

## Study of CDA During Selena Gomez's Discourse on Youtube

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### ABSTRACT

*Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) pertains to the examination of language or linguistic usage. The objectives of this investigation were twofold: firstly, to identify the types of CDA evident in Selena Gomez's speeches, and secondly, to delineate the social cognition apparent within her speeches. The researcher employed Teun A. Van Dijk's (1998) Critical Discourse Analysis theory as the theoretical framework. Employing qualitative and descriptive methodologies, this study aimed to depict and scrutinize the data. The analysis primarily focused on dissecting the critical discourse present in Selena Gomez's speech texts. Through this analysis, three categories of CDA elements were identified in Selena Gomez's speeches: firstly, thematic elements, comprising a single category; secondly, syntactic style elements, subdivided into five categories, namely Persuasion, Impression Management, Attribution, Cohesion, and Pronoun usage; thirdly, semantic style elements, which were further categorized into Background and Detail, as well as Presupposition; and fourthly, schemata, classified into three segments: the opening section, the content, and the closing section. Additionally, several elements contributing to social cognition were discerned, including person schemas, self-schemes, and role schemes.*

**Keywords:** *Critical Discourse Analysis, Selena Gomez, Speech.*

### INTRODUCTION

In society, individuals naturally engage in social interactions with others in their vicinity. Communication serves as a fundamental tool in these interactions, facilitated by language, which can be utilized in two primary modes: direct and indirect. Direct communication involves direct interaction between users, often referred to as spoken language, wherein language is produced by the human vocal organs and articulated through the mouth to form a structured sequence of words. A typical example of direct communication is face-to-face conversation among individuals. Conversely, indirect communication involves the use of written language, typically facilitated by various devices, representing language through a writing system.

Speech, as a form of public expression, encompasses spoken, written, or signed language. Various types of speeches exist, including informative, persuasive, demonstrative, entertaining, and team speeches. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the perceived naturalness of speech is often illusory. Contrary to learning basic functions like walking, acquiring speech involves a distinct process, heavily influenced by cultural factors and social norms. Speeches serve multiple functions, one of which is to



create a conducive environment wherein a single individual delivers a speech to leave a positive impression on the audience. Examples of speeches include graduation addresses, leadership speeches, religious sermons, and speeches by presidential officials. Notably, artist Selena Gomez delivered a speech titled "Trust Yourself," categorized as a persuasive speech. Effective speech beginnings often involve posing questions relevant to the audience, presenting startling facts, or engaging the audience's imagination, mirroring storytelling techniques.

Recent research has increasingly focused on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly concerning political discourse. While discussions on political discourse have often emphasized the ideas and linguistic strategies of speakers within a social context, there has been a growing interest in the correlation between language and power dynamics. This study specifically examines speeches through the lens of CDA, aiming to uncover the underlying values or ideologies embedded within them. CDA serves various functions such as examining power relations, hegemony, ideology, class, gender, race, discrimination, social order, and structure.

Critical Discourse Analysis is an analytical approach that critically evaluates the use of language in both spoken and written texts to uncover embedded values or ideologies. This analysis aims to reveal power dynamics within social and institutional contexts as reflected in language use. It considers language use as a social practice, highlighting the dialectical relationship between discourse and the situations, institutions, and social structures that influence it. CDA involves qualitative analysis of written or spoken discourse in relation to its social context, seeking to understand how language is employed in real-life situations and exploring its underlying ideology.

In a speech delivered by the American actress and singer Selena Gomez, she emphasizes the importance of believing in oneself. She recounts a personal experience where she faced doubts and criticism but found strength in her mother's encouragement to trust in herself. Gomez's speech resonates with the theme of self-belief and determination.

The primary objective of this research is to examine the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) present in Selena Gomez's speech. Additionally, the research aims to identify the specific elements of the CDA structure utilized by Selena Gomez to convey the underlying meaning of her speech. This study provides sequential insights into the CDA structure of the text, encompassing both macrostructure and microstructure aspects of Selena Gomez's speech. Furthermore, it delves into the superstructure of the speech, which emerges based on a socio-cognitive approach, and investigates the power dynamics inherent in Selena Gomez's speech.

CDA, originating from a critical theory of language, views language usage as a form of social practice deeply intertwined with specific historical contexts. It explores the intricate relationships between discursive practices, events, and texts, as well as the broader social and cultural structures and processes. Moreover, CDA investigates how these practices and texts are shaped by power relations and struggles over power, highlighting the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society as a means of securing power and hegemony.

From a critical perspective, discourse analysis examines the connections between language use and the social and political context in which it occurs. It critically engages with the norms and expectations of particular discourse communities, addressing social, economic, and political concerns while providing students with the necessary tools to navigate these discursive landscapes. The application of CDA in research is guided by key principles, including the examination of the linguistic character of social and cultural processes, the negotiation of power relations through discourse, and the recognition of discourse's role in constructing ideologies and reproducing social relations.

Furthermore, CDA acknowledges the intertwined nature of language, society, and culture, emphasizing that language not only reflects but also shapes social relations and ideologies. It considers discourse as part of broader sociocultural contexts, making connections between social and cultural structures and the properties of texts. CDA goes beyond description to offer interpretative and explanatory insights, recognizing that interpretations and explanations are subject to change based on new readings and contextual information. By uncovering opaque power relationships, CDA serves as a form of social action aimed at intervening and bringing about change in communicative and socio-political practices.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is not a uniform model, school, or paradigm, but rather a shared perspective within linguistics, semiotics, or discourse analysis. Put simply, CDA investigates the relationship between textual structures and social context, examining them within broader social structures. Van Dijk specifically highlights that CDA focuses on the interplay between discourse, power dynamics, dominance, and social inequalities. Van Dijk outlines three levels of discourse structure: macrostructure, microstructure, and superstructure.

Macrostructures, as delineated by Van Dijk, primarily revolve around thematic elements, which encompass the main themes or topics of discourse. These themes are closely intertwined with the speaker's intentions and convey the essential information transferred by the speaker. Understanding the theme requires a comprehensive grasp of the entire text and the social context in which the speeches emerge. Each sentence within discourse carries its own theme, serving as the starting point for the utterance and guiding subsequent statements.

Syntax elucidates the relationship between words or elements within discourse. Studies utilizing Van Dijk's theory have revealed various syntax styles employed in political manipulation, such as active and passive sentence structures, coherence, and pronoun usage. Coherence aids in conveying the speaker's ideas to the audience, as demonstrated by the use of conjunctions like "therefore" to imply causal relationships. Pronouns, such as "us," are utilized to create a sense of community and manipulate language. Different syntax styles, including sentence structure, cohesion, and pronoun usage, warrant analysis by CDA researchers.

The analysis of sentence form encompasses persuasion, attribution, and impression management within discourse. Persuasion strategies, such as the use of passive sentences and repetition, serve to emphasize the importance of certain ideas and shape the hierarchical structure of information. Persuasion techniques manifest not only through direct sentence repetition but also through nuanced variations in discourse delivery.

Some studies on impression management focus on the verbal cues preceding discourse, such as positive self-descriptions or acts of kindness like self-disclosure. However, a speaker's negative evolution does not always diminish persuasion, as this relies on the social attributes of the speaker. Individuals perceived as more credible or powerful, due to factors like knowledge or status, may assertively defend their viewpoints compared to less influential speakers.

Attribution, serving as a form of justification, contributes to strategies of positive self-portrayal, as seen in discussions involving minority groups. Attribution can also be observed in the negative portrayal and perception of other groups. The process of attribution involves recalling past incidents related to another group, shaped by the speaker's knowledge and perspective. Many experiments draw upon narrative discourse, presenting information about actions and actors to study subjects. This self-serving aspect of attribution applies not only to individuals but also extends to group members, particularly when explaining negative actions or failures during intergroup conflicts.

## **METHOD**

The data for this study was sourced from a transcript available on the YouTube channel "English Speech" (<https://youtu.be/jG-4kBIDAzA?t=13>). The speech, titled "Trust Yourself," was delivered on May 2nd, 2020, with a duration of 6 minutes and 55 seconds. In her speech, Selena Gomez encourages individuals to trust themselves, fostering inspiration for continuous learning, achievement, and self-belief. The data collection technique employed in this research involved a literature study, primarily focusing on obtaining the speech transcript. Initially, researchers utilized an observation script to locate Selena Gomez's speech script from the English Speech YouTube channel. Upon finding and examining the script, researchers proceeded to download it for further analysis. The speech script served as the primary data for analysis. Researchers thoroughly reviewed Selena Gomez's speech script to extract relevant data. Subsequently, the collected data was classified into categories based on Critical Discourse Analysis, namely Macrostructure, Microstructure, and Superstructure. Content analysis, a method for in-depth examination of written or printed information in mass media, was employed in this research. Harold D. Lasswell is credited as a pioneer of content analysis, introducing the symbol coding technique, which involves systematically recording symbols or messages and providing interpretations.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The author discovered various data points in Selena Gomez's speech that are pertinent to different aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Social Cognition, and Power dynamics. The first aspect examined was the text itself, which comprised several components including Macrostructure (theme), Microstructure (Syntaxes style and semantic Style), and Superstructure (schema). In the Macrostructure, the author identified one thematic element present in her speech. Moving to the Microstructure, the author detected the syntaxes style and semantic style of her speech, revealing two instances of persuasion, one instance of impression management, two attributions, two instances of cohesion, and two pronouns.

Additionally, the author identified two background and detail elements, along

with one presupposition. In the Superstructure, the author uncovered schemata, comprising one opening section, one content section, and one closing section in Selena Gomez's speech. The second aspect examined was social cognition, which encompasses two categories: mental models and context models. Mental models are elucidated as memories stored in individuals' minds, relating to their experiences, activities, or events they participate in. These mental models encompass various types, such as Person Schemas, Self Schemas, and Role Schemas. Conversely, context models solely focus on social experiences. Lastly, the third aspect explored was power, defined as the ability to direct or influence another's behavior or the course of events.

The Macrostructure element of the text is emphasized as a fundamental component requiring analysis. It is underscored that the macrostructure cannot be determined by individual sentences but necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the text to grasp the speaker's exact message. In macrostructure analysis, particular attention is given to the thematic structure of the text, which encapsulates the overarching meanings conveyed in the discourse. Themes serve as general descriptors of opinions or ideas communicated by an individual, highlighting the dominant concept and most crucial content of a speech or news piece. In Selena Gomez's speech, the theme revolves around the concept of trusting oneself.



Figure 1

*"So, I just want to say, I hope can inspire each and every one of **you justtrust in yourselves**" (duration 6.23)*

This subject examines the overall expression of opinions or ideas conveyed by an individual. The phrase "you just trust yourselves," identified in Selena Gomez's speech, serves as a motivational reminder for us to maintain self-trust. Selena Gomez intends to encourage the audience to trust themselves and hopes to instill confidence in them. The analysis of the microstructure phase commenced with an examination of syntaxes style, which encompasses four main components: persuasion, attribution, and impression management. These structural elements are scrutinized syntactically, focusing solely on sentence structure, cohesion, and pronoun usage without delving into other social contexts associated with the case.

Regarding persuasion, it pertains to the persuasive techniques employed by the speaker. The author observed that Selena Gomez tends to utilize persuasive strategies for each plan and argument. The persuasion employed by the speaker is influenced by background details and contextual factors. Much of the persuasion delivered is predominantly emotional, often invoking past events, as exemplified by the following instance:



Figure 2

**“Because I feel like I can and I’m just going to start with the basics, so I’m 21 and my mom had, my mom had me when she was 16. And I’m from Grand Prairie, Texas, and she worked four jobs and completely dedicated her life into making mine better.”(duration 1.07)**

The aspect of persuasion involves examining the persuasive techniques employed by the speaker. The writer observed that Selena Gomez often utilizes emotional persuasion, as evidenced by her statement, **“Because I feel like I can and I’m just going to start with the basics, so I’m 21 and my mom had, my mom had me when she was 16. And I’m from Grand Prairie, Texas, and she worked four jobs and completely dedicated her life into making mine better,”** where she emotionally appeals to the audience by sharing personal details about her mother's sacrifices.



Figure 3

*“You want to make something great. And it does more than not the wind out of you and crushes you when people try to tell you that you’re not good enough. **And it almost did for me but there was my mom next to me stronger than ever and she said the most important thing is to always trust in myself. If I have, if I’m doing something because I love it, I should do it because I love it and I believe that I can do it.**” (duration 2.25)*

In addition to emotional persuasion with background details as observed in Datum 2, the sentences in Selena Gomez's speech in Datum 3 encourage the audience to maintain confidence and pursue their passions. Impression management can be understood as the speaker's efforts to present themselves positively. This typically involves the speaker gaining trust and influencing the audience to support their viewpoint. The speaker often portrays moderate opinions by steering clear of sensitive topics, sometimes by diverting or altering the subject matter.



Figure 4

*I'm not an activist, I haven't changed the world or led a campaign,*

***I'm here to just tell you my path, so that you hopefully can take something away from it, because I don't like being honest with — this is a truth — I don't like being honest with press and interviews, I like being honest with you, directly, which is each and every one of you.”(duration 0.42)***

The sentence mentioned could be considered an example of impression management as it represents the initial message conveyed to the recipient, following the speaker's greeting, shaping the first impression. Selena Gomez commenced her speech with a warm greeting to the audience, aiming to establish a positive initial impression. Moreover, the concept of attribution can also be observed through the speaker's negative portrayal and depiction of another group. This attribution can be identified by recollecting past instances related to that particular group, based on the speaker's understanding and view point.

Selena Gomez recounts her personal journey through various life situations. From her aspirations in acting and her dream of pursuing a career as an artist, she expresses her determination to fulfill her aspirations. She also reflects on a significant experience where a casting director doubted her ability to lead a show independently. Despite facing skepticism and lacking support from others, she emphasizes the importance of being part of something meaningful. Furthermore, she shares her realization about the futility of conforming to others' opinions and the importance of staying true to oneself, acknowledging that authenticity is irreplaceable

## CONCLUSION

The initial structural examination conducted in this study focuses on macrostructure, particularly the thematic aspect. Subsequently, the analysis delves into microstructure, encompassing two facets: syntactic style and semantic style. Additionally, the superstructure aspect, which involves graphical elements, is also scrutinized. The findings reveal that Selena Gomez employs persuasive strategies throughout her speech, evident in the topics she addresses. Initially, she introduces her backstory as the primary theme. The microstructural analysis further demonstrates Gomez's coherence as a narrator, with impression management establishing a positive initial impression through well-wishes. Moreover, positive self-description permeates her arguments, indicating her inclination towards presenting life in an optimistic light. The predominant use of pronouns, such as 'and' and 'no', signifies her profound sense of gratitude, while the occasional use of 'me' underscores her assertiveness. Interestingly, Gomez's lexical choices occasionally depict others in a negative light, contributing to a

subtle form of negative self-presentation. Moving on to the aspect of social cognition within Selena Gomez's speech, the Social Cognition Approach is applied, encompassing two main components: mental models and context models. Within the realm of mental models, three distinct types are identified. First, the discussion centers on Selena's mother, portrayed as the epitome of strength, eliciting profound admiration from Selena herself. Second, the discourse touches upon self-schemas, urging listeners to foster self-belief. Lastly, role schemas are invoked, inspiring the audience to embrace self-reliance, with Selena expressing gratitude for the opportunity to engage with her audience.

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