



The 'Jasmine Revolt' has made the 'Arab Spring': A critical discourse analysis of the last three political speeches of the ousted president of Tunisia¹

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Abstract

The current article addresses person deixis in the last three speeches of the ousted president of Tunisia (OPT) from the perspectives of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and cognitive-pragmatics. It takes deixis to be individuated in the 'indexical field' by the deictic center, who fills them from within the social field at his/her discretion with 'social roles'. The way the filling takes place is a function of social proximity to or distance from the deictic center, which manipulates the constructed categories either closer to the CENTER or to the PERIPHERY of the image schema. In particular, it is argued that the OPT as a deictic center has constructed in the first two speeches two deictic categories, which would be called 'wandering WE' after and a peripheral THEY, through which he tried to maintain the political status quo and blame responsibility for the events on others. However, in the last speech, the OPT constructed two indexical dyads, namely I-YOU and WE-THEY. This shift is explained as an effort on the part of OPT to reproduce social power abuse, dominance, and inequality by way of making political concessions. Despite this, the shift is not felt to have created communality and closeness with the addressees since the policy of exclusion, authority, and domination precluded these concessions from being persuasive enough for the 'Jasmine Revolt' in Tunisia not to resist this power and go for regime change.

Keywords

Change, critical discourse analysis, deception, deixis, domination, manipulation, personal ideology, political discourse, political speeches, power

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Introduction

The 'Jasmine Revolt' has revolutionized not only Tunisia, but also all of the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). It was mostly about the freedom and dignity of a generation that established a sense of community via Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. As a success story, the 'Jasmine Revolt' has become the 'Arab Spring', which has reverberated across the MENA region, with many countries such as Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Bahrain, Algeria, etc. rectifying their shots and emulating almost verbatim what happened in Tunisia. However, such a victory over domination, power abuse, and torture could never have been possible without, among other things, language, which played a key role on the Internet and in the streets, thus leading to a revolutionary movement that regained power.

One important use of language is political discourse, which has to do with the reproduction and abuse of power, oftentimes confronted with various forms of resistance against such forms of discursive dominance (Chilton, 2004: 3; Van Dijk, 1997a: 11). Viewed as such, 'political discourse can only be adequately described and explained when we spell out the socio-cognitive interface that relates it to the socially shared political representations that control political actions, processes and systems' (Van Dijk, 2002: 234). Political discourse is mainly designed to engineer consent or approval about a given worldview or ideology, and discourage dissent and disapproval by persuading those who resist the mainstream ideology to adopt a belief system different from theirs. In this sense, 'political discourse is eminently ideological' (Van Dijk, 2003: 208).

Political discourse includes parliamentary debates, political interviews, political speeches, etc. Generally, in parliamentary debates and political interviews interactants use language in face-to-face interaction, with different interactants using the same pronouns as shifters, that is to say each time there is a new speaker the same pronoun shifts in order to accommodate the personality of the speaker. However, in the case of political speeches there is one speaker, who constantly refers to the self as '*I*'. The speaker may also construct other deictic entities, which he/she can fill with different social roles, thus shifting their contents. In this case, the pronouns are not so much shifters since they function like frames being individuated and filled by the speaker from within 'the social field' (Hanks, 2005).

The objective of the current article is to study the last three speeches of the OPT, with special reference, among other things, to the person deixis used. The structure of the current article is as follows. The first section offers an overview of the political situation in Tunisia which led to the revolution. The second section offers an overview of CDA and person deixis. The third section, which constitutes the bulk of the article, offers a CDA perspective of the OPT's last three speeches. The fourth section includes a discussion of the speeches, and is followed by a Conclusion.

Political situation pre-January 14, 2011

Tunisia is an Arab-Islamic country known for its educated, moderate, and tolerant population. In its modern history as an independent country, Tunisia saw up to January 14, 2011, the date of the revolution, only two presidents: Habib Bourguiba and the OPT, Ben Ali. Under Bourguiba's reign, Tunisia experienced four major sociopolitical events: the assassination of his number one rival, Salah Ben Youssef; the elimination of all his

military opponents in the biggest execution ever in the country in the early 1960s; the assault on the trade unions in 1978; and the ‘bread’ riots in 1983. In all these events, bloodshed was the rule, brandishing to all of those who preferred freedom of speech over submission imprisonment, torture, and exclusion at home or asylum abroad.

In a bloodless coup, the OPT declared his predecessor as incapacitated to rule. In an appealing statement known as the ‘Declaration of November 7, 1987’, the OPT declared himself president of Tunisia, and espoused the demands of the opposition and trade unions, namely, participation in running the country, promise of a democratic state, abolition of presidency for life from the Constitution, political pluralism, freedom of speech and the press, political and social justice, a ban on favoritism and corruption, and a reinforcement of Islamic, Arab, African, and Mediterranean solidarity. However, soon after taking office, the OPT began a wide-ranging assault on political Islam. Such a brutal treatment of the opposition was tolerated by the West because the OPT presented himself as a guarantee against terrorism in the region, especially after 9/11: ‘The French and the Germans and the Brits, dare we mention this, always praised the dictator for being a “friend” of civilized Europe, keeping a firm hand on all those Islamists’ (Fisk, 2011).

The Ben Alis (the OPT’s family members) and the Trabelis (his in-laws) cultivated a form of favoritism beyond compare, and led a Mafia-style way of life, based on drug dealing, corruption, and extortion which went beyond the country’s frontiers, costing them a conviction in a boat-jacking scandal connected to France (Schofield, 2008). The OPT’s in-laws did much more socioeconomic damage to the country. They overwhelmed the country’s economy with a parallel economy based on cheap imports from China, and dealt in threats and extortion of property, expropriating it from its owners and imposing themselves as co-owners on the others. Their preferential treatment entitled them to benefit from customs duty exemptions guaranteed by the OPT and his wife, who turned Tunisia into a private property of their own.

CDA and deixis

In this section, emphasis will be laid on two major points: (i) the link between CDA and political discourse, and (ii) the ideological uses of person deixis in political speeches.

CDA

As a method of analysis of talk and text, CDA does not hide its bias to social injustice and inequality. For one, Van Dijk (1998: 1) captures the scope of CDA as concerned with ‘the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context’. Such a scope for CDA makes it a viable method of analysis of political discourse, whose legitimization of social power abuse, dominance, and inequality is paramount.

Since ‘political discourse is eminently ideological’ (Van Dijk, 2003: 208), there is a need to uncover ideology in political discourse. Van Dijk (1998: 126) develops a socio-cognitive view of ideology as ‘systems of beliefs’ which ‘need to be studied in a cognitive framework’. These beliefs are ‘socially acquired, shared, used and changed by group members, and hence are a special type of socially shared mental representations’, which

are 'reproduced through their everyday uses by social members in the accomplishment of social practices in general, and of discourse in particular'. On the other hand, Fairclough (1995: 73) argues that 'language is a material form of ideology, and language is invested by ideology'. He (1995: 74) locates ideology in lexical meanings, presuppositions, implicatures, metaphors, and coherence.

As far as its methodology is concerned, CDA has been following critical linguistics methods proposed by Fowler and Kress (1979), who drew on Halliday's systemic linguistics. In multiple publications, Van Dijk (1993, 1997b, 2001) introduced the sociological and cognitive paradigms in CDA, and called for a multidisciplinary approach to discourse studies (1998, 2001, 2009). Wodak and Meyer argued that the seemingly different trends within CDA actually share the many dimensions of discourse, and called for multidisciplinary and multi-methodological approaches: '*CDA is therefore not interested in investigating a linguistic unit per se but in studying social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multidisciplinary and multi-methodical approach*' (2009: 2, italics in the original). The current article follows this multidisciplinary methodology by combining the methods of CDA and the insights of cognitive-pragmatics.

Person and social deixis

Person deixis has been investigated from the linguistic (Lyons, 1977; Siewierska, 2004), pragmatic (Hanks, 2005; Levinson, 1983; Marmaridou, 2000; Verschueren, 1999), and discursive perspectives (Chilton, 2004; Hart, 2011; Van Dijk, 1998) in many types of discourses such as conversational discourse (Hanks, 1992, 2005), academic discourse (Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2002; Wortham, 1996), political discourse (Chung and Pennebaker, 2007; Feng and Liu, 2010; Kuo, 2002; O'Connor et al., 2008; Pennebaker et al., 2003), discourse on identity construction and racism (Boyd, 2009; Cramer, 2009; Petersoo, 2007), and gendered discourse (Kuo, 2003).

Since the corpus of the current article is in Arabic but translated into English for the purpose of this study, it is useful to give an idea about the pronoun system in Arabic, which differentiates more pronouns than European languages. Arabic (Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), its high variety, and the vernaculars, its low varieties) is a pro-drop language, leaving traces of singularity, dual and plural numbers, and gender in the verbal system. It is also interesting to know that Arabic calls the first-person singular and plural 'the speaker's pronoun', *YOU* 'the addressee(s)'s pronoun', and *HE/SHE/THEY* 'the obviative pronouns', that is absent from the indexical field and space.

The 'personal pronouns' label given to person deixis cannot be applied to all persons. Indeed, the quality of personhood is only present in *I*, *YOU*, and *WE* while *HE*, *SHE*, and *THEY*² may also apply to non-humans such as animals and objects (Benvéniste, 1966: 251; Siewierska, 2004: 5). As a result, *I*, *YOU*, and *WE* are exophoric (i.e. depend for their resolution mainly on the extralinguistic context) while *HE*, *SHE*, and *THEY* are endophoric (i.e. depend for their resolution on the linguistic context) (Siewierska, 2004: 7) because they are mostly anaphoric. Discursively, 'when it is appropriated by an individual, language turns into discursive instances characterized by a system of internal references whose key element is *I*' (Benvéniste, 1966: 255). At the enunciation level, personal pronouns serve 'inter-subjective communication', which 'language has resolved by

creating an ensemble of non-referential “empty” signs always available vis-à-vis “reality” and get “filled” as soon as a speaker uses them in discourse’ (Benveniste, 1966: 254).

Apart from their discursive use, pronouns have an important ideological dimension. Van Dijk (1998: 203) argues that ‘pronouns are perhaps the best known grammatical category of the expression and manipulation of social relations, status and power, and hence of underlying ideologies’. Basing his stand on ‘language use as productive of, as well as reflective of social relations’, Pennycook (1994) argues that the use of pronouns ‘opens up a whole series of questions about language, power, and representation’ (p. 178). He calls this dimension the ‘politics of the pronoun’, whereby ‘pronouns are deeply embedded in naming people and groups, and are thus always political in the sense that they always imply relations of power’ (1994: 174–175). On the other hand, since *WE* in English does not grammaticalize relations of inclusion (Fowler and Kress, 1979: 201–203; Heine and Song, 2010; Pennycook, 1994: 175), it remains indeterminate in isolation. With particular interest to this article is what Pennycook said about the overt or covert dualities that *WE* constructs in discourse. According to him, if ‘we’ claims authority and communality, it also constructs a ‘we/you’ or a ‘we/they’ dichotomy. Thus, these two pronouns must always be understood with reference to other assumptions about who is being defined as the ‘we’ from which the ‘you’ and the ‘they’ differ. (1994: 176)

Hanks (2005) holds a conception of language as communicative practice where deixis plays a pragmatic role in social interaction. Hanks (2005: 191) calls deictic expressions ‘communicative resources’. For Hanks (2005: 197), there is no egocentricity use of deixis since this contradicts the interaction-centricity. For that, ‘in the deictic field we are dealing with the actual occupancy of the positions’ (p. 210), whereby ‘deictic reference is a social engagement emergent in practice’ (p. 211). To sum up his approach, Hanks (2005: 212) argues that ‘to explore the deictic field is therefore to explore a special kind of threshold in the fine structure of communicative practice, a threshold at once individual and social, cognitive and embodied, emergent and durable, language and nonlanguage’. In another publication, Hanks (1992: 53) argues that ‘given that acts of reference are interactively accomplished, a sociocentric approach is certain to be more productive than an egocentric one, even when the speaker is the primary ground of reference’. In the same vein of thought and borrowing Goffman’s ‘footing’ metaphor, Wortham (1996: 331) argues that personal pronouns allow us to ‘uncover participants’ interactional positions’. However, the kind of political speeches under study anchor the speaker in discourse as a one-sided participant, with no interactants in the immediate indexical field. Such speeches make distinct the difference between addressing real people in real communicative speech contexts and referring to them in a political speech. One reason why Hanks’s (2005: 210) theory does not allow for applicability here is that it is a model of demonstrative deictics in a pragmatic theory of speech, made to fit Yucatec, an exclusively face-to-face language.

Case study

It is interesting to note that the three political speeches here show contrast with one another at many levels. Linguistically, the first and second speeches were delivered in MSA, in a style that was quite literate and controlled. However, the last speech was

mostly given in the Tunisian dialect of Arabic (TA), showing the OPT as using this dialect for the first and last time in his life as a president of the country, with improvisation causing incoherence and inconsistency. Deixis-wise, the first two speeches capitalize on a *WE-THEY* dyad while the ultimate speech constructs two dyads: *I-YOU* and *WE-THEY*, with *THEY* having a different filling from the one in the previous speeches. Politically, the first speech was given when he still held most of the power, while in his second speech he was seeking a scapegoat to blame all the trouble on. However, his last speech showed him to be desperate for tolerance and forgiveness. These three levels are ideologically interconnected since it is the degenerating political situation that pushed the OPT to modify his linguistic attitude and his choice of pronouns, tuning their filling to political and military circumstances.

Antepenultimate speech

This speech was given after 12 days of unrest in a few cities in Tunisia, occasioning fatalities, injuries, and damage to property. It was delivered in MSA, with the OPT sitting down, poised, and self-confident. Tunisians have always felt that the OPT's use of MSA is a barrier to genuine communication with him. The speech's sentences are fairly long and elaborate, which had an impact on the frequency of pronouns.

The speech is organized around five major points, which represent the contentious issues which led to the Tunisian Revolution: (1) unemployment and regional development and injustice; (2) education and employment; (3) dialogue as a principle and style of communication; (4) political freedom and participation; and (5) follow-up of the unemployed. One striking feature of this speech is the pronouns used. Four pronouns have been used but unequally: *I*, *THEY*, *YOU*, and *WE*. The pronoun *I* has been used once at the very beginning of the speech, whereby the OPT anchored himself in discourse as a deictic center, bringing 'social roles' (Marmaridou, 2000: 99). The pronoun *I* assigns the social role of leader of a country to the OPT, and the form of address used (*Male citizens, female citizens*) defines them as citizens. In Arab political discourse, it is common practice for politicians to address all citizens by differentiating them in this gender fashion, especially in Tunisia where women have acquired a few rights since independence in 1956. Even though the pronoun *I* has been used without overtly spelling out a *YOU* – except for its use once at the end of the speech in the ritualized 'Peace and God's mercy and blessing be upon you' – Pennycook (1994: 178) argues that it 'can also operate as one half of a construction of the Other: it can stand in opposition to any "you" or "they" in the same way that "we" does'.

However, having served its purpose of anchoring the speaker in discourse, *I* is quickly abandoned in favor of *WE* and its objective and possessive derivatives *US* and *OUR*, dominating the rest of the speech with 24 occurrences. However, to trace responsibility for the unrest, the OPT shifted pronouns again to construct otherness. *THEY* was used three times: once as anaphor to 'events' (*the exaggerated dimensions that they took*) and twice to construct an out-group responsible for the events (*some parties that do not want benefaction to their country and the recourse of a minority of extremists and hired instigators against the interests of their country to violence and rioting in the street*).

In this speech, *I* has been taken advantage of by the OPT to anchor himself in discourse; *WE* has been shifted to as a 'royal-WE' or to construct in-groups; and *THEY* has been exploited to construct an out-group. It is worth noting that using *their country* twice does not imply that it is not also the OPT's country. Rather, using *OUR* instead of *THEIR* would have included the OPT in the negative out-group's actions allegedly committed by those that he made answerable for these deeds, which would have been self-incriminating for him. The OPT shifted again back to 'royal-WE' when he said: *This compels us to clarify a few issues and emphasize realities*. It should be noted that the shifts talked about here do not concern a shift in social roles between speaker and addressees, who do not shift roles in the three political speeches under study. Rather, shifts concern the speaker himself shifting pronouns between *I* and *We* and between various *WE* frames, filling them with convenient social roles constructed for the occasion.

As mentioned earlier on, the first-person pronoun in Arabic is called 'speaker's pronoun' and the second 'addressee's pronoun'. The assumption is that this is a dyad, whose former member presupposes the latter. This presupposition implies that the members of the dyad are co-present in the spatiotemporal field. This spatial closeness is often taken to be social closeness as in the conceptual metaphor, SPATIAL CLOSENESS IS SOCIAL CLOSENESS. However, the third-person pronouns in Arabic are called obviative pronouns, that is pronouns whose referents are not co-present in the spatiotemporal field with the speaker and addressee. The spatial distance built between speaker and the individuals or group constructed as *THEY* implies social distance between speaker and others as defined by SPATIAL DISTANCE IS SOCIAL DISTANCE. According to this logic, since the speaker is the deictic center, all other addressees and referents are situated at some remove determined by the social roles defined by the speaker himself. Levinson (1983: 64) expresses the coordinates of deixis as follows:

Radiating out from the speaker are a number of concentric circles distinguishing different zones of spatial proximity; through the speaker passes a 'time line', on which events prior to his present utterance, and events prior to those, can be linearly arranged, and similarly events at points and spans in the future; while the discourse to which the speaker contributes unfolds along this same time line. To capture the social aspects of deixis, we would need to add at least one further dimension, say of relative rank, in which the speaker is socially higher, lower or equal to the addressee and other persons that might be referred to.

One important thing to note is that deixis constructs social relations with persons along variable social distances from the deictic center. We are told by Johnson (1987: 124) that this centrality for the speaker comes from the fact that '[o]ur world radiates out from our bodies as perceptual centers from which we see, hear, touch, taste, and smell our world. Our perceptual space defines a domain of macroscopic objects that reside at varying distances from us'. Thus, the speaker occupies the center, with addressees and referents situated at some points in the periphery of the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema. *THEY* is at the outermost point in the periphery while *WE* is at the innermost point, with *YOU* and the addressees somewhere in between. Notwithstanding the use of the 'royal-WE', it should be noted that even though *WE* is individuated in different ways and filled by different social roles, the various occurrences of *WE* are drawn at equal distance from the center to signify that this is the closest social formation to the speaker.

In other words, *WE* is not taken here to be a pronoun on a par with *I*, but a social formation constructed by the deictic center himself, who is necessarily including himself and some of his favorite people. It is not the other way round; it is not *WE* which includes *I*, but it is the speaker who includes others with him.

What is significant about the use of *WE* in this speech is that it is individuated in different ways by the OPT. The following examples show how *WE* is filled in the speech by the OPT:

Royal-*WE*

... we respect the feeling that any unemployed person feels ...
 ... we have opted since 'the change' for dialogue as a principle and style of communication ...
 ... we renew our emphasis on respect of freedom of opinion and expression ...

Governmental-Oppositional-*WE*

... as a principle and style of communication between the national and social sides on the issues and new events that face us.
 ... our eagerness to adopt it in legislation and practice ...

Governmental-*WE*

We do not spare efforts to avoid these conditions through suitable specific treatment ...
 We accomplished outstanding results in the area of education both quantitatively and qualitatively.
 We always stick to the social dimension of our developmental policy ...

Chauvinistic-*WE*

We in Tunisia spend all efforts to curb it and treat its effects and its repercussions especially among families without any resources.
 ... that gives a distorted image of our country ...

Obviously, the deictic center created the various types of *WE* for special purposes. Through the 'royal-*WE*', the OPT typically speaks of himself as the leader of a country, which bestows on his words some degree of credibility. What is tentatively called 'Governmental-Oppositional-*WE*' is a frame which was filled by the OPT, the opposition parties, and the trade unions on the one hand, and the OPT and the parliament and involved ministries on the other, to show harmony between himself, the opposition, and the legislative. What is called 'Governmental-*WE*' is filled with political achievements and future policy and expectations. However, what is called the 'Chauvinistic-*WE*' is a frame created for emotional appeal to Tunisians to preserve their self-image, especially vis-a-vis western countries concerning the issue of tourism, which actually benefits the OPT and his family, not the country, not the people.

Thus, the social roles used to fill the various *WE* frames in the speech are ones that mostly exclude the addressees, that is the Tunisian citizens that are the targets of the speech. Pennycook (1994: 178) argues that the pronoun 'use opens up a whole series of questions about language, power, and representation'. Pennycook (1994: 174–175) argues that

a pronoun is always a highly complex piece of language that can rarely stand in a simple relationship to something else. This is where the notion of the 'politics of the pronoun'

arises, for what I want to point to here is that pronouns are deeply embedded in naming people and groups, and are thus always political in the sense that they always imply relations of power.

Thus, *WE* is not an undifferentiated piece of language but a complex of different frames created and filled in by the speaker, who shifts from one to the other according to need. Petersoo (2007: 429) calls these shifts in the use of *WE* ‘wandering *WE*’, that is where *WE* ‘wanders between addressee-exclusive, addressee-inclusive and all-inclusive “we”’. In this speech, the OPT made *WE* wander between addressee-exclusive (Royal-*WE*, Governmental-*WE*), addressee-inclusive (Governmental-*Oppositional-WE*), and all-inclusive (Chauvinistic-*WE*).

One example of abuse of power is when the OPT talked about his achievements in eradicating inequality between regions. All the country knew that the extreme south was the Mezzogiorni of Tunisia, marked by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy. Regarding the ‘policy of building an educated population’, educators and academics knew that the OPT contributed to the destruction of what was the national institution of Tunisian university and research. The Tunisian university was producing unemployed graduates, and scientific research received scant funding since all the money was going to more prioritized sectors such as security. Concerning the follow-up of the unemployed, the OPT created a banking organisation known as the 2121 Fund, and made contribution to it compulsory to some sections of Tunisian society. Instead of helping solve unemployment, it crippled young entrepreneurs with debt. Tunisians found out later that most of the contributions went as pocket money to the OPT’s wife. What is typical about these achievements is that they were mere manipulation, which is defined by Van Dijk (2006: 360) as

not only involve[ing] power, but specifically *abuse* of power, that is, *domination*. That is, manipulation implies the exercise of a form of *illegitimate* influence by means of discourse: manipulators make others believe or do things that are in the interest of the manipulator, and against the best interests of the manipulated.

Van Dijk (2011: 36) proposes for such a manipulation of knowledge a type of discourse analysis he calls ‘critical epistemic discourse analysis’, which ‘needs to focus more specifically on how knowledge is abused to control discourse, or how the knowledge of the recipients may be manipulated in the interests of powerful groups’.

It is not strange that, in spite of killing in the streets in many cities of Tunisia after the first speech given by the OPT, people were not discouraged from going into the streets in bigger numbers and demanding the departure of Ben Ali, his family, his in-laws, and his ruling party. The antepenultimate speech did not concern them because it did not include them, and they were used to such exclusion, which developed in them a sense of rejection and anger. Thus, people knew from the nature of the regime that if after the speech they withdrew from the streets, they would be slaughtered by the regime. Indeed, the post-speech period saw more militants in the streets and many more Tunisian cities getting into the revolutionary movement in solidarity with those cities that had incurred many victims.

Penultimate speech

The penultimate speech was given two weeks after the antepenultimate one. In terms of the pronouns used, the speech introduced a *WE–THEY* dyad, where the OPT constructs a positive self-presentation through *WE* and a negative other-presentation through *THEY*. Again, this pattern of pronouns in the speech does not make provisions to include the addressees. As a result, the OPT is the deictic center, with *WE* at one remove from the center, the addressees further removed from *WE*, but with *THEY* at many removes from the center, that is to say in the periphery.

Negative-other presentation. The speech opens by anchoring the OPT through the personal pronoun *I* as a deictic center, calling his addressees ‘*Male citizens, female citizens*’ as in the previous speech, but adding a precision: ‘*at home and abroad*’. It is not very clear why he made this addition to the term of address. A good guess might be that he was thinking that the expatriated citizens would line up with him since they may not be fully aware of what was actually going on in the country. So, he was taking advantage of their distance from the country to forge support for himself.

The OPT constructs one seemingly dialogic sentence through the *I–YOU* dyad (*I address you today*), where *YOU* is rather an anaphor to *Male citizens, female citizens at home and abroad*, after which he delved into the *WE–THEY* dyad, construing a terrorist group (*in a terrorist work that cannot be tolerated*); an opportunistic group (*implicating our children, students and unemployed young people and They unethically exploited an event*); a plotting group (*disseminating false slogans of hopelessness and fabricating false news*); a hostile and envious group (*a minority of hostile people that are enraged by the success of Tunisia and They feel offended and puzzled by the progress and the development*), deceptive (*These deceivers took advantage of unemployment*), and traitorous group (*their conscience in the hands of extremists and terrorists that manipulate them from abroad*). Clearly, *THEY* frames the Tunisian youth as hostile, envious, deceptive, and unpatriotic.

The negative-other presentation here assumes a particular importance. Recall that in Arabic *THEY* is called an obviative pronoun, which means that it is not only not a deictic pronoun on a par with *I* and *WE*, but also a pronoun whose referent is not co-present with the deictic center both in the indexical and spatial fields. Thus, what makes othering an out-group is that it has to do literally with a form of physical obviation, which is projected or mapped metaphorically onto the social space. This obviation has the effect of relegating the status of *THEY* in the periphery at many removes from the deictic center. Such a spatial removal is accompanied by a social removal as described by the conceptual metaphor, SPATIAL DISTANCE IS SOCIAL DISTANCE. Such a marginalization has the effect of suspending communality between the OPT and the people, and angering the youth even further.

Positive self-presentation. As in the previous speech, the OPT very soon disappears as a deictic center in a *WE* to present the second member of the *WE–THEY* dyad in a positive self-presentation. As in the previous speech, the same technique of ‘wandering *WE*’ was present, whereby the OPT wanders between addressee-exclusive (Royal-*WE* and

Governmental-*WE*) and addressee-inclusive (All-inclusive *WE*) (Petersoo, 2007: 429), even though *WE* was used less erratically than in the previous speech. The self-presentation revolves around emotionality, achievements, and commitments. Basically, emotions are conveyed through the 'royal-*We*':

... we renew our sympathy with the families of the deceased ...

We partake in their pain and sorrow ...

The achievements of the government in terms of education, employment, and eradication of poverty are conveyed through the Governmental-*WE*:

All know how great our care is for higher degree holders ...

Our educational policy is similar to our policy for family, woman, youth, childhood ...

On the other hand, some emotion is also carried out through the All-inclusive *WE*:

... an event that we all regretted having taken place ...

... sincere love for all of our sons and daughters ...

The OPT showers the Tunisians, especially the families of the victims, with expressions of regret and commiseration in an attempt to appeal to and arouse their emotions. In the formation of the in-group under '*WE* all', it is not clear who the OPT is including with him. *WE* here cannot include those to whom the events occurred, that is the victims and their families and relatives. It cannot include the Tunisian people because pragmatically the people could not regret something that they did not commit. What is left here with regret is the OPT and his government. Thus, this all-inclusive *WE* turned out to be a deceptive one.

On the other hand, the OPT framed himself as caring for the youth, their education, and their employment. He also attributed achievements to the self:

We are working towards raising the challenges posed by these numbers of graduates.

We support our employment programs and combat unemployment without affecting our efforts to promote the standard of living, the quality of life, and salary rises.

The speech followed a pattern of denigration of the other and praise of the self. After anchoring the OPT as a deictic center *I* at the beginning of the first paragraph, the first two paragraphs showed an alternation between *WE* and *THEY*. In the third and fourth paragraphs, the OPT shifted to *WE* to present his achievements both through the royal-*WE* and the governmental-*WE*. From the fifth paragraph to the end of the speech, there were fewer occurrences of *WE* because the speech listed promises to the Tunisian people, meshed at times with threats. Chung and Pennebaker (2007: 353) argue that 'when people are telling the truth (as opposed to lying), they are more likely to "own" it by making it more personal and, at the same time, are more likely to describe their story in a more cognitively complex way'. In other words, when personal pronouns disappear from talk and text, what is talked about is not attributed to the self, and therefore, the speaker may be misleading, manipulative, and telling lies.

Ultimate speech

So far, in the first two speeches, almost the same pattern of talk has been used: anchorage in discourse through the deictic center *I*; shift to *WE* to create communality, thus including and excluding social roles; and othering constructions through *THEY*. What was also common to the antepenultimate and the penultimate speeches was the fact that *WE* was hardly ever filled with the social role of the addressees. Thus, what was blatantly missing was a stable, sustained *I-WE* dyad that would create communality between the OPT and the addressees. However, unlike in the antepenultimate and penultimate speeches, for the first time in 23 years the OPT delivered the ultimate speech in a blend of MSA and TA, but mostly in TA, that is in the vernacular. Since it seemingly did not undergo editorial pruning and was mostly improvised, the speech has shown the OPT to be faltering, rocked, and psychologically disturbed. For the first time, the OPT constructed through an *I-YOU* dyad with the addressees, which made the quantity of *I* superior. And for the first time in his last three speeches, the OPT constructed an inclusive *WE*, in other words filled the *WE* frame with himself and his addressees. And for the first time, *THEY* as introducing a negative-other presentation does not frame the youth as *THEY*, but shifts the blame to the OPT's own collaborators.

I-YOU dyad. The ultimate speech marks a real departure in terms of person deixis, thus constructing an *I-YOU* dyad. Singly and together, both pronouns outnumber the same pronouns in the other speeches. This quantitative shift marks a qualitative shift in the construction of the relations of the OPT with his addressees. In the antepenultimate and penultimate speeches, the Tunisians had no existence as interlocutors with the OPT; they were solely presupposed through very few occurrences of *I*. In the ultimate speech, however, the Tunisians are addressed as *YOU* as is unambiguously stated at the very beginning of the speech: '*People of Tunisia, I talk to you today.*' This has the effect of bringing the addressees closer to the deictic center than in the other two speeches.

The speech opens with '*I talk to you*' repeated many times, which is a declaration of intention on the part of the OPT to seek communality and solidarity with the people as addressees in discourse. *YOU* establishes the addressees as a viable category not side by side with the speaker as is encoded in the syntactic sequence of both pronouns on a level, but still at one remove from the deictic center. It is interesting to note that what made this change from non-dialogue to dialogue is not a miracle, but the pressure in the streets. This need for solidarity was made all the more urgent for the OPT since he declared: '*I understood you*' many times, which was an acknowledgment that the OPT did not understand the people, which is why there was no dialogue. For a president to declare that he has understood his people for the first time in 23 years means that he was living on another planet. I reckon that most Tunisians, if not all, must have reacted to '*I understood you*' as 'Too late, dear!'

In the second paragraph, the OPT in solo lapsed into egocentric talk, trying to appeal to the emotions of Tunisians by telling them that '*I was greatly aggrieved by what happened*' and '*My sorrow and pain are tremendous*'. He spoke on behalf of Tunisians concerning the death toll, stating: '*We have been aggrieved by the fall of victims and the grievance of people.*' He also tried to appeal to the Tunisian sense of patriotism so that

the people would find attenuating circumstances for him: *'Each day of my life has been devoted to serving the country, and I offered sacrifices that I will not enumerate. You all know them.'* However, he could not do away with misrepresentation and deception, stating: *'Never did I one day, I will not accept one drop of blood to flow from Tunisians' blood.'* As president of the country, he could not have been unaware of the death toll and the snipers in the streets country-wide. After fleeing the country, it was revealed that he had engineered the killings in the city of Kasserine to set an example for other cities. Therefore, he was lying about not accepting bloodshed. The presuppositions of his own talk reveal him to be the opposite of what he stated. In stating *'I will not accept that more will fall because of the continuous violence and plunder'*, he presupposed that he tolerated thus far those who fell without objection.

WE instantiations. Apart from the constructed dialogic dimension through the *I-YOU* dyad, the OPT also constructed various *WE* individuations. After anchoring himself in the discourse of the speech, bringing the addressees closer to his side through many instantiations of the *I-YOU* dyad, the OPT shifts to constructing social roles with himself. The first significant instantiation of *WE* has to do with what I earlier called Chauvinistic-*WE*, which is a form of reference that flatters addressees by evoking a cultural trait assumed to be shared by all Tunisians, namely their tolerance and their being 'civilized' (*the civilized Tunisian, the tolerant Tunisian*), which is taken advantage of here to dominate them:

But the events that are taking place today in our country are not ours.
Violence is not ours and is not part of our behavior ...

The OPT also constructed other kinds of *WE*, which have been filled with various social roles, but the all-inclusive-*WE* has fewer instantiations:

Royal-*WE*

We have given instructions – and we count on the collaboration of all.
We will insist on its impartiality and fairness.

All-inclusive-*WE*

Tunisia is the country of us all, the country of all Tunisians. Tunisia, we love it, and all its people love it, and we must protect it.
We all must give ourselves the opportunity and time to embody all the important procedures that we have taken.

Governmental-*WE*

We are expecting from each Tunisian.
Fellow citizens, we must face up to them.

The all-inclusive-*WE* is used basically for emotional appeal to addressees for their citizenship and parenthood ('Our sons today are at home and not at school, which is sinful and disgraceful, because we are afraid for them of the violence of groups of plunderers that plunder property and attack individuals'), and does not include or associate them

in decision-making or review of policies. So, the frequent use of *WE* should not blind us into thinking that it is a *WE* inclusive of the addressees.

Once this unity between him and the people is created through an assumed inclusive-*WE*, the OPT can now involve the people with him in fighting what he thought were thugs and gangs in the streets (*'we must face up to them'*). He feels emboldened by an inclusive-*WE*, which empowers him to quickly slip into the shoes of the condescending president when he says: *'We have given instructions.'* But he slips out again into the shoes of the inclusive-*WE*: *'we count on the collaboration of all.'* Since the OPT brought his addressees closer to him as a deictic center, he constituted an in-group on whose collaboration he logically could count to face up to the gangs and thugs. He also felt that making concessions to the people was a good gesture (*'we discriminate between these gangs and groups of thugs that take advantage of the circumstances, and the legitimate peaceful protests that we do not object to'*), which turned out to be a mere disclaimer.

The back and forth movement between inclusive-*WE* and royal-*WE* reverberates in other parts of the speech:

We are expecting from each Tunisian, those who support us and those who do not, to support the efforts, the efforts of pacification and to give up on violence, destruction, and damage. Reform requires peace, and the events that we witnessed were initially protests against social conditions that we made big efforts to cure. But big efforts are still ahead of us, big efforts to compensate for weaknesses. We all must give ourselves the opportunity and time to embody all the important procedures that we have taken.

The first *WE* is exclusive of all Tunisians since it is inclusive of the OPT and his ruling party. This exclusion is further clarified when he says *'those who support us'*. The pre-supposition is that those who support him are with him under *US*, while those who do not will be a *THEY*. This second occurrence of *WE* (i.e. *US*) is a wishful inclusion of the addressees who would accept cooperation with him at this point in time when the speech was given. The third occurrence of *WE* is filled with the OPT, his government, and the addressees: *'We all must give ourselves the opportunity'*, even though the *'weaknesses'* he talked about were political, social, and economic, the responsibility for which is incumbent on him and his government. So the people can do nothing about these since he created them. This is a desperate attempt to appeal to his addressees to contribute to solving the problems that he created for them. Indirectly, it is as if he were blaming the crime on the victims. The last *WE* selects for inclusion the OPT and his government since he has made the decisions.

Other-presentation. Pennycook (1994: 176–177) argues that

both “you” and “they” thus frequently operate as the signifier of an assumed Other whose naming, whether as an explicit othering or as an implicit assumption of difference, is always a question of cultural politics, of how people come to represent themselves and others.

The appearance of *THEY* in the penultimate speech framed the Tunisian youth as acting according to a foreign agenda and as gangs of criminals and thugs killing people in the streets and attacking people in their homes. In the ultimate speech, even though there is

still talk about '*these gangs and groups of thugs that take advantage of the circumstances*', the other-presentation through *THEY* is not about the youth, but about an entity that has not been identified. All that was said about them was: '*They induced me into error, sometimes, I am not a sun that can shine on the republic, all the land. They induced me into error concerning the size of realities. They will be accountable, yes, they will be accountable.*' One can infer that *THEY* may refer to his advisors or to some of the members of his own government.

Speech acting. Apart from the *I-YOU* dyad and the *WE* instantiations, which characterize this speech, *I* is used with speech act verbs to show that the OPT was still in command, and that he was doing that for the benefit of the addressees and for the sake of transparency and commitment to the values of freedom and democracy. Such issues include the following:

I insist: enough recourse to live ammunition.

I demand of the independent committee.

I announced two days ago to inquire into the phenomena of corruption, bribery, and officials' errors.

If some of these speech acts have to do with his prerogatives and responsibilities as a president, others, mainly speech acts of promising, can be seen as self-incriminatory as per their own presupposed knowledge. For instance, '*I will work toward supporting democracy, the support of democracy, and activating plurality, the support of democracy and the activation of plurality. I will work toward protecting the Constitution*', pragmatically presupposes that the OPT acknowledged that he never supported democracy and pluralism. Neither did he protect and respect the Constitution, when he said '*I will work toward protecting the Constitution, the country's Constitution, and respect it*'. In other words, he acknowledged being an absolutist dictator, and having corrupted the Constitution by manipulating it in favor of his own selfish interests. Apart from the fact that it was too late for any president to promise to do some of these things after 23 years of rule, these statements are at least self-incriminatory and make their owner answerable in front of justice.

Duplication of certain expressions. As mentioned earlier, the link between language and ideology is beyond demonstrating. Some linguistic expressions have been selected by the OPT for repetition since doing so has an ideological value of maintaining domination and preserving power. Even though this feature is not about the pronoun system of the speech, it is important for the overall balance of power between the OPT and the addressees. This is a unique feature to the ultimate speech, which consists in taking an important expression and repeating it at least twice. Some of these include '*I talk to you*' (four times), '*I understood you*' (twice), '*I was greatly aggrieved*' (twice), '*They induced me into error*' (twice), '*They will be accountable*' (twice), '*supporting democracy*' (twice), '*no presidency for life*' (twice).

The speech ends with two paragraphs in which the OPT capitalizes on emotions through which he arouses sentiments of nationalism and citizenship: *Tunisia is the*

country of us all; we love it; we must protect it; Tunisia is for all of us; its future is in our hands, so let us all give it peace. All these first-person plural-related pronouns are inclusive of the addressees as a way of making them responsible for what might happen to the country in the future. Perhaps he was threatening the people with foreign intervention. The speech wishes for the destiny of the country to remain in the hands of its people, in particular within the hands of the faithful people who have led the country since 1987: 'May the determination of our people be within its hands, and within the faithful hands that it will choose to pursue the journey that started since the Independence and that we have been pursuing since 1987.' This piece of deception cannot go unnoticed. The OPT presupposed that the hands that governed Tunisia since independence were faithful hands. Most Tunisians, if not all, strongly believe that Tunisia was never governed by faithful hands; neither do they believe that since 1987 it has been governed by the right people.

Discussion

Since concern in this article is with the relation between language, social action, and power, it can be shown how language, social change, and power interact with each other. The slogans that have been created by the young revolutionaries are numerous, and targeted the person of the OPT, his family and in-laws, the ruling party, and the Prime Minister, Mohamed Ghannouchi. Some of the most famous ones include the following:

- *xubz wma wbin Ali la* (No to Ben Ali even if it takes living on bread and water);
- *Ben Ali ya jaban, ša3b Tunis la yuhan* (Ben Ali the coward, the people of Tunisia cannot be humiliated);
- *Tunis Hurra, iTrabelsiyya 3ala barra* (Tunisia is free, the Trabelsis must leave)
- RCD Out;
- *twalliši l-xubza balluši, la la lil-Rannuši* (even if the loaf of bread becomes free, no no to Ghannouchi).

These linguistic expressions are not simple slogans but, more importantly, a crystallization and embodiment of power taken from the ruler and turned against him and his followers as a loaded gun, thus stripping them of their power and authority.

The role played by language in this Revolution is enormous. Apart from the fact that slogans were inscribed on cloth and paper posters, they were also voiced up day and night in the streets of Tunisia. Language as power in the hands of the Tunisian youth has turned the OPT from an oppressive and threatening power in his antepenultimate speech and a deceptive and accusatory power in his penultimate speech into a defeated leader in his ultimate speech, desperately giving more and more concessions and seeking the sympathy and pity of Tunisians. Although the role of language in this balance of power between the governor and the governed cannot concretely be quantified, the effect of such linguistic power in the streets can be felt in his speeches. Table 1 sums up the pronoun frequency and distribution in the OPT's speeches.

Table 1. Comparison of pronoun frequency and distribution in the three speeches.

Topic	Antepenultimate speech	Penultimate speech	Ultimate speech
Word count	851 words	1474 words	1190 words
Pronoun count	29	45	96
I	1	3	35
YOU	1	2	18
WE	24	35	36
THEY	3	5	7
Pronoun frequency of occurrence	29.34 words	32.75 words	12.39 words

It is interesting to note that the frequency of pronouns has quadrupled from the antepenultimate speech (29 pronouns) to the ultimate speech (96 pronouns) and nearly doubled from the penultimate speech (45 pronouns) to the ultimate speech. Such a frequency is not significant if it does not reveal something about pronoun patterning. Indeed, while the antepenultimate speech built no overt *I-YOU* dyad between the speaker and the addressees, it constructed a *WE-THEY* dyad, making these two pronouns the most frequent ones in the speech. However, as pointed out earlier on, the filling of *WE* is exclusive of the addressees that it was meant to address. Although the penultimate speech has witnessed a slight increase in the frequency of the same pronouns, there was no shift in the way *THEY* and *WE* have been filled. However, the ultimate speech made a significant difference. Although it maintained the same *We*-exclusive pattern, the speech not only constructed an *I-YOU* dyad bringing the addressees closer to the deictic center, but also constructed a different *THEY* filling, thus inculcating the OPT’s collaborators rather than the Tunisian youth.

Conclusion

The CDA and cognitive-pragmatic investigation of the speeches reveals at the level of deixis a dramatic shift of pronouns. As pointed out earlier, the shift is not one between different values filling the deictic pronouns. Rather, it is the speaker as a deictic center that shifts his use of pronouns, filling them with different values. After Petersoo (2007), such a shift was called ‘wandering’ use in the case of *WE*. Thus, the antepenultimate speech was marked by ‘wandering-*WE*’, whereby the OPT constructed a ‘Royal-*WE*’, a ‘Governmental-*Oppositional-WE*’, a ‘Governmental-*WE*’, and a ‘Chauvinistic-*WE*’. Figure 1 represents these various uses as shown.

At the center of the indexical field features the deictic center. It should be noted that the center includes *I* and *WE*, where *WE* is ‘Royal-*WE*’. However, there are other *WE* instantiations, all of which are equidistant to the deictic center, and are filled with social roles other than the OPT as a president. It should also be noted that these instantiations are at one remove from the deictic center. No provision has been made to signal the inclusive versus exclusive dimension of *WE* since *WE* is always both. At the outer

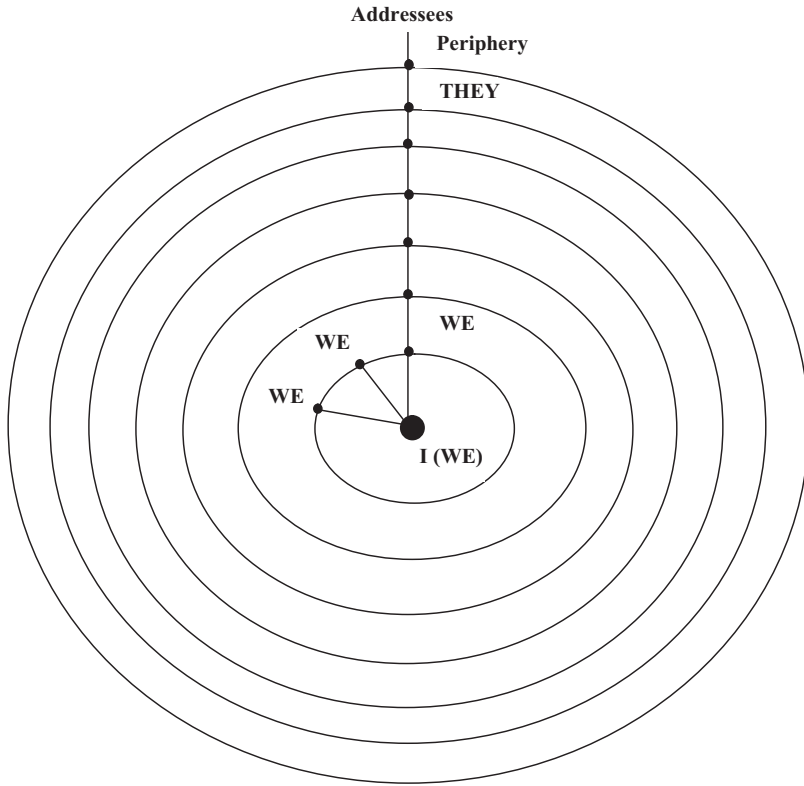


Figure 1. Cognitive-pragmatic representation of deictic pronouns in the antepenultimate speech.

periphery of the concentric circle we find *THEY*, which has been flanked at many removes from the deictic center. In between *WE* and *THEY* are the addressees, who are different from *YOU*, still at some remove from the deictic center. Such removes should be interpreted, as argued earlier on, in terms of the conceptual metaphor SPATIAL DISTANCE IS SOCIAL DISTANCE, which is the result of the projection of physical space over social space.

The penultimate speech, however, was marked by the construction of a *WE–THEY* dyad, which constructed a polarized discourse where *WE* is used to profile a positive self-presentation and *THEY* a negative-other presentation. *WE* instantiations were filled by ‘Royal-*WE*’, ‘Governmental-*WE*’, and ‘All-inclusive-*WE*’. Therefore, there are fewer differentiations of *WE*, even though the frequency of *WE* is higher than in the antepenultimate speech. On the other hand, *THEY* is strongly flanked to the outer periphery as criminal, unpatriotic, and opportunistic. Again, as in the previous speech, the addressees are not identified by *YOU*, whose occurrence is very limited in the speech to two instances. Figure 2 schematically represents the use of deictic pronouns in the penultimate speech.

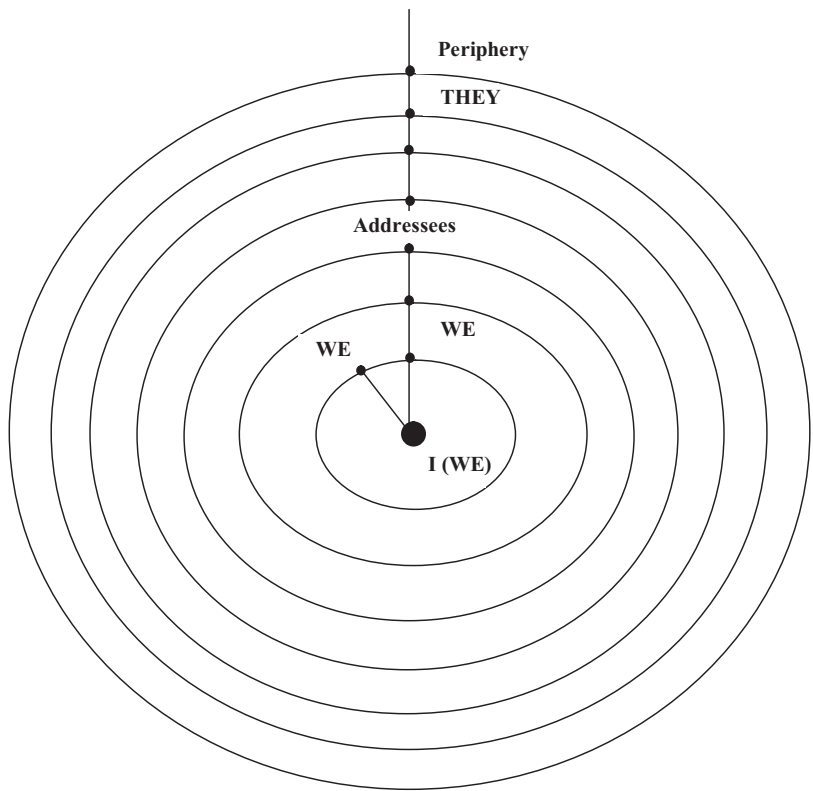


Figure 2. Cognitive-pragmatic representation of deictic pronouns in the penultimate speech.

On the other hand, the ultimate speech was marked by two dyads: *I–YOU* and *WE–THEY*. The former constructed dialogue between the OPT and the addressees, while the second constructed discourse where *WE* profiled a positive self-presentation and *THEY* profiled a negative-other presentation. For the first time, the *I–YOU* dyad brings closer to the deictic center the addressees, who now coincide with the addressee pronoun *YOU*. However, the *WE–THEY* dyad constructs two presentations. *WE* includes ‘Royal-*WE*’, ‘Governmental-*WE*’, ‘Chauvinistic-*WE*’, and All-inclusive-*WE*’, whereas *THEY* is filled with a different social role than the one in the penultimate speech. This is schematically represented as follows in Figure 3 below:

It should be mentioned that the observable changes and shifts in the pronoun configurations of the speeches were motivated by parallel events in the political, economic, and social context. While the language of the speeches showed the OPT making more and more concessions and thus gradually losing power, the youth in the streets used language as a counter-ideology to gain more and more power. The gradual loss of power by the OPT caused him to make concessions, which was reflected in the pronoun shifts in the speeches. This echoes Pennycook’s (1994: 178) argument of ‘language use as productive

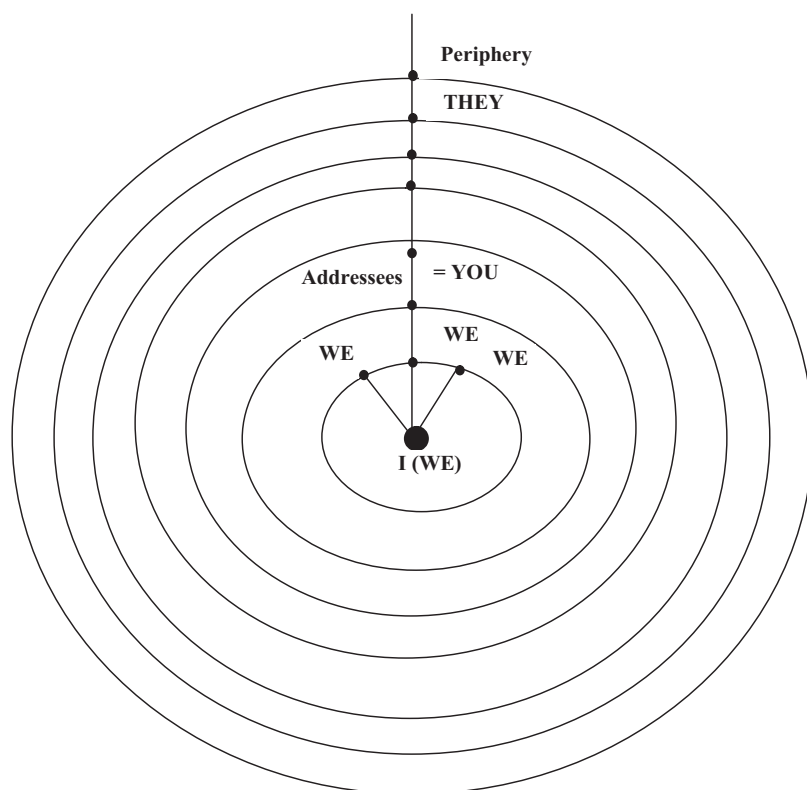


Figure 3. Cognitive-pragmatic representation of deictic pronouns in the ultimate speech.

of, as well as reflective of social relations'. Thus, it is at least partly language, not fire weapons, which produced this power shift and regime change.

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Notes

1. The text of the speeches can be accessed at: <http://faculty.ksu.edu.sa/zmaalej/Pages/Published%20Papers.aspx>
2. Personal pronouns will be capitalized and italicized.

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