L: 116)… <u>this is a region in tumult</u> (L: 126)… and <u>the rising tide of tumult</u> and confusion (L: 162)… I see <u>the Middle East</u> with <u>a rising tide of violence, chaos, tumult</u> (L: 960-961)… <u>Is the Middle East</u> <u>in tumult</u>? Yes… (L: 1154).*

In (12) Romney relies metaphorically on repeating the negative choice of lexical expressions that provide awareness into his racist attitude towards the Middle East uprisings while leaving implicit or backgrounding the role of the West, or the U.S. in the Middle Eastern regime changing.

The repetitive association of the words " *tumult, violence, chaos"* with the metaphor of " *rising tide*" to enhance denigrating others by generalizing that violence is everywhere in the Middle East and uncontrolled similar to the rising tide of the tsunami that overwhelms and drowns everything stand on its way. The speaker issues implied warning that the Middle East is a very dangerous place for American tourism and economic investments.

The quantitative analysis in table (1) and figure (1) below, demonstrates that both candidates indicate to Iran in a negative way such as, nuclear threat or sponsor state of terrorism with the highest repetition (47 times for Obama vs. 38 for Romney). Meanwhile, they underemphasize North Korean genuine nuclear threat by euphemistically mentioning it only once by Romney. This confirms Van Dijk's (1995b: 157) findings that " the U.S. makes a smooth transition from the anti-communist ' Cold War' to the anti-Arab (and anti-Third World) ' Hot Wars' as they are fighting in the Middle East, Africa or Asia" as a substitute for Communism.

| Frequency of Occurrence in Obama's Speech | Frequency of Occurrence in Romney's Speech |

Nations	Referred by a Variety of Pronouns					Nations	Referred by a Variety of Pronouns				
Iran	*They*	*Them*	*Their*	Total	Ratio	*Iran*	*They*	*The m*	*Their*	Total	Ratio
19	19	2	7	47	55.3%	24	8	3	3	38	44.7%
China	*They*	*them*	*It*			*China*	*they*	*them*	*their*		
19	1	0	1	21	35%	12	20	5	2	39	65%
Israel	*Our*	*Ally*	*we*			*Israel*	*our*	*ally*	*us*		
16	1	2	2	21	52.5%	13	3	2	1	19	47.5%
Syria	*That*	*them*	*their*			*Syria*	*that*	*them*	*their*		
13	1	0	0	14	50%	13	0	0	1	14	50%
Libya	*There*	*them*	*their*			*Libya*	*there*	*them*	*their*		
7	1	0	0	8	66.6%	3	1	0	0	4	33.4%
Egypt	*They*	*them*	*their*			Egypt	*they*	*them*	*their*		
4	11	3	3	21	80.8%	5	0	0	0	5	19.2%
Pakistan	*They*	*them*	*It*			Pakistan	*they*	*them*	*their*		
4	0	0	0	4	13.3%	15	5	5	1	26	86.7%
Russia	*They*	*their*	*It*			*Russia*	*they*	*their*	*It*		
5	1	1	0	7	53.8%	5	0	0	1	6	46.2%
Iraq	*They*	*their*	*It*			*Iraq*	*they*	*their*	*It*		
15	0	0	0	15	83.3%	3	0	0	0	3	16.7%
N. Korea	*They*	*their*	*It*			N. Korea	*they*	*Thei r*	*It*		
0	0	0	0	0	0%	1	0	0	0	1	100%
Total					49.06 %						50.94 %

This can be proved in this debate by Obama's explicit statements when he criticizes Romney's suggested policies, " *... you know, and the Cold War's been over for 20 years. But Governor, when it comes to our foreign policy you seem to want to import the foreign policies of the 1980s (OBM, L: 141-143)*". It can be seen also that the U.S.

economic competition with China is highlighted by Romney's thirty-nine utterings of " *China*". This reveals that he takes great advantage of his own business background; a message aims at persuading voters that he would be a better steward of the economy.

Table 1. *The statistical distribution of nations and their pronominal referents mentioned in Obama and Romney's speeches*
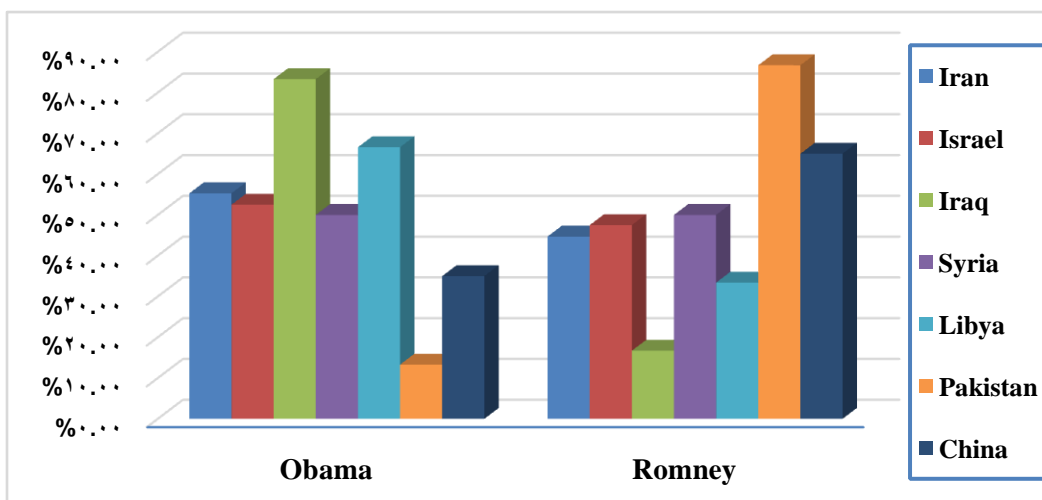

Figure 1. *Rates of frequency of occurrence of foreign nations and their pronominal referents mentioned by Obama and Romney in the debat*

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of this study, it can be concluded that:

1- The contextual features of the debate are set intentionally to serve ideologically positive self-representation and negative other-representation.

2- The analysis shows that the overall strategy of all these political ideologies appears to be within the framework of the ideological square. Its main purpose is to emphasize the racist polarization and differentiation between positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation as a means of controlling the

21

minds of others, hence, to maintain the misuse of power, manipulation, inequality, and exclusion.

3- It has been noticed that the West (the Occident) is associated with noble norms and ethical values, whereas the East (the Orient) and Islam are depicted as backward and threat to such basic principles of the civilized world.

4- The negative acts of the out-group may be invented or can further be highlighted and exaggerated by metaphor, hyperboles, concrete detailed illustrations, negative lexicalization etc.

5- The negative acts of in-group and positive acts of out-groups are hidden or mitigated by euphemisms, vagueness, implication, etc.

6- Romney focuses on the phenomenon of fundamentalism in some Arab and Muslim countries to derogate all the Middle East and World of Islam. Hence, Romney, the Republican candidate, is more overt in his racist expressions against the out-group.

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تحليل خطاب نقدي للمناظرات الرئاسية لانتخابات 2012 الأمريكية

الأستاذ الدكتور منذر منهل الدليمي

الطالب محمد سامي الاسدي

المستخلص

تعتمد هذه الدراسة على تبني تحليل خطاب نقدي للمناظرات الرئاسية لانتخابات 2012 الأمريكية". للسبر في أغوار ماهية الآليات الأيدولوجية المتبعة من قبل المرشحين في نظرتهم للآخر تبنى الباحث في أسلوبه البحثي منهجا منتقى من أبحاث العالم فان دايك (2006d). حيث تم انتخاب ست تقنيات ضمن الاستراتيجية العامة للمربع الأيديولوجي بما يخدم أهداف الدراسة ويؤسس لفرضياتها، وقد أظهرت الأدوات المنتمية إلى ثلاثة مستويات مختلفة من بنية الخطاب (المعنى، الجدال، البلاغة) معايير فاعلة في الكشف عن نظم العنصرية والخداع الأكثر خفاء.

بناءاً على نتائج تحليل هذه الدراسة نخلص إلى أن الخطاب النخبوي من كلا المرشحين قد ساهم في إعادة إنتاج الهيمنة، وكراهية الشرق، والخوف من الإسلام بعد تطبيقها على ثلاثة مستويات   من الخطاب من خلال التركيز على الاستقطاب الأيديولوجي بين العرض الإيجابي للذات، والتقديم السلبي للآخر كوسيلة من وسائل التحكم والتلاعب في عقل الجمهور.

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