

GLORIFYING AND DECONSTRUCTING OBAMA'S SPEECH IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

By casting doubt on most previously held theories, deconstruction declares that a text has an almost infinite number of possible interpretations. And the interpretation themselves, declares some deconstructionists, are just as creative and important as the text being interpreted. This study is an attempt to explain how the interpretations on Obama's speech make meanings in the way they do. Apart from the realization of experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings as well as the field, tenor and mode and their context of culture, it is revealed that Text 1 under this investigation illustrates the ideological claim that the personal appeal of an orator, appeals to the emotions of the audiences through the appropriate choice of themes and metaphors of the oration, and appeals to logic or reason should be possessed by a shrewd orator and politician, who is always able to put his audiences into his frame of mind everywhere he delivers his speeches. Whereas Text 2 illustrates the ideological claim that despite a personal power of persuasion you possess, one is tempted to ask how an official visit means anything. While it is true that you spent a considerable years in a city during your childhood, your statement should not be overly emphasized, analyzed nor treated as anything but political rhetoric aimed at further boosting the vivacious intellectual crowd. As readers of texts, we need to develop skills to be able to make explicit the ideological positions encoded

Key words: *deconstruction, realization, experiential, interpersonal, textual, field, tenor, mode, ideology, ethos, pathos, logos, political rhetoric, national interest, contribution.*

Introduction

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, a variety of different forms of structuralism dominated European and American literary theory: the French structuralism of Roland Barthes, the

Russian structuralist narratology of Vladimir Propp, and Jonathan Culler's American brand of structuralist poetics, to name a few. The application of structuralist principles varies from one theoretician to another, but all believe that language is the primary means of signification (how we achieve meaning) and that language comprises its own rule-governed system to achieve such meaning. In spite of the fact that language is the primary sign system, it is not the only one. Fashion, sports, dining, and other activities all have their own "language" or codes whereby the participants know what is expected of them in a particular situation. When dining at a restaurant, for example, connoisseurs of fine dining know that it is inappropriate to drink from a finger bowl. Similarly, football fans know that it is appropriate to shout, scream, and holler to support their team.

From a structuralist perspective, such expectations highlight that all social and cultural practices are governed by rules and codes. The proper study of reality and meaning is the system behind such individual practices, not the individual practices themselves. The proper study of a text is an enquiry into the conditions surrounding the act of interpretation itself, not an investigation of the individual text.

With the advent of deconstruction theory and practice in the late of 1960s, however, the structuralist assumption that a text's meaning can be discovered through an examination of its structural codes was challenged and therefore no definitive interpretation. Rather than providing answers about the meaning of texts or a methodology for discovering how a text means, deconstruction asks a new set of questions, endeavoring to show that what a text claims it says and what it actually says are discernibly different. By casting doubt on most previously held theories, deconstruction declares that a text has an almost infinite number of possible interpretations. And the interpretation themselves, declares some deconstructionists, are just as creative and important as the text being interpreted.

With the advent of deconstruction and its challenge to structuralism and other preexisting theories, a paradigmatic shift occurs in literary theory. Before deconstruction, literary critics - New Critics, some reader-response theorists, structuralists, and others - found meaning within the literary text or the codes of the various sign systems within the world of the text and the reader. The most innovative of these theorists, the structuralists, provided new and exciting ways to discover meaning, but nonetheless, these theorists

maintained that meaning could be found. Underlying all of these predeconstructionist views of the world is a set of assumptions called modernism (or the modern worldview) that provided the philosophical, ethical and scientific bases for humankind for about 300 years. With the coming of deconstruction, these long-held beliefs were challenged, creating **poststructuralism**, a new basis for understanding and guiding humanity (its name denotes that it historically comes after, or *post*, structuralism). Often historians, anthropologists, literary theorists, and other scholars use the term **postmodernism** synonymously with *deconstruction* and *poststructuralism*, although the term postmodernism was coined in 1930s and has broader historical implications outside the realm of literary theory than do the term *poststructuralism* and *deconstruction*. To place in context the somewhat turbulent reception of the first of several poststructural schools of criticism – deconstruction theory and practice – a working understanding of modernism and postmodernism is necessary.

A Functional-semantic approach to language

We need, however, principles and techniques in order that we may begin to analyze and explain how meanings are made in everyday linguistic interaction. The systemic functional approach is increasingly being recognized as providing a very useful descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing language as a strategic, meaning-making resource. Michael Halliday, the linguist most responsible for the development of systemic linguistics, prefaces his 1985 systemic description of English grammar with an open-ended list of twenty-one possible application of systemic theory (Halliday 1985a).

While individual scholars naturally have different research emphases or application contexts, common to all the systemic linguists is an interest in how people use language with each other in accomplishing everyday social life. This interest leads systemic linguists to advance four main theoretical claims about language: that language use is functional; that the function is to make meanings; that these meanings are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they are exchanged; and that the process of using language is a semiotic process, a process of making meanings by choosing (Eggs, 1994:2)

These four points, that language use is functional, semantic, contextual, and semiotic, can be summarized by describing the systemic approach as a *functional-semantic* approach to language.

The systemic approach to language is functional in two main respects: (1) because it asks functional questions about language: systemic ask how do people use language?; (2) because it interprets the linguistic system functionally: systemicists ask how is language structured for use?

Answering the first question involves a focus on authentic, everyday social interaction. This analysis of text leads systemicists to suggest that people negotiate text (write or talk language) in order to make meanings with each other. In other words, the general function of language is semantic one.

Reinterpreting the functional questions semantically, then, systemic ask: (1) Can we differentiate between types of meaning in language? i.e. **how many different sorts of meanings do we use language to make?**; (2) How are texts (and the other linguistics units which make them up, such as sentences or clauses) structured so that meanings can be made? I.e. how is language organized to make meaning?

Halliday (e.g. 1985a, 1985b) has argued that language is structured to make three main kinds of meanings simultaneously. This semantic complexity, which allows experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings to be fused together in linguistic units, is possible because language is a semiotic system: a conventionalized coding system, organized as sets of choices. The distinctive feature of semiotic systems is that each choice in the system acquires its meanings against the background of the other choices which could have been made. This semiotic interpretation of the system of language allows us to consider the appropriacy or inappropriacy of different linguistic choices in relation to their contexts of use, and to view language as a resource which we use by choosing to make meanings in contexts.

As soon as we ask functional questions such as “how do people use language?” (i.e. “what do people do with language?”), we realize we have to look at real examples of language in use. Intuition does not provide a sufficiently reliable source of data for doing

functional linguistics. Thus, systemicists are interested in the authentic speech or writing of people interacting in naturally occurring social contexts.

Language and context

Our ability to deduce context from text is one way in which language and context are interrelated. Our equally highly developed ability to predict language from context provides further evidence of the language/context relationship. In our ability to predict accurately what language will be appropriate in a specific context, we are seeing an extension of our intuitive understanding that language use is sensitive to context.

Final evidence which emphasizes the close link between context and language is that it is often simply not possible to tell how people are using language if you do not take into account the context of use. Considered in its textual context (as a part of a complete linguistic even), a sentence clearly did have a function (to propose a possible solution). Taken out of context, its purpose is obscured, with at least part of its meaning lost or unavailable.

Our ability to deduce context from text, to predict when and how language use will vary, and the ambiguity of language removed from its context, all provide evidence than in asking functional questions about language we must focus not just on language, but on language use in context. Describing the impact of the context on text has involved systemicists in exploring both what dimensions, and in what ways, context influences language.

Questions such as “exactly what dimensions of context have an impact on language use” and which aspects of language use appear to be affected by particular dimensions of the context” are explored within systemics through genre and register theory. Register theory describes then impact of dimensions of the immediate context of situation of a language event on the way language is used. Three key dimensions of the situations are identified as having significant and predictable impacts on language use. These three dimensions, the register variables of mode (amount of feedback and role of language), tenor (role relations of power and solidarity) and field (topic or focus of the activity), are used to explain our intuitive understanding that we will not use language in the same way

to write as to speak (mode variation), to talk to our boss as to talk to our lover (tenor variation) and to talk about linguistics as to talk about jogging (field variation).

The concept of genre is used to describe the impact of the context of culture on language, by exploring the staged, step-by-step structure cultures institutionalize as ways of achieving goals.

A higher level of context to which increasing attention is being given within systemic linguistics is the level of ideology. Whatever genre we are involved in, and whatever the register of the situation, our use of language will also be influenced by our ideological positions: the values we hold (consciously or unconsciously), the biases and perspectives we adopt.

Just as no text can be “free” of context (register or genre), so no text is free of ideology. In other words, to use language at all is to use it to encode particular positions, beliefs, biases, etc. However, for reasons which are themselves ideological, most language users have not been educated to identify ideology in text, but rather to “read” text as natural, inevitable representations of reality.

The implication of identifying ideology in text is that as readers of texts, we need to develop skills to be able to make explicit the ideological positions encoded, perhaps in order to resist or challenge them. This means we need way of talking about how language is not just representing but actively constructing our view of the world. This *semiotic* approach to language explore more fully below.

How is language structured for use?

Systemic linguistics does not only ask functional questions about how people are using language, but it also interprets the linguistic system itself from a functional-semantic perspective. How language is used in authentic texts, **how is language structured for use?**

Language users do not interact in order to exchange sounds with each other, nor even exchange words or sentences. People interact in order to make meanings: to make sense of the world and of each other. The overall purposes of language, then, can be described as a semantic one, and each text we participate in is record of the meanings that have been made in a particular context.

The choice of the word “meaning” in the last sentence is a significant one, for systemic analysis seeks to demonstrate that linguistics texts are typically making not just one, but a number of meanings simultaneously.

It is certainly the case that the text is making this kind of “real world” or experiential meaning. However, at the same time that it is making this strand of experiential meaning, the text is also making some other equally important meanings.

The text is, for example, making interpersonal meaning. There is a strand of meaning running throughout the text which expresses the writer’s role relationship with the reader, and the writer’s attitude towards the subject matter.

Finally, while expressing both experiential and interpersonal meaning, a text also makes what we describe as textual meaning. Textual meaning refers to the way the text is organized as a piece of writing (or speech).

This example demonstrates that a text can be seen to be expressing more than one meaning at a time. In fact, Halliday claims that a text can make these different meanings because units of language (e.g. texts, sentences, clauses, etc.) are simultaneously making *three* kinds of meanings. These three types of meaning are expressed through language because these are the strands of meaning we need to make in order to make sense of each other and the world.

Interpretations on Obama’s speech

In interpreting President Barack Obama’s speech, Setiono Sugiharto (2010) suggests the fact that the speech he delivered at the University of Indonesia amazed most Indonesians is reminiscent of an Aristotelean tradition of oratory, which emphasizes three modes of appeal: ethos, pathos and logos.

Text 1.

1. Mass hysteria, created by 6,000 attendees during the recent speech delivered by US President Barack Obama, can certainly be attributed to not only the president’s charming, relaxed, and affable persona, but also to his listener-friendly speech.

2. Known as a shrewd orator and politician, Obama is always able to put his audiences into his frame of mind everywhere he delivers his speeches.

3. The fact that the speech he delivered at the University of Indonesia amazed most Indonesians is reminiscent of an Aristotelean tradition of oratory, 4. which emphasizes three modes of appeal: ethos, pathos and logos.

5. Ethos is simply the personal appeal of the orator. 6. Pathos appeals to the emotions of the audiences through the appropriate choice of *topoi* (themes) and *tropes* (metaphors) of the oration, 7. and *logos* appeals to logic or reason.

8. Highly personal in tone, substantive and dialogic in its content, relaxed and light in the choice of its dictions (coupled with a local argot), the speech reflects Obama's character as an outstanding orator, who refrains from using stilted, ceremonial oratory styles with least understood political jargon. 9. What is more, Obama's supple paralanguage (facial expressions, gestures, eye movements) mirrors his prowess in demonstrating the art of oratory.

10. His personal tone in the speech indicated by the frequent use of the personal pronoun "I" demonstrates the importance of voicing one's personal interests, biases, values and opinions – essential parts of democracy. 11. And with plenty use of the inclusive "we" implies a dialogic nature to his speech, inviting the audience to ponder over the discussed issues such as the vital role of democracy and the maintenance of universal values upheld by the two countries.

12. The inclusive "we", in the context of the speech, is an effective linguistic sign used by Obama as a Christian to embrace the ideology of our Muslim-dominated country to call for commitment to upholding what he calls "shared humanity". 13. The quote of his country's motto *E pluribus unu*, which he equalizes to Indonesia's *Bhineka tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity) supports this assertions.

14. The mode of pathos lies, in fact, in the nostalgic opening part of the speech. 15. Prior to mentioning the strategic partnership between Indonesia and the US in the body of his speech, Obama intelligently spoke about his nostalgic memories of four years of living in Indonesia during his childhood 16. and foregrounded it as the *topoi* (themes) in the opening part of the speech.

17. Initiated with a greeting in Arabic and Indonesian, and followed with an emotive utterance *Indonesia bagian dari saya* (Indonesia is part of me), Obama further elaborated his narrative mainly relating to his childhood life as well as his own family life in Jakarta.

18. By attaching such a theme as an introductory remark, Obama put his audience into his frame of mind 19. before he proceeded to elucidate the partnership and the role of democracy in the two countries. 20. In doing so, he tried to engage with his audience by filling them with nostalgia for his childhood life in Jakarta.

21. Finally, appealing to logic or reason are clearly heard 22. when Obama touched on areas such as development, democracy, and religious faith, 23. which are, as he argues, fundamental to human progress. 24. Reasons for arguing and counter-arguing these issues are explicitly spelt out, 25. and proof to strengthen his arguments are made clear through real examples.

26. No less intriguing is the speech's epilogue, 27. which Obama formulated in the form of a strong reminder for the country 28. whose practice of democracy is still in its infancy. 29.

Still seeing the relevance of the country's Pancasila ideology, Obama reminded us that as a consequence of practicing democracy "Islam flourishes, but so do other faiths".

30. This is, however, not simply lip service, 31. as Obama has proven his commitment to respecting pluralism in the world by allowing the construction of a grand mosque near the Ground Zero location.

32. And more recently, despite his short stay in Jakarta, his memorable visit to the grand Istiqlal Mosque further testifies his commitment to honouring other faiths. (Setiono Sugiharto, *The Jakarta Post*. 11/20/10: 7).

On the contrary, Dicky Sofjan (2010) pointed out that despite his personal power of persuasion, one is tempted to ask how Obama's 18.5 hour visit to his so-called kampong means anything. While it is true that Obama spent a considerable four years in Jakarta during his childhood, his statement before the *homo academicus* at the University of Indonesia (UI) that "Indonesia is a part of me" should not be overly emphasized, analyzed nor treated as anything but political rhetoric aimed at further boosting the vivacious intellectual crowd at Depok. Dicky said, most Indonesia media celebrated Obama's official visit as if the United States truly considered Indonesia a strategic and equal partner. The truth of the matter is that Obama views Indonesia, notably its burgeoning "middle class" as simply "new markets for [American] goods". This was the bottom line, to which most Indonesians did not pay attention.

Text 2.

1. Nobody will ever doubt the American President Barack Obama's oratory skills, and his inborn talent for winning the hearts and minds of people around him. 2. Being the first Afro-American president, in a largely white population, of the most powerful state in the world is in itself a testament to Obama's political charisma.

3. Despite his personal power of persuasion, one is tempted to ask how Obama's 18.5 hour visit to his so-called kampong means anything. 4. While it is true that Obama spent a considerable four years in Jakarta during his childhood, 5. his statement before the *homo academicus* at the University of Indonesia (UI) that "Indonesia is a part of me" should not be overly emphasized, analyzed nor treated as anything but political rhetoric aimed at further boosting the vivacious intellectual crowd at Depok.

6. And yes, it is true that Obama had an Indonesian Muslim stepfather, 7. who taught him a thing or two about religious tolerance and respect for all religions, 8. the question over the substance and significance of his "transit" from India to South Korea still begs some answers.

9. Not much is offered by the national media and the political pundits, 10. who merely provided their experts' views on Obama's childhood memories and liking for *bakso* and *sate*.

11. Others merely zeroed in on his supposed fluency in Indonesian language and the number of times he deployed "*assalamu alaykum*"

12. Most Indonesia media celebrated Obama's official visit 13. as if the United States truly considered Indonesia a strategic and equal partner. 14. The truth of the matter is that Obama views Indonesia, notably its burgeoning "middle class" as simply "new markets for [American] goods". 15. This was the bottom line, 16. to which most Indonesians did not pay attention.

16. Since his presidency, the recovery of the American economy is not doing as well 17. as Obama had earlier hoped.

18. The early November mid-term election debacle, which saw the Republicans taking over the House of Representative, also proved that Obama's smooth talking style of leadership has not helped much in terms of reversing his growing unpopularity at home.

19. If Obama can help the US improve its economic situation by way of profusely offering Islamic greetings in all his speeches in Jakarta, 20. and if it would take Michelle Obama to do the Islamic scarf on the premises of Istiqlal Grand Mosque, so be it. 21. It would still be in America's national interest, 22. and by all means not Indonesia's.

23. The so-called Comprehensive Partnership, which was only mentioned in passing at UI, is also a curious subject 24. that needs to be scrutinized. 25. What's in it for Indonesia?

26. While the US\$165 million exchange scholarship and university partnership programs are a clear benefit for Indonesians, 27. what is installed for Indonesia on the environment, climate exchange and clean energy programs, amounting to \$136 million?

28. What specific programs can the US offer to help Indonesia mitigate these problems? 29. Is Obama aware of Freeport in Papua and its various negative spillover effects, resulting in environmental degradation and further disfranchisement among the local people here?

30. The recent agreement with respect to the US on Science and Technology Cooperation and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation should also be factored in into our assessment on Obama's recent official visit.

31. What about the current negotiations on the purchasing of F-16s by the Indonesian Air Force and the resumption of military ties? 32. Shouldn't these issues be looked at closely and critically as well?

33. As the saying goes, the devil is in the details. 34. Unfortunately, Indonesians are far too often unable to place clear demands, 34. let alone articulate their national interest. 35. Obama's magic spell has worked wonders among Indonesian journalists, diplomats and intellectuals.

36. If only we can focus more seriously on the detailed substances 37. can one then really cheer on Obama and appreciate his contributions to Indonesia.

38. Otherwise, Obama's "homecoming visit", as Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono referred to it, will bear no consequences, 39. and will only benefit the US politically and economically.

40. What is worst, the only forgettable memory the people of Jakarta will ever have on Obama's visit is the hours heavy traffic caused by the thousands of police and soldiers deployed to effectively block off all streets used by Obama and his entourage. (Dicky Sofjan, TJP 11/19.10:7)

The texts above serve to illustrate a basic premise of systemic linguistics: that language use is purposeful behaviour. The writers of these texts did not just produce it to kill time, or to display their linguistic abilities. They wrote the texts because they wanted to use language to achieve a purpose: they had goals that they were using language to achieve. We could gloss the overall purpose of the texts above as being to "persuade readers that something is the case" and to "persuade readers that something should or should not be the case" although it will be suggested in a moment that this overall purpose implicates a number of distinct goals.

Any use of language is motivated by a purpose, whether that purpose be a clear, pragmatic one (such as needing to write a letter in order to apply for a job), or a less tangible, but equally important, interpersonal one (such as "needing" to have a chat with friends after a long day at work).

There is little doubt that we would have decided that the people interacting in these texts are writers and its readers. Among the clues we may have noted as indicating that between these people contact is probably very low, affective involvement is weak, and equal power operates might be equal. In other words, these texts illustrate many of the characteristics of a formal tenor. We see evidence that the context (in this case, the social role relations or tenor) have been realized in the language of the text.

We see also Setiono Sugiharto and Dicky Sofjan assuming the role of columnists, as they produce an extended sequence of declarative clauses in illustrating Obama's speech. These dimensions of the roles being played by the interactants can be made explicit, through a Mood analysis of the clauses of the text.

However, at the same time as indicating and clarifying their relationships with each other, the participants in this interaction are talking about something. Their talk has content, it makes representational, or experiential meanings. We could summarize this

experiential dimension of the text by giving it a title which captures the main topic of talk: *The ethos, pathos and logos of Obama's speech* and *Obama's forgettable visit to Indonesia*.

Thus we need to recognize that in order to take part in texts, participants must make not only interpersonal meanings but also experiential meanings. We must also recognize that these types of meaning are being made simultaneously. This simultaneous encoding of experiential and interpersonal meanings is achieved through the simultaneous structuring of the clauses which together are making up the text. We see evidence that the context (in this case, the dimension of topic or field: ethos, pathos and logos of Obama's speech and the Obama's forgettable visit to Indonesia) have been realized in the language of the text.

Most clause constituents are playing two and often three different functional roles. Each constituent is thus realizing a maximum of three types of meaning: a meaning about the interaction (an interpersonal meaning); a meaning about reality (an experiential meaning); and a meaning about message (a textual meaning).

The textual metafunction, the third and the final strand of meaning made in the clause, is described by Halliday (1974: 95, 97) as the "relevance" or the "enabling" metafunction. This is the level of organization of the clause which enables the clause to be packaged in ways which is effective given its purpose and its context. The textual strand of meaning, while not adding new reality nor altering interpersonal dimensions of the clause, is concerned with the potential the clause offers for its constituents to be organized differently, to achieve different purposes.

Textual meaning in English is expressed largely through the ordering of constituents. We can see in the text above what gets put first (and last) in each clause that realizes textual choice. Other languages will express textual meanings differently. What does seem true, however, is that all languages will somehow encode textual meaning, since language users depend on signals which indicate the cohesive relations between the clause, its context, and its purpose.

Theme in an English clause contributes very significantly to the communicative effect of the message. The definition of Theme as given by Halliday (1985a: 39) is that it is the element which serves as "the starting-point for the message: it is what the clause is going

to be about". Since we typically depart from places with which we are familiar, the Theme typically contains familiar, or "given", information, i.e. information which has already been mentioned somewhere in the text, or is familiar from the context.

The definition of the Rheme is that it is the part of the clause in which the Theme is developed. Since we typically depart from the familiar to head towards the unfamiliar, the Rheme typically contains unfamiliar, or "new" information. The identification criteria for the Rheme are simple: everything that is not the Theme is the Rheme. Thus, once you have identified the Theme in a clause, you have also identified the Rheme, which is just "everything else".

The Theme system contributes to the realization of meanings by offering us choices about what meanings to prioritise in a text, what to package as familiar and what as new, what to make contrastive, etc. The most striking contribution of Thematic choices is to the internal cohesion of the text: skillful use of Thematic selection results in a text which appears to "hang together and make sense". The claim is also that Thematic patterns are controlled by the register variable of mode. We should therefore find that Thematic choices will differ when the mode varies. Since the key dimension to mode variation is the distinction between (interactive) spoken and (monologic) written language, we can expect to find that Thematic choice varies according to these Mode values. If a text is to have not only cohesion and coherence, we will find different textual choices being made according to the text's position along the two Mode continua. The texts above are using monologic written language with simple grammar but lexically dense, and are used to explain our intuitive understanding that we will not use language in the same way to write as to speak (mode variation).

The concept of genre is used to describe the impact of the context of culture on language, by exploring the staged, step-by-step structure cultures institutionalize as ways of achieving goals. While sometimes we can achieve our goals by just a short linguistic exchange, most linguistic interactions require many more moves than this. When we describe the staged, structured way in which people go about achieving goals using language we are describing **genre**. It is to genre theory that we turn in order to explain the organization of the text above as exposition, with the steps of Thesis, Arguments and Recommendation.

A higher level of context to which increasing attention is being given within systemic linguistics is the level of **ideology**. Whatever genre we are involved in, and whatever the register of the situation, our use of language will also be influenced by our ideological positions: the values we hold (consciously or unconsciously), the biases and perspectives we adopt. Text 1 under this investigation above illustrate the ideological claim that the personal appeal of an orator, appeals to the emotions of the audiences through the appropriate choice of themes and metaphors of the oration, and appeals to logic or reason should be possessed by a shrewd orator and politician, who is always able to put his audiences into his frame of mind everywhere he delivers his speeches. Whereas Text 2 illustrates the ideological claim that despite a personal power of persuasion one possesses, one is tempted to ask how an official visit means anything. While it is true that he spent a considerable years in a city during his childhood, his statement should not be overly emphasized, analyzed nor treated as anything but political rhetoric aimed at further boosting the vivacious intellectual crowd.

It should alert us, therefore, to the fact that just as no text can be “free” of context (register and genre), so no text is free of ideology. In other words, to use language at all is to use it to encode particular positions, beliefs, biases, etc. For reasons which are themselves ideological, most language users have not been educated to identify ideology in text, but rather “read” texts as natural, inevitable representations of reality.

The implication of identifying ideology in text is that as readers of texts, we need to develop skills to be able to make explicit the ideological positions encoded, perhaps in order to challenge them. This means we need a way of talking about how language is not just representing but actively constructing our view of the world.

Conclusion

The texts above serve to illustrate a basic premise of systemic linguistics: that language use is purposeful behaviour. We could gloss the overall purpose of the texts above as being to “persuade readers that something is the case” and to “persuade readers that something should or should not be the case”. While an interpretation glorifies the ethos, pathos and logos of the speech, the other interpretation illustrates the ideological claim that despite a personal power of persuasion one possesses, one is tempted to ask how an

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