

Critical Discourse Analysis Approach (CDA) in Rabindranath Tagore's Speech 'Crisis in Civilization'

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ABSTRACT: *The topic of this research is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach in Rabindranath Tagore's Speech entitled 'Crisis in Civilization' (1941). The speech was conducted by Rabindranath Tagore on the occasion of the poet's eightieth birthday. This is Tagore's last speech, three months before his death. This speech is interesting since it gives a deeper insight into the future of the world, the rapid development of technology and the nature exploitation to satisfy the human demands. This research uses CDA, an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice. The purpose of this research is to investigate how societal power relations are established and reinforced through language. This approach is applied on the wider study on the text, which consists of spoken and written text and also the situation affecting the text.*

Keywords: *critical discourse analysis, Tagore, speech, text*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental means of communication. Language is performed either orally, literally or by motions and expressions. Language bridges information among people. Language also influences human life; way of life, provides wider or narrower points of view, motivates or event provoke people to react on an issue. Language can persuade people to create peaceful or chaotic situation. We realize how language really controls mind and action in our life. The ideal thing to do is to use language wisely in a wider way to create the better living for all man kinds.

Rabindranath Tagore, is one of world's philosophers who gives an intensive attention into the future of human race. He is a cosmopolite, who doesn't think only for India, but also for the world's future. He observed the movements of nations, whereas the barbarism of the war, devastating greediness and selfishness are happening, event until nowadays. He made a special speech to give his last statement to the world. And this speech actually has important messages, which are not only to be understood but also to be conducted in our life as the basic understanding to perform living.

India today has been developing in a broader range. And there are Indian people has been moving and successfully running their life either in their own country or in abroad. But the very unique thing, they always keep their way of life as an Indian people with their specific culture and beliefs. There are many CEOs in the West positioned by Indian persons. An Indian person also has been advancing technology, but Indian is still Indian.

This research is conducted to discover parts of Tagore's speech which has been implied Indian way of life, and how this speech can give people in the world an insight about future living. This is interesting to be traced by using critical discourse analysis approach.

Based on the explanations, there are two problems to be answered in this research. The first is what are parts of Tagore's speech which has been implied Indian way of life? and the second problem, how this speech can give people in the world an insight about future living?

There are two aims to be achieved in this research. The first is to find out important discourse in Tagore's speech which influences Indian people to conduct their life, and the second is to find out Tagore's paradigm or cognitive framework that has been contributed to the world so that people becomes aware in their life. The scientific contribution of this research is to apply the CDA approach into discourse analysis in order to prove Fairclough's statement that language is a form of social practice and language is powerful to be a great influence to human life.

II. CONCEPT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The speech used for this research is the English translation of the original Bengali address by Rabindranath Tagore. This speech is written on the occasion of Tagore's eightieth birthday. It was actually three months before Tagore passé away. The written speech has a historic interest as his last great message to the

world. He was ill at the time and in agony of spirit at the spectacle of the devastating barbarism of the war then raging, and fearful of the crisis in civilization brought about by greed and selfishness and the insolence of might in the West. With his one-time faith in Western civilization painfully shattered, he yet preserved to the end his hope of the ultimate triumph of Man's spirit, and prophesied the coming of a dawn –“perhaps from the East where the sun rises”- after the night of arrogant stupidity and unrighteousness. (Preface, *Crisis in Civilization*, 1940).

According to Fairclough (2005: 3), the term discourse is an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) stems from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. All social practice are tied to specific historical contexts and are the means by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested and different interests are served. It is the questions pertaining to interests - How is the text positioned or positioning? Whose interests are served by this positioning? Whose interests are negated? What are the consequences of this positioning? - that relate discourse to relations of power. Where analysis seeks to understand how discourse is implicated in relations of power, it is called *critical* discourse analysis.

Fairclough's (1989, 1995) model for CDA consists three inter-related processes of analysis tied to three inter-related dimensions of discourse. These three dimensions are:

- 1) The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts).
- 2) The processes by means of which the object is produced and received (writing/speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects.
- 3) The socio-historical conditions which govern these processes.

According to Fairclough each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis:

- 1) Text analysis (description),
- 2) Processing analysis (interpretation),
- 3) Social analysis (explanation).

What is useful about this approach is that it enables you to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxtapositioning, their sequencing, and their layout and so on. However, it also requires you to recognize that the historical determination of these selections and to understand that these choices are tied to the conditions of possibility of that utterance. This is another way of saying that texts are instantiations of socially regulated discourses and that the processes of production and reception are socially constrained. Why Fairclough's approach to CDA is so useful is because it provides multiple points of analytic entry. It does not matter which kind of analysis one begins with, as long as in the end they are all included and are shown to be mutually explanatory. It is in the interconnections that the analyst finds the interesting patterns and disjunctions that need to be described, interpreted and explained.

III. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Results

Tagore concerned about what kind of India would be left after the British granted it independence. “When the stream of their centuries’ administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth they will leave behind them!” (1941: 17) Nonetheless, he looks forward to a period “after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises.” From references earlier in the speech, he may have had Japan in mind. However, the economic crisis appears to have affected Asia far less than it has Western countries. (1941: 18)

Tagore speech is closed by a touching and prophecy statement, “Today we witness the perils which attend on the insolence of might; one day shall be borne out the full truth of what the sages have proclaimed: ‘By unrighteousness, man prospers, gains what appears desirable, conquers enemies, but perishes at the root.’” On this text, Tagore would like to remind the reader to retreat and back to the real meaning of civilization so that starts every person to do the proper conduct. If it is not begun, what has been forecasted by the old sages would certainly happen. Man prospers and has a successful life but has no ethics at all. In other words, a barbar living.

Analysis

The text is a written version of Tagore's last birthday. He was eighty years old on the day he delivered the speech. It was in Santiniketan. He was born on 7 May 1861 and passed away on 7 August 1941. Generally, this speech explains about former positive thinking, that Tagore in his younger period had a thought that Englishmen had nice ideas implemented on their works especially literatures. He mentioned some works by Shakespeare, Byron, Macaulay, and ect. Tagore himself was well-educated in England. He was sent by his brother to learn Literatures and Law in London when he was sixteenth. In London, he was entertained by John Bright's speech, which he said "the English Literature which nourished our minds in the pasts, does even now convey its deep resonance to the recesses of our heart." (Tagore, 1941: 4)

In 1890, he was back to India and lived at the river side of Gangga. At that place he worked and built many projects for the peasant and lowest social. It seemed that he had been learning the impact of the real imperialism since his coming home from London.

He also mentioned on the meaning of 'Civilization' in his speech. He found the equal Indian term for 'civilization' according to Manu is '*sad achar*' that literally means proper conduct. Previously, having experienced a British education, his feeling was in contrast with the Indian traditions. But, as the time has been flowing, he found the real condition Indian people, how easily those who accepted the highest truth of civilization disowned them with impunity whenever questions of national self-interests were involved. (1941: 6)

Tagore was awoken by the experience of witnessing Indian poverty and miserable living. He stopped being lulled by the English literatures and began to sound Indian voice to the world for her independence as a recognized nation. Tagore said, "There came a time when perforce I had to snatch myself away from the mere appreciation of literature. As I emerged into the stark light of bare facts, the sight of the dire poverty of the Indian masses rent my heart. Rudely shaken out of my dreams, I began to realize that perhaps in no other modern state was there such hopeless dearth of the most elementary needs of existence. And yet it was this country whose resources had fed for so long the wealth and magnificence of the British people."

Tagore had travelled to many countries. He also mentioned about his experience about some countries in his speech namely Japan, Russia, Afghanistan, Iran, China, Spain. He mentioned about how Russia struggled to confront the illiteracy and diseases, how Iran successfully was in the national sufficiency, how Afghanistan improve education and develop their people. Tagore stated that the condition in India was more less the same as in China, in which both of them under-controlled the British administrations. Tagore found in India, there had been an improvement on people intellectuality and social development; however, it was deviated into uncontrolled barbarism. There are such filthy rich people on particular groups, but there are many more suffering poor societies in India. This is the excess of the British administration. This situation drove Tagore into a great mourning. This is happening until nowadays in India, where industrialization has been rapidly growing but only for the sake of several societies. There are many more people still in a great poverty.

Nevertheless the situation was broken Tagore's heart. He was thankful that he met such a wonderful English Christian man, C.F. Andrews, who he said as "really large-hearted Englishmen". He also mentioned that Andrews considered to be "friends of the whole human race". (1941: 15)

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that this is a political speech but also contains many humanity values. It is not only meaningful for England people (especially the British administrator) and Indian people, but also to the people in the world. The two problems are answered as follows.

1. The Indian way of life which was implied in Tagore's speech text is to keep their original values of life, since those are suitable for Indian living and give the Indian people pathways when they are facing the rapid development of technology and industries. One of original Indian values has been declared by Mahatma Gandhi, those are: *ahimsa* (nonviolence), *swadesi* (self-productions), *swamitra* (self-partnership), *satyagraha* (loyalty to the truth) and *hartal* (nationalists movement). This is one teaching from Indian leader. Besides, there are many cultural teachings which have been faithfully-conducted by Indian people until nowadays.
2. This speech can give people in the world an insight about future living in terms of suggesting every people to hold on their original way of life in order to face the fast developing technology and industrialism. And the important message is to think and to be active in action in 'civilization' that is to do the proper conduct. One of those important conducts is to avoid 'greediness' which is the root of every war in this entire world. By not doing any greediness, we can live peacefully.

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Appendix

The object of this study is Rabindranath Tagore's speech text which is actually translated from Bengali into English. Below is the text.

Crisis in Civilization

Today I complete eighty years of my life. As I look back on the vast stretch of years that lies behind me and see in clear perspective the history of my early development, I am struck by the change that has taken place both in my own attitude and in the psychology of my countrymen; a change that carries within it a cause of profound tragedy.

Our direct contact with the larger world of men was linked up with the contemporary history of the English people whom we came to know in those earlier days. It was mainly through their mighty literature that we formed our ideas with regard to these newcomers to our Indian shores. In those days the type of learning that was served out to us was neither plentiful nor diverse, nor was the spirit of scientific enquiry very much in evidence. Thus their scope being strictly limited, the educated of those days had recourse to the English language and literature. Their days and nights were eloquent with the stately declamations of Burke, with Macaulay's long-rolling sentences; discussions centred upon Shakespeare's drama and Byron's poetry and above all upon the large-hearted liberalism of nineteenth-century English politics.

At the time though tentative attempts were being made to gain our national independence, at heart we had not lost faith in the generosity of the English race. This belief was so firmly rooted in the sentiments of our leaders as to lead them to hope that the victor would of his own grace pave the path of freedom for the vanquished. This belief was based upon the fact that England at the time provided a shelter to all those who had flee from persecution in their own country. Political martyrs who had suffered for the honour of their people were accorded unreserved welcome at the hands of the English. I was impressed by this evidence of liberal humanity in the character of the English and thus I was led to set them on the pedestal of my highest respect. This generosity in their national character had not yet been vitiated by Imperialist pride. About this time, as a boy in England, I had the opportunity of listening to the speeches of John Bright, both in and outside the Parliament. The large hearted radical liberalism of those speeches overflowing all narrow national bounds,

made so deep an impression on my mind that something of it lingers even today, even in these days of graceless disillusionment.

Certainly that spirit of abject dependence upon the charity of our rules was no matter for pride. What was remarkable, however, was the whole-hearted way in which we gave our recognition to human greatness even when it revealed itself in foreigner. The best and noblest gifts of humanity cannot be monopoly of a particular race or country; its scope may nor may it be regarded as the miser's hoard buried underground. That is why English literature which nourished our minds in the past, does even now convey its deep resonance to the recesses of our heart.

It is difficult to find a suitable Bengali equivalent for the English word 'civilization'. That phase of civilization with which we were familiar in this country has been called by Manu sad-achar (lit. proper conduct), that is, the conduct prescribed by the tradition of the race. Narrow in themselves these time-honoured social conventions originated and held good in a circumscribed geographical area, in that strip of land, Brahmavarta by name, bound on either side by the rivers Saraswati and Drisadvati. That is how a pharisaic formalism gradually got the upper hand of free thought and the ideal of 'proper conduct' which Manu found established in Brahmavarta steadily degenerated into socialized tyranny.

During my boyhood days the attitude of the cultured and educated section of Bengal, nurtured on English learning, was charged with a feeling of revolt against these rigid regulations of society. A perusal of what Rajnarain Bose has written describing the ways of the educated gentry of those days will amply bear out what I have said just now. In place of these set codes of conduct we accepted the ideal of 'civilization' as represented by the English term.

In our own family this change of spirit was welcomed for the sake of its sheer rational and moral force and its sheer rational and moral force and its influence was felt in every sphere of our life. Born in that atmosphere, which was moreover coloured by our intuitive bias for literature, I naturally set the English on the throne of my heart. Thus passed the first chapters of my life. Then came the parting of the ways accompanied with a painful feeling of disillusion when I began increasingly to discover how easily those who accepted the highest truths of civilization disowned them with impunity whenever questions of national self-interest were involved.

There came a time when perforce I had to snatch myself away from the mere appreciation of literature. As I emerged into the stark light of bare facts, the sight of the dire poverty of the Indian masses rent my heart. Rudely shaken out of my dreams, I began to realise that perhaps in no other modern state was there such hopeless dearth of the most elementary needs of existence. And yet it was this country whose resources had fed for so long the wealth and magnificence of the British people. While I was lost in the contemplation of the great world of civilization, I could never remotely imagine that the great ideals of humanity would end in such ruthless travesty. But today a glaring example of it scares me in the face in the utter and contemptuous indifference of a so called civilized race to the well-being of corers of Indian people.

That mastery over the machine, by which the British have consolidated their sovereignty over their vast empire, has been kept a sealed book, to which due access has been denied to this helpless country. And all the time before our very eyes Japan has been transforming herself into a mighty and prosperous nation. I have seen with my own eyes the admirable use to which Japan has put in her own country the fruits of this progress. I have also been privileged to witness while in Moscow, the unsparing energy with which Russia has tried to fight disease and illiteracy, and has succeeded in steadily liquidating ignorance and poverty, wiping off the humiliation from the face of a vast continent. Her civilization is free from all invidious distinction between one class and another. The rapid and astounding progress achieved by her made me happy and jealous at the same time. One aspect of the Soviet administration which particularly pleased me was that it provided no scope for unseemly conflict of religious differences nor set one community against another by an unbalanced distribution of political favours. That I consider a truly civilized administration which impartially serves the common interests of the people.

While other imperialist powers sacrifice the welfare of the subject races to their own national greed, in the U.S.S.R. I found a genuine attempt being made to harmonise the interests of the various nationalities that are scattered over its vast area. I saw peoples and tribes who only the other day were nomadic savages being encouraged and indeed trained, to avail themselves freely of the benefits of civilization. Enormous sum are being spent on their education to expedite the process. When I see elsewhere some two hundred nationalities; which only a few years ago were at vastly different stages of development marching ahead in peaceful progress and amity, and when I look about my own country and see a very highly evolved and intellectual people drifting into the disorder of barbarism, I cannot help contrasting the two systems of government, one based on cooperation, and the other on exploitation, which have made such contrary conditions possible.

I have also seen Iran, newly awakened to a sense of national self-sufficiency attempting to fulfil her own destiny freed from the deadly grinding stones of two European powers. During my recent visit to that country I discovered to my delight that Zoroastrians who once suffered from the fanatical hatred of the major

community and whose rights had been curtailed by the ruling power, were now free from this age-long repression, and that civilized life had established itself in the happy land. It is significant that Iran's good fortune dates from the day when she finally disentangled herself from the meshes of European diplomacy. With all my heart I wish Iran well.

Turning to the neighbouring kingdom of Afghanistan I find that though there is much room for improvement in the field of education and social development, yet she can look forward to continuous progress; for none of the European powers, boastful of their civilization, has yet succeeded in overwhelming and crushing her possibilities.

Thus while these other countries were marching ahead, India, smothered under the dead weight of British administration, lay static her utter helplessness. Another great and ancient civilization for whose recent tragic history the British cannot disclaim responsibility is China. To serve their own national profit the British first doped her people with opium and then appropriated a portion of her territory. As the world was about to forget the memory of this outrage, we were painfully surprised by another event. While Japan was quietly devouring North China, her act of wanton aggression was ignored as a minor incident by the veterans of British diplomacy. We have also witnessed from this distance how actively the British statesmen acquiesced in the destruction of Spanish Republic.

On the other hand, we also noted with admiration how a band of valiant Englishmen laid down their lives for Spain. Even though the English had not aroused themselves sufficiently to their sense of responsibility towards China in the Far East, in their own immediate neighbourhood they did not hesitate to sacrifice themselves to the cause of freedom. Such acts of heroism reminded me over again of the true English spirit to which in those early days I had given my full faith, and made me wonder how imperialist greed could bring about so ugly a transformation in the character of so great a race.

Such the tragic tale of the gradual loss of my faith in the claims of the European nations to civilization. In India the misfortune of being governed by a foreign race is daily brought home to us not only in the callous neglect of such minimum necessities of life as adequate provision for food, clothing, educational and medical facilities for the people, but in an even unhappier form in the way the people have been divided among themselves. The pity of it is that the blame is laid at the door of our own society. So frightful a culmination of the history of our people would never have been possible but for the encouragement it has received from secret influences emanating from high places.

One cannot believe that Indians are in any way inferior to the Japanese in intellectual capacity. The most effective difference between these two eastern peoples is that whereas India lies at the mercy of the British, Japan has been spared the shadow of alien domination. We know what we have been deprived of. That which was truly best in their own civilization, the upholding of the dignity of human relationship, has no place in the British administration of this country. If in its place they have established, baton in hand, a reign of 'law and order', in other words a policemen's rule, such a mockery of civilization can claim no respect from us. It is the mission of civilization to bring unity among people and establish peace and harmony. But in unfortunate India, the social fabric is being rent into shreds by unseemly outbursts of hooliganism daily growing in intensity, right under the very aegis of 'law and order'. In India, so long as no personal injury is inflicted upon any member of the ruling race, this barbarism seems to be assured of perpetuity, making us ashamed to live under such an administration.

And yet my good fortune has often brought me into close contact with really large-hearted Englishmen. Without the slightest hesitation I may say that the nobility of their character was without parallel; in no country or community have I come across such greatness of soul. Such examples would not allow me wholly to lose faith in the race which produced them. I had the rare blessing of having Andrews – a real Englishman, a real Christian and a true man for a very close friend. Today in the perspective of death his unselfish and courageous magnanimity shines all the brighter. The whole of India remains indebted to him for innumerable acts of love and devotion. But personally speaking, I am especially beholden to him because he helped me to retain in my old age that feeling of respect for the English race with which in the pasts I was inspired by their literature and which I was about to lose completely. I count such Englishmen as Andrews not only as my personal and intimate friends but as friends of the whole human race. To have known them has been to me a treasured privilege. It is my belief that such Englishmen will save British honour from ship-wreck. At any rate if I had not known them, my despair at the prospect of western civilization would be unrelieved.

In the meanwhile the demon of barbarity has given up all pretence and has emerged with unconcealed fangs, ready to tear up humanity in an orgy of devastation. From one end of the world to the other the poisonous fumes of hatred darken the atmosphere. The spirit of violence which perhaps lay dormant in the psychology of the West, has at last roused itself and desecrates the spirit of Man.

The wheels of Fate will someday compel the English to give up their Indian Empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their two centuries' administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth they will leave behind them! I had at one time believed that the springs of

civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. But today when I am about to quit the world that faith has gone bankrupt altogether.

Today I live in the hope that the Saviour is coming; that he will be born in our midst in this poverty-shamed hovel which is India. I shall wait to hear the divine message of civilization which he will bring with him, the supreme word of promise that he will speak unto man from this very eastern horizon to give faith and strength to all who hear.

As I look around I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man. I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in his history after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the Sun rises. A day will come when unvanquished Man will retrace his path of conquest, despite all barriers, to win back his lost human heritage.

Today we witness the perils which attend on the insolence of might; one day shall be borne out the full truth of what the sages have proclaimed: "By the unrighteousness man prospers, gains what appears desirable, conquers enemies, but perishes at the root." (April, 1941)