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Intersemioticity of King Abdullah's II 'Speech from the Throne 2021' Discourse: from Infratextuality to Ultratextuality

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims primarily at revisiting and investigating how intersemioticity subsumes intertextuality and how it operates as long as infratextuality and ultratextuality are discoursally well-structured and well-systematized in a cogent mechanism that manifests how political discourse can succeed in triggering persuasiveness at various levels of socio-political interaction. Therefore, the researcher has endeavored to examine King Abdulla's II speech of the Throne 2021 as an exemplary sample that succinctly shows how such textual devices and components are critically employed semio-discoursally in an attempt to convey a deliberate message that matches the expectations of the diverse target-audience that consists of a number of legislative representatives, senators, veteran lawmakers, the cabinet members as well as the Jordanian people as a whole. The royal address is an annual occasion through which the King attempts to reinstate and to pledge his allegiance and his utter dedication to his nation and to his country in a way that instigates their reciprocal allegiance and fidelity to his throne; therefore, the infratextual, the intertextual and the ultratextual components are well-woven in a subtle fashion that guarantees the maximal flow and the right impact of his discourse on his audience. Unlike traditional critical discourse studies, this paper mainly draws on a higher level of semiotic assumptions and argumentation that can help the researcher and the reader identify and rationalize how political texts can be intellectually tailored to convey and to instill certain communicative and ideological goals beyond the mere limitations of linguistic foundations.

1.   Introduction

Jordan is one of the most influential Asian Arab World countries although it is relatively small in its geographical area and small in its population. It was established as an Emirate of Trans-Jordan in 1921 reigned by Prince Abdullah I under the British mandate. In 1946 it was named The Hashemite Kingdom of Trans-Jordan and three years later it was renamed as The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a name that

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has retained since that date. The core part of the name itself stems from the name of the Hashemite dynasty, the noblest dynasty in the Islamic World because it is ascribed to Hashem, the great grandfather of Muhammad Bin Abd-Allah, the messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him. As a stable monarchy, Jordan has been governed by four successive kings since its early foundation: King Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein I, King Talal Bin Abdullah, King Hussein Bin Talal and King Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein II (see Wilson, 1990; Salibi, 1998; Pati, 2015). King Abdullah II, the forty first descendant of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the fourth king; he was proclaimed a monarch of Jordan in 1999 succeeding his father, late king Hussein.

The Parliament of Jordan was the fruit of 1952 constitution despite its suspension in the aftermaths of 1967 war, till the resumption of its constitutional duties in 1989 during the reign of late King Hussein (Ryan, 2002). As a constitutional statutory tradition, the king himself is the head of the monarchy and he is the one who has the legal right to call the bicameral national assembly with its two chambers, the representatives and the senates, to convene; and he is the one who has the right to dissolve the parliament by law. At the beginning of the normal parliamentary term, the king attends the first session and delivers a televised speech in which he pinpoints the major issues that he wishes to be addressed and considered by the parliament (Lower and Upper Houses) and the government as well. The royal speech is considered a roadmap for all lawmakers and officials in the country because king Abdullah II is deemed as a source of supreme jurisdiction and authority in addition to his influential status socially, intellectually and spiritually (cf. Robins, 2004).

Historically speaking, the term intertextuality can be traced back to its first usage by J. Kristeva as abridging term between literary technicality of intersubjectivity and the Saussurean paradigm of the signifying process and the endeavor to explain how meaning can be transmitted directly and indirectly between the sender and the recipient as explicated by R. Barthes whether such literary intertextual devices are "optional, accidental or obligatory" (see Danziger, 1997). This simply means that the text can be delivered not in isolation but in connection to and in association with other preceding and other following texts that can be communicatively integrated to help both the sender and the recipient.

Therefore, the semantic components are undeniably essential as long as lexical and morphosyntactic structures are in operation, yet there are always some other fundamental constants and some other variables that a researcher must pay attention to while examining any text. Such textual components that transcend the mere linguistic boundaries into a higher level of communicative functions and interactive processes can be best understood semiotically without underestimating the role of semantic competence as a decisive factor in setting the foundations of the compositional meaning of the text itself (Lyons, 1978). Interestingly, lexical semantics and textual semantics can work hand in hand to facilitate the task of semioticians as long as intertextual analyses fail short to reflect the deep relations among textual layers; thus Intersemioticity can play a vital role that sustains the intricacies of the texts as co-texts and the interference of the context as such (cf. Hodges, 2008).

The dire need to highlight the sophisticated relationships between the lexemes, on the one hand, and the higher textual and contextual fabrics can be a decisive factor that strictly delimits what the speaker tries to say; how to say what he/she intends to convey and how the recipient may/may not be able to decode the intended message. Communicatively, native speakers of the same speech community, i.e. people of the same linguistic and socio-cultural background can oftentimes channel and re-channel various pieces and stretches of conversation effectively and appropriately as far as their schematic knowledge can be interchangeably established (Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). Such communicative functions have been among the prime goals of rhetoricians and poets ever since the very dawn of humanity (Wilson, 2006).

It is not always the case that discourse can be directly conducted and messages can be directly conveyed. More often than not, discoursal functions can be dialectal and controversial because of some ideological mismatches that mark and make up our intellectual and our sociocultural attitudes, beliefs and motivations. Such radical differences can impede the flow of discourse or the channeling of discourse, thus communicative failure may subsequently occur among interlocutors unless shared knowledge and shared beliefs intervene to litigate such differences between the sender and the recipients and vice versa (cf. McCanles, 1982).

2.   Methodology and data analysis

This research is qualitatively oriented and conducted. The researcher mainly tries to examine the political discourse of King Abdullah II in his opening speech from the throne in November 2021. The speech is a national address in which the king inaugurates and officially announces the opening of the normal session for the Jordanian Parliament. The Royal speech is a political landmark that depicts the philosophy of the king himself vis-à-vis all major issues that concern his country and his people politically, economically and socio-culturally. The speech instructs and delineates what the cabinet and the parliament ought to do as two major institutions in order to regulate and to facilitate how each source of authority can legislatively and executively run the affairs of the Jordanian people. Having all this in mind, the researcher attempts to study the Royal speech and to highlight the primary aspects that constitute the communicative value of the speech based on textual and semiotic assumptions that can illustrate how such political speeches can achieve the interactive objectives and intentions of the speaker and how such goals can be triggered by the sender and thus how they can be decoded by the recipient. Therefore, the Royal speech has been electronically retrieved from the website of the Hashemite Royal court in its original Arabic version and the official English version published by the Royal court itself. The two versions will be synthesized and thus major Intersemiotic aspects of the speech will be closely examined and accordingly analyzed in terms of the directness/indirectness of the intersemioticty of the speech in question.

3.   Theoretical background

Discoursal cohesion and coherence can be of paramount importance in building up discoursal bridges between interlocutors. Therefore, intertextuality must be revisited not only under the umbrella of discourse analysis beyond the scope of textual semantics and text-linguistics, but also within the comprehensive scope of intersemioticity because critical semiotics is wider in scope and deeper in interaction than other semantic-based and discourse-based disciplines in this regard (cf. Fairclough, 1989). There is no doubt that it is imperative to consider conversation analysis or discourse analysis as a cornerstone as such (see Keisling 2008), especially in political discourse where statesmen deliver their speeches more deliberately than other casual speeches (Dijik, 1997).

This can occur as politicians focus on attaining a high degree of persuasiveness in order to radically impact their audience (Poggi, 2005; Fairclogh, 1995). This can be mainly due to the close relationship between language and power as proposed by Bayram (2010) concerning the discourse of R.T. Erdogan's ideological manipulation in his debates. Intertextuality at this level is a useful tool that many eloquent statesmen opt for to achieve strict persuasion as it can be traced in King Abdullah's II official address, (see Al Shalabi and Al-Rajehi 2011; Al-Haq and Al-Sleibi, 2015). Such discoursal tools operate at various levels of interaction depending on many socio-political components as King Abdullah II manifests on such congregational occasions (Rabab'ah and Rumman, 2015; and Al-Momani, 2017).

Bearing in mind the strict relationship between the object, *representamen* and the *interpretant*, it can be more obvious how textual components can be encoded by the sender, how they can be interacting together and how they can be perceived by the addressees. This tri-dimensional process can be sometimes intriguing to follow yet it is very systematic (Peirce, 1931-1958). Therefore, the text as a whole is nothing but a sign that can interact with other signs in a way that facilitates the process of communication as the sender intends to deliver a specific message that can affect the recipient in a certain manner and to a certain extent (Dewey, 1946). Such communicative processes textually show how deep and how intricate our semiosis can be as long as we interact daily as members of a living organism that aims to survive economically and effectively (cf. Petrilli, 2009).

The production and the perception of the signs in a very systematic order and function within our signifying order can be regularly traced as long as common denominators exist among interlocutors while encoding and decoding any message (Shackell, 2018). The norms and the socio-cultural rules are productively and creatively knit far beyond the limitations of grammatical competence (cf. Chomsky, 1995; Chomsky, 1972). Therefore, what anticipates the relationship among signs within texts and between each text and another can be thoroughly deemed and perceived as sign interaction operates in various directions and at various layers socially, religiously and politically (Danesi and Perron, 1999). This prompts the need for contextualizing any political text intersemiotically in order to capture the

totality of the intended message, thus a combination of infratextual and ultratextual components must be synthesized while deciphering the signals that each text holds.

Within the critical discourse perspective, Fairclough (2001) abundantly explains how the text is produced to convey lots of nonlinguistic functions. These functions, therefore, can be approached in light of their pedagogical or ideological goals. The gap between the underlying meaning and the surface meaning is often huge; thus, it is urgent to examine such texts critically in order to digest the core of the political text; otherwise, the communicative process can be inefficient to a great extent (Dijik, 2011). This ultimately necessitates that semiotic approaches be implemented while scrutinizing the texture and the functions of critically oriented political texts whether they are written or spoken during debates and national addresses.

4.   Analysis and discussion

As a critically operational point of departure, the researcher must assert that infratextuality refers to the fundamental semantic compositional meaning that basically furnishes the discourse while the ultratextual components mainly handle the discoursal strategies utilized by the speaker in order to be more effective and more persuasive. However, the Intersemiotic layers represent the very active dynamism that controls the intrinsic relationships between both the cumulative interaction between the infratextual and the ultratextual dimensions; thus, the encoded message can be more discernible and more comprehensible in terms of its discoursal impact politically and socio-culturally.

In this section, the researcher tries to present a cogent argument that may enable the reader to pinpoint some major aspects of the intersemioticity of the texts encoded in King Abdullah's II speech. The speech hinges upon four major infratextual and three ultratextual components that mainly portray how sign interaction has been successfully attained in this speech. Of course, infratextual components refer to the predominantly semantic constituents and their skeletal compositional meaning that basically furnish the king's speech while the ultratextual components refer mainly to the discoursal strategies that his majesty apparently utilized in order to be more effective and more persuasive. Ultimately, the Intersemiotic layers represent the dynamism that regulates the relationship between both the infratextual and the ultratextual dimensions.

4.1   Infratextaul progress

The primary concern of infratextality is mainly envisaged in the idea behind generative semantics and the way sense and reference relationships can be well-structured in the text at the lexical and the sentential levels (cf Lyons 1978; and Katz, 2004). Therefore, any speech once considered as a spoken or a written entity is nothing but a text at this substantial level of semantic analysis. No theory of meaning can operate without seriously considering this infratextual dimension as it equips the reader/audience with the infrastructure that any citizen needs in a city to lead a normal life such as electricity, water, roads, schools, hospitals, etc. Thus, no text can survive any meaningful operation unless its infratextual foundations are properly set. To substantiate this argument by referring to the Kings speech, it is imperative to highlight some of these basic components:

The speech starts with the very conventional preamble of using the religious cliché "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Prayers and peace be upon our Prophet Mohammad," as it can be seen in (4.1.a.):

(4.1.a)

سم الله الرحمن الرحيم؛والصلاة والسلام على عبده سيدنا محمد النبي العربي الهاشمي، الأمين

Semantically and even stylistically, these two introductory phrases are typically and essentially used to mark the onset of any public official speech. Such a conventional prelude is semantically laden with both denotative and connotative content and overtones that set the cornerstone for the speaker or the writer to attract the attention of his audience by referring to the Holy name of God 'Allah' and calling for invocation of blessings on His messenger. This, infrastructural or infratextual tool triggers the full readiness of the addresses to carefully listen to what will follow which is typically followed the terms of address directed to the representatives and the senators proper as in (4.1.b.) and the canonical form of Islamic greetings as in and (4.1.c.):

(4.1.b.)

حضرات السادة الأعيان، حضرات النواب

(4.1.c)

وبركاته الله ورحمة عليكم السلام

As an official address to the members of the two chambers, the king observes the semantic content of the terms of address represented in the word "HaDaraat"; i.e. 'Honorable Senators; Honerable Representatives' in (4.1.b.). These formalities are semantically essential as they mark the referential value of the addressees and their status as acknowledged dignitaries. In addition, (4.1.c.) marks what it entails to greet a person or a group of people from an Islamic point of view; i.e. 'Peace and Blessings be upon you'; this infratextaul component by default establishes a sense of rapport and solidarity between the speaker and the addressee.

To culminate this infratextual dimension, King Abdullah II reminds the audience in (4.1.d.) with the national anniversary of the birthday of his father, the late king, whose birth anniversary was just a day before the speech itself. Then, king Abdullah begs them to stand up and to recite the Quraánic verses of Surat AlFatiHa 'The opening of the Qurán', which canonically serves as a kind of supplication on the soul of the deceased.

(4.1.d.)

روحه على الفاتحة لقراءة لوقوف وأدعوكم عليه، الله رحمة الباني، الحسين ميلاد ذكرى كانت أمس، الطاهرة.

The fifth stage of establishing the infratextual foundations of the speech mainly tackles the officially legal goal of the speech itself as it can be realized in (4..1.e.):

(4..1.e.)

عشر التاسع الأمة لمجلس الأولى العادية الدورة ذ فتتح الله ، بركة وعلى الله فـ باسم

Therefore, semantically and pragmatically, the king declares the inauguration of the ordinary session, "In the name of God, and with His blessings, we inaugurate the first ordinary session of the Nineteenth Parliament". So it is "In the name of God" to start his speech and "In the name of God and with His blessings" to inaugurate the ordinary session as it is unanimously agreed upon that any Muslim should start anything in the name of God.

The overall body of the king's speech is infratextually tailored in accordance with the semantic foundations and requirements of the strict referential, the denotative meanings and senses encoded in the compositional content of the wordings that refer to each basic issue that the king underscores and asks the parliament and the government to take care of; namely, looking for better future, facing future challenges, achieving modernization, enforcing law, making constitutional amendments, attaining political and socio-economic reforms, enhancing partisan life, empowering women and the youth, boosting real partnership between the public and the private sectors, reducing unemployment rates, fighting the pandemic of COVID19, maintaining national security, showing pride in the army and the members of security forces and agencies, stressing the significance of the Palestinian cause as well as sticking to the Hashemite custodianship on Al-Aqsa and all Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Finally, King Abdullah concluded his speech conventionally with invocations for God's blessings over Jordan and Jordanians; then greeting his audience in the same way and the same format he greeted them at the beginning of the speech as shown in (4.1.f.):

(4.1.f.)

الله ورحمة عليكم والسلام .الكريم الأردني وشعبنا العزيز البلد لهذا خير هو لما ميعاج الله وفقنا وبركاته

4.2   Intertextual associations

This level of analysis draws upon a higher level of argumentation that handles the second stage of encoding meaning beyond the scope of semantics and compositional meaning. Therefore, it focuses on how meaning can be sent discoursally via indirect textual components that exist outside the original text itself and its basic infratextual constituents as delivered by the king of Jordan as such (cf. Rabab'ah and Rumman, 2015). In other words, the discourse is vulnerable to critical discourse analyses that relatively entail a diversity of understanding at a higher level of interpretation (see Fairclough,1995; Dijik, 2004).

The Royal speech evidently encodes various texts and subtexts that operate inside and outside the speech itself in a way that marks solidarity, eligibility, power and royalty as well as loyalty. Therefore, in this section, the researcher tries to illustrate how these intertextual components are

cleverly employed in several obvious cases through the king's speech as it can be seen in (4.2.a.), (4.2.b.), (4.2.c.) and (4.2.d.):

(4.2.a.)

الصلاة والسلام والى على ذا سيدنا محمد، النبي العربي الهاشمي الأمين.

(4.2.b.)

هذا الوطن فحر زعزيز أبناته هو بناته و.

(4.2.c.)

وطننا فيه حمي يشيد جي عربي مصطفوي وأجهزة أمنية محترفة.

(4.2.d.)

وما زالت دماء هذه الشهداء عطر هات راب تسمر تومذاراة ضحى شجاعة وعلى أسوار قدس الـ١٠٠٠.

There is no doubt that King Abdullah II is trying to stress the very fact that he belongs to the Prophet himself (PBUH) in (4.2.a.) as he refers to him directly in the preamble and then the way he describes Him as an Arab Hashemite to remind his audience of the origin of his dynasty since he is the forty first descendant of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH), on the one hand, and be underscoring his ethnicity as an Arab since his great grandfather, Sherif Hussein Bi Ali, led the Great Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Caliphate in 1916 and this was the first brick in the Hashemite reign over some parts of the Levant and the establiment of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. So the mere salutatory text carries another critical text of claiming royalty and credibility as an eligible ruling king. The same idea has been indoctrinated in (4.2.c.) as the king refers to the Jordanian army as an Arab Army and as MusTafawi Armi; the former to reiterate the noble cause of his great grandfather's Great Arab Revolt and his army as legitimate descendants of that army; and the latter "MusTafawi" hinges upon the epithet of Prophet Muhammad "MusTafa" (PBUH), and this enhances the holiness of his monarchy as well.

In addition, the king in (4.2.b.) extends his pride in his free and dignified Jordanians, males and females. The text here has close associations with and an allusion to his father's, late king Hussein, famous saying "Man is the most precious in this country" in an attempt to prompt hope and solace among Jordanians, who suffer a lot financially while their neighboring peoples abundantly enjoy wealth and well-being. This sense of solidarity is conveyed indirectly intertextually.

The picture in (4.2.d.) accentuates the martyrdom and the noble blood the Jordanian Army offered and sacrificed while defending Jerusalem against the Zionists in a number of decisive battles like 'Bab Al3amood Battle' and 'Bab AlWad Battle', where hundreds of Jordanian soldiers and officers refused to surrender and ultimately fell martyrs at the gates of Jerusalem to protect the sanctity of city and its Holy Sites. Thus, the intertextual meaning is strongly and eloquently conveyed and encoded beyond the infratextual components.

4.3   Ultratextual intersemioticity

This intricate stage of encoding and decoding shoots deeper, wider and higher than intertextuality because both verbal and nonverbal signs must be closely considered while analyzing some major aspects of the speech. These signs can be integrated intentionally or sometimes non-intentionally to convey a critical discourse (Petrilli, 1993 and Petrilli, 2013). Therefore, communicative impact can be oftentimes richer and stronger (Deely, 2010).

Verbally, King Abdullah II successfully entrenched the ideological impact by summoning the memory of his deceased father, the late king Hussein, right before he initiates discussing and highlighting any major issue he raised in his speech, so he reminded the audience that it is the birthday anniversary of King Hussein's, the builder, as in (4.3.a.):

(4.3.a.)

وأدعوكم للوقوف لقراءة الفاتحة على روحه الحسين ميلاد ذكرى ذتكا أمس، الله رحمة الباني، عليه، الطاهرة.

No equivocally, the invocation of King Hussein's memory triggers a myriad of sign interaction that enriches the intersemioticty of the phrase. First, this revives the dramatic scene that most Jordanians are familiar with when King Abdullah II was born. At that moment, King Hussein addressed the nation through the national radio and reported the auspicious news of having his first son, and then pledged and that his son will be solemnly vowed and dedicated to serve his people. This intensifies the notion that such a gift of God was ordained to lead the monarch. In addition, describing the late king as "the builder" is not only intended to relay some of his merits; rather, this sign is smartly embedded to

claim utmost degrees of power and commendable feats; i.e. 'we are the ones who built this country' and my grandfather, King Abdullah I, was the founder and I am the 'sustainer' and the 'cherisher' as many Jordanians including the official media prefer to use in their daily discourse.

Furthermore, (4.3.b.) manifests the nobility and the legitimacy of the King's and his dynasty as reiterated again and again in a complex association with their indisputable right to exclusively enjoy the honor of the custodianship over Jerusalem and all its sacred Islamic and Christian sites as it has been entrusted upon the Hashemites over the past hundreds of year since the peaceful conquest of Jerusalem by Omar Bin AlKahttab, the second orthodox 'Rashidoon' Caliph of Muslims in the year of 637. Therefore, his majesty succeeded in instigating how his commitment to his ancestors' legacy is inseparable from his nation's free will, his country's sovereignty so that such sacred legitimacy can be always intact and indisputable.

(4.3.b.)

أما الوصاية، الهاشمية فهي أمانة شرف أتَ حملها، بـ لحماية ورعاية المقدسات الإسلامية والمسيحية في
قدس الـ وهذا التزام النامين مبادئ الهاشمي خناب اريد تواﻥ ناود وإرثَ الهاشمي تواﻥ جسدﻩ للإرادة الحرة قرارنا وقـ الوطني الذي لا سمح ذ
لأحد أن تدخل يد فوﻩ ساومنا عليه.

Visually, the ceremonial scenes that accompanied the speech reflect the royal and the majestic atmospheres that intermingle with the intersemioticity of the speech itself. The televised scenes that preceded the King's arrival to the dome of the parliament show the gravity of the annual event. The Red Royal Motorcade and the military guards add a lot of dramatization to the overall meaning of the scene and the speech as it can be seen in (4.3.c.):

(4.3.c.)

More importantly, (4.3.d.) and (4.3.e.) the military uniform that the king is dressed in during this occasion substantiates the glamour of the occasion and thus glorifies the formality and the gravity of the intended message. In addition, this majestic ideology can be doubly triggered as we can observe the lofty position of the podium where the king stands while delivering his speech compared to the low vertical level of most parliament's seats although there is another podium that can be seen at the floor of the Parliament's dome. Nonetheless, the podium where the kings stands is placed next to the Royal Red Throne and this is intersemiotically critical in creating a purposeful communicative impact upon the audience in the court and even the audience watching the televised event in front of their screens.

(4.3.d.)

(4.3.e.)

5. Conclusion

Unlike conventional discourse-oriented research that has investigated King Abdullah's II speeches, this researcher has attempted to explore how textual and paratextual factors can play a significant role while statesmen address congregations and nations. This paper is a humble attempt that examined how intersemioticity can explain the intricate relationship between the basic constituents of political texts at the level of *infratextuality*, *intertextuality* and *ultratextuality* in a way that best exhibits how sign relations and sign interaction can be dynamically utilized in political discourse. Of course, *infratextual* components refer to the predominantly semantic constituents and their skeletal compositional meaning that basically furnishes the king's speech while the intertextual components refer mainly to the discoursal strategies that his majesty apparently utilized in order to be more effective and more persuasive. Ultimately, the intersemiotic layers represent the dynamism that

regulates the relationship between both the *infratextual* and the *ultratextual* dimensions. The Royal speech of his Majesty, King Abdullah II, is an illustrative example that can depict how the speaker successfully conveys his politically-oriented and ideologically- laden message to different kinds of recipients with different intellectual backgrounds and different educational levels and different socio-political expectations. The persuasive strategy the king predominantly opts for is mainly based on his ability to exploit and fire various signs that constitute a plethora of indications and implications by themselves and by virtue of the way they are interacting with other relevant signs in this very peculiar context. Finally, the researcher recommends that further cognitive semiotic studies be conducted in the field of critical discourse and critical semiotics so that deeper understanding of our human behavior can be more systematically predicated and thus handled, analyzed and ultimately improved in the long run.

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