

# The Impacts of Jawar Mohammed's Political and Religious Speech on the Ethiopian Peoples Unity: Critical Discourse Analysis

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## **Abstract**

*The main purpose of this study was to critically analyze and uncover how Jawar Mohammed's political and religious ideologies impact the unity of Ethiopian peoples. The data was taken from Jawar Mohammed's Political and religious speech which was delivered in November 15, 2016 at Washington DC in Oromo Muslims conference. A critical investigation of data showed that the political and religious ideologies were reflected only for the Oromo Muslims society to control the political and religious power and to keep their identity. The finding of the study shows that the speaker has long term goals to dismantle the Ethiopian people based on their religion and politics through his aversion speech. The way speaker's ideologies expressions were contradicted each other during his speech.*

## **I. Background of the Study**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Human language is not only a tool of communication and transmitting information, but it is also an armory of the human brain that helps create discourse and subjectivity. Daily life interaction, academic lectures, political speeches, religious sermons, news broadcast, and written literature are the different ways people make use of language. From communication, the transmission of information to the representation of reality, language plays a very vital role in our life. Therefore, linguists have taken a keen interest in the study of language. They study language semantically, phonologically, syntactically, and pragmatically. In recent times, the field of critical discourse analysis is playing a main role in analyzing the language with respect to the mechanisms of power (Ali, and Ibrahim, 2020).

Discourse analysis is the study of language in use. It is the study of the meanings we give language and the actions we carry out when we use language in specific contexts. Discourse analysis is also sometimes defined as the study of language above the level of a sentence, of the ways sentences combine to create meaning, coherence, and accomplish purposes (Gee and Handford, 2012).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality (Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton, 2001).

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Discourse plays a great role for us to attach our everyday life and it has power to govern human's interpretation of meaning. Critical discourse analysis is an approach to discourse analysis that the political, social, economic and religious inequalities are enacted. Critical discourse analysis helps people to expose the implicit meaning of a language.

Researches on political discourse had been conducted through critical discourse analysis in Ethiopia and abroad. Mohammed and Rashid (2020), conducted a critical discourse analysis of rhetorical devices of trump's and May's speeches. Dr. Shegaw (2022) conducted his critical discourse analysis on ideological polarity of the Ethiopian people's revolutionary democratic front coalition parties: A critical discourse analysis on the parties' mottoes of the 2018 annual congresses. He found that the current Ethiopian politics has ideological polarity to take the politics hegemony. Though some researchers conducted research on critical discourse analysis, still there is a gap that needs critical analysis. Currently, Ethiopia has no stable political system and its citizens are killed daily due to different politicians' aversion speech and private interests. These politicians dismantle the people through their antagonism speech by supporting a particular group and by protesting others. So, the researcher initiated to conduct critical discourse analysis how Jawar Mohammed's political and religious speech affects the unity of Ethiopian people.

## **1.3 Research questions**

1. How the speech does affect the unity of the people?
2. How the speaker used discursive strategies to reflect his political and religious ideologies?

## **II. Theoretical Framework**

Different scholars formulated different approaches or models of critical discourse analysis. According to Van dijk (1993), to do critical discourse analysis the researchers need socio-cognition approach which is containing triangle diagram socio-cognition, discourse and social structure.

The other scholar Fairclough (1995) formulated the three dimensions of critical discourse analysis. These three dimensions include: text, discursive practice and social practice. The current researcher used these three dimensions to analyze and interpret the data critically.

## **III. Research methodology**

This chapter dealt about the techniques of the research methods how data collection procedures, sample size and sampling techniques and methods data analysis and interpretation were used.

### **3.1 Research design**

The design of the study was a qualitative case study that focused on specific political and religious speech that was made by the Oromo politician person Jawar Mohammed in the political and religious meeting in Washington DC in America in 2016.

### **3.2. Area of the study**

The area of study was the speech of Jawar Mohammed which was delivered Washington DC in his political and religious meeting in 2016. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to analyze the data. For instance, the researcher selected important words, phrases and statements from two and half pages of speech in written or 8 minutes and 42 seconds speech in oral presentation.

### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample size of this research was Jawar Mohammed's speech which was delivered in Washington Dc in the Oromo Muslims meeting. The researcher listened and transcribed the video recorded speech in the written form. The oral speech became into two and half pages in the written text form. From the total of two and half pages speech, the researcher took important words, phrases and sentences to analyze and interpret the data. Thus, the researcher used purposive sampling technique by selecting only important words, phrases and sentences from the whole speech.

### **3.4 source of data**

The source of data was Jawar Mohammed's speech which was taken from Nile tube. The speech was delivered America Washington DC in the political and religious meeting. The speaker delivered the speech in November 15, 2016 G.C.

### **3.5 Data Gathering Tool**

The researcher conducted the study by gathering relevant information from the speech by following necessary steps to get relevant information for the study.

### **3.6 Research Procedures**

The researchers followed the following four research steps:

1. The researcher collected different video recorded material on political speeches.
2. Then, the researcher listen the collected data again and again.
3. Third, the researcher selected important one from the collected data.
4. Fourth, he analyzed and interpreted the data critically through purposive sampling.

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis and Interpretation**

In this study, the researcher critically analyzed the speech by considering how political, social, economic and religious ideologies were reflected. According to Van Dijk (2006), ideologies have many cognitive and social functions. First of all ideologies organize and ground the social representations shared by the members of "ideological" groups. Second, they are the ultimate basis of the discourses and other social practices of the members of social groups as group members. Third, they allow members to organize and coordinate their joint actions and interactions in view of the goals and interests of the group as a whole. Finally, they function as the part of the socio-cognitive interface between social structures of groups on the one hand, and their discourses and other social practices on the other hand. According to Fairclough (1995), Ideology is seen as 'located' in both structures (discourse conventions) and events. On the one hand, the conventions drawn upon in actual discursive events, which are structured together within 'orders of discourse' associated with institutions, are ideologically invested in particular ways. On the other hand, ideologies are generated and transformed in actual discursive events. According to Fairclough (1995), critical discourse analysis looks to establish connections between properties of texts, features of discourse practice (text production, consumption and distribution), and wider sociocultural practice. Thus, the researcher used fairclough's three dimensional models to analyze the speech through critical discourse analysis method.

## **IV. Data Analysis and interpretation**

In the study, the researcher attempted to analyze and interpret Jawar Mohammed's political and religious speech which is gained from Nile Tube. The researcher applied, critical discourse analysis and integrated the

description of discursive strategies and interpretation of ideological reflections. So, the researcher used important words, phrases and statements as subheadings of the analysis.

**“What I am saying for Oromo’s, I started talking a lot about Islam since I have got one guy who came from Gondar. The area which I live in 99% is Muslims. So, no one can do anything confidently. We catch his/her neck with mencha”.**

In this speech, the speaker wanted to address a specific message for a particular ethnic group by mentioning the ethnic group with more intention. When he used the phrase “What I am saying for Oromo’s, the speaker believed that the issue or the message is important to the Oromo people than other Ethiopians.

In the second statement, the speaker mentioned himself as he is free from bias of religious. Because as he spoke in his speech I started talking a lot about Islam since I have got one guy who came from Gondar. Here he told for the audience as he was the liberal person on religious before he got his friend. But his expression has contradiction with the next statement the area which I live in 99% is Muslims. So, no one can do anything. We catch his/her neck with mencha”. This utterance contradicts with previous speech. We catch his or her neck with mencha implies that there is no freedom of other religious followers in Oromia region. The discursive strategy that he spoke for the audiences was difficult to harmonize the Ethiopian people. Because, his speech was full of antagonism and it separates the Ethiopian people from unity. Even the speaker doesn’t need religious equality rather he needs political and religious dominance over others beyond the Oromia region. This speech creates grievance among other religious followers and it may also leads to conflict. Therefore, it is possible to say that the way the speaker deliver his speech didn’t consider the social conflicts and he didn’t use appropriate expressions and well organized lexemes. The speech separates the unity of Ethiopian people based on their religious and the harmonization of the people will be discouraged.

**“When my friend told me the problem which was in Gondar, I believe it must be changed”.**

The speaker didn’t consider how problems are resolved. The way he expressed his speech about religious oppression couldn’t convey others religious followers even critical thinkers from Muslims. Take this statement “the area which I live in there is 99% percent Muslims. So, no one can do confidently anything. We catch his/her neck with mencha”. Here how he could be oppressed if he catches others neck with mencha. So, his intention is not to ask equality and he doesn’t serve the Muslims societies rather he runs for his private business and his focus is not to bring equality but he wants to create conflict between nations and religions.

**“When the political system and the economical system are on your hand, you can protect your right, you can protect your identity and when you start to influence on these, your religious brothers who live in Gondar, your religious brothers who live in Tigray will be respected”.**

There are many Islam religious followers who have their own identity. These people do not have only religious identity. There are many identities beyond religious. For example, Muslims who live in Amhara have their own language identity; Muslims who live in Afar have their own language and cultural identity and others too. So, if the political and economic system is used to protect identity, others who live out of Oromia cannot protect their own identity. Therefore, the political and the economical system work only for Oromos people. The speaker has no consistency in his speech in some part of his speech he talked about religion and in the other part of his speech he talked about identity. For instance, it creates confusion for the audiences who attend his speech.

**“If you are weak in Oromo; if you are divided and if your land is taken by India; not only you but also your all religious friends who live in Somalia, who live in Djibouti will be abnegated”.**

In the above speech, the speaker dismantled the Oromo people based on their religion in the opening of his speech but he said that if you are weak in Oromo, if you are divided.... .you will be abnegated. He believed that he strengthens the unity of the Oromo people but he himself divided the Oromo people based on religion in a hidden way. And still he has concentrated on the Oromo Muslims people by leaving other religious followers who live in Oromia. He called all the Oromo people as Muslims. This indicates that the speaker has no query of equality on political and religious rather the speaker wants to succeed the hegemony. Even the speaker mentioned the issue beyond the state level. For example, he mentioned Somalia and Djibouti. This shows that the speaker wants to get acceptance beyond Ethiopia and wants to work with other states like Somalia and Djibouti. It implies that the speaker has keen interest to defeat some groups with the help of the two states. "If your land is taken by India, not only you but also your religious friends who live in Somalia, who live in Djibouti will be abnegated". Here this expression indicates that there are unmanned enemies for the speaker who live in Ethiopia. Because when he said India it does not mean the country which is found in southern Asia. If it is southern Asia's country, it is not the issue of only Oromia people rather it is the whole Ethiopians responsibility. So, the speaker has a hidden agenda that he wants to transfer a message for a particular group. India is unnamed enemy who is found in Ethiopia.

**"If you organized as Oromo and control the politics, you are pride; you are the shed for others like the previous gada century, like the ravadori century".**

The speaker inspires the Oromo people to control not only the religious domination but also to control the political system. "The previous gada century" indicates there was political domination of the Oromo people and the gada system had dominance over others on political and religious issues during that century. The other one is the word "Ravadori" as explained by the speaker, ravadori was the Oromo's defense force. Here the researcher wants to raise one question and try to analyze it. Where is ravadori today and how one region has defense force? The gada system still has existed and most Oromia people follow it and celebrate its festivity every year. Even its name is always used by Oromo people and most Ethiopian people know about it and its history. However, ravadori is not the usual name and it doesn't heard by people about ravadori and there is no history about it in the educational setting. So, the speaker doesn't want to explain in detail about the word ravadori. The researcher believed that rovadori still exists by reforming its name and it is supported by the Oromo people. It is informal group who moves only for Oromo's benefit and it has no a good historical background by other Ethiopians. In addition, the speaker has great desire to dismantle the region from Ethiopia because he told for the audience as the Oromo people had defense force. One region couldn't have defense force.

**"When the Oromo is oppressed, the Islam will be oppressed. When the Islam is oppressed the Oromo will be oppressed".**

The statement is controversial issue. Here the speaker didn't take care for other Muslims role who live in other areas in Ethiopia. At the beginning, he talked about the oppressed Muslims who live in Amhara region and who live in Tigray region. But, when he addressed this speech, there is the contradiction of the two ideas. When the Oromo is oppressed, the Islam will be oppressed. When the Islam is oppressed the Oromo will be oppressed. Why not other Muslims? If Islam religious oppressed, Muslims who live in Tigray, Muslims who live in Somali, Muslims who live in Amhara, Muslims who live in Afar, Muslims who live in the whole Ethiopia even the whole Muslims in Africa and all over the world will be oppressed. However, the speaker took Islam religious as it is the only religious which is owned by the Oromia people. This could be a cause for grievance to other Muslims who are not Oromo ethnic.

**As you know the Oromo society had power during the gada system and it had ravadori defense force. This gives a base. Since this gives social and military base, they protested the tax payment and felt as it is their country.**

Tax payments for working citizens are mandatory. However, the speaker mentioned it as the rights of citizens. In Ethiopia started from the ancient time till today, paying tax is working citizens' obligation. But, the speaker didn't mention any reason that could be the cause for the Oromo's people blame tax payment. If there was partiality regarding with tax, it must be mentioned. However, the speaker delivered his speech without brief justification that can convince the other people. So, why they protested tax? The speaker has no rational evidence for this issue. If it is true it needs concrete or tangible evidences. But the tone of speech was full of aversion without rational reasons.

#### **V. Discussion and Result**

According to the findings of the study, the political and religious ideologies of the speaker represent the Oromo Muslims societies. In line with this Van Dijk (2006), ideologies have many cognitive and social functions. First of all ideologies organize and ground the social representations shared by the members of "ideological" groups. Second, they are the ultimate basis of the discourses and other social practices of the members of social groups as group members. Third, they allow members to organize and coordinate their joint actions and interactions in view of the goals and interests of the group as a whole.

In this case, the speaker reflects the common shared ideologies of the Oromo societies particularly the Oromo Muslims. In other words there are no private ideologies which are shared by individuals. The speaker couldn't be neutral from political and religious ideologies or he is biased for his ideologies.

Critical discourse analysis uncovers the speaker's hidden agenda on the political and religious ideologies. This has consistency with **Fairclough's (1995)**, critical discourse analysis looks to establish connections between properties of texts, features of discourse practice (text production, consumption and distribution), and wider sociocultural practice. Discourse practice can be implicit or explicit. Explicit discourse holds the actual meaning of language whereas implicit discourse expressed in a hidden way that the discourse makers achieve their goals in the subtle way.

#### **VI. Conclusion**

This research focused on how the political and religious ideologies are constructed. The study tried to critically analyze the political and religious ideologies of Jawar Mohammed's speech which was delivered at Washington DC in the conference of the Oromo Muslims. It was observed that the speaker used antagonism expression in his speech and he attempted to address the hidden agenda for a particular group or for Oromo Muslims.

The finding of the study shows that the speaker has long term goals to dismantle the Ethiopian people based on their religion and politics through his aversion speech. In addition, the critical discourse analysis uncovers the speaker's hidden agenda on his political and religious ideologies. Finally, the speaker's utterances have ideological contradiction. When he spoke, he himself divided the Oromo people from other Ethiopians based on their religion and based on their ethnicity and based on the political system. Even he divided the Oromo people based on their religion diversity as Oromo is the land of Muslims.

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