

The Queen Is Gone: Reading Former Colonies' Reaction Through Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

The study probes the Britain's former colonies reaction to Queen Elizabeth II's death. British people often glorify the Queen as an epitome of benevolence, but there is a need explore how people of British former colonies perceive her. To serve this purpose, news articles from four former British colonies have been chosen. These colonies are India, Pakistan, Africa, and Bangladesh. Using non random sampling, four news articles have been archived from The Dawn, The Daily Star, Times of India, and Punch news. It is within the framework of Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis Model (2007) that the research has critically examined the news articles following interpretive paradigm. The researcher has found that in all the news articles, Queen is portrayed as the 'negative-other', whereas ex-colonies are described as victims of her empire. Therefore, the discursive device of victimization is most frequently used in the chosen articles. The findings of the study indicate that the Queen's passing serves as a somber reminder of the darkest moments of colonial history. The findings also show that to former colonies, the death of Queen is tantamount to end of the bloodiest chapter in the history.

Keywords: Britain, Critical Discourse Analysis, former colonies, Queen Elizabeth II, Negative Other, Tantamount.

1. Introduction

On September 8th, 2022, the Britain mourned the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, who was the reigning monarch of 32 sovereign countries. Her rule lasted a striking 70 years and 214 days, setting a new record for the longest rule of any British emperor (Landler, 2022). Throughout her reign, she headed over the twilight of the British Empire, and therefore her death elicited mixed reactions across the world. While some mourned her passing, others were reminded of the atrocities committed by the British Empire throughout history. Despite claims by some of her supporters that Elizabeth II didn't have a say in national matters, she neither expressed regret nor apologized for any of the controversial aspects of her country's past during her multiple visits. Instead, she kept glorifying her empire and its system (Lester, 2022). Consequently, the demise of Queen Elizabeth II has triggered numerous questions about her seven-decade-long reign. According to Yee (2022), while proponents of the monarchy contend the late Queen merely inherited this system, they cannot ignore her role in shaping the events that unfolded during her reign. One such instance is the bloodshed against Mau Mau rebellion which began the same year she ascended the throne. The Mau Mau was an African colony's strive for freedom from the British rule. To suppress the Africans, the British monarch sanctioned a war against the Mau Mau rebels calling them terrorist which was permitted by the monarch almost anybody even slightly suspected of belonging to the Mau Mau was arrested and taken to a detention camp or prison where they were then interrogated and often tortured and abused. The Mau Mau uprising was a movement in an African colony aimed at gaining independence from British control. In response, the British monarchy authorized a war against the Mau Mau rebels, labeling them as terrorists. This justification enabled the British

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authorities to detain and imprison anyone suspected of being a part of the Mau Mau, subjecting them to harsh interrogation and mistreatment. (Yee, 2022)

Following the death of Queen Elizabeth II, there has been resurgence in the anti-monarchy movement, with a wave of criticism being directed towards the institution (Seelro, 2022). The former British colonies are scrutinizing the Queen for sanctioning atrocities during her reign. This study aims to probe the sentiments of British former colonies towards their former colonizer's Queen. To serve this purpose, it examines the news articles published in response to the Queen's death, specifically focusing on the reactions from four former British colonies. The current research has adopted a qualitative methodological approach.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

British media often portray Queen Elizabeth II as an epitome of benevolence who helped eradicating slavery, transitioned British smoothly from an empire to a commonwealth, and emancipated millions of people (Ferguson, 2012; Marr, 2011). But there is a need to understand how she is viewed in countries previously colonized by Britain. After the death of Queen, writers and columnists in former colonies penned down their opinion about her. Therefore, a critical interpretation of literature from British former colonies is required to understand how these they perceive her. To serve this purpose, this study focuses on analyzing the news articles that published in countries previously colonized by Britain i.e. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Africa.

The key objective of the present research is to examine the discursive strategies and the 'US vs. Them' narrative used in news articles written after the demise of Queen Elizabeth II. Analyzing the discursive devices will allow the researcher to better understand how former Britain colonies perceive its monarch. According to Creswell (2014), research questions aid in narrowing down the objectives of the study. Therefore, the present study revolves around the following research question:

- Which discursive strategies are used to establish a 'positive US vs. negative THEM' narrative in selected news articles written after Queen Elizabeth II's death?

This study carries significance from a literary point of view since it is going to contribute to the Critical Discourse Analysis studies. It examines the discursive strategies used in the selected news articles. Examining the linguistic elements helps in investigating the 'positive US vs. negative Them' narrative. Furthermore, this study will be significant for social scientists since it provides an insight into what people formerly colonized by Britain think about the Queen. Social scientists will ultimately be intrigued to know how Queen Elizabeth II, a monarch who presided Britain for seven decades, is perceived in former colonies.

1.2. Limitations of the Study

The current research has a couple of limitations. This study is confined to four former British colonies including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Africa. It studies the postcolonial response to Queen's death only in these colonies, while others like Egypt, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and Canada aren't included in this study. Moreover, the current study interprets the news article from only one approach of Critical Discourse analysis proposed by Van Dijk (2007).

2. Literature Review

This part of the research paper reviews the relevant literature. Modern linguistics has gained more depth in the recent decades. Lately, Critical Discourse Analysis has gained popularity as a sub-field of modern linguistics. Different theorists came forward and extended this theory. Teun Adrianus van Dijk added a new dimension in it. According to Dijk (2007), Critical Discourse Analysis is a way of examining how dominance, power abuse, and inequality are embedded and communicated through discourse. As part of his theory, Dijk (2007) has proposed 25 discursive devices. These devices are used by people whenever they talk about hegemony, power abuse and inequality. Various researchers and scholars have based their workson this theory. Some of these are presented in this section.

2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis (2007)

A study conducted by Apirakvanalee & Zhai (2022) targeted the linguistic elements in BBC reporting. The researcher analyzed the discursive devices BBC uses to highlight the positive aspects of Britain and negative aspects of other countries. The study draws on Van Dijk's model of critical discourse analysis to analyze five episodes of BBC program. The five episodes covered countries including Canada, Kenya, India, Australia, and Indonesia on the subject of Chinese dream. He observed that in BBC reporting, polarization strategy is used to deemphasize the negative characteristics of Kenya, India, Australia, and Indonesia. Besides Britain, only Canada was represented positively. (Apirakvanalee & Zhai, 2022)

Yet another study that followed a parallel framework targeted news articles. Salami and Dominic (2020) analyzed the news articles that covered African immigrants parenting in Canada. The researcher observed and interpreted the discursive devices used in the selected 35 news articles in portraying Africans' parental practices. The findings showed that there is an imbalance of power between African and Canadians. Moreover, Canadian writers label Africans in a certain way that represents them as inferiors. Consequently, the researchers pointed that Canadians newspapers created a dingy picture of Africans on purpose. In the Canadian news articles, through the use of certain discursive devices, the African parents' negative actions are exaggerated. As a result, the researcher established that Canadians bear a colonial mindset. They look down upon the Africans as if they are downright silly and uncivilized. (Salami & Dominic

A. Alaazi, 2020)

When it comes to news articles use of discursive strategies, another research is worth mentioning. Pasha (2011) conducted a study on Egyptian newspapers. The researcher found that in news articles, Egyptian regime is labeled as negative other and Islamists are symbolized as victims of Egyptian government. (Pasha, 2011)

2.2. Discursive Devices in Newspapers

Dijk (2007) proposed numerous discursive strategies in his work "Ideology and Discourse: A Multidisciplinary Introduction". According to him, people either use these devices to emphasize their positive side or negative aspects of 'Others'. People do so because they want

to showcase themselves as positive and the out-group as negative. These devices include euphemism, actor description polarization, hyperbole, hedging and vagueness, victimization, etc. (Dijk, 2007). These devices are mostly used in political and religious debate. Nadaf (2021) conducted a study to interpret use of discursive devices in 30 news articles from Indian and Pakistani newspapers. By drawing on Dijk (2007) modal, the researcher scrutinized the way Pakistani Indian columnist portray each other. After deeply analyzing the discursive devices used in both the newspapers, the researcher established that Indians are more belligerent and attacking since the negative-other is frequently used their news articles. (Nadaf, 2021)

Discursive strategies are also used to communicate hidden ideologies that aren't communicated explicitly. Perlina (2019) probed the newspapers' coverage of KPK and Polri conflict. 3 newspapers were opted as source of data. These include The Jakarta Globe, The Jakarta Post, and Tempo. Co. After analyzing the discursive devices used by respective newspaper, the researcher concluded that Jakarta Post was more neutral and less biased in news reporting as compared to Tempo and the Jakarta Post. (Perlina, 2019)

Another study targeted news article use of discursive strategies. Sajid and Nawar conducted a research to examine the way political creeds are communicated in Pakistani newspapers. The Dawn and The Nation were opted as data sources. Headlines were randomly selected from these newspapers. By interpreting and comparing the use of discursive devices in both newspapers, the researcher concluded that every news agency communicate the same news differently just to highlight their political agenda. Where the Dawn used actor description, and victimization, the Nation used drew on metaphors and categorization more frequently (Sajid & Anwar, 2019).

2.3. The 'Us vs. Them' Narrative:

The positive 'Self' vs. negative 'Other' narrative stems from Van Dijk Critical Discourse Analysis Model (2007). This concept is intertwined with the discursive devices Dijk proposed in his book 'Ideology and Discourse: A Multidisciplinary Introduction' (2007). Numerous researches have been conducted on 'Self-vs. Other' representation in discourses. One such study was done to probe how political parties draw on this narrative to flatter the audience. Maani and Hadla (2022) examined a Syrian President's political speech. The researchers analyzed the linguistic elements in the speech and found that president Bashar Al-Assad deliberately used such linguistic elements to flatter the audience. His language reflected that the sole purpose of his speech is to portray him as well-wisher of public. The in-group or 'Us' included Al-Asad, his government and his allies; whereas the out-group included the opposition, the conspirators, Arab nations and Israel. The researchers established that the positive 'Self' representation gained him much benefit. It improved his image from a president to a patriotic leader. At times, the 'Us vs. Them' narrative is found in course textbooks. (Maani, 2022) Ismail and Farukh (2019) studied Punjab secondary level textbooks. The researchers found that the patriotic stories in textbooks draw on positive 'Self vs. negative 'Other' narrative. A positive 'self' is meant for Pakistanis, and negative 'other' is for India and Israel. This study was supposed to help the curriculum makers of Pakistan. Curriculum makers will be able to pick content the textbooks content more wisely (Farukh, 2019). The concept of the "Self vs. Other" narrative has also been observed by researchers across sociopolitical contexts. For instance, Nicolette Bramley's (2001) study focused on the portrayal of the "Self vs. Other" narrative in Australian political media interviews. Specifically, the study analyzed the usage of pronouns 'I', 'we', 'you', and 'they' in constructing

positive 'selves' and negative 'others' by politicians. The study revealed that politicians tend to construct multiple 'selves' and 'others' to protect their image and accuse others. Bramley's study is significant in highlighting the discursive construction of reality in political contexts. (Bramley,2001)

2.4. The Research Gap

After reviewing the literature extensively, the researcher has found two major gaps in the relevant literature. First off, the studies conducted on textual analysis of news articles lack in diversity of data samples. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a research that includes text samples from different sources. Secondly, no study heretofore has been conducted to examine the response of British former colonies to Queen Elizabeth II's passing. Hence, this study fills a major gap in past literature by critically analyzing news articles from four different newspapers of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Africa.

3. Theoretical Framework

Van Dijk(2007) defines Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the investigation of how spoken or written language is used to exercise hegemony, inequality and social power. The objective of Dijk's CDA is to uncover the hidden motives behind all forms of communication. Critical Discourse Analysis has gained popularity in the recent decades. Carvahlo (2008) adds that CDA researchers strive to identify the link between the text and social practices. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on how individuals use language to impact the ideas and beliefs of others. This research draws on Van Dijk's concept of CDA, particularly the discursive devices proposed in his book "Ideology and Discourse: A Multidisciplinary Introduction" (2007). Discursive devices are the structures that make discourse a multifaceted event, divided into distinct categories and utilized simultaneously in various ways to craft a 'positive Self vs. negative Other' narrative. This narrative is embedded in all of the 42 discursive devices proposed by Dijk (2007) as a part of his book "Ideology and Discourse: A Multidisciplinary Introduction". Out of 42, 14 most relevant discursive devices are chosen for the current study. The selective devices are described below:

1. Actor Description

Dijk (2007) proposed that individuals can be characterized in countless manners, such as through their explicit or implicit qualities or their first or last name. In addition, any description that serves to define an individual in terms of their role, status, specificity, commonality, whereabouts, and most importantly, their membership within a particular group or outside of it.

2. Evidentiality

It is the speaker's responsibility to take ownership of their statements, which includes providing evidence to back up any beliefs they express. This act of providing evidence to support or refute a claim is commonly referred to as evidentiality.

3. Hedging and Vagueness

Vagueness and hedging is another discursive strategy. Speakers may resort to hedging or vague responses when they lack precise information but provide a response nonetheless. In political discourse, accurate statements may be contextually inappropriate or considered "politically false" and therefore may be hedged.

4. Authority

During debates, it is common for speakers to use references to authoritative sources in order to bolster their arguments. This use of authority as a rhetorical strategy is referred to by Dijk(2007) as the discursive strategy of authority. An authority can be an organization, individual, a book or an article. Citing such sources lends credibility and support to one's stance. Various entities, including scholars, the media, religious institutions, legal systems, and international organizations like the , United Nations, often serve as authoritative sources for speakers during these arguments.

5. Comparison

Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (2007) focuses on the distinction between "Self" and "Other," and as such, he developed a discursive approach to comparison using the concept of in- group and out-group differentiation.

6. Disclaimer

Disclaimers are statements utilized to maintain the interests of the parties involved, who often hold contrasting ideologies. However, disclaimers can contribute to bias and may be considered a characteristic feature of prejudiced discourse. There are many types of disclaimer

i.e. Apparent Negation, Apparent Apology, and Apparent Empathy.

7. Implication

A speaker or writer's production of discourse is influenced by their interpretation of events. Due to factors such as the recipient's prior knowledge, not all information needs to be explicitly stated. In such cases, the recipient can use their understanding of discourse patterns and sociocultural knowledge to fill in any missing information.

8. Polarization

Polarization as a discourse strategy is closely linked to framing the narrative as an Us vs. Them dynamic, which creates a divide between the in-group and out-group. Furthermore, polarization involves categorizing out-groups as either 'good' or 'bad'.

9. Victimization

Victimization amplifies the dichotomy between 'Self' and 'Others'. Consequently, if the portrayal of Others is negative, particularly if they are accused of being threatening and wicked, the in-group should be portrayed as the ultimate victim. The tactic of victimization is also employed by ordinary speakers to emphasize that it is not others who are discriminated against, but rather themselves.

10. Hyperbole

With the discursive strategy of hyperbole, the strategy of positive self-portrayal and negative portrayal of others involves accentuating the shortcomings of the out-group, sometimes in the

form of metaphors. Dijk's CDA model suggests that what may sound like an overstatement to one group can be perceived as a truthful and precise depiction of an issue by another group.

4. Method and Material

A qualitative research methodology is opted for this research. Qualitative methodology interprets the underlying attitudes and emotions in a text (Creswell, 2014). Since the current research critically analyzes the opinion and emotions of people from Britain's former colonies, a qualitative methodology is deemed the most appropriate. Moreover, interpretive paradigm is opted as it goes hand in hand with the objectives of the current study. The study aims to interpret and construe meaning of the selected data. It seeks to interpret the lived experiences of people by analyzing the selected data. An interpretive paradigm also allows researchers to see the reality through lived experiences

The data for this research includes four news articles that appeared in response to Queen's death in newspapers of former British colonies. These are India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Africa. As far as the data sampling is concerned, the sampling for this research is done through purposive sampling. Purposive Sampling is a type of non-random sampling in which the data must be selected according to the research questions (Patton, 1990, as cited in Khan et al. 2021). One news articles from each of these colonies have been opted for the study. The sample news articles are achieved from online editions of the newspapers due to their non-availability in Pakistan. These include The Dawn, The Times of India, Africanews, The Daily Star. One news article from each of the aforementioned newspapers was chosen.

5. Findings and Discussion

Four news articles from the newspapers of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Africa have been critically analyzed. The selected articles are: "The Crown and the Colony", "In Africa, not everyone mourns Queen Elizabeth II", "The Queen is not my feminist icon", "India mourns Queen Elizabeth II's death, many question govt decision". Guided by Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis Model (2007), the researcher has interpreted these articles. The findings from each country's article are presented below.

5.1. Pakistan

A news article titled "The Crown and the Colony" was retrieved from The Dawn news. The article is titled "The Crown and the Colony" and is retrieved from The Dawn News. Through the lenses of Van Dijk Critical Discourse Analysis Model (2007). The study examines the writer's discourse and evaluates their attitude towards the late Queen and the Royal family. The most frequently used discursive device in this particular article is actor description. The strategy of actor description is analyzed in detail. The study has revealed that derogatory actor descriptions are frequently used for the late Queen and the Royal family. The writer describes the late Queen as an individual who built her empire on corruption, looting, and genocide. This labeling position the Queen as a negative Other or an out-group member. Notably, the study also found that Pakistanis who posted notes of condolences for the Queen are equally rebuked by the writer. The derogatory actor description "Brown sahibs" is used for these Pakistanis, who are seen as a part of the out-group since they are loyal and submissive to their former colonizer's

Queen, and not their own country. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that the writer of the selected article is impudently critical of the late Queen and portrays Pakistanis who mourned for the Queen as a part of the out-group.

5.2. Africa

The article titled “Queen Elizabeth’s controversial legacy” was published in Punch news. This article has drawn on the discursive device of argumentation and counterfactual to a greater extent. These devices have served to challenge the legacy of the late Queen. Specifically, the authors use argumentation to question the widely held view that the late Queen was a strong leader, arguing instead that her longevity in power indicates vanity and incompetence. The discursive device of counterfactual is used to suggest an alternative scenario. If the late Queen had lived during ancient Rome, it is likely that her own son had executed her long ago in order to claim the throne. This scenario is a counterfactual, imagining a situation that did not actually occur. This counterfactual serves to criticize the power structure of inherited monarchy in Britain. In summary, the African columnist responded to the Queen's demise by raising doubts about her legacy and the anecdotes that portrayed her as a resolute leader.

5.3. Bangladesh

The news article titled ‘The Queen is not my feminist icon’ appeared in The Daily Star newspaper. The discursive devices of victimization and argumentation are prevalent in this article. The article presents various arguments that challenge the portrayal of Queen as a feminist icon. Additionally, the author employs discursive devices such as “actor description,” labeling the Queen as “unapologetic” for not compensating for the atrocities committed under her crown. By utilizing this discursive strategy of argumentation, the article effectively discredits the Queen's image as a feminist icon. Two consecutive arguments serve to give a crushing blow to Queen’s fake image. First, in a span of two centuries, the Queen failed to apologize for colonizing Bangladesh and other territories and benefitting from their resources. Second, the Queen's position as head of state was not through an electoral process, but rather inherited from her forefathers. The article explores the victimization strategy in Bangladesh and extends the discussion to include the case of Meghan Markle as a victim of Queen's imperialism. The mistreatment of Meghan within the royal family serves as a potent example of oppression perpetuated by the monarchy. The analysis shows that Meghan is considered part of the in-group, not just people from Bangladesh. This classification is based on the fact that both Meghan and the people of Bangladesh have been victims of Queen's wrongdoings in one way or another.

5.4. India

A few days after the demise of Queen Elizabeth II, the “Times of India” published an article titled ‘India mourns Queen Elizabeth II's death, many question govt decision’ which primarily discusses the Kohinoor diamond. The analysis reveals that discursive strategy of authority is prevalent in this article. Indian Twitter users are the authoritative figures. These users collectively assert India's rightful ownership of the Kohinoor diamond. The Kohinoor diamond which sits on the late Queen’s crown worth 20 billion dollars was stolen from an India. The researcher has found that response to Queen’s death in India revolved around the Kohinoor diamond. Quoting different Twitter users’ views via discursive device of ‘authority’, the Indian columnists have shown the way Kohinoor diamond is the root cause of Indians hatred towards The Queen. This way, Indians are pictured as positive “Self” or in-group. Conversely, the Queen is pictured as “negative-Others.”

5.5. End of the Bloodiest Chapter

“The end of the bloodiest chapter” is a phrase used in the Indian news article “India mourns

Queen Elizabeth II's death, many question govt. decision''. The Queen reminds Indians of the dreadful famines, and deaths of Indian freedom fighters under British rule. Following a thorough analysis of articles related to the former British colonies, it has become clear that the Queen's passing serves as a somber reminder of the darkest moments of colonial history. As a result, none of these colonies feel the need to mourn her death. Where Indians consider her passing as end of bloodiest chapter, Pakistanis wishes the system of monarchy dies with her death.

6. Conclusion and Future Implication

The current study concludes that although the 'Self vs. Other' narrative is found in all selected news article, there is a variation in discursive devices employed by respective columnist. Every discursive device corresponds to the sentiments of respective to Queen's passing. Regarding the potential impacts in the future, this study has several noteworthy implications. First and foremost, there is definitely a great scope for future research in exploring how Europeans have responded to Queen Elizabeth II's death. A comparative study can be conducted between the different European countries to understand the similarities and differences in their reactions. Secondly, an analysis of editorial images that appeared after the Queen's demise can also be done. It can provide valuable insights into the representation and symbolism associated with the monarch's death. Researchers can examine the visual language used in these images, including the choice of colors, objects, and motifs, and analyze how they convey cultural and historical meanings. In a nutshell, there are many avenues for further research on the topic of Queen Elizabeth II's death, and scholars can use various methods to investigate different aspects of this event, including surveys, interviews, textual analysis, and visual analysis.

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