



CONSUMING DESTINATIONS: A POST-COLONIAL CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS, JAMAA EL FNA AS A CASE STUDY^{i,ii}

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Abstract:

This study highlights the way the advertising industry uses language as a discursive medium to sell the tourism destination of Marrakech: Jamaa el Fna to western target audiences. Furthermore, this study focuses on a critical discourse analysis as a vision to uncover how power-oriented discourse is applied in textual references to sell tourism destinations.

Keywords: language, post-colonialism, orientalism, imperialism, culture, discourse, tourism advertising, discourse analysis

ملخص:

تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الطريقة التي تستخدم بها صناعة الإعلان اللغة وسيلة خطابية لبيع مراكش وجامع الفنا وجهة سياحية للجمهور الغربي المستهدف. تركز هذه الدراسة على التحليل النقدي للخطاب باعتباره رؤية للكشف عن كيفية تجسد السلطة في الخطاب وفي المراجع النصية الهادفة إلى بيع الوجهات السياحية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة، ما بعد الكولونيالية، الاستشراق، الامبريالية، الثقافة، الخطاب، الإعلان السياحي، تحليل الخطاب

Abstrait :

Cette étude met en évidence la manière dont l'industrie de la publicité utilise le langage comme support discursif pour vendre la destination touristique de Marrakech : Jamaa el Fna à des publics cibles occidentaux. En outre, cette étude se concentre sur une analyse critique du discours en tant que vision pour découvrir comment le discours orienté vers le pouvoir est appliqué dans les références textuelles pour vendre des destinations touristiques.

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Mots-clés : langage, postcolonialisme, orientalisme, impérialisme, culture, discours, publicité touristique, analyse du discours

1. Introduction

This article focuses on revealing the way representational viewpoints are used as a social power move to promote tourism destinations. This social power is exerted through textual language used by western advertisers in travel guides to promote Marrakech's original district: the square of Jamaa el Fna, (a giant square located within the ancient walls of the Medina). Moreover, the type of power we are interested in revealing is translated through a promotional discourse that Western advertisers use to represent the non-Western square of Jamaa el Fna as a place that offers travelers an authentically primitive Moroccan experience. This article will demonstrate how advertisers create an image of representational authenticity and assign it to the destination of Jamaa el Fna.

The tourism industry promotes places and destinations as commercialized items used for many purposes, including commercial profit. When it comes to booking a visit to any particular destination, tourists find themselves confronted with a plethora of options. As a result, advertisers create an image of the destination of their choosing and promote it according to the needs of their target audiences.

2. Methodology

The methodology that we will follow is based on van Dijk's model of critical discourse analysis (CDA). His model revolves around what he refers to as the discourse-cognition-society triangle. According to van Dijk (2003), the discourse part of his model represents the 'communicative event', which in this case is the textual inferences of our data. The 'cognition' and 'society' aspects involve the goals and belief systems that are involved and represented in the discourse and projected through power-oriented strategies. By following the aspects of this model, we strive to reveal the imperialistic ideology that the West has over the Orient.

According to van Dijk (2003), ideology is part of the mind's belief system and therefore naturally belongs to the term 'cognition'. In this article, the power-oriented representational discourse will be demonstrated through van Dijk's (2003) polarization strategy, which is a representation of the ideological discourse which differentiates between 'us' and 'them' where writers or speakers clearly demonstrate a 'positive self-description' and 'negative other description'. However, in this article, we will be solely focusing on the latter. Moreover, this article demonstrates such dominant discourse through lexical items that represent a peculiar image of Jamaa el Fna, which showcases negative meanings oriented towards 'them'- (Moroccans).

In the advertising industry, especially in tourism, peculiarity serves as a strategy to attract consumers. The application of van Dijk's discourse-cognition-society triangle is presented as follows. We will demonstrate the production of power and dominance (which falls under the broad term 'society') of western advertisers and demonstrate it through various discourse properties which fall under the broad term (discourse). However, as there is no direct link

between society and discourse (van Dijk, 2001), we will be using cognition as a linking bridge between the two. Therefore, in this article, the link between power and dominance and our discourse properties is the ideological perspectives of Western representational theory, which falls under the broad category 'cognition'. Moreover, this category also doubles as an element of context, which serves the purpose of relevance.

2.1. Methodology: presentation of the model of analysis and data collection

According to van Dijk (2001), discourse is the 'communicative event', which is, in this case, defined as written textual instances from the following travel guide: (Lonely Planet Morocco, 2021). The selection of our data is composed of one paragraph taken from the selected travel guide. The reasoning behind choosing this paragraph is to analyze the discourse which promotes Jamaa el Fna as an authentically different place. The presentation of our model is assigned according to van Dijk's (2001) way of doing CDA, which he calls the 'socio-cognitive' triangle. This triangle is divided into three levels: discourse, cognition and society. According to van Dijk (2001), critical discourse analysis varies in terms of the theoretical framework and statement of the problem of each study. Therefore, the analysis of the social and discourse structures of our data will vary accordingly.

Cognition, on the other hand, is a section that involves the beliefs, ideologies and goals involved in our discourse and finally, society is a category that defines the various social and political systems that revolve around inequality and dominance assertion. The following analysis deals with the ways advertising companies promote the unrefined authenticity of Jamaa el Fna through their discourse. In order to relate the representational structures of Western discourse as a dominating force (as a global social structure) that oppresses the Moroccan culture, we need to introduce cognition and society as a contextual/social overview of our communicative event.

"This allows subjective interpretations of social situations and differences between language users in the same situation, strategically incomplete models, and in general a flexible adaptation of discourse to the social situation." (van Dijk, 2001, pp. 108-109)

Additionally, van Dijk (2007) asserts that the critical aims of CDA can only be achieved when discourse structures are correlated with local and global context structures. In this study, the global contexts revolve around the Western ideological structures (expressed by advertising companies) and their power-oriented drive through language, whereas the local contexts are affiliated with all the features which take place in this promotional discourse.

"Some properties of such a situation are its overall domain (politics, business), an overall action (legislation, propaganda), participants in various communicative and social roles... as well as their intentions, goals, knowledge, norms and other beliefs." (van Dijk, 2001, pp. 108)

The choice of this particular model of analysis is based on the nature of the genre of our data and is further personalized according to the main issue that this study deals with - demonstrating the undeveloped authenticity of Jamaa el Fna which is motivated by global social

structures such as power and dominance and implicitly expressed through the following discourse structures:

- **Meaning** covers the ideological as well as belief systems that are conveyed through discourse (van Dijk, 2003) and includes the following data-relevant properties:
 - 1) **Actor description:** this category includes the way participants refer to the other in discourse notably through actions, attributes or social relations. Us-them categorization: when participants assign either positive or negative properties when referring to 'others'.
 - 2) **Presupposition:** this tool includes any presupposed or implied meanings expressed by participants through discourse.
- **Argumentation** is used by participants to persuade or defend a certain argument or point of view and will be used according to the following tools:
 - 1) **Authority:** participants who are categorized as professionals and present themselves in a way that promotes moral leadership.
 - 2) **Generalization:** this tool is used to make broad claims about opinions or situations.
- **Rhetoric** is about the different rhetorical devices that participants use when referring to highlight any polarity properties between groups.

"It will focus on those figures of style that can be deployed to emphasize our good things and their bad things, and vice versa for our bad things and their good things, such as hyperbolas, euphemisms, and so on." (van Dijk, 2003, p. 59).

For relevance purposes, the following rhetorical devices will be applied to the analysis of our data.

- 1) **Metaphor:** this rhetorical figure is used as a persuasive rhetorical figure to emphasize meanings and thus render them more tangible.
- 2) **Hyperbole:** this device is used as an enhancement tool by participants or language users for positive in-group demonstration and negative out-group demonstration.

3. Data analysis

Before we analyze the discourse properties of our data, which is constituted of the following excerpts, we will first analytically situate the contextual/social overview that revolves around the Orientalized setting (constituted of the overall domain of the event, actions and role of participants and addressees) that defines the following discourse:

Excerpt 1:

"If there's one thing you can't miss in Marrakesh, it's the reeling, free-wheeling nightly circus that is Djemaa El Fna. This chaotic square is the heart and soul of Marrakesh, where snakes are

charmed by day, music troupes shimmy and shake at night, and hordes of hungry revellers come to chow down at food stalls..." (Lonely Planet Morocco, 2021, p. 177)^{iv}.

3.1 The contextual outline

The contextual outline which defines the discourse or communicative event of our data (Excerpt 1) unfolds as follows:

The overall domain of the excerpt is that of advertising and promoting the district of Jamaa el Fna. The overall actions are about selling Jamaa el Fna as a culturally and aesthetically different location. The setting of the communicative event is a booklet, available to the public. Furthermore, the role of the participants involved is that of writer/author whose interactional role is to objectify the Moroccan culture by presenting Jamaa el Fna as a chaotic circus.

"If there is one thing you can't miss in Marrakesh it's the reeling, free-wheeling nightly circus that is Djemaa el fna. This chaotic square is the heart and soul of Marrakech." The following analysis will tackle the discourse attributes of excerpt 1

3.2 Meaning

According to van Dijk (2003), 'meaning' is meant to express any type of ideological content present in discourse, and will be elaborated through the following sub-categories: actor description and presupposition.

3.2.1 Actor description

The main actors present in Excerpt 1 used to promote Jamaa el Fna are 'you' the target consumer who is advised to discover the undeveloped Jamaa el Fna square, e.g.:

"If there's one thing you can't miss in Marrakesh, it's the reeling, free-wheeling nightly circus that is Djemaa El Fna. This chaotic square is the heart and soul of Marrakesh..."

and other implicitly appointed actors who may designate locals who fulfill circus-like performances, e.g.:

"This chaotic square is the heart and soul of Marrakesh, where snakes are charmed by day, music troupes shimmy and shake at night..."

3.2.2 Presupposition

In excerpt 1, the author/writer presupposes that Jamaa el Fna is a circus that welcomes a variety of barbaric shows and introduces it to their target audience as such in order to implement the element of exoticism and peculiarity to grab the reader's attention.

^{iv} We will refer to this travel guide by its title and not by its authors' names.

3.3 Argumentation

The argumentative structure is used by language users to defend and support their claims and viewpoints (van Dijk, 2003). This structure will be explained through the following sub-categories: authority, and generalization.

3.3.1 Authority

The element of authority is manifested through the writer. This latter expresses authority by addressing the reader in a way that dictates what the reader should visit and where to go, e.g.:

"If there's one thing you can't miss in Marrakesh it's the reeling, free-wheeling nightly circus that is Djemaa El Fna..." and "...don't just come for the gardens: delve a little deeper..."

3.3.2 Generalization

This technique is used to make broad claims by providing examples and or general claims to discourse (van Dijk, 2003). E.g.:

"... this chaotic square is the heart and soul of Marrakech...".

3.4 Rhetoric

According to van Dijk (2003), the rhetoric structure is used by language users in a way that emphasizes out-group negativity. The relevant rhetorical figures used in our excerpt are metaphors, and hyperboles.

3.4.1 Metaphor

This rhetorical figure is used to render meaning more concrete (Van Dijk, 2003). This figure of speech is present in excerpt 1, and its role is to emphasize a unique and authentic image of Jamaa el Fna. E.g.:

"...the reeling, free-wheeling nightly circus that is djemaa el fna", "this chaotic square is the heart and soul of Marrakesh".

3.4.2 Hyperbole

Hyperboles are rhetorical figures meant to have a dramatization effect on discourse to magnify meaning. (van Dijk, 1998). E.g.:

"...hordes of hungry revellers come to chow down at food stalls."

This sentence means that people come in very large numbers and consume extravagant quantities of food very quickly. This meaning further emphasizes the primitive image that advertisers assign to Jamaa el Fna.

Table 1 represents the way language is used to portray an image of Jamaa el Fna, which further highlights the undeveloped authenticity of the Moroccan culture.

Table 1

Orientalized Jamaa el Fna
Authentic 'them'
"...The reeling, free-wheeling nightly circus."
"...This chaotic square."
"...snakes are charmed by day, music troupes shimmy and shake at night"
"...hordes of hungry revellers come to chow down at food stalls."

4. Conclusion

The tourism industry is mainly concerned with branding their wanted destinations according to the expectations of their target audiences. Interestingly, this case presents an overview of Jamaa el Fna's representation as an authentically undeveloped location. The image of representational authenticity provides elements of originality that automatically render the destination of Jamaa el Fna interesting to consumers.

According to Dean (1976), a tourist's exposure to different environments and cultures is what makes him/her feel distinct and superior in many ways. The approach of CDA has permitted us to identify the way van Dijk's (2003) polarization strategy is applied in promotional materials to advertise Jamaa el Fna as a tourism destination which represents itself as an authentically different destination.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest related to the publication of this article.

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