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**Critical Discourse Analysis of Two Political Speeches
in Light of Bakhtin's Dialogism**

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To
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List of Abbreviations

CDA..... Critical Discourse Analysis

Para..... Paragraph

Abstract

Bakhtin's dialogism is a theory that respects differences and appreciates dialogue. Different fields of human sciences have increasingly been benefiting from dialogism; however, few studies have applied it in the realm of Critical Discourse Analysis. The present study presupposes one important similarity between dialogism and Critical Discourse Analysis is respecting human rights by advocating an equal opportunity for different voices. Accordingly, this study analyzes Malcolm X's "The Ballot or the Bullet" and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream", as two important political speeches in the history, using two master concepts of dialogism, *self* and *other*, and other selected ones, namely *utterance*, *heteroglossia*, *polyphony*, *centripetal and centrifugal forces*, *chronotope*, and *architectonics*. The results show that the selected political speeches, conceptualized as two utterances, are the locus of struggle between centrifugal and centripetal forces through which self-other architectonics in "The Ballot or the Bullet" appears primarily in the form of binary opposition and relative domination of one voice; in contrast, self-other architectonics in "I Have a Dream" shows various examples of polyphony and reconciliation of voices. Consequently, they are introduced as monologic and dialogic utterances, respectively. Moreover, the textual analysis reveals different results for "The Ballot or the Bullet" and "I Have a Dream" such as explicit or implicit addressing of opposite pole, the use of connotatively negative or positive words, and presence or absence of African-American Vernacular Accent. Recognition of dialogic and monologic utterances and their extensive textual analysis can provide deeper understanding in critical analyzing of texts and generalizable textual results.

Keywords: Dialogism, Critical Discourse Analysis, "The Ballot or the Bullet", "I Have a Dream"

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The present chapter aims to provide a rather comprehensive and lengthy juxtaposing of Bakhtin's key concepts and their application in the area of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA henceforth) to establish the background to this research, and to introduce the objectives, significance, and organization of the current study.

1.2. Background to the Study

The subject of dialogue was found worth contemplating by Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975), generally in the great event of existence and particularly in the realm of human language. Bakhtin, a Russian man of thought in the 20th century, lived in the epoch of Stalinian dictatorship that was ruling Russian society at the expense of crossing out others or others' *voices*. The utter centralization of power, or in Bakhtin's words, the given *centripetal* and *monologic* forces, was not compatible with the scientific spirit of that era valorizing relativism and decentralization of power, and men of thought could not tolerate it as an acceptable human society. In the given context, Bakhtin contributed to various areas of thought, which made it quite impossible to specify him as a scholar in a specific field (Holquist, 1990), but the present study refers to his various areas of activity and thought as Bakhtin's "philosophy".

It cannot be far from reality if one says that the monument of Bakhtin's philosophy stands on the base of dialogue though his approach is different from the conventional ones that conceptualize dialogue as a linguistic exchange between two or more people. Bakhtin's approach reflects a kind of epistemological orientation and sees the whole event of existence as a dialogue, through which all beings are in constant interconnected dialogue with their past, present, future and *others*. All these relations make one whole in which every creature is "the *unique and unified event of being* [Italics added]" (Ibid, p. 24) with a unique and unified place.

The given place of each being is *unique*, since through the whole history of existence it is exclusively bestowed to them and cannot be occupied by anybody or anything else within the time and space of existence. The given place of each being is *unified* because each unique being is the outcome of unlimited various dialogues, far or near, among other beings. To make it more clear by an example, one can take the present thesis as an instance of dialogue between the Creator, parents, teachers, other scholars, friends, relatives, I, the nature, and other people; today this thesis exists because God has created my parents, teachers, me and other people in a specific historical, cultural, and natural context by an interconnected relation between us, which symbolizes a dialogue between God and the creatures. Consequently, this thesis is the result of a dialogue among everybody or everything that has a role in my and my thesis's existence. So it does not seem the everlasting dialogue and unity of each unique being with others can be deniable.

Bakhtin's philosophy has been called *dialogism* by the scholars due to the unique status of dialogue in his thought. Dialogism is realized by specific relation of his two master concepts, *self* and *other*. As stated above, every self occupies a unique and unified place in the event of existence, since it is exclusively bestowed to him and is inevitably the result of interconnection between self and others. Accordingly, not only each self is in constant dialogue with others, but also based on the "law of placement" (Ibid, p.20), he can have a partial point of view by the help of which the person perceives an event. In order to have a rather comprehensive perception, it is necessary to relate self's perspective to others' relative points of view. In Bakhtin's thought, self without other is unimaginable, by which he criticizes the centralization of one self and one point of view.

Dialogism encompassing self and other shines throughout Bakhtin's different areas of thought, and language is not an exception. Any study about language based on Bakhtin's language philosophy demands a prerequisite familiarity with the concept of *utterance* from his point of view. Bakhtin values a communicative perspective to language and introduces utterance as the unit of language analysis. He goes beyond the idea of language as a system and puts the linguistic elements within the dialogic interchanges in society and calls it utterance. So, he states that language makes its realization through "individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.60); "for speech can exist in reality only in the form of concrete utterances of individual speaking people, speech subjects...and outside this form it cannot exist" (Ibid, p. 71). Consequently, an utterance as a unit of language analysis can be explored from varying perspectives.

Following Bakhtin's idea about unique and unified place of every self, each utterance uttered by one self is a unique and unified instance of language use as well. It is unique, since it is uttered by a speaker who occupies a unique place in the event of existence in response to another unique person or group at a specific time within history in a specific place. Moreover, it is unified because each utterance has various overtones of otherness inherent in and is in dialogue with its past, present, and future. It carries the impact of the social, cultural, and historical norms and issues and is interwoven with the influence of all other people in the speaker's thought, speech and manner.

Holquist (1990) states that "verbal discourse is clearly not self-sufficient" (p.61) and is directed to a specific addressee. Bakhtin (1986) writes that "the choice of all language means is made by the speaker under varying degrees of influence from the addressee and his anticipated response" (p.99). So each utterance is a response to another utterance and contains what Bakhtin

calls “dialogic overtones” (Ibid, p. 92). Not only past and present are reflected in an utterance, but also it will allow further dialogue with realization of near or far future responses and following impacts on other utterances. Accordingly, every utterance is a dialogue in essence, a multidimensional intersectional dialogue between the speaker, addressee or addressees, historical epoch, social status quo, cultural values, and future utterances. Consequently, not only each utterance carries various other voices, but also each communicative event encompasses different voices, which points to Bakhtin’s another concept, *polyphony*.

Polyphony (many-voiced-ness) is a concept that Bakhtin (1984) used to appreciate Dostoevsky’s works for, describing them as “a *genuine polyphony of fully valid voices*” (p.6). Accordingly, a polyphonic relation provides an opportunity for all voices to be fully heard. Moreover, it “refers not literally to a number of voices, but to the collective quality of an individual utterance” (Park-Fuller, 1986, Conclusion), which connotes the capacity of one utterance to embed others’ utterances and to make a dialogic relation with them. Polyphony may be considered interchangeable with *heteroglossia*. Heteroglossia refers to the coexistence of multiple social language varieties encompassed by a single one. Bakhtin (1984) asserts one language in its historical becoming encompasses different types of languages based on social differences, age, profession and so on, each with their specific values and world views. He believes every utterance is heteroglot and polyphonic in nature.

The noteworthy point is that the dialogic feature of an utterance lies in the presence of a kind of polyphony in which the voices can hear each other, understand them by looking from others’ points of view and establish the co-existence of various voices without struggling to omit differences. It is “plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with his own world” (Ibid, p. 6). Lack of dialogic relation with the given features leans toward establishing

binary oppositions and prioritizing one voice, which can end in an utterance with monologic tendencies.

Both dialogic and monologic relations are the result of varying degrees of conflict between two opposing *centripetal and centrifugal forces*. Bakhtin (1984) assumes every event of existence embeds two main types of forces, namely centripetal and centrifugal ones; the former by the help of rules, Do's and Don'ts strives to maintain and centralize the totality and stability of an event while the latter advocates flexibility, enhancement and decentralization. Any centripetal force implies orbiting around a single pivot and authority, while the contrasting centrifugal force enjoys freedom and question established authority. One can imagine that in a classroom a teacher as an authority establishes rules and wants them to be met by students while students enjoy freedom and challenge the established criteria in some cases. While a centripetal force can avoid chaos in one whole like a classroom, too much centralization can lead to a kind of totalitarianism, since it does not let any centrifugal force question its orientations.

In a world that we live, *time and space*, entitled *chronotope* in Bakhtin's references, are two home lands that embed all events and their relations. Moreover, it may be a shared opinion that a specific time and space regarding an event has a special significance and value in the nature of the given event. Bakhtin (1981) notes that "every entry into the sphere of meanings is accomplished only through the gates of chronotope (p. 258). According to Holquist (1990), establishing relations is within two important parameters of time and space, and all human acts including verbal ones "are characterized by their unique spatio-temporal co-ordinates (Lähteenmäki, 2004, p.100). In this way, chronotope integrates temporal and spatial factors coupled with value and significance from a specific point of view. As a result, it "brings together not just two concepts, but four: a time, plus its value; and a space, plus its value"

(Holquist, 1990, p. 155). In sum, chronotope of each event whether physical, social or historical has a decisive impact on the significance and totality of that event.

The explained key concepts can comprise an important portion of dialogism's *architectonics*. Architectonics is one of the overriding concepts of Bakhtin's philosophy, which addresses the interrelation between different components of a unit. In Holquist's words, "in general, architectonics concerns questions about building, questions about how something is put together" (1990, p. 149). The architectonics of an utterance including its self-other relations and textual realization is not neutral; it reflects the overall aim and type of an utterance. This notion that focuses on the relation of entities to each other provides the ground for Bakhtin's important concerns and discussions, most of which aim to explain how each event of existence from its unique and unified place establishes relations with others, and how all the differences coexist together in a complimentary manner. So "the principal concepts of dialogism can all be seen, then, as tools of what is essentially an architectonics enterprise" (Ibid, p.150).

In sum, the above synthesis of Bakhtin's key concepts was prepared as an introductory point of departure for the current research due to the fact that reading Bakhtin is accompanied with some difficulties with respect to his specific era of living, various contributions to different fields and available translated form of his works in English. Though this introductory part may seem longer than usual ones, in fact, it is the researcher's strive to introduce a rather cohesive juxtaposing of Bakhtin's concepts to be applicable as a theoretical basis.

It may not be an exaggeration if it is claimed that Bakhtin's dialogism, with his humanistic orientation can be benefited in various fields of humanities. Following his posthumous fame, Bakhtin's circle and concepts have become the subject of study and elaboration for lots of scholars and researchers such as Holquist (1990), Gardiner (2003), Brandist (2002), and Bostad,

Brandist, Evensen and Faber (2004). In addition to abundant attempts to shed light on his concepts of thought, researchers from different fields found his ideas influential in their areas of study. As one of the widely recognized voices in the field of Bakhtinian studies, Gardiner (2003) believes Bakhtin's interdisciplinary influence over various areas, like anthropology, historiography, psychology, multiculturalism, communication, literature and media studies, is astonishing.

To illustrate briefly some examples of the given range of influence, the researchers in the fields of education (e.g. Bowers, 2005; Racionero & Padrós, 2010; Braz, 2012), literature (e. g. Bialostosky, 1986; Kershner, 1992; Berman, 2009), psychology (e.g. Akhutina, 2003; Wegerif, 2008; Salgado & Clegg, 2011), and feminism (e.g. Heikinen, 1994; Eigler, 1995; Racine, 2009) have tried the apprehension and application of his philosophy in their areas of focus. While Bakhtin's manner of thought and concepts are playing a leading role in the stated areas, CDA is yet to apprehend Bakhtin's philosophy in its foci of study, and there are little distinct studies that applied Bakhtin's key concepts in critical analyzing of *texts* or in Bakhtin's term, *utterances*.

As a result, the present research aims to provide an example of application of Bakhtin's selected key concepts as a theoretical point of departure in the area of CDA that is the study of discourse from a social point of view and primarily focuses on how social and political inequalities are enacted by a text (van Dijk, 2008). One shared point between Bakhtin and CDA is their objection against a kind of dominance and inequality whose "legitimacy and acceptability" can be questioned (van Dijk, 1993, 250).

1.3. Statement of the Research Objectives

With regard to the humanistic significance of Bakhtin's philosophy, i.e. advocacy of dialogic relation and objection to domination of a single voice, and CDA's objection to unfair

social political domination in society, this research is to investigate the dialogic and monologic language use instances in two examples of political speech *utterances*, in Bakhtin's word, Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" and Malcolm X's "The Ballet or the Bullet". Malcolm X and Martin Luther King are two famous leaders in the process of African-American Civil Rights Movement adopting two completely different approaches as it can be recognized from their titles of speeches. So the research questions are stated in the following section.

1.4. Research Questions

1. How is the self-other architectonics presented in Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" and Malcolm X's "The Ballot or the Bullet"?
2. What are the monologic and dialogic tendencies manifested by the textual realizations of self-other architectonic relations?
3. What are the textual features of the relations in "I Have a Dream" and "The Ballot or the Bullet"?
4. How can the given Bakhtinian perspective be insightful in Critical Discourse Analysis?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The present study is an attempt to apply Bakhtin's dialogism and his master concepts of thought in the field of CDA. The assumed aim is to shed light on the monologic and dialogic tendencies and their textual realizations present in two speech utterances, namely "I Have a Dream" and "The Ballot or the Bullet". The reason behind this kind of analysis is its significance in a communicative world that we live. Dialogic discourse respects all involved voices and tries to make reconciliation and togetherness among all instances of being while monologic discourse foregrounds only a single voice at the expense of others' voices and in a binary approach of me and others is to omit or fade other involved voices. In a debating society

of our age in which communication is one of important means of settling our issues and problems, communicative literacy and discrimination of hidden layers of a text or talk can be one of the necessities of social life. Recognizing monologic and dialogic linguistic realizations in any communicative instance can lead interlocutors to each other's depth of thought and act.

1.6. Organization of the Study

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides the reader with background information about the importance of dialogue in Bakhtin's philosophy and his distinct orientation toward it. Moreover, the overall research focus and individual research objectives have been clarified accompanied by the significance and organization of the current study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter includes four parts through which part one aims to introduce the difficulties of reading Bakhtin; part two provides information about the available literature on elaborating Bakhtin's conceptual notions; part three refers to some studies benefiting his concepts in specific areas and subjects; and part four discusses the application of the selected concepts in the area of CDA regarding the present research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter briefly presents the analytical background of the study. Moreover, the data and rationale behind selecting them are stated. The final part outlines the steps taken in analyzing the data first from the view point of Bakhtin's two key concepts, self and other to introduce the monologic and dialogic utterances, and second from textual perspectives.