

**A critical discourse analysis on Barack Obama's
race speech = Phân tích diễn ngôn phê phán bài
diễn văn về chủng tộc của Barack Obama. M.A
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I, Lê Nữ Thu Hằng, certify that the combined program thesis “*A critical discourse analysis on Barack Obama’s race speech*” submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts is the result of my own, except otherwise is acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Barack Obama – the first African-American President of United States – has brought the power of oratory back to American politics. Among his finest speeches, the speech on race “A more perfect union” is considered historic and helped Obama lift up the racial barrier on his way to the White House. This study is an attempt to find out why the speech was so successful, in what way Obama used his language to attain power and contribute significantly to change power relationships. Under the light of CDA, based on Fairclough’s analytical framework, the study analyzed socio-cultural and historical context and linguistic features such as vocabulary, metaphors, processes, pronouns, modality, macro-structure, argumentation, rhetoric techniques, presuppositions, speech acts and the influences of collective language. The findings of the study reveal that the success of the speech lies in its analytical power and its skillful language to explain, persuade and inspire people. Discourse has proven to be a sharpen weapon to fight against racism and injustice. It is also a very useful instrument to build up allies and obtain authority and political power, through which discourse has great effects to change society. The study suggests that other Obama’s speeches should also be investigated to find out the prominent linguistic features in his language use and how they work to achieve his communicative goals and gain political power.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CDA: Critical discourse analysis

MLK: Martin Luther King

JFK: John Fitzgerald Kennedy

RFK: Robert Fitzgerald Kennedy

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