
A Critical Discourse Analysis of Equality and Resistance in Seretse Khama's Kgotla Speech in the Movie A United Kingdom (2016) Using Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Framework

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Abstract

Political speeches are powerful tools for shaping social ideologies, constructing leadership identities, and challenging oppressive systems. This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), guided by van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework, to examine Seretse Khama's Kgotla speech as portrayed in the film *A United Kingdom* (2016). The analysis explores how the speech constructs discourses of equality, resistance, and moral leadership across textual, cognitive, and social dimensions. At the textual level, Khama's strategic use of metaphors, parallelism, rhetorical questions, repetition, and emotional appeals frames segregation as morally and socially unacceptable while emphasizing equality as a universal ethical principle. At the cognitive level, these linguistic strategies shape audience mental representations, foster empathy, and encourage critical reflection on the ethical implications of racial discrimination. At the social level, the speech situates its arguments within the historical and political realities of colonial Bechuanaland, challenging entrenched power structures and legitimizing Khama's leadership based on moral and ethical principles. The findings demonstrate that the speech operates simultaneously across multiple levels, using rhetoric to mobilize social consciousness, construct ideological meaning, and promote collective ethical responsibility. This study highlights the enduring importance of language in political discourse and the value of CDA as a framework for analyzing how leaders communicate resistance, equality, and moral authority.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, political rhetoric, Seretse Khama, Equality, Resistance.*

1. Introduction

Political speeches often serve as powerful tools for shaping public opinion, constructing social identities, and resisting oppressive ideologies. Across history, leaders have used rhetoric to influence collective beliefs, legitimize authority, and mobilize communities to challenge social injustice. In many historical contexts, speeches have played a central role in confronting systems of discrimination, advocating for human rights, and promoting equality. The persuasive power of political discourse lies not only in its capacity to communicate policy but also in its ability to shape moral and social consciousness, particularly during moments of political and cultural transformation.

One notable example of such rhetorical intervention appears in the film *A United Kingdom*, which dramatizes the life of Seretse Khama and his controversial marriage to Ruth Williams Khama during the colonial era of the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

Their marriage challenged prevailing racial and social norms, eliciting resistance from both local tribal authorities and the British colonial administration. Within this context, Khama's Kgotla speech represents a pivotal moment in which the personal, political, and ideological intersect. Delivered in the traditional public assembly of the Kgotla in Serowe, the speech reflects Khama's attempts to reconcile his role as a political leader with his personal convictions, while simultaneously confronting systemic racial oppression.

In the speech, Khama explicitly challenges racial segregation and apartheid ideology, framing equality not merely as a social aspiration but as a moral and political imperative essential for the progress and unity of Africa. Through careful use of rhetorical strategies, including metaphor, parallelism, repetition, and emotional appeals, Khama legitimizes his authority, appeals to the ethical and emotional sensibilities of his audience, and constructs a discourse of resistance against injustice. This integration of personal experience, leadership responsibility, and anti-racist advocacy exemplifies the complex interplay between identity, ideology, and rhetoric.

This study aims to examine the rhetorical and ideological dimensions of Khama's Kgotla speech using CDA. By analyzing linguistic strategies, discursive structures, and persuasive devices embedded in the speech, the study seeks to reveal how discourse operates as a tool for resisting racial segregation, shaping moral authority, and promoting equality. Ultimately, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how political rhetoric can influence social consciousness and serve as an instrument for social and ideological transformation in historical and postcolonial contexts.

2. Research Problem

Political discourse has historically played a significant role in resisting racial discrimination and shaping social transformation. However, limited scholarly attention has been given to the discourse represented in cinematic portrayals of African political leadership, particularly speeches that challenge colonial and apartheid ideologies.

Although *A United Kingdom* presents a historically inspired narrative, the rhetorical structure and ideological implications of Seretse Khama's Kgotla speech remain underexplored from a critical discourse perspective. Understanding how the speech constructs arguments for equality and resistance can reveal how language functions as a tool of political persuasion and social change.

Therefore, this study investigates the rhetorical strategies and ideological representations embedded in Khama's speech to uncover how discourse challenges segregation and legitimizes equality.

3. Research Questions

1. What rhetorical strategies are used in Seretse Khama's Kgotla speech?
2. How does the speech construct the discourse of equality and resistance?
3. What ideological meanings related to race and justice are embedded in the speech?
4. How does the speech challenge segregationist ideology?

4. Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Analyze the rhetorical strategies used in Seretse Khama's Kgotla speech.

2. Examine how the speech constructs the discourse of equality and resistance.
3. Identify ideological representations related to race, justice, and leadership.
4. Explore how language is used to challenge apartheid and segregationist ideology.

5. Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the fields of discourse analysis, political rhetoric, and postcolonial studies by examining how language is used to challenge racial discrimination and advocate equality. It also provides insights into how cinematic representations of historical speeches can reflect broader political and social ideologies.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of rhetorical discourse in shaping leadership narratives in African political history. By applying Critical Discourse Analysis, the research demonstrates how linguistic structures can reveal hidden power relations and ideological struggles within political speech.

6. Literature Review

Language plays a central role in shaping social realities, constructing ideologies, and influencing public perception. Political speeches, in particular, function as powerful communicative tools through which leaders articulate values, legitimize authority, and challenge social injustices (Fairclough, 1989). Scholars in discourse studies emphasize that political rhetoric is not merely a neutral form of communication but a strategic practice that reflects power relations and ideological struggles within society.

CDA provides an analytical framework for examining how discourse reproduces or resists dominant ideologies. Through CDA, researchers investigate the relationship between language, power, and social inequality (van Dijk, 1998). In the context of anti-racist discourse and political leadership, speeches that challenge segregation and colonial ideologies often rely on persuasive rhetorical strategies to promote equality and justice. Therefore, analyzing Seretse Khama's Kgotla speech offers an opportunity to explore how discourse constructs resistance against racial discrimination and advocates social transformation.

6.1 Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model of Critical Discourse Analysis

One of the most widely applied frameworks in CDA is van Dijk's socio-cognitive model, which emphasizes the interrelationship between text, cognition, and social context (van Dijk, 2006). This model provides a systematic approach for understanding how discourse both reflects and shapes social and ideological structures. Van Dijk (2006) argues that language cannot be analyzed in isolation from the cognitive processes of speakers and listeners or from the societal context in which discourse occurs.

The framework is organized around three key dimensions. The textual dimension focuses on the linguistic features of discourse, including lexical choices, sentence structures, rhetorical devices, and thematic patterns. These textual elements allow researchers to identify how meaning is constructed at the level of language (van Dijk, 2006). The cognitive dimension examines how discourse influences and is influenced by mental representations, beliefs, and knowledge of both the producer and the audience. This dimension is critical for understanding how ideology is internalized and reproduced through language. Finally, the social dimension situates discourse within its broader societal and historical context, considering power relations, social norms, and institutional structures.

This framework is particularly suitable for analyzing political speeches, as it provides a structured lens to examine how leaders construct ideological messages and mobilize audiences. In the case of Seretse

Khama's Kgotla speech, van Dijk's model enables the identification of rhetorical strategies that construct discourses of equality, justice, and resistance, while also accounting for the social and historical realities of racial segregation in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

6.2 Political Discourse and Rhetorical Persuasion

Political discourse has been widely examined as a form of strategic communication through which leaders influence audiences, legitimize political authority, and shape collective understanding of social issues. According to Charteris-Black (2011), political speeches rely heavily on rhetorical devices such as metaphors, repetition, and emotional appeals to frame issues in ways that resonate with the values, beliefs, and experiences of the audience. These strategies not only enhance the persuasive power of the speech but also allow speakers to construct narratives that justify their positions and mobilize public support for specific policies or social agendas.

Similarly, Beard (2000) emphasizes that political language often constructs persuasive narratives by highlighting moral and ethical principles, including justice, unity, and national identity. Through careful rhetorical framing, leaders can present themselves as guardians of social and cultural values while simultaneously undermining competing ideologies or political opponents. Such framing is particularly significant in contexts of social injustice, where the use of persuasive language can challenge entrenched systems of discrimination and legitimize calls for reform.

In speeches addressing social inequality or injustice, rhetorical persuasion frequently involves appeals to universal values, such as equality, human dignity, and fairness. By invoking these values, political leaders can strengthen their arguments and foster moral legitimacy, encouraging audiences to critically reflect on existing social norms and align themselves with principles of justice and equity (Charteris-Black, 2011). Ultimately, these rhetorical strategies demonstrate that political discourse functions not merely as communication but as a tool for shaping social consciousness and effecting societal change.

6.3 Critical Discourse Analysis and Ideology

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has emerged as a prominent and widely applied approach for examining how language both reflects and reproduces power relations within society. CDA scholars argue that discourse is not merely a neutral means of communication, but a central mechanism through which ideological beliefs, social hierarchies, and institutional norms are constructed and maintained (Fairclough, 1995). By systematically analyzing linguistic features, researchers can uncover the often implicit ideologies embedded within texts, speeches, and other communicative practices, revealing the ways in which language shapes social reality.

Van Dijk (2006) further emphasizes that discourse is closely intertwined with cognition and social context. His socio-cognitive model highlights the dynamic interaction between language, mental representations, and collective beliefs regarding social groups, power structures, and identity. Through detailed analysis of lexical choices, syntactic patterns, argumentation strategies, and rhetorical devices, CDA enables researchers to examine how discourse not only mirrors social structures but also actively constructs and legitimizes them.

In addition, Wodak and Meyer (2016) underscore the particular usefulness of CDA for analyzing political speeches that address issues such as inequality, discrimination, and social justice. This analytical approach allows scholars to identify how language can serve dual purposes: either to reinforce dominant power relations or to challenge and resist them. By applying CDA to political discourse, researchers can

thus gain critical insight into the ways leaders communicate ideology, mobilize audiences, and influence social and political action.

6.4 Discourse of Equality and Anti-Racism

Discourses that challenge racial discrimination often rely on moral reasoning and appeals to universal human rights to legitimize claims for justice and equality. Research on anti-racist rhetoric indicates that political speeches addressing racial inequality frequently frame equality as a fundamental ethical principle that transcends social, cultural, and political boundaries (van Dijk, 1993). Such discourses not only expose the injustices inherent in discriminatory systems but also promote inclusive social values and foster collective moral awareness.

In historical contexts, including colonial Africa and the apartheid era, political leaders strategically employed rhetoric to resist institutionalized segregation and advocate for social justice. These speeches frequently emphasized themes of unity, dignity, and collective identity as essential elements of national liberation and social cohesion (Fairclough, 1989). By foregrounding these moral and social principles, leaders were able to construct persuasive narratives that challenged prevailing hierarchies and mobilized communities toward equality.

Moreover, anti-racist discourse often employs rhetorical contrasts to highlight the gap between ideals of justice and the realities of segregation. By juxtaposing ethical principles with discriminatory practices, these speeches expose contradictions within oppressive systems and enhance the persuasive impact of the discourse, encouraging audiences to critically reflect on social norms and question entrenched structures of power (van Dijk, 1998). Such strategies demonstrate the power of political rhetoric not only to critique injustice but also to inspire collective action and social transformation.

6.5 Cinematic Representation of Political Leadership

Films that depict historical political figures play a significant role in shaping public understanding of historical events and leadership narratives. As Rosenstone (2012) notes, historical films often reconstruct political and social events through dramatized narratives, which communicate ideological messages to audiences while simultaneously reflecting broader societal realities. Although cinematic representations may incorporate fictionalized elements for dramatic effect, they can provide insight into historical contexts, power relations, and the ways in which leadership and social struggles are perceived and interpreted.

In the case of the film *A United Kingdom* (2016), the story portrays the life of Seretse Khama and his struggle against racial prejudice and political opposition following his interracial marriage to Ruth Williams Khama. The film dramatizes key moments of political tension, including the Kgotla speech, which emphasizes themes of equality, moral leadership, and resistance to racial discrimination. By analyzing such cinematic speeches through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), researchers can examine how language is strategically used to construct ideological meanings, mobilize audiences, and communicate broader social values.

This approach highlights the value of combining film studies with discourse analysis, as it enables scholars to explore not only the historical and political dimensions of the narrative but also the rhetorical strategies that shape audience interpretation. Consequently, cinematic representations of political leadership serve as both cultural texts and sources of data for investigating the intersections of language, ideology, and social transformation.

7. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to examine the rhetorical and ideological dimensions of Seretse Khama's Kgotla speech as depicted in the film *A United Kingdom*. Qualitative approaches are particularly suitable for discourse studies because they allow researchers to explore linguistic structures, interpret meanings, and analyze how language constructs social realities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To investigate how the speech constructs narratives of equality and resistance, the study adopts CDA as the primary analytical framework (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998). CDA focuses on the relationship between language, power, and ideology, enabling researchers to identify how discourse both reflects and challenges social inequalities.

Specifically, this study applies van Dijk's socio-cognitive model, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of textual structures, cognitive processes, and social context (van Dijk, 2006). According to this framework, the textual dimension examines lexical choices, syntactic patterns, rhetorical devices, and argumentation strategies; the cognitive dimension explores how discourse shapes and is shaped by the mental representations, beliefs, and knowledge of both the speaker and the audience; and the social dimension situates discourse within historical, political, and cultural contexts. By integrating these three dimensions, van Dijk's model provides a comprehensive approach for analyzing how rhetorical strategies and linguistic features in Khama's speech construct social realities, legitimize resistance, and convey ideological meanings.

7.1 Research Design

The study follows a qualitative interpretive research design using CDA. Qualitative discourse analysis allows researchers to examine linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and ideological meanings embedded within texts and speeches, providing insight into how language shapes social realities (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). CDA is particularly well-suited for analyzing political speeches because it enables a systematic investigation of how language constructs power relations, social identities, and ideological positions. According to Fairclough (1989), discourse analysis reveals how linguistic choices reflect and reinforce broader social and political structures.

In this study, CDA is applied to explore how Seretse Khama's Kgotla speech challenges racial segregation, legitimizes resistance, and promotes equality. Specifically, the analysis is guided by van Dijk's socio-cognitive model (van Dijk, 2006), which examines discourse through three interconnected dimensions: the textual dimension, which analyzes lexical choices, syntactic patterns, rhetorical devices, and argumentation strategies; the cognitive dimension, which considers how discourse shapes and is shaped by the beliefs, knowledge, and mental representations of speakers and audiences; and the social dimension, which situates discourse within historical, political, and cultural contexts. By integrating these dimensions, the study systematically investigates how the speech constructs ideological meaning, mobilizes moral and ethical arguments, and challenges entrenched systems of racial discrimination.

7.2 Data Source

The primary data for this study consist of the Kgotla speech delivered by the character of Seretse Khama in the film *A United Kingdom* (2016). The film portrays the historical experiences of Seretse Khama, who later became the first president of Botswana, and his marriage to Ruth Williams Khama during the colonial period of the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

The speech analyzed in this study represents a significant narrative moment in which Khama addresses the Bamangwato people at the traditional Kgotla assembly. The speech focuses on themes of racial equality, justice, leadership, and resistance against segregationist ideology.

The speech transcript was obtained from the film dialogue and used as the primary textual data for analysis.

7.3 Analytical Framework

This study adopts van Dijk's socio-cognitive model of CDA as the analytical framework. According to van Dijk (2006), discourse analysis should examine the interrelationship between textual structures, cognitive processes, and social context. His model focuses on three main dimensions. First, textual analysis, which involves examining lexical choices, sentence structures, rhetorical devices, and thematic patterns within the speech. Second, the cognitive dimension, which considers how discourse influences audience perceptions, beliefs, and ideological interpretations. Third, social context, which emphasizes understanding how the speech reflects broader issues such as racial segregation, colonial politics, and leadership legitimacy. By integrating these dimensions, van Dijk's framework enables the researcher to explore how rhetorical strategies and linguistic structures contribute to constructing discourses of equality and resistance.

7.4 Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis of the speech was conducted in several stages. First, the speech was transcribed from a YouTube video, with the researcher repeatedly reading the text to become thoroughly familiar with its linguistic patterns and rhetorical structure. Second, key linguistic features, including lexical choices, repetition, metaphors, and persuasive language, were identified throughout the speech. Third, these linguistic elements were categorized into discursive strategies related to equality, justice, leadership, and resistance. Fourth, the researcher interpreted how these strategies construct ideological meanings concerning racial equality, anti-segregation ideology, and political leadership. Finally, the findings were analyzed within the broader historical and political context of colonial Africa and racial segregation. Through this multi-stage analytical process, the study seeks to demonstrate how the speech employs rhetorical and linguistic strategies to challenge segregationist ideology and promote principles of equality.

7.5 Ethical Considerations

This study utilizes publicly available textual data derived from a film script, specifically the Kgotla speech of Seretse Khama as depicted in *A United Kingdom* (2016). Since the research relies solely on secondary data and does not involve human participants, there are no direct ethical risks associated with data collection, such as privacy concerns or informed consent. The study is therefore non-intrusive and respects the rights and confidentiality of individuals.

In conducting the analysis, careful attention was given to accurate representation of the source material, ensuring that all quotations and paraphrased content are faithfully transcribed from the film. Proper acknowledgment and citation of all sources, including the film and supporting literature, were maintained throughout the study to uphold academic integrity. Furthermore, the researcher remained mindful of cultural and historical sensitivity, particularly in interpreting the speech within its socio-political context, avoiding misrepresentation or distortion of the historical events depicted.

By adhering to these practices, the study ensures that ethical standards in research are maintained, while providing a rigorous and responsible critical discourse analysis of the speech.

8. Results

This section presents the findings of the Critical Discourse Analysis of Seretse Khama's Kgotla speech as depicted in the film *A United Kingdom* (2016). Using van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework, the analysis examines how the speech constructs discourses of equality, resistance, and moral leadership through textual, cognitive, and social dimensions. The results highlight the strategic use of language, rhetorical devices, and structural patterns to communicate ideological meaning, influence audience perception, and situate the discourse within its historical and socio-political context.

8.1 Summary of key themes, rhetorical strategies, and ideological meanings

This section provides a concise overview of the Critical Discourse Analysis of Seretse Khama's Kgotla speech using van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework. It summarizes the key themes, identifies the rhetorical strategies, and explains the ideological meanings conveyed through the speech. By examining the textual, cognitive, and social dimensions, this summary illustrates how Khama's language constructs messages of equality, resistance, and moral leadership, while shaping audience beliefs and situating the discourse within its historical and socio-political context.

Table 1: Critical Discourse Analysis of Seretse Khama's Kgotla Speech Using Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Framework

Dimension	Theme	Example from Speech	Rhetorical/Discursive Strategy	Ideological Meaning
Textual	Racial injustice	"South Africa's racist disease has infected all our neighboring countries, and us."	Metaphor; evaluative language	Frames segregation as harmful and morally wrong
	Segregation vs. equality	"We should not be fighting for segregation; we should be fighting for equality."	Parallelism; contrast	Highlights ethical choice; positions equality as universal moral principle
	Moral leadership & personal commitment	"I am ready to serve you because I love my people. I love this land. But I love my wife."	Repetition; emotional appeal (pathos)	Emphasizes personal integrity and ethical leadership
	Critique of	"Are we to now uphold the	Rhetorical question;	Challenges legitimacy of discriminatory

	oppressive systems	abomination that is apartheid in our own Kgotla?”	evaluative term	systems; encourages audience reflection
Cognitive	Audience moral reasoning	“Africa can never be free until all those who live in her, white and black, recognize that race must have no bearing on equality and justice.”	Inclusive language; moral appeal	Activates collective responsibility; encourages internalization of anti-segregation values
	Empathy & identification	Defense of interracial marriage	Personal narrative; emotional appeal	Builds audience connection; humanizes political conflict
Social	Colonial & societal power	References to segregated schools, hospitals, churches	Evidence-based description; enumeration	Critiques colonial and social hierarchies; situates speech in historical context
	Resistance & equality	Overall speech message	Discursive construction of equality and resistance	Promotes anti-racist ideology; legitimizes moral leadership

The analysis presented in Table 1 demonstrates the multidimensional construction of meaning in Seretse Khama’s Kgotla speech through the lens of van Dijk’s socio-cognitive framework. The textual dimension reveals the deliberate use of language to convey moral and political messages. Metaphors such as “*racialist disease*” frame apartheid and segregation as harmful and ethically unacceptable, while evaluative terms like “*abomination*” create a strong moral stance against discriminatory practices. Parallelism and contrast, evident in statements such as “*we should not be fighting for segregation; we should be fighting for equality,*” serve to emphasize the ethical dichotomy between injustice and equality, reinforcing the persuasive impact of the speech. Additionally, repetition and emotional appeals, particularly in the personal declaration “*I am ready to serve you because I love my people. I love this land. But I love my wife,*” enhance the audience’s emotional engagement and reinforce Khama’s ethical credibility as a moral leader.

The cognitive dimension highlights how these textual strategies are designed to shape audience mental models and influence beliefs. By connecting personal experience with broader social issues, the speech encourages listeners to internalize anti-segregation values and reflect on collective responsibility. Inclusive language, such as addressing both “*white and black*” members of the community, fosters identification and empathy, allowing the audience to perceive Khama’s struggle as both personal and societal. The rhetorical questions employed throughout the speech further prompt critical reflection,

challenging listeners to consider the moral implications of upholding segregation in their own community.

The social dimension situates the speech within the historical, political, and cultural context of colonial Africa. References to segregated schools, hospitals, and churches contextualize the systemic nature of racial discrimination and highlight the pervasive influence of apartheid ideology. By framing equality as essential for the freedom and future of Africa, the speech not only challenges dominant power structures but also positions Khama as a legitimate moral and political leader advocating for social justice.

Overall, the table illustrates that the speech operates on multiple levels simultaneously: it communicates ethical and ideological meaning through carefully structured language, shapes audience beliefs and attitudes, and situates its arguments within a concrete socio-political context. This multidimensional approach underscores the effectiveness of Khama's rhetoric in constructing discourses of equality, resistance, and moral leadership, demonstrating how political language can mobilize both thought and action within oppressed communities.

9. Discussion

This section interprets the findings of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Seretse Khama's Kgotla speech using van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework. The analysis demonstrates how the speech constructs discourses of equality, resistance, and moral leadership through textual, cognitive, and social dimensions. The discussion is organized into three subsections: Textual Strategies, Cognitive Effects, and Social Context.

9.1 Textual Strategies

The textual dimension of Khama's speech demonstrates a carefully structured and deliberate use of language to convey both ideological and moral meaning. Key lexical choices, including terms such as "*racialist disease*" and "*abomination*," serve to morally condemn segregation and delegitimize discriminatory practices, framing them as both ethically and socially unacceptable. These evaluative terms not only communicate a strong moral stance but also establish the seriousness of the social injustice being addressed. Parallelism and contrast, as seen in the statement "*we should not be fighting for segregation; we should be fighting for equality*," create a clear ethical dichotomy, emphasizing the distinction between unjust practices and the principles of equality (Charteris-Black, 2011). Such linguistic structures guide the audience to recognize the moral imperative embedded in the speech and reinforce the persuasive power of the message.

Repetition and emotional appeal further enhance the speech's rhetorical impact. For instance, the phrase "*I am ready to serve you because I love my people. I love this land. But I love my wife*" not only reiterates Khama's commitment to his people and nation but also integrates his personal experience, making the argument more relatable and emotionally compelling (Beard, 2000; Fairclough, 1995). This combination of ethical reasoning and personal narrative strengthens the audience's perception of Khama's integrity and legitimacy as a leader. Collectively, these textual strategies align with established principles of political rhetoric, which emphasize the importance of language in mobilizing audiences, legitimizing authority, and framing political and moral discourse in persuasive and ideologically meaningful ways.

9.2 Cognitive Effects

At the cognitive level, Khama's speech strategically shapes the mental representations, beliefs, and ethical reasoning of his audience. By employing inclusive language that addresses both white and black members of the community, the speech fosters empathy and identification, encouraging listeners to perceive the struggle against segregation as a shared moral and social responsibility (van Dijk, 1993). Rhetorical questions, such as "*Are we to now uphold the abomination that is apartheid in our own Kgotla?*", actively engage the audience in critical reflection, prompting them to evaluate the moral legitimacy of segregation and their own potential complicity.

Furthermore, Khama links personal experiences and emotions, such as his love for his wife and commitment to his people, to broader societal issues, enhancing cognitive engagement and reinforcing the relevance of his argument to the audience's lived reality. This integration of personal narrative and social critique not only strengthens the persuasive power of the discourse but also encourages the internalization of anti-segregation values. Such strategies exemplify van Dijk's (1998, 2006) emphasis on the interplay between cognition and discourse, demonstrating how linguistic choices can shape mental models, influence collective beliefs, and motivate ethical reflection within a community facing systemic injustice.

9.3 Social Context

The social dimension situates Khama's speech within the broader historical, political, and cultural context of colonial Bechuanaland, emphasizing the structural and systemic nature of racial discrimination. By referencing segregated institutions such as schools, hospitals, and churches, the speech not only illustrates the pervasiveness of apartheid-inspired practices but also underscores the ethical urgency of challenging such systemic inequalities (Fairclough, 1989). These references make abstract principles of justice and equality tangible for the audience, linking societal structures directly to the lived experiences of the community.

Furthermore, the speech actively challenges dominant power structures, including colonial authorities and traditional leaders, by questioning the legitimacy of racial segregation and positioning Khama's leadership as grounded in moral and ethical authority rather than inherited or imposed status. Through this framing, Khama constructs a discourse that connects personal integrity with collective responsibility, demonstrating that leadership entails a duty to uphold justice and protect human dignity. This linkage encourages the audience to reflect on their own ethical and social responsibilities and fosters a collective moral consciousness. As noted by Wodak and Meyer (2016), CDA is particularly effective for analyzing how language in political speeches can expose power relations, reveal social inequalities, and mobilize communities toward social change. Khama's speech exemplifies this dynamic, illustrating how discourse can simultaneously challenge oppression, legitimize moral authority, and advocate for equality and resistance in a deeply unequal society.

9.4 Integrated Interpretation

Taken together, the textual, cognitive, and social dimensions of Khama's Kgotla speech demonstrate that it operates on multiple levels simultaneously, integrating language, thought, and context to convey powerful ideological and moral messages. At the textual level, carefully chosen lexical items, rhetorical devices, and structural patterns frame segregation as morally and politically unacceptable while emphasizing equality as a universal principle. At the cognitive level, these linguistic strategies shape audience beliefs, encourage empathy, and stimulate critical reflection, enabling listeners to internalize anti-segregation values and consider the ethical implications of their own actions (van Dijk, 1993, 1998). The social dimension situates the discourse within the historical and political realities of colonial

Bechuanaland, highlighting systemic oppression, challenging dominant power structures, and presenting Khama as a moral and legitimate leader whose authority is grounded in ethical principles rather than social convention (Fairclough, 1989; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

Overall, the speech exemplifies how political rhetoric can construct ideological meaning, legitimize resistance to oppression, and mobilize audiences toward social justice and equality. By combining persuasive linguistic strategies with cognitive engagement and social contextualization, Khama's speech demonstrates the multidimensional effectiveness of discourse in shaping moral and political consciousness (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2006). These findings underscore the value of CDA as a tool for analyzing complex political speeches, revealing how language can simultaneously communicate ethical imperatives, influence audience perception, and challenge entrenched societal inequalities.

10. Implications and Future Research

10.1 Implications

The findings of this study provide several important implications for the fields of discourse analysis, political rhetoric, and postcolonial studies. First, the analysis demonstrates how political speeches can function as powerful instruments for challenging discriminatory ideologies and promoting social equality (Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 1998). By employing rhetorical strategies such as metaphor, repetition, and emotional appeal, Seretse Khama's speech constructs a persuasive discourse that opposes racial segregation and advocates justice. This finding supports the argument that language plays a significant role in shaping ideological beliefs and influencing public attitudes toward social issues.

Second, the study highlights the usefulness of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an analytical framework for examining political speeches. CDA allows researchers to uncover the underlying ideological meanings embedded in language and to explore how discourse reflects broader social and political contexts (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Through this approach, the study reveals how rhetorical discourse can expose power relations and challenge dominant narratives related to race and social hierarchy.

Third, the study contributes to understanding the role of rhetoric in constructing leadership identity. The speech portrays leadership not merely as political authority but as a moral responsibility grounded in equality, justice, and commitment to the people (Charteris-Black, 2011). Such representations reinforce the idea that effective leadership communication involves both rational argumentation and emotional engagement with audiences.

Finally, the study also demonstrates the significance of cinematic representations in shaping historical and political narratives. Films that portray historical figures can serve as valuable sources for discourse analysis because they reflect social ideologies and cultural interpretations of historical events (Rosenstone, 2012). Therefore, examining speeches within films provides insight into how historical narratives are constructed and communicated to contemporary audiences.

10.2 Future Research

Although this study provides valuable insights into the discourse of equality and resistance in Seretse Khama's speech, several areas remain open for future research. First, future studies may analyze additional speeches by African political leaders who addressed issues of racial equality and social justice.

Comparative studies involving speeches by figures such as Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King Jr. could reveal similarities and differences in rhetorical strategies used in anti-discrimination discourse.

Second, future research could apply alternative discourse analysis frameworks, such as Fairclough's three-dimensional model or Wodak's discourse-historical approach, to provide deeper insights into the relationship between language, ideology, and historical context. Using multiple analytical frameworks may enhance the reliability and richness of discourse analysis findings.

Third, scholars may also investigate the role of cinematic discourse in shaping public perceptions of historical events and political leadership. Since films often reconstruct historical narratives through dramatized storytelling, analyzing film dialogue and speeches can reveal how media representations influence audience interpretations of history.

Finally, future research may explore the impact of political rhetoric on audience reception. Empirical studies involving audience responses or perception analysis could provide further insight into how rhetorical discourse influences attitudes toward equality, justice, and leadership.

Overall, further research in these areas will deepen understanding of how language and rhetoric function as tools for social change and ideological transformation.

11. Conclusion

This study employed Critical Discourse Analysis, guided by van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework, to examine the rhetorical and ideological dimensions of Seretse Khama's Kgotla speech as portrayed in the film *A United Kingdom* (2016). The analysis revealed that the speech operates on multiple levels; textual, cognitive, and social, to construct discourses of equality, resistance, and moral leadership. At the textual level, Khama's strategic use of metaphors, parallelism, repetition, and rhetorical questions framed segregation as morally unacceptable and emphasized the ethical imperative of equality. At the cognitive level, these linguistic strategies influenced audience beliefs, fostered empathy, and encouraged critical reflection on the social and moral consequences of racial discrimination. At the social level, the speech situated its message within the historical and political context of colonial Bechuanaland, challenging entrenched power structures and legitimizing ethical leadership.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that political rhetoric can serve as a powerful tool for constructing ideological meaning, mobilizing moral reflection, and advocating social justice. Khama's speech exemplifies how language can simultaneously convey personal conviction, ethical principles, and political resistance, illustrating the value of CDA for analyzing complex political discourse. The study underscores the role of discourse in shaping collective consciousness and highlights the enduring importance of rhetorical strategies in challenging social inequalities and promoting human rights.

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Appendix A

Full Transcript of Seretse Khama's Kgotla Speech (A United Kingdom, 2016)

I am told that you no longer wish for me to honor my duty to serve you as your king because of the color of the wife I have chosen. South Africa's racialist disease has infected all our neighboring countries, and us. Look around you: our schools, hospitals, churches, all segregated in practice, if not in law.

Are we to now uphold the abomination that is apartheid in our own Kgotla, the very same abomination that has been oppressing us for decades? Is this to be the future for our Africa?

We should not be fighting for segregation; we should be fighting for equality. That is where we should be focusing our minds, not on the wife I have chosen, who means you no harm, whose only apparent crime has been to fall in love with me, and mine to fall in love with her.

I cannot serve you without her by my side, but I cannot force you to accept this. Africa can never be free until all those who live in her, white and black, recognize that race must have no bearing on equality and justice.

I am ready to serve you because I love my people. I love this land.

But I love my wife.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3UxIrMmgZo>