

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The literature review will be divided into three parts. The first part is synopsis of the movie *Black Hawk Down*. The second part is theoretical framework which will be employed to analyze this research: political discourse analysis theory. The third part is previous studies that related to this study.

2.1 Synopsis

Black Hawk Down is a movie that is based on actual events. The U.S. soldiers were sent to Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, in October 1993 to remove the most powerful Somali warlord, Mohamed Farrah Aidid. Under his dictatorial and corrupt administration, international food shipments sent to help poor people were seized and many Somali citizens suffered from starvation. The U.S. Marines were sent to disentangle the situation but after their withdrawal in April 1993, Aidid declared war on the remaining United Nations (U.N.) peacekeepers. Moreover, his militia ambushed and slaughtered Pakistani soldiers and began targeting American citizens. Therefore, American soldier units – Delta Force, Army Rangers and the 160th SOAR were sent there to assist the U.N. in peacekeeping operations in this country.

The movie starts at the Mogadishu Airport, the U.S. army headquarters before the mission is launched to capture Aidid. The American soldiers had different opinions about the operations. Many of them have underestimated the abilities of Aidid's militia, "I wouldn't worry about that. Generally speaking, Somalis can't shoot for shit. Don't

worry. Just watch out for the Sammys (Somali people) throwing the rocks, and you'll be fine. Might even be fun." Furthermore, they chose to use a Somali spy to identify Aidid and his force's meeting location and this would be to their advantage, but they were somehow outwitted by the underground communication and the Somali guerrilla forces and the mission was unsuccessful. Instead of capturing Aidid and his men and then heading back to the base camp, they had to help the surviving soldiers of the downed Black Hawk helicopters at crash sites within the city. They lost many helicopters and soldiers' lives during the mission because they did not expect such fierce retaliation by the Somalis and their heavy weapons. The 30-minute-plan to seize the dictator became a 15-hour-operation. Worse, Aidid's right-hand man captured one surviving American pilot at the crash site. He wanted to negotiate for the hostages the American soldiers had captured, but the pilot told him that he was not in charge. Then Aidid's man struck back "You have the power to kill, but not negotiate. Do you really think if you get General Aidid, we will simply put down our weapons and adopt American democracy? We know this: without victory, there can be no peace." Consequently, the American soldiers left that town the following morning with the help of the U.N. and the 10th Mountain (Pakistani) troops. At the end, 1,000 Somalis died but only 19 American soldiers died in the operation. The American pilot who was captured by Aidid's man was released after 11 days in captivity and two weeks after that, the Delta Force and the Rangers were withdrawn from Somalia. In July 1996, Mohamed Farrah Aidid engaged in a battle with his former allies and was wounded by gunfire during the fight. He suffered a fatal heart attack, either during or after the surgery to treat his wounds, and passed away on August 1, 1996.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

This part describes Tuen A. Van Dijk's and Paul Chilton's theories of political discourse analysis.

Political Discourse Analysis Theory

Van Dijk states in "What is Political Discourse Analysis?" that political discourse analysis (PDA) is one of the critical discourse analysis (CDA) approaches that focuses on the study of political power, power abuse or domination through the text and talk of its actors or authors which are politicians or political institutions, for example, presidents, prime ministers, members of parliament, political parties and members of government at the local, national and international levels. Even though the actors, or in this sense, the politicians and political institutions, are the protagonists of political activities, the relevant participants in political communicative events such as the citizens, the public and masses are also crucial actors in the political process (12-13). Thus, engaging in political action through text and talk is beyond merely producing and perceiving the political context by the political actors. Moreover, he claims that political discourse is a form of political action and political process. Even though most of the actions and interactions have involved dialogues or spoken interactions, they have also taken place in the form of written texts as well (20).

Besides, Van Dijk has raised the importance of studying context in political discourse since many activities of political discourse, for instance, parliamentary debates, propaganda campaigns, slogans, peace negotiations and international treaties could not only be defined in textual terms, but most of them need to be defined contextually, "Political discourse is not primarily defined by topic or style, but rather by

who speaks to whom, as what, on what occasion and with what goals” (225). However, the discourse structures usually follow the global ideological or political perspective of positive self-presentation by the politicians, authors and actors while negatively presenting the others or the recipients (228).

Furthermore, Paul Chilton and Christina Schäffner as cited in “Translation of Political Speeches,” define the concept of political discourse as the use of language to describe the connection of power and society. Based on Aristotle’s and Plato’s concepts, they claim that human beings are social animals. They form alliances or social groups of shared perceptions of values and socialize among themselves to achieve their desired goals, to maintain peace as well as to be united in war against their enemies. In this sense it is apparent that human nature is innately political; “genres specify patterns by which text and talk is sequentially structured, who speaks to whom, when, about what and in what manner” (18).

Language and Politics

Chilton in *Analyzing Political Discourse* asserts that language and politics are linked closely at the fundamental level, so political activity does not exist without the use of language (6). Due to the fact that different actors have different capabilities of phrasing and wording interpretation, political parties and government agencies employ various language techniques to serve their purposes. Thus, small linguistic differences could become significant and could be exploited in political ways (9). He specifies the following three strategies of language use in politics (45-46).

1) Coercion This strategy is dependent up on the authors’ language ability and power. Political actors often act overpowering through language in order to control the others’ use of language, especially via the public media through which political communication

takes place. The government, for example, has announced that every Thai person over the age of 18 years old must vote in elections, otherwise they will be deprived of the political right for 5 years. In this example, it is evident that the Thai government is exerting its political power on the citizens ascribing voting as the citizen's duty and the failure to do so will result in the deprivation of certain political rights.

2) Legitimization and Delegitimization The use of the legitimization technique puts an emphasis on positive self-presentation, whereas delegitimization uses the ideas of “the others.” The author claims his political right legitimizes himself as the rightful and democratic party, while presenting foreigners, enemies or institutional oppositions negatively, as a dictator. The following example illustrates well how the concept is employed, we as a democratic country will assist the United Nations in putting down a riot in countries run by dictators.

3) Representation and misrepresentation These two strategies aim to prevent people from giving and/or receiving information. Representation refers to the language used in text and talk giving the meaning to groups and their social practices, while the misrepresentation technique usually twists the meanings of words. This is usually done through euphemisms since projected implicit meanings can avoid harsh feelings and responses from the message receivers, but the intended message or responding actions may still be achieved. In consequence, vague or unclear statements become one of the main characteristics of politics. For example, President Nixon's press secretary coined the phrase “biosphere overload” for overpopulation.

Chilton has suggested even more about political language in that the real meanings of the statements are not always expressed in explicit form, but meanings are constructed by a human's basic language use and his or her background knowledge.

Besides, speakers are significant as the users of political language because they have choices in wording and phrasing that frame the listeners or the intended recipients in order for them to experience purposeful utterances. The following strategies are important components of political language (61-64).

1) Entailment This involves the relations between sentences. Entailment relation implies that if the first sentence is true, then the sentence which follows is also true. Conversely, if the first sentence is false, then the subsequent sentence is necessarily false. This type of entailment is generated by lexical and syntax structures. The prime minister declared the national emergency entails the country is in crisis, for example.

2) Presupposition This is similar to entailment but the message is not as explicit. The audience has to use their social knowledge to understand what is happening because the speaker will use presuppositions to avoid risky situations or rejection. For instance, the Crown Prince of Japan is visiting today presupposes there exists a Crown Prince of Japan. But the sentence, the Crown Prince of Japan is not visiting today also presupposes there exists a Crown Prince of Japan.

3) Presumptions This combines the meaning of claim and implication. The audience would understand the situation in terms of coherence. Linguistic forms of utterances will be coherent if some presumptions belong to the speaker and are accepted by the hearer. The example provided hereafter is generally used in most common law jurisdiction, “a person who has been absent for seven years without explanation and gone to parts unknown is presumed dead. In this case a person absent from the public arena for such a period of time and with no known knowledge of his or her whereabouts is, by law, considered deceased.”

To Van Dijk, lexicon, syntax, rhetoric, expression structures and speech acts and interaction are language characteristics usually employed for political purposes.

(33-37)

1) Lexicon Most studies of political language look at the special words being used in politics. Words used to describe the opponents or enemies are negative terms, such as “terrorists” instead of “freedom fighters.” On the other hand, euphemisms tend to be used to describe the actors’ crude actions or habits, for instance, bombing missions in other countries such as Iraq and Pakistan are referred to as “Peace-making”.

2) Syntax This is more subtle than lexicon because it takes into consideration sentence structures, for example, word order, active and passive constructions and pronouns. The best known examples of syntax are the one-sided specific pronouns like us (the political actor) vs. them (the others or the recipients) and the plural pronoun we, as in “we American citizens” and “we Democrats.” The “we” excludes the other people, marginalizing them, making them objects of rightful discrimination and exploitation.

3) Rhetoric Rhetoric is the art of persuading people, particularly for political purposes. Political rhetoric strategies used to draw attention include repetition operations, parallelisms, irrelevancy, euphemisms and metaphors such as ‘the axis of evil’ and ‘weapons of mass destruction’. The ‘axis of evil’ is a term used to specify the countries which are the common enemies of the United States of America, these countries are Iran, Iraq and North Korea (“Axis of Evil” def.9), while weapons of mass destruction or WMDs are weapons that can harm a large number of humans, and/or cause a great amount of damage to human environments, nature and the biosphere, such as nuclear weapons and missiles (“WMD” def.4).

4) Expression structures Expression structures of sounds and graphics function indirectly or subtly. The preferred meanings are emphasized through shouting, rising intonations or by using vivid color and large font headlines.

5) Speech acts and interaction Speech acts do not only occur in daily life. They are also the consequences of and are performed by speakers who are engaged in political activities, such as debating, running campaigns, accusing other political parties and proposing bills (Mbisike 63). Furthermore, speech acts according to the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) also “include(s) real-life interactions and requires not only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given culture” (line.5). Speech acts might contain just one word such as “Thanks!” or phrases like “Say no to corruption.” Similarly, interaction, according to Cambridge Online Dictionary, is defined as “when two or more people or things communicate with or react to each other.” Therefore, speech acts and interaction are closely bounded language characteristics. When speech acts occur, they normally involve interaction. For example,

A little boy sneezes.

Man: “God bless.”

Boy: “Thank you.”

2.3 Previous Studies

Many researchers have been studying various forms of media such as movies, films and TV shows based on political discourse analysis to analyze various language techniques used in the media to see how language is used to achieve a desired political objective. In “Non-Literal Language in Political Discourse,” Elena Mihas investigated the narratives of contemporary American society after the 9/11 event, focusing

particularly on the political language of the presidential campaign of 2004. The political discourse analysis, euphemisms and metaphors were employed to analyze and describe American political language used by the authorities and both the Conservative and Liberal parties. It was found that after the crucial events, for instance, the Vietnam War and 9/11, euphemisms, or in other terms “doublespeak”, was frequently used to lessen the level of harshness perceived in politics and the media. Many new euphemistic words and expressions had been coined. For example, “war on terror” became a euphemism for the war on militant Islam. The invasion of Iraq was called “a liberation” and both candidates of the presidential campaign avoided using the “L-word” (lie) but rather “misspoke” or “stretched the truth.” In addition, as for metaphors, Mihas pointed out that George W. Bush’s team was good at using metaphor to attack Senator Kerry. They labeled Mr. Kerry a “flip-flopper,” who “blows with the wind” like a “weathervane.” America is a country whose political discourse is full of metaphors and euphemisms. Thus, metaphorical and euphemistic terms play important roles in the narratives of political actors and have an effect on the masses.

Apart from that, there is a study involving the political discourse analysis on the British children’s TV shows by Rubén Valdés Miyares. His article in *Odissea Journal* entitled, “Pulling the Strings: Political Discourse in some British TV Shows for Children” aimed to analyze two episodes from *The Wind in the Willows* and *Teletubbies* which were “Paperchase” and “Big Hug!”. He applied Rob Pope’s the teaching model of discourse analysis in observing children’s opinions and reactions on the power relations in both the text and context of the shows. It was found that the “Paperchase” episode was full of English conservative morals or constants of English characteristics – the value of being a gentleman, competitiveness, youthfulness and fair play. He

commented that this episode aroused the nostalgic feelings of the adults. Children did not grasp the hidden notions and thus, did not seem to enjoy the episode (215). Whereas, in *Teletubbies' Big Hug!*, the general activities in children's lives which were shown on the screens on the Teletubbies' bellies showed children doing exciting activities or watching rabbits had influenced children in the studio to play and react eagerly to the rhythmic spell of the funny lady who assumed herself to be the Queen of England in this particular episode. The spell of the funny lady in this episode sounded like a hypnotic rhythm in the ritual repetition of the spell praying for the crown to come down. Miyares also asserted that the repetition of the spell and frequent close-up of a West Indian boy in the studio conveyed a hidden message because it contained overtones of social class and race. Thus, child play became political practice, rather than just a living experience (217).

Moreover, Fatih Bayram examined the realization of power in the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's language use and language's ideological components during a debate at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2009 through linguistic analysis based on critical discourse analysis (CDA) and political discourse analysis (PDA). After Erdogan walked out on a debate with Israel's president, Shimon Peres, he became a popular political leader because instead of discussing the countries' economy, Erdogan accused Peres of killing children on the beach. It was found that there were three points to be discussed regarding the Turkish Prime Minister's political discourse and people's attitudes toward his language. The first point is the attitude and identity construction through Erdogan's use of language. There are two different terms for "you" in Turkish, "sen" is used in the informal situation and "siz" is in the formal one. When he referred to Israel's president, he always used "sen"

in his speech to indicate his anger and to note the equal political status he was assigning to Peres, but when he addressed Peres as the representative of the nation, he used “siz” to connote the comradeship of belonging to the same nation. The second point is that he quoted the Old Testament in his speech, which implied that he was trying to criticize the Israeli government’s military actions as one that violated the religion and so they should be blamed. The last point is how Turkish people perceived Erdogan’s reaction within the debate. It was found out that 80% of Turks on Internet polls supported their Prime Minister’s actions (33-35).

There have also been studies, which have involved the study of language in films. Most of them have focused on how the language use applied by the filmmakers, affects the viewers’ perceptions. To start with Mohammad Reza Amirian, Ali Rahimi and Gholamreza Sami in their research entitled “A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Images of Iranians in Western Movies: The Case of *Iranium*” investigated the misrepresentations of Iranian images in the Western documentary movie *Iranium* (2-4). Although they used critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a framework, they mainly focused on the movie’s language in which the Iranians were stereotyped, especially exploring how the film-makers had represented “us” and “them” to the world. Euphemisms and derogation were applied through biased and exploitative language in this movie as they were used to depict the actors or the speakers as being superior than the Iranians. The two techniques helped to create “negative other-representation” and “positive self-representation.” Thus, the Western movies make use of language as a weapon to distort the Iranians’ history, culture and ideologies.

Similarly, Urther Rwafa investigated the language used in representing the genocide through certain Rwandan films – *A Good Man in Hell* (2002), *Hotel Rwanda*

(2004), *Keepers of Memory* (2004) and *Sometimes in April* (2005) in his paper, “Contesting Cultural and Political Stereotypes in the Language of Genocide in Selected Rwandan Films.” He aimed to study how the specific characteristics of language reflected the political and cultural stereotypes in the Rwandan films, the reasons international films encouraged those stereotypical images in the movies and how forms and implications of political discriminations encouraged and promoted the genocide in Rwanda (3). Thus, various language techniques and post-colonial theories were used to examine those selected films. It was found that all the four films shared a similar plot, types of language characteristics used and had predictable endings. The stereotypical images of the Tutsi ethnicity were depicted as the victims and the political saviors of Rwandan, while the ethnic Hutu people were portrayed as the criminals in the films (132).

In *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Brian L. Ott employed a multi-modal approach of cinematic discourse to interpret the cinematic rhetoric, politics in mass art and the characters and their roles which signified political references in the film, focusing on the narrative and language in the movie *V for Vendetta*. After analyzing texts and contexts in the film, it was found that the film provoked strong political responses from the audience, as the protagonist was portrayed as a charismatic freedom fighter who attempted to arouse a revolution against the brutal fascist regime. Besides, the female protagonist’s characteristics reflected a working class persona caught up in the revolution mission (48).

To sum up, the studies previously presented have employed political discourse analysis and language as a means to study social values, politicians’ values and the hidden agendas in the chosen movies. However, studies of political discourse,

particularly regarding the political language in the movie *Black Hawk Down*, have not been extensively analyzed. This may stem from the fact that the movie was released in 2001. Therefore, this research aims to investigate how the political language and activities in the film reflects the political exploitation of the others, the Somalis, as well as to examine the American values of superiority. The study will be based on Tuen A. Van Dijk's and Paul Chilton's political discourse analysis (PDA).



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