

A Critical Discourse Analysis Study of UNHCR Reports on Internally Displaced Iraqi People¹

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ABSTRACT

Critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice. Thus CDA is considered a theory in qualitative research in which the framework of analysis includes analysis of texts, interactions and social practices at the local, institutional and social levels. The present research paper is concerned with utilizing critical discourse analysis in analysing UNHCR reports that have been selected from internally displaced people of Iraq. The main aim of this on-going study is to investigate the linguistic devices that have been found in UNHCR reports. Thus, five UNHCR reports have been selected randomly from the internet for the reference period of 2014 to 2017. The procedure followed for the analysis of these reports is Norman Fairclough's Three-layer model (2001). The study has come up with the following concluding points: on the textual analysis level, the reports consist of vocabulary items including synonymy, collocations, hyponymy, Acronyms, etc. On the discursive analysis level, the reports involve repetitions, conjunctions, articles, and conjunctions. On social analysis level, the reports are said by different UNHCR representatives and happened in different occasions to send different messages.

Keywords: *CDA; IDP; Norman Fairclough; Linguistic Devices; UNHCR*

INTRODUCTION

Language is viewed as a vital tool employed for imparting various purposes via sending numerous linguistic and non-linguistic messages. In the on-going study, five UNHCR reports on internally displaced people of Iraq have been extracted and downloaded from the International Network. However, these reports will be analysed according to the tenets of Critical Discourse Analysis by conducting Norman Fairclough's three-layer model (2001), which is regarded as interdisciplinary approach that deals with the text on three different levels; the textual level, the discourse practice level, and the social analysis level.

Moreover, these UNHCR reports on internally displaced Iraqis have been downloaded from the internet for the reference period extending from 2014 to 2017. Accordingly, the paper consists of three parts. Part one gives a necessary skeletal account of CDA main features together with a brief history of UNHCR. Part two presents research methodology. Part three draws the main conclusion of the study.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Language

Wardhaugh (1984, p. 133) defines language as saying "language is not only means of communication but it is also a vital medium for establishing and maintaining social relationship which involves that language is spoken, productive, or creative". Similarly, Farrokhphey (1999, p. 9) states that "language is a body of knowledge that the speaker has about the sounds, structures, and meanings used in communication". In the same way, Lyons (1981, p.

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7) adds that "language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols".

Discourse Analysis

Discourse is a broad term that could be defined by various scholars. On the one hand, Halliday (1972, p. 142) defines discourse as "the particular form has taken by the grammatical system of language which is closely related to the social and personal need that language is required to serve". On the other hand, Van Dijk (1977, p. 133) states that discourse as a text in context as "data that liable for empirical analysis". By the same token, Cook (1989, p. 156) views discourse as "stretches of language perceived to be meaningful, unified, and purposive". Moreover, Fairclough (1989, p. 24) argues that discourse is "the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part".

Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA is an approach to language analysis, which deals with issues of language, power, and ideology. Thus, the essential aim of CDA is to figure out language as social practice and language users act in a group of cultural, social, and psychological frameworks. Basically, CDA examines the relation between textual structures and their function in interaction with the society (Wodak, 2009, p. 140). Similarly, Widdowson (2007, p. 33) defines CDA as an approach that involves the use of language for the exercise of socio-political power, ideology, and social belief. Further, Rahimi and Riasti (2011, p. 120) claim that CDA is a discipline that allows researchers and learners to look at the elements of texts, both at the micro and macro linguistic levels.

A Brief History of UNHCR

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is an UN agency mandated to aid and protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people, and to assist in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, with over 17,300 staff working in 135 countries.

UNHCR was founded in 1950 to meet the refugees' crisis that resulted from World War II. UNHCR operated across the world. By its 65th anniversary in 2015, the agency assisted more than 50 million refugees worldwide (Leoscher, 2002, p. 133).

By June 2020, UNHCR has over 20 million refugees under its mandate. UNHCR mandate has gradually been expanded to include protecting and providing humanitarian assistance to which it describes as other persons of concern including internally displaced persons who would fit the legal definition of a refugee under the 1951 UNHCR to the states of refugees and 1967 protocol.

STATEMENT OF THE STUDY PROBLEM

The current research paper attempts to analyse UNHCR reports on internally displaced Iraqis through employing critical discourse analysis by means of adopting Norman Fairclough's three-layer model (2001) in order to identify and survey the linguistic devices found in UNHCR reports.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The current research paper set out to pinpoint the textual, discursive, and social devices that have been ascertained in UNHCR reports on internally displaced Iraqis.

Accordingly, the research paper aims at:

1. Identifying the frequency of occurrence of linguistic devices.
2. Examining and describing CDA tenets when applying on UNHCR reports.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Fairclough's Three-Layer Model

According to Norman Fairclough's three-layer model, there are three dimensions of discourses. They are as follows:

1. The object of analysis (text or description of formal properties of the text) or text analysis which describes morphological/ syntactic/ semantic and phonological structure of the text.
2. Processing analysis (interpretation) which is concerned with discourse practice analysis that includes cohesive ties, discourse markers and types of clauses, repetition, ellipses, etc.
3. Social analysis (explanation) which involves word choice, location of the text, target audience, the power, social agents, ideological aspects, beliefs, attitudes, cultural and social events.

Data Collection

The present study is limited to describe investigating and analysing five UNHCR reports on internally displaced Iraqis that have been downloaded from the internet for the reference period starting from 2014 to 2017.

Data description

The data collection have been analysed in terms of critical discourse analysis by adopting Norman Fairclough's three-layer model (2001). Furthermore, this model consists of three analytical practices. These include textual analysis, discourse practice, and social analysis. Besides, the five UNHCR reports vary in length and number of sentences. In the course of analysis, the five reports are labelled from R (1) to R (5).

Data analysis

In analysing the collected data, the researcher will apply the following steps:

1. Selecting the data (UNHCR reports) that will be analysed according to Fairclough model of three-layers.
2. The researcher then classifies the collected data by applying the model.
3. The researcher analyses five UNHCR reports in terms of CDA.

Report (1)

The UN refugee Agency has started distributing emergency aid to thousands of people displaced by the latest outbreak of violence in northern Iraqis Ninewa governorate.

On the textual analysis level, report (1) consists of present perfect tense, with a long statement as well as it involves active voice construction. Besides, it has an acronym "UN" to refer to the United Nations. In the same way, it has a collocation "emergency aid" and synonymy "started – outbreak". Further, the report includes hyponymy "Iraq – Ninewa". On the discourse practice analysis, the report comprises repetition including the preposition "of" which is repeated twice and the article "the" that is mentioned twice. On the social analysis level, the report is said by NedColt, UNHCR representative on 5 August 2014 in Geneva in Switzerland.

Report (2)

Displaced Iraqis seek safety and aid in camps as winter falls. Arabat is one of 24 camps for displaced Iraqis now open across the country. Another 17 are under construction, expected to be ready by the end of January. 3000 internally displaced Iraqis are living Arabat camps three months after it opened to shelter to some of the 2 million people uprooted by conflict in northern and central Iraq.

As far as the textual analysis is concerned, the current report is composed of present simple tense and present continuous tense together with active voice construction. Furthermore, the report involves collocation "under constructions". On the discourse analysis level, the report consists of repetition "camps, Iraqis, the, of" and conjunction "and". Besides, it has adjective of numbers "24 camps, 3000, 2 million". Further, the report consists of adverbs of time "next", lexical items denoting time "January, winter".

According to the social analysis level, the report is said by Ariane Rummery, UNHCR representative on 22, August, 2014 in Geneva in Switzerland.

Report (3)

The UN refugee Agency on Tuesday reported that Iraqi civilians fleeing violence in Ramadi face numerous challenges, checkpoints, entry restrictions, and security procedures to navigate on their journey to safety.

On the textual analysis level, the present report consists of a long statement with a declarative sentence a long with simple past tense. Moreover, the report involves using acronym "UN" to denote the United Nation and hyponym "Iraq – Ramadi" besides, synonym is used "safety – security".

On discourse analysis level, the report consist of repetition "to, and, on". Additionally, the connector "and" is used to link two statements. Similarly, cataphora is used "their" to refer to "Iraqi civilians".

On social practice level, this report is delivered by UNHCR representative Ariane Rummery on 22 August 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. What is more, the social event is that there people escaped from the violent acts occurred in Ramadi when ISIS occupied Al-Anbar governorate in 2014.

Report 4

The UN refugee Agency urgently needs 125\$ million to meet critical needs of vulnerable children, women and men displaced from and returning to, Mosul, until the end of the year.

Textually speaking, the syntactic level of the report consists of simple present tense along with statement in the form of declarative sentence, besides, the report has acronym "UN" denoting the United Nations and infinitive "to meet"

On the discourse practice level, the report comprises a conjunction "and" to link two statements. Likewise, it includes repetition "to, of, the".

On the social analysis level, the report is said by Andrej Malecic, the UN representative on June 2017the occasion was that the UNHCR tries to get 125\$ million to meet the critical requirements of internally displaced people of Iraq in Mosul.

Report 5

The Un refugees Agency is concerned about a rising trend of newly displaced Iraqis being forcibly transferred to camps where restrictions on their freedom of movement are imposed in manner disproportionate to any legitimate concern including these related to security.

On textual analysis level, the report consists of a long statement with declarative sentence along with simple present tense. Besides, the report has acronym "UN" to refer to the United Nations. Moreover, the report involves synonym "related to – about". On discourse practice level, the report includes repetition "to, of, and, concern". On the social analysis level, the report is told by Ariane Rummery, UNHCR representative on 30, March, 2016. The occasion was that the UNHCR concerned about the rising number of the internally displaced people of Iraq.

CONCLUSION

Having analysed the five selected UNHCR reports, the study comes up with the following concluding points:

1. The reports consist of formal language, simple words, long sentences. Besides, it involves legal and technical terms.
2. The reports are comprised of general facts and number of Iraqi displaced people together with statistical information.
3. The textual analysis reveals that the reports involve rich vocabulary items including synonymy, collocations, hyponyms, and acronyms.
4. The discourse practice analysis shows that the reports include third plural person "they" denting internally displaced Iraqis.

5. It is found that repetitions are used exclusively in these reports to reinforce the critical situations of internally displaced people of Iraq.
6. The current social analysis reveals that the reports are told by different UNHCR representative on the same issue which is the critical situation of internally displaced of Iraqis on different occasions and different dates in UNHCR refugee Agency.
7. There are many social and political messages that UNHCR tries to send the first message as helping displaced people and the second message is to stop violent acts. The third message is to confront terrorist groups.

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