

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University Abbes Laghrour
Khenchela – Algeria
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

Critical Discourse Analysis

Dr. Zoulaikha Elbah
Second Year
Master’s Degree

Full Name:

Exam

Choose ONE of the following topics.

Topic one: Analyse Trump’s speech using van Dijk’s Ideological Categories (use 8 categories):

One of the greatest challenges facing our country today is: immigration. I have just landed having returned from a very important and special meeting with the President of Mexico – a man I like and respect very much, and a man who truly loves his country. Just like I am a man who loves the United States. We agreed on the importance of ending the illegal flow of drugs, cash, guns and people across our border, and to put the cartels out of business. The truth is, our immigration system is worse than anyone realizes. But the facts aren’t known because the media won’t report on them, the politicians won’t talk about them, and the special interests spend a lot of money trying to cover them up.

Today you will get the truth. The fundamental problem with the immigration system in our country is that it serves the needs of wealthy donors, political activists and powerful politicians. Let me tell you who it doesn’t serve: it doesn’t serve you, the American people. When politicians talk about immigration reform, they usually mean the following: amnesty, open borders, and lower wages. Immigration reform should mean something else entirely: it should mean improvements to our laws and policies to make life better for American citizens.

But if we are going to make our immigration system work, then we have to be prepared to talk honestly and without fear about these important and sensitive issues. For instance, we have to listen to the concerns that working people have over the record pace of immigration and its impact on their jobs, wages, housing, schools, tax bills, and living conditions. These are valid concerns, expressed by decent and patriotic citizens from all backgrounds. We also have to be honest about the fact that not everyone who seeks to join our country will be able to successfully assimilate. It is our right as a sovereign nation to choose immigrants that we think are the likeliest to thrive and flourish here. Then there is the issue of security. Countless innocent American lives have been stolen because our politicians have failed in their duty to secure our borders and enforce our laws. Countless Americans who have died in recent years would be alive today if not for the open border policies of this Administration.

Adapted from: <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/08/donald-trump-immigration-address-transcript-227614>

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Categories of Ideological Analysis

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• POSITIVE SELF-PRESENTATION• NEGATIVE OTHER-PRESENTATION• ACTOR DESCRIPTION• AUTHORITY• BURDEN• CATEGORIZATION• COMPARISON• COUNTERFACTUALS• DISCLAIMERS• DRAMATIZATION• DISTANCING• HISTORY AS LESSON	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ILLEGALITY• NUMBER GAME• POLARIZATION,• US-THEM CATEGORIZATION• VICTIMIZATION• EVIDENTIALITY• FALLACIES• GENERALIZATION• HISTORY AS LESSON• HYPERBOLE• OPENESS, HONESTY• VAGUENESS
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Topic two: Analyse the following Facebook post using Fairclough's Three-dimensional Modal.



1. Textual Analysis (Description)

- ✓ *Lexicalization:*.....
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- ✓ *Patterns of Transitivity:*.....
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- ✓ *The Use of Active and Passive Voice:*.....
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- ✓ *The Use of Nominalisation:*.....
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- ✓ *The Choices of Mood:*.....
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- ✓ *The Choices of Modality or Polarity:*.....

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✓ *The Thematic Structure of the Text (Theme vs. Rheme):*

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✓ *The Information Focus:*

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✓ *Cohesive Devices:*

2. Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

✓ *Speech acts:*

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✓ *Coherence:*

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✓ *Intertextuality:*

3. Sociocultural Practice (Explanation)

✓ *Dominance:*

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✓ *Resistance:*

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✓ *Hegemony:*

Model Answer

Topic ONE

The analysis of the text reveals the use of many categories including

1. CATEGORIZATION

Analysing the text reveals the existence of ideologies and sub-ideologies. The text first states a clear division between Americans (ingroup members) and non-Americans (outgroup members i.e., immigrants). Stating “it doesn’t serve you, the American people”, the text further draws a clear ideological boundary between Americans who serve “the American people,” with himself presented as a prime example, versus other politicians who cater to “the needs of wealthy donors, political activists, and powerful insiders.” At both levels, the division emphasizes in-group positive image while excluding outsiders (negative image).

2. ACTOR DESCRIPTION

Stating that “Countless innocent American lives have been stolen because our politicians have failed in their duty to secure our borders and enforce our laws. Countless Americans who have died in recent years would be alive today if not for the open border policies of this Administration,” Trump uses evaluative language to describe social actors positively or negatively depending on their ideological belongings. While Americans are described as kind and harmless, immigrants are described as lawbreakers and criminals. Also, while American citizens are described as innocent, decent and patriotic, immigration policymakers are framed as negligent.

3. BURDEN

Trump states: “we have to listen to the concerns that working people have over the record pace of immigration and its impact on their jobs, wages, housing, schools, tax bills, and living conditions.” That is, immigration is presented as a social and economic burden on citizens.

4. HYPERBOLE

By stating that “One of the greatest challenges facing our country today is immigration,” Trump exaggerates the seriousness of immigration by framing it as one of the nation’s greatest challenges.

5. FALLACIES

One of the categories the text refers to is that of ‘fallacies’. This appears in linking deaths directly to immigration policy without evidence, assigning as such blame to political opponents. Trump states: “Countless Americans who have died in recent years would be alive today if not for the open border policies of this Administration.”

6. VAGUENESS

Vague expressions allow Trump to accuse groups without specificity. Terms like “Countless innocent American lives” and “special interests” lack exact meaning, enabling broad blame while avoiding accountability.

7. COMPARISON

Stating: “When politicians talk about immigration reform, they usually mean the following: amnesty, open borders, and lower wages. Immigration reform should mean something else entirely: it should mean improvements to our laws and policies to make life better for American citizens,” Trump contrasts his agenda on immigration with that of his opponents. That is, he delegitimizes the existing policies while promoting his agenda as beneficial to citizens.

8. OPENNESS / HONESTY

Trump states, “If we are going to make our immigration system work, then we have to be prepared to talk honestly and without fear about these important and sensitive issues.” In making this claim, he positions himself as someone committed to truth and transparency, suggesting that addressing immigration requires bravery and honesty. This not only elevates his moral standing but also portrays his opponents as slippery or deceitful. Notably, the “self” in this statement is collective, referring to both Trump and his supporters, reinforcing the idea that they, as a group, are the ones willing to confront these issues seriously.

Topic TWO

1. Textual Analysis (Description)

✓ Lexicalization

The post uses highly evaluative and ideologically loaded lexical choices such as “feminism,” “failed,” “succeeded,” “single,” “childless,” and “don’t need a man” that frame feminism as deceptive and harmful to women.

✓ Patterns of Transitivity

The text relies on relational and mental processes rather than material actions:

- “*I love feminism,*” “*I don’t need a man,*” and “*I’m never having children*” reflect mental states and intentions.
- “*Feminism has failed / succeeded*” assigns agency to **feminism** as an actor responsible for women’s failure to have a normal life (a husband and a child).

✓ The Use of Active and Passive Voice

The post predominantly employs the active voice, with statements like “Feminism has failed” and “Feminism succeeded” that directly attribute responsibility to feminism. By avoiding the

passive voice, it leaves no room for ambiguity or alternative interpretations regarding other factors that might contribute to women's failure.

✓ The Use of Nominalisation

Nominalisation is evident in the use of "feminism" as a noun that compresses a movement, an ideology, and a practice. Referring to feminism as a noun, the text disregards internal diversity and individual cases. That is, the text refers to a monolithic entity that has made promises to women but failed to fulfil them.

✓ The Choices of Mood

The mood is declarative throughout the text; presenting statements as facts rather than opinions. Declarative statements such as "*I'm 50, single and childless*" and "*Feminism has failed*" give the patriarchal discourse an air of inevitability, discouraging doubt or debate.

✓ The Choices of Modality or Polarity

The text uses strong, absolute polarity with no modal verbs. As such, statements are framed as definite truths, reinforcing ideological certainty regarding the flawed foundation of feminism.

✓ The Thematic Structure of the Text (Theme vs. Rheme)

The theme is consistently "*feminism*" and "*female feminists*". The rheme refers to the consequences of adhering to a feminist ideology (loneliness, childlessness, regret).

✓ The Information Focus

The text emphasizes personal outcomes as evidence. The woman's age and status ('50, single, and childless') are highlighted to illustrate feminism's assumed failure, while other individual experiences are disregarded.

✓ Cohesive Devices

Cohesion is achieved through:

- Personal reference: "I" refers to the woman, "it" refers to feminism.
- Repetition of "feminism", "I", and "you".
- Collocation: words like man, children, single childless cluster around the concept of family

2. Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

✓ Speech Acts

The post performs multiple speech acts including:

- Expressive: I love feminism.
- Assertive: I don't need a man.

✓ Coherence

The post is internally coherent as it reflects a linear narrative structure: Women who adhered to feminist beliefs made choices regarding marriage and having children, which led to negative consequences, and they now feel regret. This coherence relies on shared cultural assumptions about gender roles, marriage, and motherhood.

✓ Intertextuality

The text refers shows interdiscursivity (or constitutive intertextuality) as it refers to different discourses including:

- Feminist discourse.
- Anti-feminist discourse
- Patriarchal discourse.

3. Sociocultural Practice (Explanation)

✓ Dominance

The post reinforces patriarchal dominance by promoting traditional gender norms, which suggest that:

- Women are valued primarily as wives and mothers.
- Men are positioned as rational holders of truth.
- Women engage in self-destructive behaviors.

✓ Resistance

The post represents an anti-feminist discourse that resists feminist challenges to traditional gender roles. It acts as backlash discourse against women's autonomy and reproductive choice.

Note: A detailed analysis of the visual elements in the Facebook post - such as colors, facial expressions, age-related features- would be highly appreciated.