

Abstract

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Negotiation of Power in Arab Presidential speeches During the Arab Spring Revolution: A Pragmatics corpus linguistic approach

Arab spring revolutions have been controversial events since they were emerged. The study at hand seeks to examine the speeches delivered by the presidents of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya during the time of these popular uprisings. In doing so, the thesis aims at tracing the changes in the presidents' attitudes which in turn marks shifts in the power relations established between the presidents and their peoples. The analytical framework operates a triangulation methodology quantitatively and qualitatively. Corpus linguistic tools, in the form of computer software that can quickly and easily perform statistics on the certain pragmatic manually annotated rules, are used. Therefore, along with facilitating the task of the analysis, it provides for the accurate number of the occurrence of each pragmatic strategy. The corpus then illustrates a comparison based on the manipulation of linguistic references by the three presidents. Qualitative analysis is then used to contextualize the quantitative results. As far as the qualitative analysis is concerned, the study employs the pragmatic tools of speech acts, politeness phenomenon, impoliteness and person deixis. Such tools reveal how the presidents try to manipulate the public emotionally through the power of discourse. Thus, the Arab springs witnessed a significant manipulation of language. Language is used as a tool that helped the presidents of that time to appeal to the public conscience and approach them emotionally. Therefore, the role language played in these events is not only a means of communicating with others rather, it is an effective tool for promoting certain aspects of reality.