



The Linguistic Representations of the Moroccan Outstretched Hand Policy in Diplomatic Relations with Algeria in Light of Fairclough's Model

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Abstract

Morocco and Algeria have shared a long historical relationship of genuine fraternity and friendship; however, there have been times when this comradeship has resembled the brotherhood of Cain and Abel, fraught with tensions and characterized by tragic turning points. Throughout the history of the countries' interactions, particularly at the level of diplomacy as well as the military sphere, official political speeches of Moroccan and Algerian political representatives always reflect subliminal ideologies that can be revealed within a systematic analysis of political texts, relying on a solid theoretical framework. Such methodological examination enables this study to establish a logical link between the linguistic features used by those politicians and some social and geopolitical consequences. In pursuit of this, this paper examines the linguistic choices used by King Mohammed VI in approaching Algeria diplomatically, specifically those mirroring the Moroccan monarch's policy of the 'outstretched hand'. The samples used in this study were chosen based on purposive sampling and were analyzed according to Fairclough's three-dimensional model. The findings indicate that the Moroccan king consistently uses specific lexical choices that depict a discourse marked by fraternity. In contrast, the Algerian state has shown no tangible engagement with this Moroccan initiative.

1. INTRODUCTION

The current diplomatic tensions between Morocco and Algeria have reached their peak, echoing the drums of war at certain points. Igniting the wick of such an escalated conflict and the outbreak of a war would not serve both countries' interests but would pull the Maghreb region into a bloody war. It can be observed that the repercussions of this vision have clearly been highlighted in several speeches of the King Mohammed VI. Here, what makes his discourse effective, precisely speaking about the 'outstretched hand', is not only its core function of being a short-term remedy for the crisis but also its strong intention to de-escalate tension between both countries completely. It can be assumed that diplomatic ties are often perceived as an extensive and multifaceted framework, symbolizing a gateway to the normalization of relations between certain nations. In the Moroccan/Algerian context, the launched policy to deal with the Eastern neighbor of Morocco carries profound symbolic weight, not solely as a political and diplomatic act but above all as a statement about the chance to overcome entrenched narratives of mistrust and crisis. Before shedding light on direct and

indirect invitations for the Algerian state for the sake of normalizing the ties, we precisely need to contextualize the situation and highlight the underlying factors of the Moroccan royal initiative.

Pavia (2022) stated that only after Washington, D.C., declared the official American recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over the Sahara and strengthened diplomatic relations with Morocco, Algiers articulated a stance concerning this consolidation of ties and the alignment of political visions. Algeria additionally pointed fingers at Morocco, accusing the Western neighbor of causing the devastating wildfires that occurred in the Algerian forests in 2021. This condemnation followed shortly after the proliferation of the Pegasus project's outcomes that were published by the Washington Post along with other media outlets. The investigation regarding the Pegasus incident detailed attempted and successful hacking of mobile phones. Pavia mentioned that the investigation was extensive, disclosing that there were many Algerian politicians among the list of victims. In response, Algeria expressed its alarm, while the Moroccan side strongly denied any involvement in espionage against people in general and political figures in particular. Subsequently, Algeria radically cut diplomatic ties with Morocco and even closed its airspace to Moroccan aircraft.

Within this broader context of accusations against Morocco, many scholars have closely linked Algerian political discourse to narratives associated with the hate speech spectrum. Before highlighting its attributes in the context of Algerian-Moroccan diplomacy, it is necessary, as we see it, to mention the role of linguistic rhetoric in confrontations. Hdouch (2023) mentioned that semantic battles refer to attempts to standardize language and use words with the aim to mold the world to suit one's benefit. Consequently, meaning should be seen as an interpretive hypothesis that is influenced by situational and textual constructions. The Algerian 'elite' and officials, according to this particular perspective, have shown a significant level of hostility toward Morocco, and this has been reflected unambiguously in their official media. Mliless Mohamed (2021) mentioned that the Algerian hate speech is growing with time as well as getting greater in terminology. This means that they have started creating new lexical choices to demonize the Moroccan state to construct a new collective consciousness as well as narratives that perpetuate Morocco as the eternal enemy of the Algerian state. Hence, they started opting for expressions like 'the classical enemy', 'the western enemy', and 'the bad neighbor'. Using such hate discourse by the Algerian state, aligning with Hadouch's perspective, would serve El Mouradia's agenda for unclear or, as they may seem, unknown reasons to mold and construct 'the suitable local world' for the Algerian regime. The inevitable question that must be raised should not inquire into the Algerian motives but rather why Morocco did not reply by relying on a counter-hegemonic discourse utilizing the same Algerian strategies and discursive tools.

Morocco, in return, has adopted a peaceful and wise strategy in dealing with the Algerian neighbor. Morocco's king has launched the outstretched hand policy to seek the normalization of diplomatic ties with Algiers for establishing a post-crisis collaborative vision in order to have a shared future. The representations of this monarch policy are clearly reflected in several official addresses. The main objective of this paper lies in analyzing linguistically those expressions. The chosen samples are analyzed according to Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse analysis; it will work as a critical sieve that will let the ideologies and Moroccan state-like intentions be clear for readers. The study aims at answering the following questions: What are the linguistic specificities and discursive strategies used by King Mohammed VI to invite Algeria for a normalization of diplomatic ties? What is the feedback or counterpart's response to this policy?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Moroccan-Algerian Crisis

Cain and Abel's brotherhood is a good example to figuratively describe diplomatic relations and political interactions between Morocco and Algeria. It is true that there have been periods when each country has strongly stood by the other. Balta (1990, as cited in Lounnas & Messari, 2018) mentioned that when the North-African countries were detaching themselves from the French colonial restrictions, they had been ideologically on the same page. Morocco, as it had gotten its independence a few years before Algeria did, stood by the Algerian National Liberation Front in its decolonizing process against the French imperial forces. Besides being a faithful ally, the Moroccan state and people welcomed thousands of their Algerian brothers (refugees). The Moroccan king, Hassan II, given that Algeria had just gained independence, reached an agreement with the exiled government of Algeria to delay discussion of border disputes.

Despite this seemingly irrefutable point, it remained an absolute fact that this ideological rapprochement was clearly fugacious. A while later after the Algerian state got its independence in 1962, Algeria reneged on the agreement, which made Morocco feel betrayed and led the Sand War. In 1975, Morocco gained back control over the southern region. Following this, the Algerian state, considering this situation, radically stood against the Moroccan stance (Abd EL Hay, 2014; Lounnas & Messari, 2018; Pavia, 2022). This border issue has been the flame that ignited all the contemporary diplomatic conflicts, at least partially. It is then essential to argue that the tensions resulting from these differences related to the demarcation of the borders between the parties concerned have created an atmosphere of geographical and geopolitical instability.

The Algerian Contemporary Stance from the Diplomatic Crisis

The Algerian stance regarding the diplomatic crisis was ambiguous, mainly in contrast to the Moroccan one. In this regard, Sour (2022) brought up that Morocco's king, Mohamed VI, sent a congratulatory letter to Abdelmadjid Tebboune in honor of his new role as president, inviting him to start a new chapter in Moroccan-Algerian relations. On the 19th of December, in the event of the Algerian inaugural address, the elected president seemed to be accepting the king's initiative. Additionally, he affirmed that Algeria's position on the Sahara issue would remain unchanged. In a subsequent interview with Al Jazeera, Tebboune recalled earlier times when the two countries were collaborating together, mentioning that borders had stayed open in spite of continuous diplomatic and political tensions. However, he renewed Algeria's political and diplomatic resistance to any suggested solutions (Sour, 2022). As time passed by, the Algerian president himself declared that the bilateral relations of both countries have reached the point of no return (Al Jazeera, 2023).

The Moroccan Political Approach and the Initiative of the 'Outstretched Hand'

The monarchical initiative of the outstretched hand has sought reopening the borders and re-establishing a newly solid foundation of mutual trust between the two countries. The Moroccan king's speeches are congenial, and they both directly and indirectly make a friendly proposal toward Algerians to restore relations. Mlilles stressed that the king has repeatedly shown good intentions toward the Eastern neighbor, reflecting his serious approach to resolving the crisis. The juxtaposition of the Moroccan and Algerian crisis management methods elucidates that the two countries adopt two different approaches. On one hand, Morocco, led by Mohamed VI, takes a conciliatory stance toward Algeria. To put it in words, Mliless (2023) stated that the policy of the 'outstretched hand' is perceived as a clear offer of peacemaking. On the other hand, Algeria, based on its state's decisions as well as declarations of its officials, is taking a hostile stance by demonizing Morocco and referring to it as an enemy. This behavioral disparity, in the critical eyeshot of Mliless, emphasizes how convoluted the situation

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is. This means that the Moroccan monarch will not be met halfway and will wind up being at odds with the Algerian stance, whose characteristics manifest in uncertainty that is covered by this improvised lethargy.

Discourse Studies on Moroccan-Algerian Relations

Research on Morocco–Algeria relations highlights the substantial role of discursive strategies in shaping national perceptions and sustaining long-standing tensions regarding the regional matters. Media narratives and elite rhetoric are used to justify each country’s political positions and frame the other as a threat (Liu, Chen, & Chen, 2025; Mliless, 2021), conforming to what we mentioned above, for instance, that the Algerian officials use specific lexical choices to demonize Morocco. These dynamics not only affect the Moroccan-Algerian bilateral relations but also impact broader regional security and hegemonic competition in the Maghreb region (Sour, 2022). Overall, these studies explain that discourse is an important mechanism through which political and social tensions can be legitimized.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Studying language critically, from a historical lens, is rooted in different temporalities and characterized by different visions and perspectives. According to Van Dijk, the critical scrutiny of language is traced back to Aristotle and many thinkers of the age of enlightenment, as well as Marx and a plethora of Marxist scholars of the Frankfurt School, like Adorno, Benjamin, etc. He stated that this multidisciplinary field, that is, the critical study of language, has been influenced by different critical streams of thought, like the works of Althusser, Foucault, and Pêcheux. These intersections have made it possible for CDA to emerge (Bezar et al., 2023). Al-Mas'udi & Al-A'mery (1994) stated that CDA, from a Faircloughian lens, aims at discovering and detecting the hidden elements in a social system, such as power and hegemony. This academic vision aligns with Van Dijk’s (1993, as cited in Al-Mas'udi & Al-A'mery, 1994) as he sees that the role of critical discourse analysts is to understand and expose socio-political inequalities.

As long as we have opted for the Faircloughian three-dimensional model to scrutinize the selected data, the article seems to suggest a supply for readers to understand the systematic and structural steps of this chosen paradigm. Basically, it comprises three substantial stages. One of which is the first phase that examines the text itself, analyzing its linguistic features, structure, and stylistic choices in a systematic way. The second phase, discursive practice, sheds light on the text both as a product of its production and as a resource for interpretation. The last phase, that is, the social practice, focuses on how power relations influence the interpretation of the text (Fairclough, 1989).

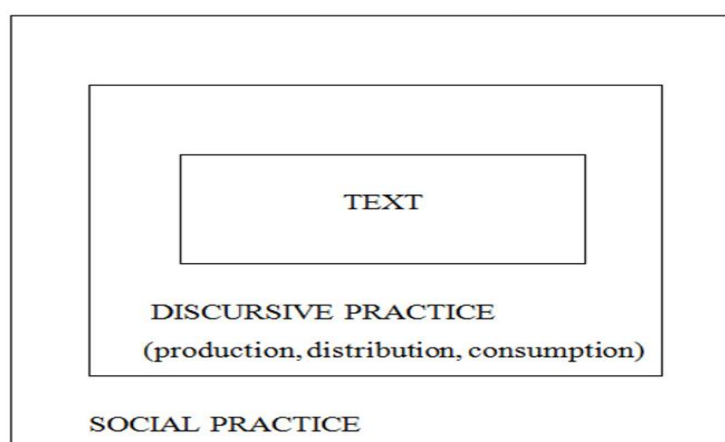


Figure 1: Three-Dimensional Model of Fairclough

4. METHODOLOGY

Once purposive sampling was selected, the expressions we tend to analyze were chosen deliberately to highlight their diplomatic connotations in regard to inviting the Algerian ‘ally’ to a new reconciliation. Cohen et al. (2007) and Nyimbili and Nyimbili (2024), among other academic voices, have mentioned that purposive sampling is used to select ‘samples to study’ based on the objectives of the study. This way, the three texts are strategically curated to fit the academic purpose of this research.

Samples: The chart presents the texts to be studied:

The Samples in Original Language	The Samples in English	The Source of the Sample
<p>واعتبارا لما نكنه للجزائر، قيادة وشعبا، من مشاعر المودة والتقدير، فإننا في المغرب لن ندخر أي جهد، من أجل إرساء علاقاتنا الثنائية على أسس متينة، من الثقة والتضامن وحسن الجوار، عملا بقول جدنا صلي الله عليه وسلم: “ما زال جبريل يوصيني بالجار، حتى ظننت أنه سيورثه”</p>	<p>Given the feelings of affection and appreciation we have for the Algerian leadership and people, we in Morocco will spare no effort in order to establish our bilateral relations on solid foundations of trust, solidarity and good neighborliness in accordance with the teachings of our grandfather, the prophet (Mohammed) peace be upon him:</p> <p>‘Jibril kept recommending treating neighbours with kindness until I thought he would assign a share of inheritance’</p>	<p>The royal speech on the occasion of the 43rd anniversary of the Green March (Medi 1 TV, 2018)</p>
<p>إننا نؤكد مجددا التزامنا الصادق، بنهج اليد الممدودة، تجاه أشقائنا في الجزائر، وفاء منا لروابط الأخوة والدين واللغة وحسن الجوار، التي تجمع، على الدوام، شعبينا الشقيقين.</p>	<p>We reaffirm our sincere commitment to the outstretched hand approach towards our brothers in Algeria, out of loyalty to the bonds of brotherhood, religion, language and good neighborliness that have always united our two brotherly peoples.</p>	<p>The royal Speech on the 20th Anniversary of Throne Day (2MTV, 2019)</p>
<p>إننا نجدد الدعوة الصادقة لأشقائنا في الجزائر، للعمل سويا، دون شروط، من أجل بناء علاقات ثنائية، أساسها الثقة والحوار وحسن الجوار.</p>	<p>We renew our sincere call to our brothers in Algeria to work together, without conditions, to build bilateral relations based on trust, dialogue and good neighborliness.</p>	<p>The royal Speech on the 22nd Anniversary of Throne Day (Al Aoula TV, 2021)</p>

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The complicated interactions between Morocco and Algeria have long formed the political climate of the North African region. Throughout this critical temporality, the king of Morocco has repeatedly called for an honest reconciliation with Algeria. His speeches clearly demonstrate a continuous attempt to rebuild trust and bring both countries back to a state of coherent interactions. By applying Fairclough's three-dimensional model to three royal speeches delivered on the 43rd anniversary of the Green March, as well as the 20th and 22nd anniversaries of Throne Day, it becomes crystal clear that the Moroccan monarchy has relied on a constant ideological stance. This pattern is remarkably characterized by the use of emotionally charged lexical choices related to fraternity, neighborliness, and shared identity.

Speech 1: 43rd Anniversary of the Green March

In the first speech, delivered on the 43rd anniversary of the Green March, the King uses a noticeable set of expressions that represent his willingness to mend and normalize relations with Algiers. Words like "affection" and "appreciation" explicitly depict a discursive register filled with good intentions. By addressing both "the Algerian leadership and people," the King's message is inclusive and directed at all Algerian components, not only the political regime. The speech also draws on a religious reference that focuses on the cruciality of kindness toward neighbors, which gives the Moroccan monarchical call moral support. The metaphor "solid foundations" carries a figurative description of the strong and stable relationship Morocco hopes to restore. All these terms reflect the friendly strategy adopted by the King. According to the second stage of analysis, the text seeks to encourage Algeria to participate in restoring political relations, presenting reconciliation as a shared necessity for both states. Concerning the social practice level, this segment of discourse appears as a diplomatic attempt to solve regional disputes, with a particular focus on the Sahara question. However, El Mouradia Palace has not shown any intention of engaging with this call, which creates yet another rupture at the level of diplomatic ties.

Speech 2: 20th Anniversary of Throne Day

The second sample, delivered on the 20th anniversary of Throne Day, represents the continuous call for Algeria using the same terminology. The use of "reaffirm" explicitly expresses persistence, and the phrase "sincere commitment" highlights the honest willingness beyond this initiative. The lexical choice "brothers" is intentionally used to touch upon the sense of closeness and familiarity between the two countries. The phrase "out of loyalty to the bonds of brotherhood, religion, language, and good neighborliness" sheds light on the ideological roots from which this initiative is adopted. Morocco seems to be taking a post-conflict position that seeks common ground with Algeria by focusing on shared cultural and religious ties. The repeated use of the pronoun "We" shows the coherent fusion of the Moroccan royal and popular intentions, signaling the collaboratively shared vision of the king and his people. At the discursive practice level, the repeated call is a strong ideological representation, considering reconciliation as the only possible solution to heal the political fractures. The insistence clearly stresses that the two countries are destined to remain connected. According to the third phase of analysis, the social practice, the sample presents the intentions of the outstretched hand as a peaceful attempt to resolve the crisis. Nevertheless, Algeria has responded with complete silence, making Morocco's initiative a one-sided policy.

Speech 3: 22nd Anniversary of Throne Day

The third speech, from the 22nd anniversary of Throne Day, continues to show the same ideological and discursive line. Words such as "renew" and "brothers" reflect the process of continuation of the sought-after reconciliation. The verb "renew," which refers to doing something again, expresses the repetitiveness of Morocco's diplomatic invitation. The phrases

“without conditions” and “to build bilateral relations based on trust” describe the principles on which the Moroccan king wants future political interactions to be founded. Regarding the second stage, the sample also shows a consistent commitment to this reconciliatory strategy, while the Algerian state continues to avoid any positive engagement within this suggested framework. In accordance with the last phase, the social practice, this sample reinforces the ideological narrative of goodwill that Morocco adopts regionally and internationally. It is crystal clear that Morocco explicitly shows readiness to rebuild relations with the Eastern neighbor.

6. CONCLUSION

Our scholarly scrutiny exposes the ideological load of the Moroccan king’s rhetoric, emanating from the direct and ciphered messages to Algeria. This analytical vision, in accordance with Fairclough's three-dimensional model, represents Morocco in a position in which it not only seeks the normalcy of ties but reaches beyond that to establish solid foundations for bilateral socio-economic projects. The unexplainable Algerian stance has been the one and only obstacle in the face of the Moroccan-Algerian coherent interactions as well as the formation of a real and strong Maghreb Union. This explanation is not focusing on demonizing or criminalizing the Algerian part nor on aggrandizing the Moroccan one, but on the reality as it is, as the Algerian presidency remains distant, having no overtures for any political resolution. This study mainly invites several lines of inquiry that merit further scholarly scrutiny. Future research can, for instance, interrogate the potential advantages that Algeria may derive from its stance. Positioning such questions would enable a more rigorous examination of the dynamics at play.

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