

Presuppositions and Implicatures in Four Selected Speeches of Osama Bin Laden's Legitimation of 'Jihad'

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Abstract : This paper investigates certain linguistics properties of four selected speeches by Al-Qaeda's former leader Osama bin Laden who legitimated the use of jihad by Muslims in various countries when he was alive. The researchers adopt van Dijk's (2009; 1998) Socio-Cognitive approach and Ideological Square theory respectively. Socio-Cognitive approach revolves around various cognitive, socio-political, and discursive aspects that can be found in political discourse as in Osama bin Laden's one. The political discourse can be defined in terms of textual properties and contextual models. Pertaining to the ideological square, it refers to positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation which help to enhance the textual and contextual analyses. Therefore, among the most significant properties in Osama bin Laden's discourse are the use of presuppositions and implicatures which are based on background knowledge and contextual models as well. Thus, the paper concludes that Osama bin Laden used a number of manipulative strategies which augmented and embellished the use of 'jihad' in order to develop a more effective discourse for his audience. In addition, the findings have revealed that bin Laden used different implicit and embedded interpretations of different topics which have been accepted as taken-for-granted truths for him to legitimate Jihad against his enemies. There are many presuppositions in the speeches analysed that result in particular common-sense assumptions and a world-view about the selected speeches. More importantly, the assumptions in the analysed speeches help consolidate the ideological analysis in terms of in-group and out-group members.

Keywords : Al-Qaeda, cognition, critical discourse analysis, Osama Bin Laden, jihad, implicature, legitimisation, presupposition, political discourse

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