A Critical Discourse Analysis of Artificial Intelligence in Gates' Social Media Content

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (henceforth, AI) is one of the most remarkable topics on social media platforms. The current study aims to investigate the representation of AI in Bill Gates' social media content to uncover the hidden ideology of one of the most influential figures in the field of AI technology. Furthermore, critical discourse analysis (henceforth, CDA) examines the relationship between language, ideology, and power in various social and cultural contexts. The study aims to answer the following questions: 1- What are the lexical devices that are used to represent Artificial Intelligence (henceforth, AI) in Gates' social media content to construct the "self "and the "other"? 2- How is intertextaulity utilized in social media in terms of ideology and the construction of "self" and "other"?. The researcher forms an eclectic model of CDA using Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model and Van Dijk's (1995) ideological square model. Based on the findings, the study concludes that the examination of lexical devices reveals the way the "self" represents his AI technology and its benefits to the world. While the representation of "other" is illustrated in the environment that surrounds AI technology.

1. INTRODUCTION

AI is defined by Professor McCarthy (2007), as "the science and engineering of making intelligent machines." has become one of the most interesting aspects that catches attention on social media since it began to be associated with a lot of fields nowadays. Moreover, it began to be used in a way that copies people's faces, voices, and identities in the virtual world. A lot of opinions surround AI, whether it is considered a negative, or a positive influence among individuals. CDA is considered one of the best tools for uncovering the strategies and ideologies behind texts. Wodak (2015, p.1) identified CDA as "language use beyond sentence level," so in other words, CDA goes further than analyzing words linguistically, but it also reveals the ideas that go behind these words, in other words, being critical in CDA symbolizes the idea of going beyond describing the linguistic components of discourse but also explaining how and why these components are used by the discourse marker. Van Dijk (2008) also claimed that the purpose of CDA is to reveal the relationship between language, ideology, society, power, values, and opinions. AI has a significant influence on social media platforms.

However, no other study has investigated the concept of AI in Gates' posts and threads, especially from the perspective of CDA. Therefore, the current study attempts to fill this gap.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Media Discourse

Media is sure a broad term that consists of printed media and telecasting; in other words, TV, radio, and newspapers are used to present the reality of the world (O'Keeffe, 2006). Van Dijk (1995) claimed that many informal, public, and institutional forms of talk and text are considered to be under media because it is a form of information transition. Representation of events and ideas in media is different from ordinary communication; for example, the press is transmitted according to certain governing rules in media institutions, social values, and economic circumstances that participate in the process of representation; furthermore, the media is considered to be subjective even if it appears to look objective because media presents its own viewpoints based on a particular ideological motivation: "The world of the press is not the real world, but rather a partial one that is skewed and judged" (Flower, 1991, p. 11).

Media, whether it is printed or online, has great power; the power of media is manifested in terms of the absolute power to post information as a democratic force (Schudson, 2003).

Moreover, due to the development that happened to the world, it is easy to access news from multiple sources such as newspapers, TV, radio, mobile, websites, X, and Facebook, as long as they have digital devices, which become considered the basics to every human being (Janeau, 2023).

Representation is considered to be a common point that is shared between discourse and media. This fact highlights that media discourse is not associated with impartial writing; however, it reflects a certain view whether it is a political, social, or economic aspect (Flower, 1998). Also, Flower (1998, p.27) claimed that ideas and events are not transmitted spontaneously "because they have to be transmitted through some medium with its own structural features, and these structural features are already impregnated with social values that make up a potential perspective on events." According to Macdonald (2003), media discourse is not a representation of reality; it is considered to be an interpretation of it.

2.2. CDA: Related Concepts

2.2.1. Discourse

The term discourse is considered to be a broad term that is used by many domains such as linguistics, sociology, philosophy and more. Discourse could also be seen as "a type of language communication in which speaker and listener exchange roles" (Leech,1983,p.84).

There are two ways to define discourse: it could be defined in terms of structure and function; Structurally, It is a particular unit of language that is above the sentence, and functionally, a particular focus like language use (Schiffrin, 1994). Jorgensen and Philips (2002,p.1) discussed the idea behind the word discourse, he mentioned that "language is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life"

2.2.2. Ideology

Van Dijk (2013) refers to the beliefs and values of a certain group as ideologies; moreover, Fairclough (1995, p.72) claimed that ideology is associated with structures and events: "

Ideology is located, then, both in structures which constitute the outcome of past events and the conditions for current events, and in events themselves, as they reproduce and transform their conditioning structures." Also, language is influenced by ideology in many ways (Fairclough, 1995).

Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p.275) stated that ideologies are "particular ways of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, domination and exploitation."

   It is important to note that revealing underlying ideologies is one of the main purposes of CDA; moreover, ideologies in texts are examined as a means of changing the linguistic practices that are associated with the beliefs of social groups Fairclough and Wodak (1997,p.275) claimed that "ideologies are often false or undergrounded construction of society."

2.2.3. Power

   According to Van Dijk (2013, p. 9), the term "power is defined in terms of the control one group has over another group." It is important to mention that CDA is mainly associated with analyzing the discourse of domain groups and exposing their goals; therefore, Fairclough (2001, p. 216) claimed that "critical analysis of discourse is nothing if it is not a source of struggle against domination." The concept of power has a very important role in CDA. Weiss and Wodak (2003) stated that power is one of the main concepts within the fields of CDA because it is related to relations in social structure. Power is associated with persons' control of specific social events via the genre of text, so it is not associated with grammatical aspects of text only; Van Dijk (1996, p. 84) stated that "one of the central tasks of CDA is to account for the relationships between discourse and social power."

2.3.Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

   According to Meyer (2001), Haliday's theory of systemic functional grammar influenced Fairclough to develop a three-dimensional model for CDA. Fairclough views that analyzing text in isolation is insufficient because text can only be understood if it is connected with other text and with the social context (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). Fairclough (2001) listed three dimensions of a communicative event, which are:

1-Text (speech, writing, visual images).

2- Discursive practice (creation and consumption of texts).

3- Social practice.

1) Text

According to Crystal (2008, p. 481), text is defined as a "pre-theoretical term used in linguistics and phonetics to refer to a stretch of language recorded for the purpose of analysis and description."

2) Discursive Practice

The discursive practice is the second dimension of Fairclough's framework that is associated with "text production, distribution, and consumption" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 78). Also, discursive practice is associated with the interpretation stage; Fairclough (1989, p. 26) claimed that "interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction with seeing the text as the product of a process of production and as recourse in the process of interpretation."

3) Social Practice

The third dimension illustrates that discourse is a sociocultural practice (Fairclough, 1998). The social practice dimension is associated with the explanation stage. Fairclough (1989, p. 26) claimed that "Explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with the social determination of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects".

2.3.1. Lexical Analysis

Vocabularies are essential in the analysis of text, and they have an important role in revealing hidden ideologies. According to Fowler (1991, p. 82), vocabulary is a "representation of the world for a culture; the world as perceived according to the ideological needs of a culture."

Fairclough introduced three dimensions of lexical analysis, which are:

1) Experiential Value of Words

According to Fairclough (2001.p. 93), experiential value is associated with knowledge, beliefs, and contents; he claims that "experiential value is a trace of and a cue to the in which the text producer's experience of the natural or world is represented."
The current study uses categorization which is defined as a "particular way of dividing up some aspects of reality which is built upon a particular ideological representation of that reality."

2) Expressive value of words

The expressive value of words is related to the subject and the social identity. Fairclough (2001) claimed that this dimension is related to the discourse producer's evaluation of reality.

2.3.2. Intertextuality

Fairclough (1992, p.270) claimed that intertextaulity shows "how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones". In other words, intertextuality presents diachronic relations between specific texts and prior texts. According to Fairclough (1992), there are two types of intertextuality, which are manifest intertextuality and constitutive intertextuality.

1- **Manifest Intertextuality:** Fairclough (1992, pp.117) defines manifest intertextuality as the cases where specific other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text". There are two types of manifest intertextuality which are direct and indirect.

2- **Constitutive Intertextuality:** According to Fairclough (1992), constitutive intertextuality refers to the set of discourse elements that participate in the content of discourse; these elements are genre, discourse, and style.

2.4.Van Dijk's Ideological Square

Van Dijk (1995) introduces the ideological square model, which is associated with analyzing discourse on an ideological level using four principles. According to Van Dijk (2006, p.734), these four principles are:

1-"Emphasize Our good things"

2-"Emphasize Their bad things"

3- "De-emphasize Our bad things"

4- "De-emphasize Their good things"

The aim of Van Dijk's ideological square is to reveal hidden ideology by using strategies that include positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. The positive self-presentation includes using good words in their speech about themselves, while the negative other-presentation includes using bad words in their speech about the others (Van Dijk, 2000). It is important to mention that the ideological square could be applied on all levels of analysis in terms of "emphasize and de-emphasize (Van Dijk, 2000; Hazhar et al, 2021).

2.5. AI, Social Media and CDA

Social media nowadays has become one of the most used sources people rely on to access information. To give a proper definition of social media; it refers to a variety of technologies that facilitate the sharing of ideas and information among their users. From Facebook, Instagram, the X platform, and YouTube, more than 4.7 billion people use social media, equal to roughly 60% of the world's population (Dollarhide, 2023). Firstly, the researcher of the current study chooses X as one of the social media platforms because (1) it is one of the most popular social networking apps, (2) it will have more than 500 million monthly active users in 2024, (3) it is used worldwide (Dean, 2024). Secondly, Facebook was selected as the source of the collective data because it is the most famous social media platform that is familiar worldwide. Thirdly, Threads was selected as one of the sources for data collection because (1) it is text-based, (2) it is always compared to X .

The purpose of applying CDA on Gates' social media content in association with AI is to find the reason behind using certain texts to present AI to the audience. Van Dijk stated that the reason behind the application of CDA is to examine texts to highlight what "structures, strategies or another properties of text, talk, verbal interaction or communicative events play a role in production or reproduction of uneven power relations" (Van Dijk, 1993, P. 250). Therefore, CDA is considered a suitable tool for studies that are associated with social media content. Moreover, the concept of AI technology is related to the concept of power which is considered as one of CDA's pillars.

3. Methodology

The qualitative method by Creswell (2014, p.34) is defined as "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

"Furthermore, using the qualitative method involves making a narrative or textual description under investigation. Also, the qualitative method aims to have a deep understanding of the data analysis (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). Therefore, the current study is associated with the qualitative method since the researcher of the present study aims to investigate Gates' posts and threads to uncover his ideology. Moreover, the process of data collection is associated with investigating Gates' social media content. Maxwell (1997 p.87) defined the selected data, which is collected with a purpose, as "particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices."

Additionally, There are many reasons for selecting the data of the current study which are: (1) The selected platforms are famous and recognized worldwide, (2) the chosen figure is a famous businessman, and billionaire. His words has a big influence on the world, (3) Gates is native English speaker, which makes the data analysis smoother and easier (4) Gates uses AI to develop his business, (5) he shares his opinions about AI on social media platforms regularly. Therefore, the selected data includes eight X crops' (henceforth, X) posts, five Facebook posts, and five threads from the period 15/3/2023 to 30/3/2024. The researcher of the current study focuses on this period of time to emphasize on AI representation in recent years.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

This section is associated with presenting the analysis of the selected data. The following examples illustrate the analysis of Gates' social media according to Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model and Van Dijk's (1995) ideological square model. The examples involve one post from X, one post from Facebook, and one thread from Threads.

1. X's Post

"Everyone should benefit from artificial intelligence, and not just people in rich countries. This is the priority for my own work."

A- Lexicalization

- #### The Experiential Value of Words
  Categorization

Categorization in this post is presented in the way Gates focuses on the entities. Firstly, the term *"everyone"* emphasizes the first group, which is the global group that highlights Gates' noble intention to provide AI technology universally. Secondly, the term *"people in rich countries"* emphasizes a specific group, which highlights Gates' objection towards the inequality towards the benefit of AI they have in comparison to individuals who are less fortunate. Furthermore, the ideology of Gates' is reflected in the way he positioned himself as a claimer of equality that has the power to make AI technology available to all individuals. Additionally, Gates' addressing this issue implies the existence of inequalities in society in providing AI services, which presents Gates as an active participant who works to develop AI technology for moral reasons. Also, the benefit of addressing this issue helps Gates influence the audience to trust his work and evoke them to use it. Therefore, the representation of "self" is presented in Gates' noble intention of providing AI technology to the whole world regardless of their economic statue, while the representation of "other" is presented in society as a whole that positioned AI technology as a privilege for wealthy.

- **The Expressive Value of Words**

Gates uses the adjective "rich" to specify a group within society to highlight the distinction in AI privilege. Furthermore, the significance of identifying these countries is to shed light on the limited access to AI technology to be available in all countries. Also, Gates stresses a crucial aspect that attracts the attention of the audience, which has the significance of positioning his work as leading in the field of AI in association with morals and ethnicity. Moreover, the ideology of Gates is revealed in the way he uses social issues to declare his ability to develop AI technology that is accessible in every country. Therefore, the representation of "self" is presented in Gates' expression to highlight social issues, while the representation of "other" is presented in the identification of "rich" countries that benefit from AI access in comparison to other countries.

B- Intertextuality

- **Manifest Intertextuality**

Gates' post does not include an explicit reference to a specific figure, topic, or event. It addresses the audience about his aim of making AI technology available in every country. Therefore, the representation of "self" and "other" is not presented in association with manifest intertextuality.

- **Constitutive Intertextuality**

Table 1: *The Constitutive Intertextuality in X's Post*

Discourse	Genre	Style			
		Rhetorical mode	Tenor		Mode
			Status	Formality	
Advocacy Discourse	Post on X	Argumentative	Responsible leader	Formal	Written

The Discourse of Gates is considered an advocacy discourse since it is associated with supporting the importance of AI being available in every country despise of its economical statute. It is associated with raising awareness about the value of AI to all individuals. The genre of the discourse is a post on X. Furthermore, the rhetorical mode of this post is argumentative since it is associated with raising an argument about equality among countries concerning the usage of AI. In addition, Gates emphasizes this issue to present its importance to influence the public's perception. Moreover, Gates position himself as a responsible leader who is concerned about unprivileged individuals, which highlights his power and ability to make changes within the world by using his experience and wealth. Additionally, the language of this discourse is formal since there is no use of colloquial expressions and it has a clear and direct structure. The use of formal language has the benefit of showing the seriousness of the issue. Also, Gates uses formal language to address the international audience and the general public, which highlights the significance of the problem. The mode of the discourse is written.

- **Facebook Post**

"My work has always been rooted in a core idea: Innovation is the key to progress. When scientists came up with better ways to make vaccines, it helped cut childhood deaths in half and save millions of lives. With AI, we can accelerate the rate of new discoveries at a pace we've never seen before."

A- Lexicalization

- **The Experiential value of words**
  - *Categorization*

Categorization in this post is presented in the way Gates classifies specific aspects in this post such as "*vaccines"* and AI technology. Furthermore, Gates emphasizes AI technology's importance by relating it to a significant social issue, which is childhood deaths. This categorization highlights the argument that scientific AI technological advances lead to great social advantages. Additionally, the categorization in this post presents AI as a key driver of future progress. Moreover, Gates' ideology is reflected by the way he positions AI as a necessity for future advancement that will fix important social issues. Also, categorization in this post is associated with stressing Gates' AI technology in comparison to other companies in the field, which is presented in his phrase " *My work has always been rooted in a core idea: Innovation is the key to progress".* He focuses on the idea that he has different principles for those who work in the same field. Therefore, the representation of "self" is illustrated in the way categorization presents Gates' AI technology as advanced enough to solve important life issues. While the representation of "other" is implied in Gates' competitors that does not have the same ethical principles as he does.

- **The Expressive Value of Words**

Gates uses adjectives like "better" and "new" in his post which express positive emotions. Furthermore, Gates presents AI technology in association with positive adjectives to influence the audience's perception about accepting AI technology as part of their lives which has the significance of building trust in his future projects. Additionally,   the phrase *" discoveries"* emphasizes his progress in developing AI technology to reach great beneficial outcomes. Therefore, the representation of "self" is illustrated in the positive way Gates expresses about AI technology. While the representation of others is not presented in association with the expressive value of words which reflects Gates' ideology of presenting AI technology in a positive life to be accepted by the public.

B- Intertextuality

- **Manifest Interextuality**

Gates does not make an explicit reference to a text, event, or figure in this post. Furthermore, Gates expresses his idea concerning AI and innovation without referencing a specific previous discourse. Therefore, the representation of "self" and "other" is not presented in association with manifest intertextuality.

- **Constitutive Intertextuality**

Table 2: *The Constitutive Intertextuality in Facebook's post*

Discourse	Genre	Style

		Rhetorical mode	Tenor		Mode
			Status	Formality	
Promotional Discourse	Post on Facebook	Descriptive	Company Leader	Formal	Written

The discourse of Gates is considered as promotional discourse since it is associated with promoting his idea and his work. He highlights the benefit of his idea to the aspect of progress. The genre of the discourse is a Facebook post. Furthermore, the rhetorical mode of this discourse is descriptive since Gates describes his idea in association with using scientists' experience in developing vaccines to evoke the audience to trust his words. Additionally, Gates presents himself as a company leader by using phrases such as "*my work*" and *"we can accelerate the rate of new discoveries"* to promote his potential new AI projects. Also, the language of the discourse is formal since it has vocabulary such as "innovation", "discoveries", and "progress" that are related to formal context such as business or professional discourse. In addition, the discourse does not include informal elements such as slang or conversational language. It has well-structured sentences, which are thoughtfully composed to convey his ideas. The use of formal language highlights his serious intention. The mode of the discourse is written.

- **Thread**

"AI has the potential to improve learning and outcomes—including college completion rates— for students. I'm glad that this conversation is taking place among education leaders."

A- Lexicalization
- **The Experiential value of words**
  Categorization

Categorization in this thread is presented in the way Gates classifies the aspects of education and AI technology. Furthermore, education is considered one of the most important social values, which Gates utilizes to present the benefit of AI technology. This categorization emphasizes the argument that education with AI technology leads to great social advantages. Moreover, Gates categorizes himself as an AI leader who has knowledge and experience concerning AI technology and categorizes the individuals in charge of educational decisions as *"education leaders"* to frame the audience's perception of his significant efforts to provide a technology that is beneficial to humans. Additionally, his ideology is reflected in the way he shapes the audience's view of AI as a necessity for essential life aspects. Therefore, the representation of "self" is illustrated in AI technology's benefits in improving the outcomes that are associated with education. While, the representation of "other" is presented in the education field, which needs AI to make the students have a better learning experience.

- **The Expressive Value of Words**

The adjectives in this thread, such as "potential" and "glad," express positive emotions that help in influencing the audience's perception concerning AI's benefits for education.

Furthermore, Gates frames the concept of AI in a positive light that reflects his ideology of presenting the benefits of AI to build the audience's trust in AI technology in association with life's needs in the present and the future. Therefore, the representation of "self" is presented in the positive framing of AI technology. While the representation of "other" is not presented since Gates focuses on highlighting the optimistic side of AI technology to influence the audience to accept it in their lives.

C- The Interpretation Stage
- **Intertextuality**
1- Manifest Intertextuality

Gates shares a report from the Hechinger Report website, which is considered a non-profit website for news. The report is associated with AI technology benefits for educational purposes under the title "Why artificial intelligence holds great promise for improving student outcomes." Furthermore, the report focuses on the benefits AI brings to educational institutions by managing multiple issues, as in *"artificial intelligence holds great promise for dramatically enhancing the reach and impact of postsecondary institutions and improving outcomes for all students."* and *"AI tools could have a transformative effect on access, progression and completion for learners who were previously constrained by limitations of time, space and resources."*

Gates refers to this report to frame the audience's understanding concerning the positive outcome of AI technology. Moreover, Gates' ideology is reflected in the way he uses this report to position AI technology as a necessity to human life, which is presented by his reference to a report that focuses on the positive side of AI technology. Therefore, the representation of "self" is illustrated in AI technology benefits that provide significant help for the field of education. While the representation of "other" is illustrated in the educational field, which needs AI technology to fix issues associated with time and finance.

2- Constitutive Intertextuality
Table 3: *The Constitutive Intertextuality in Thread*

Discourse	Genre	Style			
		Rhetorical mode	Tenor		Mode
			Status	Formality	
Advocacy Discourse	Thread	Argumentative	AI Expert	Informal	Written

This discourse of Gates is considered as an advocacy discourse since it is associated with highlighting the importance of using AI technology as a tool that helps the process of learning. The genre of this discourse is a thread. Furthermore, the rhetorical mode of this discourse is argumentative since it presents an argument concerning using AI technology in education to influence the public's perception to accept the idea. Moreover, Gates positions himself as an AI expert who has the knowledge and experience to identify the benefits of AI in the field of education. Additionally, the language of this thread is informal. The phrase "I'm glad" indicates an informal language since it includes contractions and subjectivity. Also, it includes elements

of conversational tone such as in the phrase *"this conversation is taking place."* In addition, the mode of the discourse is written.

5. CONCLUSION

Conclusions are drawn based on the findings of the data analysis. Furthermore, this study arrives at the following conclusions:

1. The study of lexical devices reveals the way Gates uses the "self" to represent AI technology developer and his capability to manage it to do good. While, the representation of "other" is illustrated in the environment that surrounds AI technology.
2. The representation of "self" is emphasized by the usage of positive adjectives in association with AI technology to influence the audience to accept AI as part of their lives. While, the representation of "other" is highlighted by the usage of negative adjectives in association with circumstances around AI technology.
3. The representation of "self" and "other" highlights Gates' ideology of presenting his technology (the "self") as a necessity for society (the "other").
4. The expressive value of words emphasizes Gates' ideology of promoting AI technology as safe and important.
5. The representation of "self" highlights Gates' power as a company leader.
6. Gates' social media content involves advocacy discourse that stresses his ideology of supporting the importance of AI in solving social problems; technical discourse emphasizes his position as a technical expert.
7. The style of the discourse has an important role in reflecting the ideology of Gates. It consists of three items, which are rhetorical mode, tenor, and mode. First of all, the rhetorical mode in Gates' social media content reflects his ideology of highlighting the benefit of his work. Second, the tenor consists of two pillars, which are status and formality. The status of Gates is a company leader, responsible leader, and AI expert, which emphasizes his ideology of presenting his important role in making beneficial contributions to the world by developing AI technology. On the other hand, using formal and informal language is associated with the target audience he has in mind to influence about a specific AI technology. Third, the mode of the discourse in all of the collected data is written since it was collected from short posts and threads on social media platforms.
8. The use of references in Gates' social media content reflects his ideology of highlighting the importance of AI in different situations.

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