

## Critical Discourse Analysis of Nelson Mandela's Speech "I Am Prepared to Die".

Selma Bekkai \*<sup>1</sup>, Daoudi Frid<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> English Department, University of Tlemcen; Algeria; selma.bekkai@univ-tlemcen.dz

<sup>2</sup> English Department, University of Tlemcen; Algeria; frdcalco@yahoo.fr

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### **Abstract:**

This article presents a critical discourse analysis of Nelson Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech delivered in 1964. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis, the analysis examines the language, discourse strategies, and underlying assumptions and values expressed in the speech. The article argues that Mandela's speech was a powerful tool for challenging and transforming political and cultural norms in apartheid South Africa. It demonstrates the ways in which discourse can be used to mobilize social movements, challenge power relations, and transform cultural and political contexts. The analysis also highlights the importance of critical discourse analysis in understanding the ways in which language is used to shape power relations, social inequality, and cultural and political contexts.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis, CDA, Nelson Mandela; Rivonia Trial, defence speech, apartheid

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\* *Corresponding Author*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Nelson Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech is a significant text in the history of South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle. Delivered in 1964 during his trial at the Rivonia court, the speech is a powerful critique of the apartheid system and a call to action for those who are oppressed by it. At its core, the speech is an example of critical discourse analysis, where Mandela uses language to challenge the dominant narratives that portray apartheid as justifiable or benign, and to assert the dignity and humanity of all people.

In this analysis, we will explore how Mandela's discourse employs a range of linguistic strategies to persuade his audience and mobilize them towards a common cause of freedom and equality. We will examine how Mandela constructs his argument, using metaphors, contrasts, and emotive language to create an emotional impact on his listeners. We will also look at how he challenges the dominant narratives around apartheid, using evidence and logical reasoning to demonstrate the injustice and inhumanity of the system.

Furthermore, we will investigate how Mandela's discourse creates a counter-narrative that calls for a society characterized by mutual respect and understanding among different racial groups. We will analyse how he articulates his vision of a just and equitable society and the role of the people in bringing about this change. Through this analysis, we will see how Mandela's discourse shapes public opinion and mobilizes people towards a common cause of freedom and equality.

The analysis of Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech demonstrates the power of critical discourse analysis in shaping public opinion and social change. It highlights the role of language in challenging dominant narratives and constructing counter-narratives that can inspire people to work towards a more just and equitable society.

### **1.1. Significance of the Study**

The significance of the critical discourse analysis of Nelson Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech lies in its contribution to our understanding of the power of discourse in shaping cultural and political

contexts. By analysing the language, discourse strategies, and underlying assumptions and values expressed in the speech, we can gain insights into the ways in which discourse can be used to challenge power relations, mobilize social movements, and transform cultural and political norms.

Moreover, the analysis of Mandela's speech is significant in its historical and political context. The speech was delivered at a time when apartheid was at its peak in South Africa, and Mandela's words played a crucial role in inspiring the anti-apartheid movement. The critical discourse analysis of the speech sheds light on the ways in which Mandela used language to challenge the dominant narrative of apartheid, mobilize support for the anti-apartheid movement, and ultimately help bring an end to apartheid in South Africa.

Finally, this study is significant in that it highlights the importance of critical discourse analysis as a theoretical framework for understanding the power of language in shaping society. The analysis demonstrates the ways in which discourse can be used to construct and maintain power relations, perpetuate social inequality, and challenge dominant narratives

### **1.2. Aims of the study**

The aim of the critical discourse analysis of Nelson Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech is to provide a detailed analysis of the language, discourse strategies, and underlying assumptions and values expressed in the speech. The study seeks to understand how Mandela used language to challenge the dominant narrative of apartheid, mobilize support for the anti-apartheid movement, and ultimately help bring an end to apartheid in South Africa. By analysing the language and discourse strategies used in Mandela's speech, this study seeks to demonstrate the ways in which discourse can be used to challenge power relations, mobilize social movements, and transform cultural and political norms.

### **1.3. Research questions**

The present paper attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How did Nelson Mandela use language and discourse strategies in his speech to challenge the dominant narrative of apartheid and mobilize support for the anti-apartheid movement?

2. What underlying assumptions and values are expressed in Mandela's speech, and how do these reflect broader cultural and political norms?

#### **1.4. Methodology:**

The data used in the analysis of this paper are based on Nelson Mandela's statement from the dock at the opening of the defence case in the Rivonia Trial, delivered on April the 20<sup>th</sup>, 1964 (Mandela). This speech was given when he was on trial for his involvement in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. It is taken from Nelson Mandela Foundation web site available at: [http://db.nelsonmandela.org/speeches/pub\\_view.asp?pg=item&ItemID=NM S010&txtstr=prepared%20to%20die](http://db.nelsonmandela.org/speeches/pub_view.asp?pg=item&ItemID=NM S010&txtstr=prepared%20to%20die)

To analyse Mandela's speech, we used a qualitative research methodology that focused on identifying the assumptions, values, and discourse strategies that were employed in the text. We paid particular attention to the tone, style, word choice, and sentence structure of the speech, as well as the historical and political context in which it was delivered. The findings of the analysis are then interpreted, drawing conclusions about the power of discourse in shaping cultural and political contexts, as well as the implications of the discourse strategies used in the speech for power relations, social inequality, and broader cultural and political norms

#### **2. The historical and political context of the speech**

Nelson Mandela delivered his "I Am Prepared to Die" speech in one of the intense circumstances filled with racial and political tension in South Africa (Joffe). In the 1960s, South Africa was under the grip of apartheid, a system of racial segregation and discrimination that systematically oppressed and marginalized black South Africans.

In 1961, Mandela and other leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) founded the military wing of the ANC, known as Umkhonto we Sizwe "Spear of the Nation", to engage in acts of sabotage against the government. Mandela was arrested in 1962 and charged with sabotage and conspiracy to overthrow the government. He was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964, along with the other defendants in the Rivonia

Trial. (Buthelezi) The trial was widely seen as a political show trial designed to silence the opposition to the apartheid government. The defendants used the trial as an opportunity to denounce the apartheid system and call for its dismantling.

During his trial, Mandela delivered his "I Am Prepared to Die" speech, which was his defence against the charges brought against him. The speech was a powerful critique of the apartheid system and a call to action for those who were oppressed by it (Linder). In it, Mandela asserted the dignity and humanity of all people, regardless of race, and challenged the dominant narratives that portrayed apartheid as justifiable or benign. The speech is widely regarded as one of the most important speeches of the 20th century, as it provides a powerful critique of the apartheid system and lays out Mandela's vision for a democratic South Africa.

The trial ultimately had the unintended consequence of increasing support for the anti-apartheid movement and turning Mandela and his co-defendants into symbols of resistance against the apartheid regime. After serving 27 years in prison, Mandela was released in 1990 and played a key role in negotiating an end to apartheid and the transition to democracy in South Africa. (Linder)

### **3. Theoretical Framework:**

#### **3.1. Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical discourse analysis is a method of analysing language that looks at the social and political context in which it is produced. critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used because it regards language inherently political and its primary focus is on 'the effect of power relations and inequalities in producing social wrongs' (Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*). This approach seeks to uncover how language is used to construct and maintain power relations (Fairclough, *Language and power*), and how it can be used to challenge or resist dominant discourses.

According to van Dijk (1993), critical discourse analysis involves analysing the ways in which language is used to reproduce social inequalities and power relations (van Dijk). According to critical scholars,

power is exercised discursively by claiming those with dominance and power as the subject/owner of knowledge, truth, and norm in society. While positioning others as the object whose experiences are questioned, dismissed, and even disciplined by the subjects, thereby consolidating social dis/orders. (Foucault)

It is believed in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that power is intrinsically discursive, meaning that one's position as a 'subject' is re/constructed via their discursive resistance to, negotiation with, dominance over, and subordination of the other. While the 'subject' represents a position of truth and norm in society (e.g., naming what historical trauma is and how its healing should be done), the 'object' has their claim called into question, their experience/presence differentiated from their own, and they are seen as needing discipline and education. (Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*) Van Dijk (1993) suggests that:

If powerful speakers or groups enact or otherwise exhibit their power in discourse, we need to know exactly how this is done. And if they thus are able to persuade or otherwise influence their audiences, we also want to know which discursive structures and strategies are involved in that process. (van Dijk)

In the case of Mandela's speech, we can use critical discourse analysis to examine how his language reflects and challenges the discourse of apartheid and white supremacy

One of the most striking features of Mandela's speech is the way in which he uses language to position himself and his fellow anti-apartheid activists as legitimate political actors. He repeatedly refers to the struggle against apartheid as a "political" struggle, arguing that it is a struggle for the "political rights" of all South Africans. This framing is significant because the apartheid regime often depicted the anti-apartheid movement as a criminal or terrorist organization, rather than a legitimate political movement. By framing the struggle as a political one, Mandela is challenging this discourse and positioning himself and his fellow activists as legitimate political actors who are fighting for a just cause.

Mandela also uses language to challenge the idea that apartheid is a natural or inevitable system. He argues that apartheid is a "man-made" system, created by humans and therefore capable of being dismantled by humans. This framing is significant because it challenges the discourse of white supremacy, which often depicted black people as inferior and therefore in need of control and subjugation by white people. By arguing that apartheid is a human creation, Mandela is suggesting that it is not a natural or inevitable system, but rather a social and political construct that can be challenged and changed.

Another important feature of Mandela's speech is the way in which he uses language to create a sense of unity and solidarity among all South Africans who are fighting against apartheid. He repeatedly uses the pronoun "we" to refer to himself and his fellow anti-apartheid activists, as well as to all South Africans who are oppressed by the apartheid system. This framing is significant because it creates a sense of collective identity and purpose among all those who are fighting against apartheid, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or political affiliation.

In conclusion, Nelson Mandela's speech "I Am Prepared to Die" is a powerful example of how language can be used to challenge dominant discourses and construct new forms of political identity and resistance. By using language to position himself and his fellow anti-apartheid activists as legitimate political actors, challenge the discourse of white supremacy, and create a sense of collective identity and purpose, Mandela was able to articulate a powerful vision for a democratic South Africa that continues to inspire people around the world today.

### **3.2. Analysing Language**

The tone of the speech is measured and assertive. Mandela speaks in a calm, deliberate tone throughout the speech, conveying a sense of conviction and determination. He speaks with authority and confidence, using his tone to emphasize the gravity of the issues he is addressing.

The word choice in the speech is deliberate and emotive. Mandela uses strong, emotive words such as "oppression," "injustice," and "exploitation" to convey the gravity of the situation and to emphasize the

need for action. He also uses words such as "freedom," "dignity," and "humanity" to underscore his vision of a just and equitable society.

The sentence structure in the speech is varied and effective. Mandela uses short, punchy sentences to convey a sense of urgency and emphasis, while longer, more complex sentences are used to develop his arguments and present evidence. His style is also characterized by the use of declarative sentences and straightforward language, which conveys a sense of clarity and directness

Overall, the language used in Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech is powerful and effective. His measured and assertive tone, persuasive style, deliberate word choice, and varied sentence structure all contribute to the impact of the speech. His use of language serves to challenge the dominant narratives around apartheid and to construct a powerful counter-narrative that calls for a society characterized by mutual respect and understanding among different racial groups.

### **3.3. The discourse strategies used in the speech**

Nelson Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech is a powerful example of how discourse can be used to persuade, influence, or manipulate an audience. In his speech, Mandela employs a variety of strategies to engage his audience, evoke strong emotional responses, and motivate them to action.

One of the key strategies Mandela uses is rhetoric. Mandela uses rhetorical strategies such as repetition, contrast, and metaphor to emphasize key points and persuade his audience. He uses as well rhetorical questions, which are not looking for responses. They are regarded as a courteous indirect method of delivering a notion to the recipients (Ilie). By posing questions that have obvious answers, he invites his audience to participate in the speech and to reflect on the injustices of apartheid. For example, he asks, "What then has happened to our moral values?" which encourages the audience to consider the ethical implications of apartheid.

Mandela also makes use of metaphors to make complex issues more accessible and to evoke strong emotional responses from his audience. For



example, he describes apartheid as "a cancer in the society," which suggests that: 'it is a destructive force that must be eradicated'.

Repetition is another strategy Mandela employs to emphasize key points and create a sense of urgency. By repeating the phrase "I am prepared to die" several times throughout the speech, he underscores his commitment to the cause of freedom and motivates his audience to take action.

Mandela also uses contrast to highlight the differences between apartheid and his vision of a just society. For example, he contrasts the "darkness" of apartheid with the "bright daybreak" of freedom and justice, which serves to illustrate the stark contrast between the two.

Finally, Mandela uses evidence to support his arguments and to persuade his audience of the need for change. By citing statistics on the number of people killed and imprisoned under apartheid, he illustrates the scale of the injustice and mobilizes his audience to take action.

Considering everything, the discourse strategies used by Mandela in his speech are aimed at persuading, influencing, and motivating his audience to take action against apartheid. By using rhetorical questions, metaphors, repetition, contrast, and evidence, he creates a powerful and emotive argument that challenges the dominant narratives of apartheid and presents a compelling vision of a just and equitable society.

### **3.4. Themes Addressed in the Speech**

One of the key themes of Mandela's speech is the idea that apartheid is a system of oppression that is fundamentally unjust and violates the basic human rights of all South Africans. Throughout the speech, Mandela uses powerful and emotive language to describe the impact of apartheid on black South Africans, including the denial of basic rights such as freedom of speech and movement, the use of violence and brutality by the state, and the deep social and economic inequalities that exist between black and white South Africans. By describing the impact of apartheid in this way, Mandela is highlighting the need for urgent and decisive action to challenge and dismantle the system.

Another important theme of Mandela's speech is the idea that non-violent resistance is a legitimate and effective means of challenging the apartheid system. Mandela argues that violence and terrorism are not legitimate means of achieving political change, and that the anti-apartheid movement must instead rely on non-violent forms of resistance such as boycotts, strikes, and civil disobedience. This framing is significant because it challenges the discourse of the apartheid regime, which often depicted the anti-apartheid movement as a violent and dangerous threat to law and order.

Mandela also uses language to challenge the idea that apartheid is a system that benefits white South Africans as a whole. He argues that while some white South Africans may benefit from the system in the short term, in the long term it is harmful to all South Africans, including white people. This framing is significant because it challenges the discourse of white supremacy, which often depicted black people as inherently inferior and in need of control and subjugation by white people. By arguing that apartheid is harmful to all South Africans, Mandela is suggesting that it is not just a system that is unjust, but also a system that ultimately serves no one.

Finally, one of the most striking features of Mandela's speech is the way in which he uses language to express his own personal commitment to the anti-apartheid struggle. He declares that he is "prepared to die" for the cause, and speaks with a sense of moral clarity and conviction that is both inspiring and deeply moving. This framing is significant because it creates a sense of urgency and purpose around the struggle against apartheid, and highlights the importance of personal commitment and sacrifice in achieving political change.

Nelson Mandela's speech "I Am Prepared to Die" is a powerful example of how language can be used to challenge dominant discourses and construct new forms of political identity and resistance. By using language to highlight the injustices of apartheid, challenge the discourse of white supremacy, and express his own personal commitment to the struggle, Mandela was able to articulate a powerful vision for a democratic and just South Africa that continues to inspire people around the world today.

#### **4. Analysis and discussion**

- *"We, the people of South Africa, feel fulfilled that humanity has taken us back into its bosom, that we, who were outlaws not so long ago, have today been given the rare privilege to be host to the nations of the world on our own soil." (Mandela)*

This opening sentence of Mandela's speech establishes a sense of unity and shared purpose among the people of South Africa. By using the phrase "we, the people of South Africa," Mandela emphasizes the collective nature of the struggle against apartheid, and positions himself as a representative of the entire nation. Additionally, by referring to the international community's recognition of South Africa's humanity, Mandela sets up a contrast between the dehumanizing effects of apartheid and the shared humanity that he believes should unite people across national and racial divides.

- *"I stand here before you not as a prophet but as a humble servant of you, the people. Your tireless and heroic sacrifices have made it possible for me to be here today. I therefore place the remaining years of my life in your hands." (Mandela)*

This statement positions Mandela as a leader who is accountable to the people he serves. By referring to himself as a "humble servant" rather than a prophet, Mandela emphasizes the importance of humility and collaboration in achieving political change. Additionally, by acknowledging the sacrifices of others and placing his own life in the hands of the people, Mandela reinforces the idea that the struggle against apartheid is a collective effort that requires the participation and commitment of all South Africans.

- *"During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to*

live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die." (Mandela)

This statement expresses Mandela's personal commitment to the anti-apartheid struggle and positions him as a martyr if necessary. Moreover, it challenges the dominant narrative that portrays anti-apartheid activists as violent and dangerous extremists by acknowledging his own history of fighting against both white and black domination. And it challenges the binary opposition between white and black that is often used to justify apartheid. Mandela emphasizes the importance of transcending racial divides and that the struggle against apartheid is not a black vs. white issue, but rather a struggle for the creation of a truly democratic and free society. This statement also highlights the contradiction between the ideal of a democratic and free society and the reality of apartheid in South Africa. Additionally, by emphasizing the importance of equal opportunities and harmony among all people, Mandela creates a vision of a society that is not just anti-apartheid, but also pro-humanity, and challenges the legitimacy of apartheid and reinforces the idea that it is fundamentally unjust. Furthermore, by expressing his willingness to die for this ideal, Mandela creates a sense of moral urgency and underscores the gravity of the struggle against apartheid. He also reinforces the idea that the cause of justice is more important than any individual's life or safety and suggests that violence and extremism are not inherent to the struggle, but rather a response to the violence and oppression of the apartheid regime.

- "I do not deny that I planned sabotage. I did not plan it in a spirit of recklessness, nor because I have any love of violence. I planned it as a result of a calm and sober assessment of the political situation that had arisen after many years of tyranny, exploitation, and oppression of my people by the whites." (Mandela)

This statement is noteworthy because it contradicts the prevailing narrative that renders anti-apartheid activists as violent extremists who use violence for its own sake. By acknowledging his involvement in planning sabotage, Mandela emphasizes the strategic nature of the resistance and

underscores the fact that violence was not a goal in itself, but rather a means to an end. Additionally, by characterizing his decision to engage in sabotage as a result of a "calm and sober assessment," Mandela suggests that it was a rational and considered response to the political situation.

- *"The whites must be made to realize that they are only human, not superior. Same with the blacks. They must be made to realize that they are also human, not inferior."* (Mandela)

Mandela challenges the racist ideology that underpinned apartheid. By emphasizing the humanity of all people, regardless of their race, Mandela challenges the notion that some groups are inherently superior or inferior. Additionally, by calling for both whites and blacks to recognize their shared humanity, Mandela creates a vision of a society that is not just anti-apartheid, but also pro-humanity.

- *"The lack of human dignity experienced by Africans is the direct result of the policy of white supremacy."* (Mandela)

In this statement, Mandela criticizes the prevalent stereotype, which suggests that Africans are essentially devoid of dignity or humanity. By attributing the lack of human dignity to the policy of white supremacy, Mandela underscores the fact that this is a result of systemic oppression rather than any inherent deficiency in the African people. Additionally, by linking the lack of human dignity to the policy of white supremacy, Mandela highlights the structural nature of the problem and suggests that it cannot be solved by individual efforts alone.

- *"There are many people who feel that it is useless and futile for us to continue talking peace and non-violence against a government whose reply is only savage attacks on an unarmed and defenseless people."* (Mandela)

This statement contradicts the mainstream narrative, which depicts non-violent resistance as ineffective or naive. By acknowledging the frustration and anger of those who feel that peaceful methods have failed, Mandela validates their concerns and emphasizes the severity of the situation. Additionally, by highlighting the fact that the government is attacking

unarmed and defenceless people, Mandela underscores the moral bankruptcy of the apartheid regime and reinforces the idea that resistance is justified.

- *"We believe that South Africa belongs to all the people who live in it, and not to one group, be it black or white."* (Mandela)

This statement defies the standard belief that portrays South Africa as a country that belongs only to the white minority. By asserting that South Africa belongs to all its citizens, regardless of race, Mandela undermines the legitimacy of apartheid and reinforces the idea that justice and equality require the dismantling of racial hierarchies. Additionally, by framing the struggle as one for a truly democratic society, Mandela suggests that the issue is not just about the rights of black people, but about the rights of all people.

- *"We have always regarded our struggle against apartheid as a truly national struggle."* (Mandela)

This saying contradicts the widely held belief about anti-apartheid activists, which depicts them as a small, unpopular minority with limited support in South Africa. By asserting that the struggle against apartheid is a "truly national struggle," Mandela emphasizes the breadth and depth of opposition to apartheid and underscores the fact that it is not just a few radicals who are calling for change, but a majority of South Africans. Additionally, by positioning the struggle as one that is rooted in the aspirations of the people, Mandela suggests that it is a legitimate expression of the will of the majority.

- *"The whites enjoy what may well be the highest standard of living in the world, whilst Africans live in poverty and misery."* (Mandela)

By emphasizing the stark inequality between whites and Africans in terms of living standards, Mandela underscores the fact that apartheid is a system of oppression that benefits some groups at the expense of others and not a benign or justifiable system. Additionally, by using the phrase "poverty and misery" to describe the condition of Africans, Mandela draws

attention to the human cost of apartheid and creates a sense of urgency around the need for change.

From these examples of critical discourse analysis in Nelson Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech, we can conclude that the speech is a powerful critique of the apartheid system and a call to action for those who are oppressed by it.

Mandela's use of language, such as metaphors, contrasts, and strong emotive words, demonstrates his persuasive skills and ability to mobilize people towards a common cause. His discourse analysis also reveals how he challenges the dominant narratives that portray apartheid as justifiable or benign, by emphasizing the inequalities and injustices experienced by black South Africans.

Moreover, Mandela's speech offers a counter-narrative that asserts the dignity and humanity of all people and calls for a society that is characterized by mutual respect and understanding among different racial groups. Through his discourse, Mandela appeals to the conscience of his audience, both black and white, and invites them to join him in the struggle for freedom and equality. Overall, the speech is a powerful example of critical discourse analysis and its role in shaping public opinion and social change.

## **5. The underlying assumptions and values expressed in the speech**

One of the key assumptions and values expressed in the text is the belief in equality. Mandela asserts that all people, regardless of race, should be treated with dignity and respect. He argues that apartheid is fundamentally unjust because it denies black South Africans their basic human rights and freedoms.

Another important assumption and value expressed in the text is the belief in freedom. Mandela argues that all people have the right to freedom and self-determination, and that apartheid is a form of oppression that denies black South Africans their basic freedoms. He also argues that the struggle for freedom is a just and necessary one, and that those who are fighting for their freedom are not criminals but heroes.

The speech is also rooted in the assumption and value of justice. Mandela argues that apartheid is a system that is inherently unjust, and that it must be dismantled in order to create a just society. He also argues that those who are fighting against apartheid are doing so in the name of justice and that their cause is a just one.

Although Mandela is willing to use violence as a last resort, he expresses a preference for non-violent resistance. He argues that non-violent resistance is a more effective means of achieving social change, and that it is morally superior to violent resistance. This reflects an underlying value of peace and non-violence.

Finally, Mandela's speech is rooted in the assumption and value of democracy. He argues that all people have the right to participate in the political process, and that the apartheid system is fundamentally undemocratic because it denies black South Africans the right to vote and participate in government. He also argues that a truly democratic society is one in which all people have equal rights and opportunities.

The underlying assumptions and values expressed in the speech are centred around the principles of equality, freedom, justice, non-violence, and democracy. These values reflect a vision of a just and equitable society, one in which all people are treated with dignity and respect, and have the opportunity to live full and meaningful lives.

## **6. The effects of the speech on the audience**

Nelson Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech had a profound impact on the audience, the broader public discourse, and social practices. The speech not only mobilized the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, but it also helped to shift the global discourse on apartheid and to create a more equitable and just political environment.

The discourse strategies used in the speech had significant implications for power relations and social inequality. By framing apartheid as a moral and ethical issue, Mandela challenged the dominant narrative of apartheid as a necessary and just system. His use of metaphors and repetition helped to create a sense of urgency and mobilize the audience to



action, while his use of evidence helped to undermine the legitimacy of apartheid and challenge its defenders.

The speech also had broader cultural and political implications. By presenting a compelling vision of a just and equitable society, Mandela challenged the dominant political and cultural norms of apartheid and paved the way for a more inclusive and democratic future. The speech helped to galvanize the anti-apartheid movement, inspire other liberation struggles around the world, and contribute to the eventual dismantling of apartheid in South Africa.

Overall, the effects of the speech on the audience, the broader public discourse, and social practices were significant and enduring. The discourse strategies used by Mandela helped to challenge the dominant power structures and social inequalities of apartheid, and paved the way for a more just and equitable society. The speech remains a powerful example of the ways in which discourse can be used to challenge and transform the political and cultural norms of a society.

## **7. Major findings**

The critical discourse analysis of Nelson Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech revealed several significant findings. Firstly, the speech employed a range of discourse strategies to challenge the dominant narrative of apartheid and mobilize the anti-apartheid movement. These strategies included the use of metaphors, repetition, and evidence to create a sense of urgency and undermine the legitimacy of apartheid.

Secondly, the speech was characterized by a strong moral and ethical tone that reflected Mandela's underlying assumptions and values. He framed apartheid as a moral and ethical issue, which helped to challenge the dominant political and cultural norms of the time.

Thirdly, the speech had significant effects on the audience, the broader public discourse, and social practices. It contributed to the eventual dismantling of apartheid in South Africa and inspired other liberation struggles around the world. The speech remains a powerful example of how discourse can be used to challenge and transform the political and cultural norms of a society.

In conclusion, the critical discourse analysis of Nelson Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech highlighted the various ways in which the speech was effective in challenging the status quo, inspiring change, and contributing to a more just and equitable society.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

From a critical discourse analysis of Nelson Mandela's "I Am Prepared to Die" speech, we can conclude that language plays a powerful role in shaping public opinion and inspiring social change. Mandela's discourse challenges the dominant narratives around apartheid and constructs a counter-narrative that calls for a society characterized by mutual respect and understanding among different racial groups. His persuasive use of language, including metaphors, contrasts, and strong emotive words, demonstrates his ability to mobilize people towards a common cause of freedom and equality.

We can also conclude that the speech serves as an example of critical discourse analysis, where language is used to challenge the dominant narratives and construct a counter-narrative that calls for social change. This analysis highlights the importance of linguistic strategies in shaping public opinion and inspiring social change, and it emphasizes the role of discourse in mobilizing people towards a common cause.

Overall, the critical discourse analysis of Mandela's speech demonstrates the power of language in challenging dominant narratives and constructing counter-narratives that can inspire people to work towards a more just and equitable society.

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