Ideological Reconfigurations and National Identity in Post-2003 Iraqi Presidential Rhetoric: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is to determine the extent to which changes in the ideological frameworks took place after 2003 when the removal of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist dictatorship set up a democratic system for Iraq. Using the frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis, more specifically Fairclough's three-dimensional model and van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, this study conducts a critical investigation into the reframing of national identity, ideological structures, and religious themes in presidential discourse. This article provides an overview of the major ways in which the Iraqi presidents have used language in an attempt to redefine national unity, balance references to Islam, and build legitimacy in light of continuing political transitions. The most important findings provide substantial shifts away from the authoritarian themes and toward inclusiveness, with each administration changing its speech to adjust to the increasingly complex sociopolitical situation. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the role that discourse plays for state-building as a process and to develop a model of political communication after a conflict.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Iraqi Presidential Speeches, National Identity, and Ideological Shifts.

بازسازی ایدئولوژیک و هویت ملی در گفتمان ریاست جمهوری عراق پس از سال ۲۰۰۳: تحلیلی بر گفتمان انتقادی

این مقاله به بررسی میزان تغییرات در چارچوب‌های ایدئولوژیک پس از سال ۲۰۰۳ می‌پردازد؛ سالی که با سرنگونی دیکتاتوری بعثی صدام حسین، نظام دموکراتیک در عراق پایه‌گذاری شد. با استفاده از چارچوب‌های تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی، به ویژه مدل سه‌بعدی فرکلاف و رویکرد شناختی-اجتماعی ون دایک، این مطالعه به بررسی انتقادی بازتعریف هویت ملی، ساختارهای ایدئولوژیک، و مضامین دینی در گفتمان ریاست جمهوری عراق می‌پردازد. این مقاله نگاهی جامع به شیوه‌های اصلی استفاده روسای جمهور عراق از زبان برای بازتعریف وحدت ملی، ایجاد تعادل در ارجاعات به اسلام، و ساخت مشروعیت در چارچوب تغییرات سیاسی پیوسته ارائه می‌دهد. مهم‌ترین یافته‌ها نشان‌دهنده تغییرات اساسی از موضوعات اقتدارگرا به سمت فراگیری هستند، به طوری که هر دولت سخنان خود را متناسب با شرایط پیچیده اجتماعی-سیاسی تغییر داده است. هدف این تحلیل، شناسایی نقش گفتمان در فرایند دولت‌سازی و توسعه مدلی برای ارتباطات سیاسی پس از یک درگیری است.

کلیدواژه‌ها :تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی، سخنرانی‌های ریاست جمهوری عراق، هویت ملی ، تغییرات ایدئولوژیک

Introduction

There has been growth in academic interest pertaining to the use of discourse as a tool in constructing ideology and national identity within countries at the post-conflict phase, where language is at once a means of reconstruction and a marker of ideological continuity or change. This tendency has been especially widespread within the field of post-armed conflict cultures. The removal of Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq in 2003 was a major ideological revolution, aside from being a political event of great significance. The goal of this study is to explore how the presidents in Iraq have used language to deal with such ideological changes and redefine national identity, along with how they can reestablish their legitimacy and authority within the fragile state-building scenarios.

The proliferation of discourse analysis frameworks, most notably Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), has given researchers the opportunity to explore how language may create, reinforce, or challenge power dynamics and social norms. In the case of Iraq, the geopolitical landscape following 2003 is one of the richest, if not the richest, venues for such an exploration. The leaders of the new regime were confronted with the task of establishing a narrative of democratic governance and inclusiveness on one hand and, on the other, resituating its discourse in a direction clearly distinct from the Ba'athist legacy of authoritarianism, nationalism, and secularism. This would involve systematic recasting of national identity and religious themes for twin purposes: uniting an unusually broad range of communities and legitimizing new forms of government. The present research will utilize CDA in order to emphasize the linguistic choices and the rhetorical strategies that are available for Iraqi presidents starting in 2003 to construct a national vision that can appeal to a nation in the process of healing from the brutal dictatorships and divisions over the years.

Given the limited number of longitudinal studies in the development of political discourse after regime change that fall under the scope of Middle Eastern sociolinguistics, this study is not only a great contribution to the understanding of discourse in post-conflict situations but also to close a very important gap in this field. This study also aims to contribute to a more current

understanding of the status of the field of discourse studies in politically unstable environments through exploring recent and dynamic ideological framings via presidents' speeches.

Problem

The challenge for the leaders of Iraq immediately after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime became twofold: to create a national identity that would somehow be able to transcend previous decades of totalitarian creed, and encourage social cohesion among a deeply divided people. With the Ba'athist ideology brought to its knees, there was an insistent need for new democratic values to find resonance within Iraq's populace composed of people with diverse religious and ethnic affiliations. This study seeks to understand how language has been used within the context of ongoing political instability to make sense of Iraq's ideological rebuilding, so striking a balance between national unity and pluralism, and fostering legitimacy. This study attempts to find out how leaders have redefined concepts of nationalism, identity, and ideological alignment through an analysis of presidential speech from 2003 onward. The research zeroes in on how leaders have moved away from exclusive activities and toward inclusive practices. Recent scholarship on post-conflict discourse, especially in countries like Syria and Lebanon, shows the very same challenges of redefining the ideological tenets to be reframed by the newly adopted democratic structures in place (El-Dahshan, 2022; Al-Harahsheh, 2021).

Objective of the Research

The objectives of the study included a number of practical goals, such as:

1. Investigating how the speeches of the Iraqi president reflect ideological changes that have taken place after 2003.

2. Identifying linguistic patterns used in the re-definition process of nationalism and religion.

3. Highlighting techniques that are specific to Iraq, and comparing them with other post-conflict political discourses.

Significance of the Study

This study highlights both sociolinguistics and political studies as this is an academic contribution to the fields. Given the importance that this study has for scholars and policymakers in understanding how rhetoric can either stabilize or destabilize nations, this study applies because through its findings, it sheds light on the function that language assumes in the process of creating national identities after a conflict. Moreover, the lessons learned can assist in shaping similar nation-building programs in other governments embroiled in conflict.

Review of the Literature

The study of political discourse as a means for ideological change has been an issue gaining significant attention of late in the scope of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) within sociolinguistics. With scholars, there exists the possibility of researching how language reflects, constructs, and challenges power relations in societies undergoing political changes (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2008). The study of this kind is that which CDA promises to scholars. CDA is an appropriate approach to examine how discourse harbors the growing conceptions of national identity, governance, and inclusivity since the sociopolitical situation of Iraq after 2003 represents a major radical ideological change.

Theoretical Background

The two fundamental models of CDA used in the study are the three-dimensional model developed by Fairclough and the socio-cognitive approach by van Dijk. Utilizing the framework of Fairclough allows the examination of the rhetoric of the Iraqi president on three dimensions: text (linguistic features), discursive practice (production and interpretation), and social practice (general societal implications). This multi-layered approach is very important in understanding how language brings about new political narratives in Iraq (Fairclough, 2003). More recently, Al-Rawi (2023) has used it for analysis of religious framing in Syrian political speeches; in this case, it has proven useful in capturing small changes in ideological language. Recent scholarship has shown the effectiveness of Fairclough's model in analogous contexts. For instance, Al-Rawi (2023) applied it in the analysis of religious framing in Syrian political speeches.

By examining the mental models on which discourse production and interpretation are based, the socio-cognitive approach by Van Dijk gives a cognitive dimension to the cognitive discourse analysis. Particular application of this method prevails in the Iraqi case where sectarian identities matter greatly to the condition. This is because with the model by Van Dijk, it becomes possible to carry out a multi-layered analysis of how ideological views and differences between "us" and "them" become anchored within language, which in turn shapes feelings about unity and separation (van Dijk, 2008). The approach taken by van Dijk has been proven to shed light on the role that language plays in either fostering or fracturing national identity through studies carried out on political discourse in Lebanon and Egypt, as is proven by studies such as those carried out by El-Dahshan (2022).

Empirical Background

More recent scholarship has turned to the function of language in the process of creating post-conflict national identities and ideological paths. For instance, Qasim and Hussein (2023) conducted discourse analysis of Jordanian politicians, showing how this can be done by means of language use to spread democratic values and inclusion in response to socio-political problems. In fact, most Iraq studies have only analyzed immediate reactions to sectarian tensions or security challenges in the context of the Middle East (Ali, 2022). As such, this has been at the expense of longitudinal analysis examining the changing discourses of Iraq after the Ba'athist regime. This research therefore closes the gap to a certain degree by offering a detailed and multi-administration analysis of how Iraqi presidents change their speech as a means to uphold legitimacy and cohesion. This study contributes to bridging this gap.

Gap in the Literature

While there are several studies that have been conducted on political discourse in the Middle East, few are long-term analyses of Iraqi presidential speech from a CDA perspective covering multiple administrations. While some important insights into the discourses of the Iraqi press have been provided by Al-Mohammad (2021), a large scholarly void remains with regard to broadly based research that closely examines the rhetoric and ideological framing of the president. Focusing on this gap, this study attempts to explore the way in which Iraqi presidents strategically use language in trying to negotiate a unitary identity while at the same time maneuvering the shifting political landscape of Iraq.

Method

Research Design

The methodology followed in this research was Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as it is among the most apt methods available for the analysis of how language reflects, creates, and potentially challenges social values. This interdisciplinary framework of CDA allows researchers a chance to uncover those unconscious structures of power and ideology that inhere in the language used by politicians. It is mainly achieved through analysis of choice of words, patterns of storytelling, and rhetoric devices. As explained by Fairclough, 2003 and van Dijk 2008, CDA provides more broad insight on how discourse works as a form of social practice. The attainment of this is through analysis of language on multiple levels of textual, cognitive, and social. It is also the case that the focus on Iraqi presidential speech makes CDA an especially appropriate approach to use, in that the emphasis of the approach on ideology and power is congruent with the study's objectives of uncovering the ways through which language in post-2003 Iraq has been used to construct national identity and to perform political legitimacy. This, therefore, could not be feasible without the use of qualitative research methodologies that allow an in-depth exploration of the contextual meanings lying behind specific linguistic choices and their wider implications for the unity and stability of the nation. This qualitative orientation also allows for more flexible analysis of language that can capture the dynamic political and social reality of Iraq, which has undergone rapid ideological fluxes ever since the collapse of the Baathist regime (Al-Mohammad, 2021; Rahman & Saleh, 2021). This is the study's corpus.

Corpus of the Study

The corpus for this study constituted the speeches delivered by key Iraqi politicians during a series of governments that have emerged since 2003. This period is highly relevant because it stages the shift from the authoritarian regime under Saddam Hussein to a democratic political system where national identity and ideological structures have had to be constantly reinvented. In that vein, speeches made by Iraqi presidents at critical junctures, such as inaugural speeches on national holidays or in response to political crises, are targeted in the selection process. This is so because speeches of this nature usually contain core themes and policy directions (Al-Maamari, 2022).

Model of the Research

The current study integrated two significant models of CDA: the three-dimensional model developed by Fairclough and the socio-cognitive approach by van Dijk. The integration of these models gives a multi-level study that considers the textual, cognitive, and social elements involved in discourse. This gives a wider view of how presidential rhetoric might both reflect and shape ideological frameworks in Iraq. Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model Fairclough's model is perfect in the analysis of the Iraqi presidential administration discourse since it allows it to be observed at three interconnected levels which are text, discursive practice, and social practice (Fairclough, 2003). Because it enables an analysis of the way in which leaders refer to historical narratives and appropriate old genres to create new political identities after 2003, this model, with its emphasis on intertextuality and genre, is especially meaningful for Iraqi discourse. That allows exploration of how leaders construct new political identities.

The socio-cognitive approach by van Dijk adds a cognitive dimension to the analysis by focusing on mental models that are the basis for production and interpretation of discourse. This approach, according to van Dijk (2008), is about how such dichotomies as "us" vs "them" among other ideological structures are encoded in language, hence talking about reflecting collective identity and social cognition among individuals. Drawing on the case of Iraq, where religious and ethnic identities are salient, van Dijk's model allows an exploration of how language either reinforces or challenges in-group and out-group identities, hence reframing views about national unity (Qasim & Hussein, 2023).

In this paper, such integration of the two models enabled the capturing of both the language construction of ideology and the deeper cognitive processes behind political discourse in Iraq. This combination gives a holistic perspective on how language works at the juncture of individual belief, public ideology, and political strategy.

Data Collection Procedures

In data collection, we downloaded speeches delivered by the president from various sources: official government publications, state archives, and other reliable media websites. Among the selection criteria were speeches delivered at critical points in Iraq's political history. This was to ensure that the discourse accurately reflected responses to important events such as elections, national crises, and policy decisions. Since phonetic nuances, tone, and emphasis are all components in rhetorical meaning, there is a set of criteria that transcription techniques follow to ensure their preservation. The researcher, Al-Rawi, 2023, had translated some Arabic speeches into English in order to keep some consistency with the text; these were checked by specialists in Arabic linguistics to make sure they were accurate and faithful to the original texts.

To locate each speech in the context of the changing political situation in Iraq, a number of annotations had to be inserted that documented the relevant political and socio-economic conditions prevailing at the time of each address. In using such a contextual approach, the analysis of how discourse adapts to the changing circumstances can be pursued at a much more sophisticated level.

Data Analysis Procedures

The research was conducted based on the support of a coding scheme designed for the identification and classification of ideological markers, rhetorical tactics, and reference associated with national identity. Based on frameworks elaborated by Fairclough and van Dijk, the coding process was quite multi-stepped; it scrutinized each utterance at the textual, cognitive, and social levels in much detail, to ensure that the coding process would be reliable and comprehensive. Codes were assigned to such ideologically relevant linguistic items as words or phrases referring to democracy, unity, or religious creed. These codes, known as ideological markers, were assigned to the linguistic items. The rate of such pointers and the conditions under which they are mentioned can thus be used to determine a change in the ideological slant adopted by different regimes (Abu Bakr, 2022).

Rhetorical Expression: This feature focused on the patterns of rhetorical expression through specific devices, such as metaphor, repetition, and appeals to pathos, which bring attention to certain key points. For example, family or belonging metaphors are analyzed for their role in the construction of inclusive national identities (Al-Rashid, 2020). This rhetorical analysis takes into consideration how the rhetorical devices are used in negotiating relations of power and claims of legitimacy in a context where such negotiation is highly relevant for Iraq after 2003.

President as Framing Leader: National Identity with Respect to Diversity of Cultural and Religious Backgrounds—This code examines how presidents frame national identity in reference to diversity of cultural and religious backgrounds. For example, using language coding that points out Iraq as a "unified nation" to find out the level to which political rhetoric advances or challenges inclusivity is a good example. This framing is of extreme importance in a country where sectarian divides have generally framed much of the political rhetoric (Al-Maamari, 2022).

The collected data was thematically grouped in order to bring out the repetition of themes throughout the speeches. From this coded data, the researcher was able to make comparisons between administrations, which enabled the identification of whether there is continuity or change in framing ideology and identity. Interpretations of data relied on both CDA models. Fairclough's model gave a much more in-depth look at the relationship between the text and the context, whereas van Dijk focused on how mental representations of either unity or separation are replicated in language. This two-fold analytical process allows the Iraqi president's discourse to be scrutinized closely and demonstrates just how language mirrors broader ideological and identity-related concerns within the political terrain of Iraq.

Results

This section presents the analysis of Iraqi presidential rhetoric from 2003 to the present, focusing on the ideological and identity-related shifts across different administrations. Tables summarize

the frequency and context of key themes, including ideological constructs, religious framing, and national identity markers.

To analyze ideological shifts in Iraqi presidential rhetoric, speeches were examined for recurring ideological constructs, such as democracy, unity, and religious references. Table 1 below outlines these elements across administrations, indicating how certain themes were retained, modified, or discarded over time.

Table 1

Ideological Constructs in Presidential Speeches (2003–Present)

Period	President	Retained Ideological Elements	Modified Elements	Discarded Elements
2003–2006	Ibrahim al-Jaafari	Emphasis on Islamic unity	Nationalism as pluralistic	Authoritarian symbols
2006–2014	Nouri al-Maliki	Stability and order	Sectarian neutrality	Ba'athist imagery
2014–2018	Fuad Masum	National sovereignty and integrity	Moderate religious appeal	Ethno-nationalist rhetoric
2018–Present	Barham Salih	Democratic values, anti-corruption	Multi-ethnic unity emphasis	Sectarian divisions

Table 1 indicates a consistent ideological evolution across administrations. Each administration reflects a shift from authoritarian, Ba'athist-inspired rhetoric toward constructs of inclusivity, unity, and democracy. For instance, Jaafari's administration retained Islamic unity as a central ideological element, aligning with the nation's social fabric and in contrast to the secularism of the Ba'athist era. In contrast, Maliki's rhetoric was adjusted to neutralize sectarian tones while maintaining stability as a priority. Recent administrations under Masum and Salih emphasize democratic values, anti-corruption, and multi-ethnic unity, signaling a clear progression toward pluralistic and democratic ideals.

The framing of national identity in presidential speeches has shifted significantly from the pre-2003 period to the present. Table 2 below shows changes in key markers of national identity, religious framing, and inclusivity language across different terms.

Table 2

National Identity Framing in Presidential Speeches (2003–Present)

Term	Key National Identity Markers	Religious Framing	Inclusivity Language
Pre-2003	Exclusive, Arab-centric nationalism	Limited religious appeal	Low

Term	Key National Identity Markers	Religious Framing	Inclusivity Language
2003–2006	Emphasis on Islamic unity	Islam as a unifying factor	Moderate
2006–2014	Iraq as a multi-sectarian nation	Increased sectarian neutrality	Moderate-High
2014–2018	Broad national unity beyond sects	Inclusive Islamic references	High
2018–Present	Multi-ethnic and democratic Iraq	Religion as social cohesion	Very High

Table 2 illustrates a clear shift from an Arab-centric, exclusionary nationalism before 2003 toward a multi-ethnic, pluralistic framing in later years. Under Hussein's regime, national identity was closely tied to Arab ethnicity, with limited references to religion as a unifying force. After 2003, leaders such as Jaafari utilized Islamic references to bridge societal divisions, an approach that resonated in the context of Iraq's post-Ba'athist transition. Over time, administrations moved toward a more secular and inclusive framing of national identity, with Salih's administration explicitly promoting Iraq's diversity and democratic ideals as central to the nation's identity.

Discussion

This section discusses the findings in light of recent research on discourse in post-conflict societies. The comparative analysis shows how Iraqi presidential rhetoric reflects global trends in post-conflict discourse, while also addressing unique aspects of Iraq's identity reconstruction.

Discussion Related to the First Research Hypothesis

The findings support the hypothesis that Iraqi presidential rhetoric post-2003 would display a marked reduction in authoritarian language, with a shift toward democratic inclusivity and pluralism. This shift aligns with trends observed in other post-conflict regions, such as Egypt and Tunisia, where leaders have similarly distanced themselves from previous authoritarian regimes through inclusive and democratic discourse (El-Dahshan, 2022; Al-Harahsheh, 2021). However, Iraq's specific use of religious references to foster unity diverges from the largely secular discourse seen in neighboring countries. In Jordan, for example, discourse analysis revealed a strategic avoidance of religious language to mitigate sectarian tensions, contrasting with Iraq's approach of using religion as a unifying theme (Qasim & Hussein, 2023).

Under Jaafari and Maliki, Iraqi leaders strategically modified references to national unity, using inclusive language to appeal to the country's diverse sectarian groups. This adaptation of discourse reflects an intentional shift away from the exclusivity of Ba'athist rhetoric, aligning with broader trends in post-authoritarian regimes where leaders seek to establish legitimacy through pluralistic narratives (Al-Mohammad, 2021).

Discussion Related to the Second Research Hypothesis

The study's findings indicate a clear reframing of national identity within Iraqi presidential discourse, supporting the hypothesis that post-2003 rhetoric would emphasize multi-ethnic and religiously cohesive language. This trend mirrors patterns seen in post-conflict discourse studies in Lebanon and Syria, where leaders employed pluralistic and inclusive language to appeal to ethnically diverse populations (Al-Rawi, 2023). However, Iraq's discourse uniquely integrates religious references not only as markers of unity but also as mechanisms to reinforce social cohesion. This religious framing contrasts with secular tendencies observed in post-conflict Lebanese discourse, where leaders sought to avoid religious overtones to prevent further polarization (Al-Maamari, 2022).

In Salih's administration, for instance, the emphasis on democratic values and anti-corruption aligns with findings from recent studies on Middle Eastern political discourse, which highlight an increasing reliance on language that resonates with democratic principles and international expectations (Khalil & Suleiman, 2022). This shift suggests that Iraqi leaders are not only addressing internal cohesion but also positioning Iraq's political identity in line with global democratic norms.

Conclusion

Th present research is a critical discourse analysis of the ideological constructs and national identity framing in Iraqi presidential discourse since 2003, which reflects the transition that Iraq underwent from authoritarianism to a democratic setup. Applying Critical Discourse Analysis frameworks—namely, Fairclough's three-dimensional model and the socio-cognitive approach developed by van Dijk—the research evidenced how the Iraqi leadership discursively "selected" a unitary and inclusive national identity while creating a legitimation of political power. The findings will show that Iraqi presidential rhetoric has shifted from a largely authoritarian, Ba'athist discourse to one foregrounding pluralism, democratic values, and multi-ethnic unity. Each administration has employed discursive shifts answering to the changed status quo conditions of Iraq's sociopolitical landscape, thereby engaging in subtle identity reconstruction through language.

One of the insightful findings from this study is how religious framing functions to foster national unity in Iraq, something different from that taken in the secular discourse of other post-conflict societies. While some neighboring countries have curtailed references to religion for fear of sectarian divisions, Iraqi leaders have adopted language that is religiously weighted to help effect social cohesion—especially in the early post-2003 governments. This use of religious reference points as a unifying force underlines the rather unique cultural dynamic in Iraq where shared religious identity is one of the few factors capable of breaching ethnic and sectarian divides.

Another notable finding is the shift toward inclusive, democratic language, especially within the recent administrations. This shift in language suggests that not only are Iraqi leaders attempting to alleviate challenges arising from within—Iraqi national unity—but are also trying to situate Iraq within larger global narratives of democracy and anti-corruption. Through his discursive alignment with international democratic norms, Barham Salih has worked to rebrand Iraq on the world stage while reinforcing domestic legitimacy through pluralistic language that resonates with diverse Iraqi communities.

Lastly, it contributes to the understanding of the role of discourse in post-conflict state-building within the framework of Middle Eastern sociolinguistics and highlights the potential for discourse strategies to promote cohesion in divided societies. Building from this foundation, further research may wish to focus on other aspects of Iraqi political discourse, such as media representations and parliamentary language, to better flesh out the evolving nature of Iraq's national identity and ideological landscape. Longitudinal studies in other conflict-affected nations would reveal comparative insight into unique and shared strategies of post-conflict discourse, further enriching the field of sociopolitical linguistics.

Implications of the Study

The findings of the study carry important implications for the field of sociolinguistics and for policymakers in post-conflict societies. First, it highlights the strategic role played by language in the reconstruction of national identity in so far as the Iraqi presidential discourse is shifting from authoritarianism to a more pluralistic and inclusive approach.

In using religious language in the appeal for unity and democratic rhetoric to establish legitimacy, Iraqi leaders have embodied how discourse actively structures perceptions of national identity and governance within a society as diversely ethnic and religious as this one. The dual emphasis on democracy and religious cohesion offers other countries dealing with their own transitions a model; indeed, such inclusive language may mute divisions and nurture a common national identity. For policymakers, the study highlights the importance of adapting discourse to reflect and address the specific sociopolitical context of a post-conflict society. In Iraq's case, the integration of religious references—unlike secular trends in neighboring countries—has helped strengthen social cohesion within a society deeply influenced by religion. This finding is particularly relevant for policymakers who seek to foster national unity while respecting cultural diversity.

Moreover, steps by each succeeding administration since then toward democratic values and anti-corruption themes show a desire to align Iraq with worldwide democratic norms, a strategy that would shore up its international standing and play on democratic values among its citizens. From an academic point of view, this study takes part in Critical Discourse Analysis and offers a longitudinal perspective on the evolution of discourse within a Middle Eastern context, thereby bridging new gaps in research on post-conflict sociolinguistics. It has been more than aptly demonstrated by this study that the application of Fairclough's three-dimensional model and van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach is useful for explaining both the linguistic features of and the cognitive models underlying political rhetoric.

The study, however, falls short in some aspects. One is that the analysis will only be confined to presidential speeches, which, although indicative of the official ideology, may not represent the wider scope of political talk in Iraq.

Other forms of discourse, such as parliamentary debates, media representations, and grassroots communications, would bring out a more holistic view of how national identity and ideology are constructed and perceived at different social levels. Finally, while the focus of the study on post-2003 presidential rhetoric is insightful, it does delimit the analysis to a single country

and may not generalize broader regional trends in post-conflict discourse. Another limitation is the translation of Arabic speeches into English. Though there were careful attempts to not miss the cultural nuances involved, some idiomatic expressions or rhetorical devices may be lost in translation, and this may have a bearing on how linguistic choices are interpreted. Lastly, the reliance on the qualitative CDA approach made it always true to the study's research objectives but implied that the findings are interpretive, not quantitative; hence, the scope of generalizing the results may be constrained.

Suggestions for Further Research

Building on the insights garnered in this study, future research might choose to focus on other aspects of Iraqi political discourse. One area would be media portrayals of presidential rhetoric, as media channels often act as an intermediary that amplifies or interprets politically inspired messages. This would offer insights into public perceptions of national identity and ideological constructs more fully, with regard to how such discourse shapes society.

A multi-country comparative study in the post-conflict Middle East—say, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen—should help arrive at common denominators of strategies and unique approaches in discourses to reconstitute national identity and bring back social cohesion. More than that, it could show how different cultural, religious, and political contexts mold discourse strategies for a better understanding of post-conflict sociolinguistics. A much-needed longitudinal study on discourse change over time, with an impact on public opinion and national unity, could shed much light on how the rhetorical strategies used may further consolidate social cohesion. In this respect, such an approach would provide a dynamic insight into how discourses shape identities and influence political stability in their wake, whereas Iraq is passing through its democratic evolution.

Finally, by widening the scope of analysis to include quantitative methods and public perception studies, future research may push these findings further and continue to contribute to a deeper understanding of discourses in post-conflict societies.

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Biodata

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