

Proximization of Threat in the Construction of GERD: A Critical Discourse Study

تقريب الخطر في بناء سد النهضة الإثيوبي الكبير: دراسة تحليلية نقدية

“在 GERD 的构建中威胁的临近化：一项批判性话语研究。”

Prof. **Miranda Mohamed Khamis El-Zouka**

Professor of Linguistics, English Department, Faculty of Arts
Damanhour University

تاريخ استلام البحث : ٢٠٢٢/١٠/٣

تاريخ قبول البحث : ٢٠٢٣/١٠/١٢

Abstract

In Critical discourse studies, the relation between linguistics and other branches of knowledge is manifested. Cap (2006) first proposed *Proximization Theory* and developed it later. It is one theory which is used in critical discourse studies. This theory presents a certain action, event, person or thing as negatively affecting the addressee(s). The analytic approach of this theory includes the analysis of spatial, temporal and axiological aspects. The current study analyses some of the official statements and speeches of Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shokry, concerning the threats of GERD on the two downstream countries, Egypt and Sudan. The study reveals many results, among which is that spatial proximization is the most commonly used strategy followed by axiological proximization and then temporal proximization.

Key words: Proximization Theory – GERD - spatial proximization - temporal proximization - axiological proximization

الملخص

في الدراسات النقدية للخطاب تظهر العلاقة بين علم اللغويات وفروع المعرفة المختلفة. إن نظرية التقريب من النظريات المستخدمة في الدراسات النقدية للخطاب، وقد وضعها كاب (٢٠٠٦) ثم قام بتطويرها فيما

بعد. وتظهر هذه النظرية أن هناك فعل ما أو حادث ما أو شخص ما أو شيء ما يؤثر سلبيا علي المخاطبين. والنطاق التحليلي لهذه النظرية يشمل تحليل التقريب المكاني والتقريب الزمني والتقريب القيمي. ويدرس هذا البحث بعض من البيانات الرسمية وخطب وزير الخارجية المصري السيد سامح شكري المتعلقة بمخاطر سد النهضة الأثيوبي علي دولتي المصب ألا وهما مصر والسودان. وقد أظهرت الدراسة العديد من النتائج منها: أن التقريب المكاني هو الأكثر استخداما يتبعه التقريب القيمي ثم التقريب الزمني.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: نظرية التقريب - سد النهضة الإثيوبي الكبير - التقريب المكاني - التقريب الزمني - التقريب القيمي

Introduction

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is one of the developing areas of studies in Discourse Analysis. In these kinds of studies, the interaction between linguistics and various social sciences is very obvious. CDS include a large number of interdisciplinary and numerous methodologies, one of which is *Proximization Theory* (PT) (Cap, 2014:16). *Proximization* is a strategy through which the speaker presents a certain event as negatively and directly affecting the addressee(s). The present study analyses some of the speeches and statements of the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shokry, concerning the threats of the construction of the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on both Egypt and Sudan. The analysis will be done using *PT*, and a frequency count will be provided concerning the three kinds of *proximization strategies: spatial, temporal and axiological*.

Aims, Methodology and Data of the Study

Proximization Theory and its spatial, temporal and axiological (STA) model is a methodology used in CDS (Cap 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013). It is a cognitive pragmatic approach that takes into consideration “strategic regularity underlying forced construals in political/ public discourse” (Cap, 2014:16). It can be considered that PT is a link between CDS and cognitive pragmatics.

PT is a new theory in Discourse Analysis. The two verbal forms “proximize” and “proximizing” were first used by Chilton (2004), while the nominal form “proximization” was first introduced by Cap (2006), who has also developed it into a theory of cognitive pragmatic construals in discourse.

The present study aims at analysing some of the official statements and speeches of the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shokry, regarding the threats

imposed by the construction of (GERD) on the two downstream countries, Egypt and Sudan, in various aspects of life. The analysis will be done using *PT* as it best analyses the various devastating effects of GERD because of its - *PT*- analytic model that includes *spatial, temporal and axiological* aspects. Thus, all aspects of threats will be clearly analysed. The study will also offer a frequency count of the three analytic models or strategies of *PT*: spatial, temporal and axiological.

The analysed data includes some of the official statements and speeches issued by the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shokry, regarding the threats of GERD on Egypt and Sudan in various national and international arenas, for example, the United Nations Security Council, the Arab League and the Egyptian Council of Representatives. The data has been obtained from the official Facebook page of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the websites of Al-Ahram Gate and El-Watan News.

The analysed statements and speeches are all issued in Arabic. In the Arabic extracts under investigation, the analysed words and phrases are underlined for ease of reference. Also, an English translation is provided by the researcher to provide more clarification.

Theoretical Background

PT is a recent cognitive-pragmatic approach that accounts for “Strategic regularities underlying forced construals in political/public discourse” (Cap, 2014: 189). It is a model that clarifies the opposition between US and THEM. It focuses on the way outsiders (THEM) are dangerous and threaten the insiders (US), who are the center of the discourse space (Cap, 2017: 2). Thus, this theory manifests the relation between entities and individuals within a given Discourse Space (Chilton, 2005; Gavins 2007).

In political discourse, the speaker carries out proximization by establishing a discourse stage where remote events are portrayed and represented as having a negative and a direct effect on the speaker and the addressees (Cap, 2020: 393). This strategy is adopted by a given speaker to legitimize the actions and policies taken by him and his government or organization to stop the increasing threat of the negative foreign or outside entities (Cap, 2014: 7, 2015: 314; Chilton 2006; 2008; 2010, 2011).

Proximization is a forced construal operation presupposing ‘US/GOOD’ versus THEM/BAD arrangement of the Discourse Space (Cap, 2018:385). *Proximization Theory* aims at indicating closeness of an external threat or danger to legitimize preventive measures, actions and policies. The threat is imposed by DS peripheral entities, i.e. outside-deictic centre (ODCs), who are portrayed as crossing the space to threaten or invade those who are within a

given DS, i.e. inside-deictic centre (IDCs), which includes a given speaker and his addressees (Cap, 2014: 17).

In this theory, the threat is manifested through three aspects or strategies of *proximization: spatial, temporal and axiological*. *Spatial proximization* “is a forced construal of the DS peripheral entities, i.e. ODCs are physically approaching the DS central entities, i.e. IDCs that include the speaker and the addressees (Cap, 2015:550). This strategy increases fears of the threat coming from the ODCs to the IDCs ‘good vs. evil’ because of the decreasing physical distance between them as the former are waiting to fulfil their ambitions and invade the IDCs home territory (Cap, 2013: 74-75). *Temporal Proximization* is a “forced construal of the envisaged conflicts as not only imminent, but also, momentous...thus needing immediate response” (Cap, 2015: 550). Lastly, *axiological proximization* is a “construal of a gathering ideological clash between home values of the DS central entities and the alien and antagonistic ODCs values (Cap, 2014: 17).

PT and its spatial-temporal-axiological (STA) analytic model assume that these three strategies decrease the distance between the entities in a given DS and their negative effect on the speaker and his addressees. Such proximization strategies are legitimization devices, especially in political discourse. The addressees will accept and legitimize actions against the approaching threat (Cap, 2014: 17; Hart & Cap, 2014: 19).

Spatial proximization is a strong indicant of the threat from the ODCs and their destructive effect on the IDCs. This kind of proximization, according to Cap (2017: 77), includes:

- 1- The characteristics of the IDC and ODC.
- 2- The dynamics of the ODC activity, i.e. the ways available to ODC to invade the IDC space.
- 3- The attitude (active or passive) of the IDC.
- 4- The presence of a given past event which threatens the future scenario.

Cap (2013: 19) clarifies the framework and the main lexico-grammatical linguistic devices of *spatial proximization* in a given DS:

- 1-NPs construed as elements of the deictic centre of the DS (IDCS).
- 2-NPs construed as elements outside the deictic centre of the DS (ODCs).
- 3-VPs of motion and directionality construed as markers of movement of ODCS towards the deictic centre.
- 4-VPs of action construed as markers of impact of ODCs upon IDCs.
- 5-NPs denoting abstract concepts construed as anticipations of impact of ODCs upon IDCs.
- 6-NPs denoting abstract concepts construed as effects of impact of ODCs upon IDCs.

These six categories of *spatial proximization* framework clarify the arrangement of the DS (categories 1 & 2), the shift that leads to the clash

between the ODCs and IDCs (categories 3& 4) and the negative effects of such clash on the IDCs (categories 5 & 6) (Cap, 2014: 18, 2017: 23).

Temporal proximization is a forced construal of now as the central time frame of the time axis in which to use the premises of the Past, the present as well as anticipations of the future to decide on an immediate action to prevent a near future action by the ODCs (Cap, 2017: 111).

Temporal proximization requires linguistic elements to conflate the envisaged events of the future with actual events of the past (Cap, 2013: 14). The *temporal proximization* framework includes:

1-NPs involving indefinite descriptions construing ODCs actual impact acts in alternative temporal frames.

2-Discourse forms involving contrastive use of the simple past and present perfect construing a threatening future extending infinitely from a past instant.

3-NPs involving nominalizations construing presupposition of condition for ODC impact to arise anything in the future.

4-VPs involving modal auxiliaries construing conditions for ODCs impact as existing continually between the now and the infinite future.

5-Discourse forms involving parallel contrastive construals of oppositional and privileged futures extending from the now.

Category (1) refers to phrases in which the constituents refer explicitly to actual terrorist acts. In category (2) the simple past tense represents the past, while the present perfect represents a threatening future which extends from a past event. In category (3), nominalized threats illustrate how construed time event scan turn real time events to a phenomenon that can last for a long time. In category (4), auxiliaries and time adverbials indicate the period of the threat, and this causes fear to the addressees. As for category (5), because of the threats of the ODCs to the IDCs, the future is privileged because of the actions taken by the IDCs (Cap, 2013: 112-114).

In *axiological proximization*, the ODCs threaten the values of the IDCs, and this leads to a physical clash. This kind works with values and beliefs related to the opposing entities (IDCs vs. ODCs). The axiological framework includes:

1-NPs construed as IDCs (+ve values and ideologies).

2-NPs construes as IDCs (-ve values and ideologies).

3-Discourse forms no longer than one sentence or two consecutive sentences involving linear arrangement of lexico-grammatical phrases construing materialization in the IDC space of the ODC negative values.(Cap, 2013: 119-121).

Category (1) includes NPs that represent the positive values of IDCs, and category (2) includes negative values of the ODCs. Category (3) includes two parts referred to as ‘abstract ideologies and concrete physical ones’. The

abstract ideological part reflects the conflict between ideologies held by IDCs and ODCs. The concrete physical part is related to the real physical or concrete threat. There is an ideological clash between IDCs and ODCs, where values of the latter threaten those of the former (Cap, 2013: 120). This threat is first distant then it becomes imminent. Category (3) can be manifested in a set of NPs and VPs as follows:

1-NPs denoting ODC s values followed by or combined with

2-VPs denoting a remote possibility of the ODCs-IDCs conflict followed by or combined with

3-VPs denoting a close possibility of the ODCs-IDCs conflict followed by or combined with

4-NPs denoting physical consequences of the ODCs-IDCs conflict (Cap, 2013: 122).

As for the issue under investigation, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), it is a crisis that has started nearly ten years ago. There has been an agreement between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia to preserve the rightful water shares of the two downstream countries; Egypt and Sudan. The three countries previously agreed not to harm their shares of water by establishing dams that might prevent the flow of water to these countries, except after the consultation and the agreement of the three countries. Since the onset of the direct negotiations concerning the agreement and *Declaration of Principles* in 2015, the negotiations have not succeeded.

Egypt and Sudan saw the dire need of the role of the international community to overcome the difficulties and obstacles put by Ethiopia to reach an agreement that depends on the principles of the international laws that govern the management and use of international rivers so that all countries can benefit from their water resources without any harm done to other countries (State Information Service, 2021).

After the June 30th Revolution, Egypt adopted the negotiations path in dealing with the crisis of GERD. In 2015, Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia signed the *Declaration of Principles* that specifies the right procedures of filling the dam without harming the interests of the three countries, and at the same time respecting the final report of the international committee of experts, and also agreeing on the procedures of the first filling of GERD as well as its operation afterwards. The agreement stresses the importance of notifying the two downstream countries beforehand. There have been many negotiations regarding GERD from 2011 until 2021 but they all failed because Ethiopia rejected all peaceful proposals by Egypt and Sudan to rescue the GERD talks. The firm stance adopted by Ethiopia asserts that it seeks to impose a status quo on the two downstream countries.

In July 2021, Ethiopia declared the second filling of the dam. The implementation of the second filling has affected the annual water supply of the two downstream countries because Ethiopia controls the amount of water

discharged from the dam during the filling process. The situation is now worse because the annual water released to Egypt and Sudan will decrease. Egypt stresses the fact that filling the dam has to be done according to the best interests of Egypt and Sudan.

A number of previous studies have been carried out using *Proximization Theory* as their means of analysis, for example, Cap (2006; 2008; 2010; 2013) applies this theory in case studies regarding the war on terror discourse, discourse space and health discourse. This theory has also been applied to other kinds of discourse, such as political discourse(Chovanec, 2010), and war discourse (Kopytowska,2010). In addition, this theory has been used to analyse (anti) immigration discourse as Hart (2010; 2011), political party representation (Cient et al., 2010), design of foreign policy documents(Dunmire, 2011) and political speeches given by President Bush (Sowinska, 2013). To the researcher's knowledge, the problem of GERD has not been tackled and analyzed using *Proximization Theory*. Thus, the present study fills this gap.

Analysis

Spatial Proximization

Spatial proximization indicates that the threat of ODCs on IDCs is approaching, and that the physical distance between them is small. Thus, the threat is imminent. This strategy of proximization is achieved by the first five categories indicated by Cap (2013:19).The use of *spatial proximization* is clarified in the next extracts.

Extract (1)

... و علي بداهة ما تطالب به مصر الا أن التفاوض حول ذلك الاتفاق استغرق منا جولات تفاوضية لا حصر لها...أبدت فيها مصر مرونة فائقة...إلا أن المشكلة تكمن في أن الطرف الإثيوبي لا يريد سوي فرض رؤيته قسراً علي الآخرين متغافلاً في ذلك عن عمد عن تعارض ما ينادي به مع كل المواثيق و الاتفاقيات... يسعى الي فرض واقع جديد تتحكم فيه دول المنبع بدول المصب، و هو ما لا يمكن أن تقبل به مصر، فنهر النيل ملكية مشتركة لدول المنبع كما لدول المصب...لقد أثبتت مصر حسن نواياها في كل المرات... فانخرطنا في جميع مسارات التفاوض، بداية من المسار الثلاثي و مروراً بالوساطة الأمريكية...قبل أن ينسحب المفاوض الإثيوبي في اللحظة الأخيرة، ووصولاً الي مسار الوساطة الأفريقية... الا انها لم تسفر، و للأسف الشديد، عن النتائج المرجوة...فمصر تقدر كل الجهود التي بذلتها جنوب افريقيا و الكونغو الديمقراطية لكننا لا نري طرفاً يتحمل اللوم علي إفشال كل تلك الجهود و إطالة أمد التفاوض لا لشيء إلا لكسب الوقت ، سوي الجانب الإثيوبي...

(SamehShokry, the Arab League, 12th June 2021)

...what Egypt asks for is very normal; however the negotiations about this agreement took us numerous rounds of negotiations...Egypt has been very lenient... The problem is in the Ethiopian side, who only wants to impose its point of view by force upon the other sides, ignoring the fact that what it advocates contradicts all accords and agreements...It tries to impose a new status quo where upstream countries control the downstream ones, which is what Egypt does not accept as the River Nile is a common property for the upstream countries in the same way as the downstream ones...Egypt has proven its good intentions all the time...we were involved in all negotiations paths, starting from the trilateral route and passing by the American mediation...before the Ethiopian side withdrew in the last minute until we reached the route of the African mediation, which unfortunately, did not lead to the required results...Egypt appreciates all the efforts exerted by South Africa and Congo, but we consider that the side which is to blame for the failure of all these efforts and extending the time of negotiations, only to gain time, is the Ethiopian side...

This extract is taken from the speech of the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shokry, in the Arab League held at the ministerial level to discuss the issue of GERD. In this extract, there are manifestations of categories (1,2,3,4,5) included in the *spatial proximization* framework. Concerning category (1), which includes NPs that refer to elements of the deictic centre of the discourse space, there are examples such as "مصر", and "دول المصب". The NP "مصر" is repeated 5 times to emphasize that Egypt will be drastically affected by GERD, and also show that Egypt insists on adopting the negotiations method to reach a compromise that will not negatively affect its people. The NP "دول المصب" is used to refer to both Egypt and Sudan to show that the dangers of GERD will harm both countries. Regarding category (2), which includes NPs that refer to elements outside the deictic centre (ODCs), includes the NP "الطرف الإثيوبي", which is repeated twice, and the NP "دول المنبع". Other examples are "الجانب الإثيوبي" and "المفاوض الإثيوبي". These NPs emphasize the fact that the main reason for the construction of GERD is Ethiopia, which insists on its stance and refuses any compromises. As for category (3), which refers to VPs of motion marking the movement of ODCs towards the deictic centre, there are examples as "لا يريد سوي فرض رؤيته قسراً علي الآخرين" and "يسعي الي". These VPs indicate that Ethiopia sticks to its opinion and refuses all attempts to arrive at a compromise. Thus, it wants to force Egypt to accept the new status quo. Category (4), that includes VPs that refer to the impacts of the ODCs on the IDCs, includes the VP "تتحكم فيه" that indicates that Ethiopia fully controls the dam and this will harm both Egypt and Sudan. Concerning category (5), which includes NPs referring to anticipations of the impact of ODCs on IDCs, there are examples, for instance, "إفشال" and "اللوم". These NPs manifest that Ethiopia is to be blamed

for stalling negotiations, and finally, their failure, because it wants to impose its opinion on the two downstream countries regardless of the destructive effects of GERD on them. The researcher has noticed that there are VPs that show the actions taken by IDCs against ODCs to prevent their danger. This new seventh category can be added to the *spatial proximization* framework. These VPs are " لقد أثبتت مصر حسن نواياها في كل المرات... فانخرطنا في جميع and أبدت فيها مصر مرونة فائقة" " All these VPs show that Egypt always adopts the negotiations strategy to reach a solution for the issue of GERD so its drastic effects do not affect both Egypt and Sudan.

Extract (2)

...مصرشاركت بحسن نية في جولات تفاوضية لا حصر لها... هذه الجهود لم تثمر عن نتيجة بسبب النزعة الأحادية للجانب الإثيوبي و رغبتها في فرض أمر واقع علي دولتي المصب. خلال هذه العملية سعينا الي التوصل لحل مُرضٍ لكافة الأطراف يحفظ و يعزز حقوق و مصالح دول النيل الأزرق الثلاث. لقد عملنا بلا كلل من أجل التوصل الي اتفاق يحقق الأهداف الإنمائية لاثيوبياو يقلص من التأثيرات الضارة لهذا السد الضخم علي دولتي المصب...دعت مصر أطراف أخرى محايدة الي المشاركة في المفاوضات، كما أعربت عن استعدادها لقبول أي اتفاقات... مصر... وقعت بالأحرف الأولي في ٢٨ فبراير ٢٠٢٠ علي اتفاق بشأن ملء وتشغيل سد النهضة تم إعداده تحت رعاية الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية و بمشاركة البنك الدولي...قوضت إثيوبيا هذه الجهود... تواصل إثيوبيا الأصرار علي بدء حجز المياه في خزان السد بشكل أحادي الجانب و هو الأمر المثير للقلق... اذ يمثل محاولة خطيرة من جانب إثيوبيا لاقامة و ممارسة سيطرة غير مقيدة علي نهر حيوي عابر للحدود...سوف يشكل حرقاً مادياً لاتفاق اعلان المباديء بشأن سد النهضة...

(Sameh Shokry, United Nations Security Council, 20th June 2020)

...Egypt has participated with goodwill in numerous negotiations sessions...These efforts have not led to any results because of the unilateral disposition of Ethiopia and its will to impose a status quo on the two downstream countries. In this process, we tried to reach a compromise that satisfies all parties and that preserves and strengthens the rights and the interests of the three countries of the Blue Nile. We worked hard to reach an agreement that satisfies the development efforts of Ethiopia, and decreases the harmful effects of this huge dam on the two downstream countries...Egypt has invited other non-allied parties to participate in the negotiations, and expressed its will to accept any agreements...Egypt...signed in initial letters on 28th February 2020an agreement concerning filling and operating GERD under the sponsorship of the United States of America and the International Monetary Fund...These efforts failed because of Ethiopia ...Ethiopia insists on starting to withhold the water in the dam unilaterally, which is a very disturbing matter...because it represents a dangerous attempt by the Ethiopian side to establish and practice an unrestricted control on a vital cross-bordering

river...This is a materialistic violation of the agreement of *the Declaration of Principles*...

The above extract is taken from a letter of the Egyptian Foreign Minister, SamehShokry, to the Head of the United Nations Security Council. In this extract, there are manifestations of categories (1, 2, 4, 5, 7) of the *spatial proximization* framework. As for category (1), there are NPs that refer to elements within the deictic centre (IDCs) such as "مصر" , which is repeated 3times and "دولتي المصب" , which is repeated twice. These NPs and their repetitions assert the serious harms and dangers of GERD on Egypt and Sudan and manifest Egypt's serious attempts to reach a compromise with Ethiopia regarding this dam. Concerning category (2), there are NPS that refer to elements outside the deictic centre (ODCs) as "الجانب الإثيوبي" and "إثيوبيا", which is repeated 4 times. These NPs assert that Ethiopians the main side responsible for the failure of the GERD negotiations. Regarding category (4) that includes VPs that refer to the impact of ODCs upon IDCs, there are VPs, for example, "يشكل خرقاً وتواصل إثيوبيا الأصرار علي بدء حجز المياه في خزان السد بشكل أحادي الجانب" and "يشكل خرقاً مادياً لاتفاق اعلان المباديء بشأن سد النهضة". These VPs indicate that the actions taken by Ethiopia seriously harm the two downstream countries. At the same time, Ethiopia wants to be in control of everything regarding the dam regardless of the interests of Egypt and Sudan. Concerning category (5), which includes NPs referring to anticipations of the impact of ODCs on IDCs, there are examples as "أمر واقع", "التأثيرات الضارة", "سيطرة غير مقيدة", "خرقاً مادياً". All these NPs help in explaining that Ethiopia always tries to distort the truth and tries to force a fact, which is GERD, that cannot be changed regardless of its harms and dangers on Egypt and Sudan. As for category (7) that includes VPs that show the actions taken by IDCs against ODCs to prevent their danger, there are VPs as:

- شاركت بحسن نية في جولات تفاوضية لا حصر لها
- سعيانا الي التوصل لحل مرضي لكافة الأطراف "
- لقد عملنا بلا كلل من أجل التوصل الي اتفاق يحقق الأهداف الإنمائية لإثيوبياو يقلص من التأثيرات الضارة لهذه السد الضخم علي دولتي المصب
- دعت مصر أطرافاً أخرى محايدة الي المشاركة في المفاوضات، كما أعربت عن استعدادها لقبول أي اتفاقات

All these VPs help in showing that Egypt has resorted to all peaceful methods to solve the issue of GERD through negotiations to reach a compromise that is suitable and accepted to all the countries involved in this issue. However, Ethiopia insists on its stance and is not convinced at all of the dangers and harms of this dam on Egypt and Sudan.

Temporal Proximization

Temporal proximization focuses on the momentousness of the threat, and that the present is set according to the past as well as possible future actions. This kind of proximization includes the shift from the past to the present and from the future to the present. The former deals with the effects of the past actions and events of the ODCs that affect the present of the IDCs. The latter deals with possible actions performed by the ODCs in the near future which are based on the present events actions (Cap, 2013: 85-86). It has been noticed that in the data under investigation only category (3) is used from the *temporal proximization* framework is used, and that there is another sixth category that can be added to framework, which is VPs indicating the negative effects of what is happening at present upon IDCs in the future. It can be said that this new category is found in the Arabic data, and thus it can be peculiar to it. In this category the future consequences are expressed by inserting the future markers of the Arabic language, which are "سوف" and "س" before the verb in the present tense.

Extract (3)

...ان ملء سد النهضة بشكل أحادي و دون اتفاق مع مصر و السودان يهدد مصالح دولتي المصب اللتين يعتمد وجودهما و بقاؤهما علي تهر النيل. كما أن تشغيل هذا السد العملاق بشكل أحادي قد يكون له تأثيرات اجتماعية و اقتصادية مدمرة سوف تؤثر علي كافة مناحي الأمن الإنساني للمصريين, بما في ذلك الأمن الغذائي و الأمن المائي و الأمن البيئي و الصحة العامة، كما انه سيعرض الملايين لمخاطر اقتصادية ستؤدي الي ارتفاع معدلات البطالة و الجريمة و الهجرة غير الشرعية، فضلاً عن التأثير علي النظم البيئية و التنوع البيولوجي, و زيادة المخاطر الناجمة عن تغير المناخ...

(SamehShokry, United Nations Security Council, 29th June 2020)

...Filling GERD unilaterally, without agreeing with Egypt and Sudan, threatens the interests of the two downstream countries, whose existence and survival depend on the River Nile. Also, operating this huge dam unilaterally may have destructive social and economic effects which will affect all aspects of the human security for the Egyptians, including food security, water security, environmental security and general health. It will also expose millions to economic dangers that will lead to the increase of the crime rate and illegal immigration as well as the effects on the ecological system, biological variation and the increase of the dangers resulting from climate change...

This extract is taken from the speech of the Egyptian foreign Minister, Sameh Shokry, to the United Nations Security Council. In the extract, there is a shift from the future to the present. Categories (3) and (6) of the *temporal proximization* framework are used. The use of category (3) which includes NPs involving nominalizations construing presupposition of conditions from ODCs

"تأثيرات" impact to arise any time in the future is shown in the use of the NPs "ارتفاع معدلات البطالة و الجريمة و الهجرة", "المخاطر الاقتصادية", "اجتماعية و اقتصادية مدمرة" and "غير الشرعية". These NPs which involve nominalizations clarify the harmful effects of GERD on the future of the two downstream countries. This shows the importance of the fact that Ethiopia must negotiate with both Egypt and Sudan before filling and operating GERD. In addition, the use of category (6) is manifested in the following NPs "ان ملء سد النهضة" and "تشغيل هذا السد" which refer to what Ethiopia is doing at the present time, which is filling and operating the dam. This will harm the future of the two downstream countries. These bad effects are shown through the use of the future tenses in VPs as:

- قد يكون له تأثيرات اجتماعية و اقتصادية مدمرة سوف تؤثر علي كافة مناحي الأمن الانساني للمصريين...
- سيعرض الملايين لمخاطر اقتصادية ستؤدي الي ارتفاع معدلات البطالة و الجريمة و الهجرة غير الشرعية...

The negative effects of operating the dam that will affect the two downstream countries in the future are expressed using VPs in which the verbs begin with "سوف" and "س" which are the future indicators of the Arabic language.

Extract (4)

...ازاء هذا التعتن الإثيوبي، و المتمثل في اصرارها علي الاستمرار في ملء خزان هذا السد الضخم دون اتفاق مع دولتي المصب سيؤثر تأثيرات خطيرة عليهما في كافة مناحي الحياة علي المستوي الاجتماعية و الاقتصادية، و هو ما يعد مخالفة جسيمة لاتفاق إعلان المبادئ... فان صبرنا قد تعرض لاختبارات عدة و في كل مرة أثبتت مصر أنها الطرف الذي يتصرف بمسؤولية و من منطلق إدراك مسبق بتبعات تصعيد التوتر علي أمن و استقرار المنطقة، ومن ثم فإن مصر مصرة علي استنفاد كافة الحلول الدبلوماسية، الأمر الذي دعانا و نحن هنا لنعرض الأمر علي أشقائنا العرب... إن مصر تعرض هذه القضية... من منطلق تأثير الأمن القومي العربي بهذه القضية...

(Sameh Shokry, the Arab League, 12th June 2021)

...Because of the Ethiopian stubbornness, manifested in its insistence on continuing to fill the reservoir of this huge dam without agreeing with the two downstream countries, will have dangerous effects on them in all aspects of life on the social and economic levels. This filling is considered a serious violation of the *Declaration of Principles*...our patience has been exposed to many tests. Egypt has always proven that it is the party that deals with responsibility and out of prior understanding of the consequences of the escalation of tension on the security and the stability of the region. Thus, Egypt insists on using up all diplomatic solutions. This has led us to bring the matter before our Arab

brothers... Egypt presents this issue...because the Arab national security is affected by it...

This extract is taken from the speech of the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shokry, in the Arab League held at the ministerial level to discuss the issue of GERD. In the extract, categories (3) and (6) of the *temporal proximization* framework are used. The use of category (3) which includes NPs involving nominalizations construing presupposition of conditions from ODCs impact to arise any time in the future is clarified in the use of the following NPs, "تأثيرات خطيرة", "مخالفة جسيمة", "بتبعات تصعيد التوتر", "تأثر الأمن القومي العربي and "These NPS indicate that the harmful actions taken by Ethiopia violate international laws and are dangerous not only to Egypt and Sudan but to the national security of all Arab nations. Utilizing category (6) is manifested in the extract. By building and operating GERD, Ethiopia has carried out negative actions towards Egypt and Sudan more than ten years ago. These actions will have negative consequences in the present and the future of the two downstream countries. This is indicated by the use of the VP "سيؤثر تأثيرات خطيرة". The future effects, which result from the present actions taken by Ethiopia, are indicated in the VP by using the Arabic future indicator "س".

Axiological Proximization

Axiological proximization reflects the opposing values that exist between the IDCs and ODCs. The positive values are assigned to the IDCs and the negative ones are assigned to the ODCs. This reflects an ideological conflict that may lead to a physical conflict between the IDCs and ODCs. The following extracts are manifestations of the axiological proximization framework.

Extract (5)

... ان مصر تعرض هذه القضية الوجودية علي المجلس الوزاري لجامعة الدول العربية من منطلق تأثر الأمن القومي العربي بهذه القضية، ولا ينبغي أن يفهم هذا باعتباره محاولة لخلق اصطفاك موجه ضد دولة إفريقية شقيقة، ولكنه طلب يستمد روافده من أهمية التكاتف العربي لحماية أمننا القومي... والتأكيد علي وجود تضامن عربي واضح و موقف موحد... حتي يتم التوصل الي اتفاق متوازن، فليس مقبولا أن يستمر التفاوض الي ما لا نهاية، و خاصة أننا بتنا مدركين لنوايا الطرف الاخر، و اقدامه علي خطوات أحادية تفرغ أي تفاوض من مضمونه. ظنا انه بسلوكه المراوغ قادر علي فرض رؤيته و تجاهل موقفنا، و بالتالي فان دعمكم لمصر و السودان في موقفهما العادل يكتسب أهمية مضاعفة في ظل هذه الظروف التي سقناها اليكم، وانا لعلي يقين بأننا سنلقي منكم الدعم المطلوب، انتصارا لقيم الاخاء و التلاحم، و ايمانا بعدالة قضيتنا...

(Sameh Shokry, the Arab League, 12th June 2021)

...Egypt presents this existential case at the ministerial level of the Arab league as the Arab national security is affected by it. This should not be understood as an attempt to form a unified coalition against an African sister nation; however it is a requirement that stems from the importance of an Arab coalition to protect our national security...and to ensure the existence of a clear Arab coalition and a unified stance... to arrive at a balanced agreement. Endless negotiations are not acceptable, especially that are aware of the intentions of the other side and its unilateral attempts that lead to the failure of any negotiations. Ethiopia thinks that it can impose its point of view and ignore our stance with its evasive behaviour. Thus, your support to Egypt and Sudan in their just stance acquires an increasing importance in the circumstances we told you about. We are sure that we will find the support we need to obtain victory for the values of brotherhood and unity, and out of a belief of the equity of our case.

This extract is taken from the speech of the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shokry, in the Arab League held at the ministerial level to discuss the issue of GERD. In this extract, there are examples of categories (1) and (2) included in the *axiological proximization* framework. Category (1), that includes NPs which refer to the positive values of the IDCs is manifested in NPS, includes NPs as "تضامن عربي و اضح و موقف", "التكاتف العربي", "دولة افريقية شقيقة", "These NPs indicate that Egypt seeks a peaceful solution to the GERD issue with the help of other Arab countries in the Arab league because the Egyptian and Sudanese stance are legally just. The NP "دولة افريقية شقيقة" also shows that Egypt wants to maintain peaceful relations with Ethiopia in spite of the conflict between the two countries regarding GERD. Concerning category (2) which includes NPs which refer to the negative values of the ODCs is shown in NPs as "خطوات", "فرض رؤيته و تجاهل موقفنا", "سلوكه المراوغ", "أحادية". These NPs reflect the fact that Ethiopia is totally responsible for all Egyptian peaceful attempts to resolve the GERD issue. Moreover, they clarify that Ethiopia does not accept any compromise, therefore all negotiations have failed. They also clarify that what Ethiopia is doing regarding filling and operating GERD is unacceptable for the two downstream countries due to the dangers of this dam on these countries.

Extract (6)

... وعلي ضوء سياستها خلال مفاوضات سد النهضة، فإن إثيوبيا ليس من حقها أن تعطي دروساً لجامعة الدول العربية أو دولها الأعضاء حول الصلات... التي تجمع الشعوب العربية و الافريقية... إن مواقف إثيوبيا إزاء موضوع سد النهضة ما هي إلا مثال آخر علي منهجها علي الصعيد الإقليمي المبني علي اتخاذ إجراءات أحادية، و هو ما ألحق الضرر و المعاناة بالعديد من إخواننا الأفارقة... فإننا ندعو المجتمع الدولي للانضمام للجامعة العربية في إدراك طبيعة سياسة إثيوبيا القائمة علي العناد و فرض الأمر الواقع، وهو ما يهدد بالاضرار بالاستقرار و الأمن الاقليميين...

(Official Statement of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7th March 2020)

...Based upon its policy in the GERD negotiations, Ethiopia does not have the right to give lessons to the Arab League or any of its members about the ties... that unite Arab and African peoples...Ethiopia's stance regarding the issue of GERD is another example of its approach at the regional level which is based on taking unilateral measures that caused harm and suffering to our African brothers...We call the international community to join the Arab League in understanding the nature of Ethiopia's policy which is based on stubbornness and imposing a status quo that threatens to harm the regional stability and security...

The extract is taken from an official statement of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs published in the Official Facebook page of the ministry. The use of categories(2) and (3) of the *axiological proximization* framework is shown in the extract under analysis. In the above extract, there are many NPs that express the negative values of the ODCs. These are: "اجراءات أحادية" and "العناد و فرض الأمر الواقع". These NPs indicate that Ethiopia is being very stubborn in all negotiations, and tries to impose its stance regarding GERD. Also, It refuses all alternatives proposed by Egypt and Sudan. Regarding category (3), there are VPs that indicate the results of the negative ideologies and actions of the ODCs on the ID Csas:

ألحق الضرر و المعاناة بالعديد من إخواننا الأفارقة

يهدد بالاضرار بالاستقرار و الأمن الإقليميين

These VPs clarify the negative consequences of the actions carried out by Ethiopia regarding GERD without arriving at any settlements with the other two downstream countries, The consequences will affect both the stability and the security of this African region.

Results and Discussion

The data shows that the total number of lexical and grammatical categories denoting *spatial, temporal and axiological proximization* is 714 times. *Spatial proximization* is used 348 times and it is the most commonly used proximization strategy. This is followed by *axiological proximization* which is used 211 times, and the least used proximization strategy is *temporal proximization*, which is used 155 times. Spatial proximization is of the highest frequency to show the spatial closeness of the harmful effects of building GERD on both Egypt and Sudan. The dam will totally harm the land and the population of these countries. This *spatial proximization* manifests the serious threat of the dam on the existence of both countries. This spatial threat is more

serious than *temporal proximization* which manifests the momentousness of the threat, and even more serious than *axiological proximization*, which shows the ideological difference between Ethiopia, on one hand, and both Egypt and Sudan, on the other hand.

Axiological proximization is the second most commonly used strategy to show that there is no hope to reach a compromise between the two sides regarding GERD, in spite of the numerous talks and negotiations that took place between the two sides. However, Ethiopia is not convinced of any evidence presented by Egypt and Sudan.

Temporal proximization is the least used strategy to show that the momentousness of the threat is not what really matters in the issue of GERD, but what is important is the spatial threat on the actual existence of Egypt and Sudan.

The frequency of usage of each category of *spatial proximization* is clarified in table (1).

Table (1) Frequency of using each category of *spatialproximization* in the data

Category	Frequency of Occurrence
1-NPs construed as elements of the deictic centre of the DS (IDCs)	96 (27.5%)
2-NPs construed as elements outside the deictic centre of the DS (ODCs)	75 (21.5%)
3-VPs of motion and directionality constructed as markers of the movement of ODCs towards the deictic centre	32 (9.2%)
4-VPs of action construed as markers of impact of ODC upon IDCs	34 (9.8%)
5-NPs denoting abstract concepts construed as anticipations of impact of ODCs upon IDCs	39 (11.2%)
6- NPs denoting abstract concepts construed as effects of impact of ODCs upon IDCs	37 (10.7%)
7-VPs showing acts of resistance of ODCs	35 (10.1%)
Total	348 (100%)

Table (1) clarifies that the most commonly used category in *spatial proximization* is NPs indicating IDCs (96 times, 27.5%) to show that Egypt and Sudan will be seriously affected by GERD. The second most commonly used category is NPs indicating ODCs (75 times, 21.5%) to show the responsibility of Ethiopia regarding building and operating GERD which will negatively affect the two downstream countries. The difference of the frequency of using the other categories is not big. The main aim of the categories of *spatial proximization* used is to show the closeness of the threat of GERD on the two downstream countries.

Regarding *temporal proximization*, only categories (3) and (6) have been found in the data. Table (2) shows the frequency of occurrence of these two categories.

Table (2) Frequency of using each category of *temporal proximization* in the data

Category	Frequency of Occurrence
1-NPs involving indefinite descriptions construing	-----

ODCs actual impact acts in alternative time frames	
2-Discourse forms involving contrastive use of the simple past and present perfect construing threatening future extending infinitely from a past instant	-----
3-NPs involving nominalizations construing presupposition of condition for ODCs impact to arise anytime in the future	80 (51.6%)
4-VPs involving modal auxiliaries construing conditions for ODCs impact as existing continually between the now and the infinite future	-----
5-Discourse forms involving parallel contrastive construals of oppositional and privileged futures extending from the now	-----
6-VPs indicating the negative effects of what is happening at present upon IDCs in the future	75 (48.4%)
Total	155 (100%)

Table (2) shows that category (3) is used 80 times (51.6%) which is slightly more than category (6), which is used 75 times (48.4%). The use of these two categories shows that Egypt seeks serious help from the international community to reach an adequate compromise regarding GERD because of its destructive effects on Egypt and Sudan in the near future.

The frequency of usage of each category of *axiological proximization* is clarified in table (3).

Table (3) Frequency of using each category of *axiological proximization* in the data

Category	Frequency of Occurrence
1-NPs construed as IDCs positive values (ideologies)	79 (37.4%)
2-NPs construed as ODCs negative values (ideologies)	70 (33.2%)
3-Discourse forms no longer than one sentence or two consecutive sentences involving linear arrangement of lexico-grammatical phrases construing materialization in the IDC space of the ODC negative values	62 (29.4%)
Total	211 (100%)

The table shows that category (1) in *axiological proximization* is the most commonly used one (79 times, 37.4%). This is followed by category (2) (70 times, 33.2%), and category (3) (62 times, 29.4%). The difference in the frequency of the first two categories is not big to prove the extent of the ideological difference between Ethiopia, on one hand, and Egypt and Sudan on the other hand. This also proves that Ethiopia insists on its stance regarding GERD in spite of the numerous negotiations between the two sides. Category (3) shows the extent of the harms of this dam on Egypt and Sudan.

Conclusion

The present study utilizes *Proximization Theory* developed by Cap (2006) to analyse four official statements regarding GERD which is built and operated by Ethiopia. These official statements have been released in many national and international organizations, including the United Nations Security Council, the

Arab league as well as statements taken from the official Facebook page of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In these statements, Egypt clearly indicates all possible threats of GERD on Egypt and Sudan as well as the fact that Ethiopia refuses, and thus hinders, all negotiations held in the past years to arrive at a compromise regarding this serious and dangerous issue.

The study reveals that spatial proximization is the most commonly used strategy, followed by *axiological proximization*, and then *temporal proximization*. In *spatial proximization*, which is related to the threat of ODCs upon IDCs, the threat of GERD on Egypt and Sudan is not distant. So, the existence of these two countries is under threat due to the numerous harmful and destructive effects of GERD. In the *spatial proximization* framework, category (1) followed by category (2) are the most commonly used ones. However, the difference in the frequency of using the other categories is not big. This is because Egypt is keen on clarifying the IDCs (Egypt and Sudan) that will be negatively affected by GERD and ODC (Ethiopia), which is the cause of the GERD issue as it is the country which is building and operating it.

In *axiological proximization*, related to the ideological conflict between IDCs and ODCs, category (1) is most commonly used, followed by category (2) in the framework, and then category (3). It has been noticed that the difference in the frequency of usage is not big. The use of *axiological proximization* shows that Egypt knows that there is no hope to reach an adequate settlement with Ethiopia, and all peaceful means through negotiations have failed. Ethiopia does not accept any compromise and insists on filling and operating GERD.

Temporal proximization is related to the momentousness threat of the ODCs upon IDCs. The dangerous effects of GERD will seriously and negatively affect both Egypt and Sudan in the near future. In this kind of proximization, categories (3) and (6) in the framework are used to focus on and assert the serious impacts of GERD on the existence of the two downstream countries.

The study reveals that Egypt has resorted to all possible means to explain to the national and international communities through official national and international organizations the serious and disastrous effects of the GERD that is being built, filled and operated by Ethiopia on Egypt and Sudan. Egypt has also demonstrated that it has resorted to all peaceful means via negotiations to convince the Ethiopian side of the dangerous consequences of this dam.

The three proximization strategies included in the *Proximization Theory* are used in the four Egyptian statements under analysis to clarify the dangerous and destructive effects of GERD on Egypt and Sudan. However, Ethiopia ignores all these threats that have been manifested by Egypt, and insists on filling and operating the dam. It can be said that Egypt has indicated to both national and international communities that all negotiations regarding this issue

have failed due to the stubbornness of the Ethiopian side. In fact, Egypt has spared no effort in this respect.

Further studies can be carried out to utilize *Proximization Theory* to examine other international issues such as the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and its consequences on all countries of the world in all aspects of life, especially economic consequences. The theory can also be used to study other national and international political, economic and social issues.

References

- Cap, P. (2006). *Legitimization in political discourse: A cross-disciplinary perspective on the modern US rhetoric*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge University Scholars.
- Cap, P. (2008). Towards the Proximization model of the analysis of legitimization in political discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics* 40, 17-41.
- Cap, P. (2010). Axiological aspects of proximization. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, 392-407.
- Cap, P. (2013). *Proximization: The pragmatic of symbolic distance crossing*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Cap, P. (2014). Applying cognitive pragmatics to critical discourse studies: A proximization analysis of three public space discourses. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 70, 16-30.
- Cap, P. (2015). Crossing symbolic distances in political discourse: Evaluative Rhetoric within the framework of proximization. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 12, 313-329.
- Cap, P. (2017). *The Language of fear: Communicating threat in public discourse*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cap, P. (2018). We don't want any immigrants or terrorists here: The linguistic manufacturing of xenophobia in the post-2015 Poland. *Discourse & Society*, 29(4), 380-398.
- Cap, P. (2020). Aspects of threat construction in the Polish anti-immigration discourse: A cognitive-theoretical study. In: Andreas Musloff & Lorella Viola (Eds.) *Migration and media: crisis communication about immigration in Europe and the world*, (pp. 240-278). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

- Chilton, P. (2004). *Analyzing political discourse: Theory and practice*. London: Routledge.
- Chilton, P. (2005). Discourse space theory: Geometry, brain and shifting viewpoints. *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics*, (3),78-116.
- Chilton, P. (2006).Negation as maximal distance in the discourse space theory.*Proceedings of thwe groupe recherches Anglo-Americaines de tours(GRAAT) Conference*, p.351-378.
- Chilton, P. (2008). Reflections on blends and discourse. In Todd Oakley nad Anders Hougaard (Eds.), *Mental spaces in discourse and interaction*, pp.251-256. Amsterdm: John Benjamins
- Chilton, P. (2010). From mind to grammar: coordination systems, prepositions, construction. In Vyvyan Evans and Paul Chilton (Eds.), *Language Cognition and space: The state of the art and new directions*, (pp.640-671). London: Equinox
- Chilton, P. (2011). *Deictic space theory (DST): The fundamental theory and its applications*. Paper presented at *the42nd Poznan Linguistic Meeting*, Poznan, 1st-3rdMay.
- Chovanec, J. (2010). Legitimization through differentiation: Discursive construction of Jacques, le Worm Chirac as an opponent to military action. In: UrszulaOkulska and Piotr Cap (Eds), *Perspectives in politics and discourse*, (pp.61-82). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Dunmire, P. (2011). *Projecting the future of political discourse: The case of the Bush doctrine*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Gavins J. (2007). *Text world theory: An introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Hart, C. (2010). *Critical discourse analysis and cognitive science: New perspectives on immigration discourse*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hart, C. (2011). *Critical discourse studies in context and cognition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Hart, C. & Cap P. (2014). *Contemporary critical discourse studies*. London: Bloomsbury.

Kopytowska, M. (2010). Television news and the 'meta-war'. In: Iwona Wiczak-Plisiecka (Ed.) *Pragmatic perspectives on language and linguistics*, (pp. 301-326). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press

Sowinska, A. (2013). A critical discourse approach in the analysis of values in political discourse: The example of freedom in President Bush's State of the Union address (2001-2008). *Discourse & Society*, 24(6), 792-809.

Online References:

Al-Ahram Gate (20th June 2020).

نص خطاب سامح شكري الي رئيس مجلس الأمن بشأن أزمة سد النهضة الإثيوبي

<http://gate.ahram.org/News/2430001.aspx>. Retrieved 28th February 2022.

Al-Watan News (29th June 2020). شكري يضع مجلس الأمن أمام مسؤولياته بشأن أزمة سد النهضة.

<http://www.Elwatannews.com/new/details/4879430>. Retrieved 24th January 2022.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (7th March 2020).

بيان من وزارة الخارجية المصرية بشأن سد النهضة لرفض بيان وزارة خارجية جمهورية اثيوبيا الفيدرالية الديمقراطية الصادر يوم ٦ مارس ٢٠٢٠.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=3672895679449018&id=130027683735853. Retrieved 26th January 2022.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (15th June 2021). نص كلمة وزير الخارجية أمام اجتماع الدورة غير

العادية لمجلس الجامعة العربية علي المستوي الوزاري لبحث قضية سد النهضة.

<http://www.Facebook.com/MFAEgypt/posts/113142237662298>. Retrieved 25th June 2022.

State Information Service (2021). Egypt and the Renaissance Dam.

<https://www.sis.gov.rh/section/7302/94262lang=en-us>. Retrieved 20th January 2022.