
Ahmed Smirkou (Ph.D)
Department of English, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Ibn Tofail University, Kenitra, Morocco
Corresponding Author: Ahmed Smirkou (Ph.D)

Abstract: This article is a critical analysis of the Arabic version of the ‘Moroccan strategic vision of education and training’. This ‘vision’, which was issued by the Moroccan Supreme Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research, establishes a roadmap for reforming the Moroccan educational and training systems from 2015 to 2030. The ‘vision’ is analyzed within the framework of critical discourse analysis. As such, micro and macro linguistic features are utilized to scrutinize the structure of the text. The focus is, in particular, on how language can be strategically used to influence the reader’s perception of education and training and implicitly enforce them to accept the council’s recommendations. By analyzing the text, it is observed that the council uses a number of linguistic techniques (e.g., nominalization, metaphorization, handling responsibility, techniques of persuasion, etc.) to negatively evaluate the past and present education and training situations and dictate an urgent action to reform education and training.

Keywords - critical discourse analysis, strategic vision, report, Moroccan education, nominalization, metaphorization

I. INTRODUCTION

Moroccan education and training system has been the subject of many controversies nationwide. Although Morocco has had more than twenty ministers of education and new educational policies have been implemented, the efficiency of education and training is still frequently characterized by serious setbacks. For this reason, the Supreme Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research was created and ever since it has called for a number of immediate and concrete changes to reform national education and training. Recently, it has launched a strategic report called Vision 2030, written in French and Arabic, which establishes a detailed roadmap for reforming the Moroccan national system of education and training. This strategic report establishes a key reference for the ministry of education to assess education and decides the agenda to improve the quality of education, vocational training, and scientific research.

The strategic report that has been released by the Supreme Council for Education highlights the foundations necessary for a comprehensive reform of the national system of education, training, and scientific research. Some of the main elements that it targets include presenting an overview of the challenges and obstacles that the application of the previous strategic report has faced, poor academic achievements among students, integrating and teaching foreign languages, school dropouts, and lack of connection between education and the requirements of the job market. It also calls for equality and equity in education, more accessibility to rural schools, and provides new strategies and guidelines to reform education and training, and promote scientific research especially at higher education.

An Overview Of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to the social analysis of discourse [1]. Fairclough [2], in his definition of critical discourse analysis, contends that CDA aims at studying the correlation between discourse and the wider social and cultural practices and how texts are ideologically shaped to reflect and secure power relationships and hegemony. CDA tries to establish a critical perspective from which political discourse can be understood and political power can be perceived ([3]). To display the link between discourse and the forces of social institutions, Fairclough, in his work Language and Power (1989), clearly argues that “the ways in which we communicate are constrained by the structures and forces of those social institutions within which we live and function” ([4]). Critical discourse analysis then probes into how discourse influences and is influenced by the social and political institutions.
Critical discourse analysis also studies how societal power relationships are reinforced through language use. In this sense, language plays a key ideological role in shaping the reader’s attitudes, decisions, worldview, etc. and is strategically used to influence the reader’s perception of the text. For example, vocabulary is purposefully selected to make the reader adopt a certain ideology, think or perceive things from within an ideological framework. CDA thus argues that language itself is powerless and it only gains power by the use powerful people make of it ([5]).

CDA therefore tries to understand how discourse shapes social reality as well as how social practices are reinforced in discourse. It is primarily interested in understanding social issues such as inequality and dominance through discourse analysis. In this context, Fairclough [6] indicates that one of the objectives is to provide accounts of the relation between changes in discourse and changes in non-discoursal aspects of social life. This includes the pivotal role of discourse in reconstructing social life. This means that CDA aims at affecting society instead of playing a passive role.

As for Van Dijk, who prefers to use the term critical discourse studies (CDS) to refer to the diversity of critical studies, argues that CDS scholars are more interested in how discourse reproduces social domination ([7]). That is, through discourse, social groups maintain power over others. Van Dijk also emphasizes the fact that “Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is obviously not a homogenous model, nor a school or a paradigm, but at most a shared perspective on doing linguistics, semiotic or discourse analysis” ([8] [p.131]). This means that CDA does not function in isolation but within a linguistic, semiotic, and social framework. Thus, language, according to CDA, is a social practice whereby the connection between the textual structures and social context are scrutinized.

Furthermore, what differentiates CDA from other discourse analyses is its characteristic of ‘critical’. For Fairclough [9] “Critical implies showing connections and causes which are hidden; it also implies intervention, for example providing resources for those who may be disadvantaged through change” [p.9]. In other words, this attribute, ‘critical’, implies not only intervention and scrutinizing the text but also uncovering hidden ideological messages that may not be evident to the reader. In this sense, critical discourse analysis tries to go beyond the description of discourse, as it aims to stress the ways in which discourse can be used to reverse the relationships of dominance in society ([10] [p.11]).

The CDA approach upon which this analysis is framed is that of Norman Fairclough. His fundamental theoretical assumptions are based on Halliday’s functional-systemic linguistics that associate three functions to language: ideational, interpersonal and textual functions ([11] ). Fairclough adopts these functions and creates an analytical framework for the analysis of discourse.

In order to make a critical discourse analysis of the selected text, the present paper will first examine the textual level, Cap’s [12] conceptualized categories (topicality and relational prepositions). After classifying relational prepositions based on Mann and Thompson’s classification [13], we would specify their functions in the selected text. Of particular important relational prepositions to be analyzed are background and circumstance, solutionhood and elaboration, motivation, restatement and sequence, cause and reason, and concession relational propositions, while the functional categories of relational propositions that will be highlighted include approach-specifiers, context-setters, rationale-makers, and proposition-grounders. Coherence and cohesion, linking concepts and implicature will be also examined to determine the semantic features of the text. Furthermore, to see how the council tries to intensify certain ideological claims and appeal for urgent educational actions, we will decipher how metaphorizations, nominalizations, instruments of handling responsibility, and techniques of persuasion are diligently used in the selected text.

I. Critical Discourse Analysis Of The Text
1. Topicality
   - The first one deals with enforcing equality to access education and training.
   - The second section discusses the obligation and generalization of the pre-school education as it is the basis for any educational reform.
   - As to the third section, it lays emphasis on generalizing compulsory education in the rural areas, semi-urban areas, and the areas of deficiency through making the maximum efforts to achieve the desired objectives.
   - The major theme of the fourth section is to guarantee the right of access to education and training to the disabled people and the ones in ‘special needs’.
   - Concerning the fifth section, it draws attention to ensuring a life-long learning process that enables learners to be autonomous learners, construct their personal projects, and be integrated in society.
   - The sixth section gives emphasis to providing education and training institutions with guidance, equipment and support.
   - The seventh section is about the need to establish a high-performing and attractive school.
- The eight section highlights the role of the private education sector as a partner and an integral part of the public education sector in the generalization and realization of equity.

Second chapter, which targets the quality of the Moroccan School, highlights seven fundamental sections. The main highlighted themes include the following:
- The renovation of teaching, training, and management as a prerequisite for quality improvement.
- The coordination between the various components of the Moroccan School.
- The development of a pedagogical model based on diversity, openness, efficiency and innovation.
- The mastery of the languages taught and the diversification of teaching languages.
- The promotion of scientific and technical research and innovation.
- The effective governance of the education and training system.
- Third chapter highlights the role of the Moroccan School in promoting the individual and society. It specifically targets the following points:
  - The adaptation of learning and training to the needs of the country, the future jobs’ requirements and the skills to integrate learners in society and professional life.
  - The reinforcement of socio-cultural integration.
  - Establishing a society based on democracy, citizenship, and equality.
  - Ensuring a life-long learning.
  - The active involvement in the economy and knowledge society.
  - The reinforcement of Morocco's status among the emerging countries.

Fourth chapter highlights the efficient leadership and a new conduct of change through the following key points:
- A sustainable social mobilization.
- Strong leadership and effective managerial skills for the various educational levels.

2. Relational propositions

In this section, we focus primarily on the most frequent relational propositions used in the text. The analysis of the four chapters shows that the following relational propositions are frequently used: background, circumstance, solutionhood, elaboration, motivation, restatement, sequence, cause, reason, and concession.

The report starts with background and circumstance relational propositions. In the former proposition, the authors of the text provide the reader with background information to adequately understand the claims of the text, while in the latter, the author clearly presents the circumstances or situations within which the claims of the texts are framed and interpreted. To explain, before it presents and elaborates the current educational and training situation in Morocco, the council gives background information about the role and status of the Moroccan School and the challenges facing Moroccan education and training and subsequently provides the reader with the circumstances (such as poor academic achievement and school dropouts) that led to the release of this report.

Solutionhood and elaboration are the main relational propositions used in the analyzed report as it clarifies the challenges facing the Moroccan education and training issues and subsequently provides effective solutions and guidelines to ensure a comprehensive and successful educational reform. As solutionhood and elaboration are principal propositions in the report, we present some examples from each chapter to clarify them.

In chapter one, for example, the report starts with an elaboration of some educational achievements and challenges targeting the importance of generalizing education, equal chances and access to education, the achievements of the previous reform, and some persistent challenges to the generalization of education. Then, it provides solutions to overcome the challenges and improve the achievements.

Similarly, in chapter two, the report elaborates on the obstacles that are still hindering the quality of education and training. Afterwards, the report provides a list of solutions. Importantly, the council’s proposed solutions take their legitimacy from the royal recommendations, law, international changes in human rights, education and training, scientific research and knowledge as well as technological development, moral values (like equality and free access to education regardless of gender or race), current challenges to education and training, and the need of the nation to reform the Moroccan school.

As for motivation, the council aims at motivating all who are concerned to make actions so as to change the current unsatisfactory educational and training situation. To make this action, the council provides the reader with a list of educational and training outcomes in the short and long terms if the reform is thoughtfully applied.

Restatement and Sequence are also important relational propositions used to convey sequential events and a repetitive enforcement of necessary ideas. The report discusses the expected short and long term objectives through repetitive statements and sequences to enact them.
Cause and reason relational propositions are also recurrent in the report. The council names the factors and challenges that still impede the achievement of the desired educational objectives. As such, the council provides a rationale to suggest a necessary strategic vision to reform education and training and to enforce the reader to make an urgent action.

As far as concession proposition, it is implicitly reinforced. The council tries to legitimize the truthfulness and practicality of its strategic vision. For example, whenever the council proposes a certain reform, it legitimizes it by referring to its compatibility with the law, human rights, Moroccan constitutional reform, and Moroccan identity.

3. The functional categories of relational propositions

There are four major functional categories of relational propositions in the text. The relations of elaboration and solutionhood fall within approach-specifiers as they specify the scope of approach to the Moroccan education, elaborate on the educational problem, and subsequently offer solutions. Solutionhood is used more frequently than elaboration because the ultimate objective of the report is to offer solutions to reform the Moroccan education and training. Circumstance and background play the function of context-setters. They establish the ground based on which the council proposes its reform. With regards to motivation and reason, they belong to rationale-makers as the council provides a rationale for announcing a certain future action and achieve the desired objectives. Finally, restatement and sequence belong to proposition grounders as they reinforce the main ideas of the report through repetitive statements.

4. Coherence and cohesion

Coherence and cohesion devices are frequently used to achieve the logical continuum of the text. By analyzing these devices, it would be possible to define the semantic features of the text and assess how the textual structure contributes to the making of the meaning.

4.1. Coherence

All the report’s chapters are coherent with each other as sections do. Every chapter defines a certain problem related to education and training and proposes a number of solutions and every problem area is comprehensively tackled in a separate section.

4.1.1. Syllogistic structures

A syllogistic reasoning is recurrently utilized in the report in order to clarify the relationship between the problem and its source and then provide the solution. Some illustrative examples of syllogistic structure include the following:

- In the first chapter [p.13], the problems that still hinder the quality of education and the access to it in the primary, secondary, and university levels are briefly mentioned. The report refers to the fact that dropping out of school is a serious problem that impedes primary education. At the level of secondary and higher education, the desired objectives have not been achieved yet. Also, the admission capacity of vocational training remains limited to respond to the growing demand. After making these assumptions, the council provides a number of solutions in eight sections.

- In the second chapter [p.24], it is hypothesized that the main hindrance to the Moroccan school is the poor quality of education and training. Then, the council declares improving education quality as the solution. In seven sections, the report details the proposed solutions for realizing education quality. Some of which are as follows:

  ✓ The renovation of teaching and training as a prerequisite for quality improvement.
  ✓ Developing an educational pedagogy based on diversity, openness, efficiency and innovation.
  ✓ The promotion of scientific and technical research and innovation.

- In the third chapter [p.52], the council assumes that part of the Moroccan educational problem is directly related to the role of the school in qualifying graduates to integrate in society and the job market. Then, the solution is declared as linking the role of the school with promoting the individual and society.

5. Linking concepts and implicatures

Some of the linking concepts that are repeatedly used in the text can be listed as: (الإصلاح: reform), (جدد: renewing), (الرؤية الاستراتيجية: strategic vision), (الإبتكار: innovation), (المدرسة المغربية: Moroccan school), (التعليم العام: generalizing education), (التربية: education), and (البحث العلمي: scientific research). The frequent repetition of these concepts establishes the semantic features of the text and denotes the necessity of a new reform to the Moroccan education and training. It can also help the reader follow along smoothly and clearly. This vocabulary choice creates a semantic relationship between the whole text. It should be noted that some concepts which belong to other fields (e.g. philosophy, psychology, religion) are used
to enrich the vocabulary of the text as well. Furthermore, to reinforce the idea of reform, the council repeatedly uses these words: (تقرير: weaknesses; صعوبات: obstacles; التحديات: challenges; يعاني: suffer).

In addition, some of the implicatures used in the text are presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Implicatures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>فإن المدرسة المغربية لا تزال تعاني من اختلالات مزمنة.</td>
<td>The Moroccan school still faces serious challenges.</td>
<td>It implicitly indicates that the previous reforms recommended by the National Charter for Education, Training and Scientific Research (2000-2013) were not effectively implemented, and the Moroccan school still urgently needs to be reformed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>إعادة بناء علاقة تربوية جديدة بين المتعلم والمدرّس.</td>
<td>Rebuilding a new educational relationship between the learner and the teacher.</td>
<td>What is implied is that there is a huge gap in the teacher-student relationship. A healthy teacher-student relationship can improve learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الانتقال إلى التربوية الجديدة، من منطق التأسيس والتحسن والذاتي لمنطق تحدي الأحادي إلى منطق التعليم والتعلم الذاتي.</td>
<td>Transition of education, training and scientific research, from lecturing, spoonfeeding and passive, one-way lecturing, to the active and autonomous learning.</td>
<td>Lecturing or the teacher-centered approach is not effective and appropriate. Students are not active learners and not involved in the learning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>بالإضافة إلى المجتمع المغربي من مجتمع مستفيد للمعرفة، إلى مجتمع نشر المعرفة و نتاجها.</td>
<td>Upgrading the Moroccan society from a consumer knowledge society into a society to spread and produce knowledge.</td>
<td>Although it is not directly mentioned, it is implied that Morocco is not a knowledge producing society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أما التعليم الثانوي التقليدي والتعليم الحقيقي، فيظلان يدوران ببعض عن تحقيق الهدف المنصوص.</td>
<td>Secondary education and higher education are far from achieving the desired goal.</td>
<td>Secondary education and higher education have not achieved the desired educational objectives, and more efforts are required to meet the recommendations proposed in the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تخصص المدرس بالوسط الفني可以看出.</td>
<td>Education in the rural areas should receive more concern.</td>
<td>Many serious challenges still hinder education in the rural areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>توسيع تجارب إنشاء مساقن حديث للأطر الإدارية والتعليمية، وتدشين البرامج التعليمية.</td>
<td>Providing more housing facilities for teachers and administration staff.</td>
<td>Teachers an administration staff live in dire conditions in the rural areas. These poor living conditions affect teachers’ and administration staff’s productivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الإجابة الشاملة للتعليم.</td>
<td>Comprehensive awareness of the teacher’s roles.</td>
<td>The teacher plays many roles: educational, social, psychological, and cultural ones.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1. Examples of implicatures used in the analyzed text

6. Cohesion

The main function of cohesive devices is to establish a logical relationship between sentences and paragraphs. The text under analysis uses different cohesive devices to create cohesion within and between paragraphs. The following are examples of the most repeatedly used cohesive devices.

The anaphors are frequently used to refer to already mentioned entities or antecedents. While anaphors obligatorily get their meaning by referring back to the antecedent, the pronouns may be semantically interpreted by referring to an already mentioned antecedent or may get their meaning from the context. An example of used pronominal anaphora includes the demonstrative pronoun (هذه: this), relative pronouns (الذي: which/that), nominal disjoint personal pronouns (هم وما: they), dative and accusative joint personal pronouns (هم ما: them). We have noticed the absence of personal pronouns as this report is 1) written by a council; 2) it gives importance to the message regardless of who the writer is; and 3) both the writer and reader share similar responsibility to reform Moroccan education.

Reiteration also occurs in the repetition of some key words (e.g. الإصلاح: reform; التربية: education; التدريس: training; التربوية: scientific research; التعلم: learning; للتعليمي: reforming; ضعف: weakness; نيل: equality; تغيير: change; الاصطلاح: equity). These reiterations create cohesion between and within paragraphs.

While many conjunctions such as additive (و: and), causal (لأنه: thus) are used to link sentences within the paragraph, very few transitional words (e.g. في هذا الصدد: in this regard) are used to start a new sentence or to
link between paragraphs. Therefore, there is no cohesion between paragraphs because each paragraph points out a different topic and the text is written in the form of a list of separated recommendations. Other cohesive devices, namely substitution, ellipsis, and collocations, are also used.

7. Metaphorizations

Cap [12] defines three forces of metaphorization: stimulation of emotions, bewilderment and perplexity, and intimacy. In other words, the use of metaphors may drift the attention of the reader away from the objective interpretation of the text, confuse the reader’s full grasp of the writer’s claims, and manipulate his/her understanding. Metaphors may also be used to dramatize a certain situation.

With reference to the text under analysis, very few metaphors are used in the report as the writer tries to be as explicit as possible. The lack of metaphors is also explained by the purpose of the text: it aims at conveying the message clearly without bewilderment or perplexity.

Some of the metaphors used in the text are underlined in the phrases presented in the table below with their literal and intended meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphors</th>
<th>Literal meaning</th>
<th>Intended meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>متواجد (الاختلافات) لن يكون مفاعلاً للاختلافات</td>
<td>The magic wand</td>
<td>It is not easy to get over the educational and training challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الاتصال (الاختلافات) لن يكون مفاعلاً للاختلافات</td>
<td>Drying of their sources</td>
<td>To eradicate their sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تمثيل (الاختلافات) لن يكون مفاعلاً للاختلافات</td>
<td>Made strides</td>
<td>Have made more progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>المتاح نحو التفاف نافذة</td>
<td>Opening of a demographic window.</td>
<td>The inclusion of more age groups especially the youth integration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first metaphor underlines that without a strong organic relationship among all who are concerned (teaching, training, and administrative staff), the reform of education and training would not be practically possible. The second metaphor intensifies the meaning and shows the council’s strong intention to eradicate the issue of dropping out of school. The third metaphor aims at reminding the reader of the achievements that have been realized in the primary education. The last metaphor indicates that there is an approach and orientation towards the youth integration in education and training.

8. Nominalizations

The concept of nominalization expresses common values and concepts that are used to express moral values and ideas and may contribute to affect the reader ideologically, as stated by Fairclough [14] who claims that the reasons for utilizing nominalization could be stylistically or ideologically stimulated. That is, nominalizations are used either as linguistic devices to enrich the textual structure or for ideological purposes, namely to implicitly enforce the reader to endorse some policies, ideologies, actions, etc. According to Simon-Vandenbergen et al. [15], processes can be symbolized as things rather than actual happenings through the use of nominalization. Some nominalizations used in the text are generalizing education, equity, the right for education and training regardless of race and gender, free and equal access to education and training, social justice, human rights, integration, the promotion of lifelong learning, professional ethics, renewal, commitment, restructuring, coordination, diversity, openness, citizenship, invention, efficiency, constitutional charters; freedom of thought, change, the right to access information, and the development of the country.

Such nominalizations are repetitively used to achieve two main purposes: to point out fundamental moral values that the report takes into consideration and implicitly enforce the reader to endorse them. For example, by frequently quoting from Moroccan constitutional charters, the council not only legitimizes its recommendations but also indicates that if the reader respects and endorses the law, he/she should automatically support the proposed recommendations. Indeed, some of the nominalizations such as constitutional charter, social justice, freedom of thought, citizenship, and human rights are adopted from the legal discourse. They are used to enrich the text linguistically, show the credibility, legitimacy and appropriateness of the council’s proposed vision. Similarly, by using nominalizations like the development of the country for education and training regardless of race and gender, and generalizing education, the council tries to make the educational crisis a national issue. Additionally, to emphasize a broad-based coordination between the teaching and administrative staff and enforce an approach towards educational change.

DOI: 10.9790/0837-2309024350  www.iosrjournals.org  48 | Page
and innovation, the council uses these nominalizations: renewal, commitment, restructuring, coordination, diversity, opening, invention, and efficiency.

9. Instruments of handling responsibility

From the linguistic choices, the council emphasizes a broad coordination among all who are concerned in the education and training domain. This means that the council and the reader equally share the responsibility of reforming Moroccan education and training. Some examples that reveal sharing responsibility include: calligraphic: the school is now in question; rhetorical: questioning the conscience; metaphorical: the council frequent reserves undesirable consequences. Thus, the council uses fear appeals.

Although the text targets the administrative, teaching and training staff, in particular, it does not specifically name the target groups because the council questions the role of the whole nation in promoting education and training and hence questions even the role of parents, civil society, politicians, intellectuals, etc. All share the responsibility of the educational crisis. We notice this through the use of the passive voice and the plural object pronoun (we).

Sharing responsibility with the reader is also noticeable in the use of verbal nouns (e.g. improvement; using; creating; employing; generalization; openness; integration). First, verbal nouns are used for language economy and accuracy; second, they are utilized to indicate that the text does not address specific individuals.

10. Techniques of persuasion

For the council to prove the necessity of the proposed reform, it should persuade the reader that the current educational and training situations are not encouraging and the continuity of this situation would lead to undesirable consequences. Thus, the council uses fear appeals. Some examples of this rhetorical device include: existential: The Moroccan school still faces serious challenges; rhetorical: Victims of this cost are therefore the school's leaders whose future is semi-reserved; ideational: from a wake-up call from the highest authority in the country.

The council also uses source credibility through the frequent reference to indisputable references. The council frequently quotes constitutional articles like (5: 18, 19, 25, 26, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 71, 159, 160, 163, 168, 169) and refers to the king’s speeches to create credibility and reliability. Thus, the reader is implicitly enforced to accept the council’s recommendations as they are legitimized and trustworthy.

Some universally accepted values are also used to persuade the reader. Some of these values include equity, freedom, equality, justice, and democracy. Their function is mainly to give more credibility to the recommendations of the report and put emphasis on the incorporation of universal values in the educational and training reform.

II. CONCLUSION

By using macro and micro linguistic elements to analyze the selected text, it has been concluded that the Moroccan Supreme Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research has used different linguistic techniques to assess the current situation of education, legitimize its recommendations and call for urgent actions to reform education and training. Applying critical discourse analysis, we have seen that the report used a set of relational propositions, coherent and cohesive devices, linking concepts and implicatures, metaphorizations, nominalizations, instruments of handling responsibility, and techniques of persuasion. All of which serve a textual function by achieving an organic relationship within and between paragraphs and semantically link between the sequence of ideas, and implicitly ideological function through enforcing the reader to endorse the council’s recommendations and share the responsibility of reforming education and training.

REFERENCES

[12]. P. Cap, explorations in political discourse: methodological and critical perspectives (Berlin: Lang, 2002)