

Abstract

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A Political Discourse Analysis of Blogs Written in English by Arab Women during/after the Arab Spring Revolutions

The present study attempts to examine political discourse features of forty-four blog posts written by Arab women during and after the Arab Spring Uprisings from January 2011 till January 2012. The two theoretical models used for analysis are those of van Dijk (1995) and Chilton (2004). The study aims at answering three questions: 1) How far can women be lexically and syntactically subversive as far as expressing their ideological stance is concerned? 2) How does context in the medium of blogging affect women's language, on the one hand, and political discourse features under examination, on the other? and 3) How do women's linguistic features serve political discourse on revolutions and uprisings? The researcher makes use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. Features of political discourse are traced on three levels: semantic, pragmatic, and syntactic. On the semantic level the researcher studies the lexical items used to refer to different aspects and actors in the uprisings. On the syntactic level, passivization and nominalization are examined, and, on the pragmatic level, deixis are analyzed. The linguistic features examined pertaining to women's discourse are lexical hedging, empty adjectives, intensifiers, tag questions, polite standard forms and personal pronouns. The Arab women bloggers under study challenge the traditional representation of the polarization of Us and Them via manipulating the lexical, syntactic and pragmatic choices examined in the present study. Also, they break away from traditional linguistic features ascribed to women's language and make use of the medium of blogging to create an alternative reality where they feel empowered and free.