

## RACISM IN LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE IN OTTAWA IN 1858: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

*(Rasisme pada Debat Lincoln-Douglas di Ottawa pada 1858: Analisis Wacana Kritis)*

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### Abstract

Regardless the greatest slavery abolition figures of American history in every historical book, this paper argues the very different angles of Lincoln and Douglas political carrier as men to create the American history of slavery abolition and racism. However, this fact is strongly correlated with the leading rising issues of racism in America at the present time. Moreover, the historians state that the history of 1860s has built mental picture of the belief that racism is in America's DNA. AP (Associated Press) in 2012 released the finding of racism practice in America slightly rising in 2012 as much as 51% from 48% in 2008 research. Then, this inspires us to uncover and bring one of racism memoirs which is Lincoln-Douglas parliamentary debate in Ottawa in 1858 into more formal discussion. Through the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), racial inequality embedded in debate is delineated. Besides, this article gives the rigid analysis of linguistic choice system used by Lincoln and Douglas by applying one of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) especially transitivity system. Besides, to strengthen the research result, this research is enriched by the theory of racism. The findings of this study reveal that Lincoln and Douglas are racist people. This fact is quiet surprising to know that the most well-known slavery abolitionist orator, *Abraham Lincoln*, in fact is also *racist*.

**Key words:** *Critical Discourse Analysis, systemic functional linguistic, transitivity system, racism*

### Abstrak

Artikel ini mengungkapkan sisi lain dari karir politik Lincoln dan Douglas sebagai sosok penting dalam sejarah penghapusan perbudakan dan rasisme di Amerika. Tetapi, keberadaan dua sosok penting ini menggulirkan asumsi para sejarawan bahwa keberadaan mereka dalam sejarah Amerika pada tahun 1860 berkaitan erat dengan isu-isu rasisme yang ada di Amerika saat ini. Sehingga, muncul sebuah kesimpulan bahwa penduduk Amerika memiliki DNA sebagai orang yang rasis. Hal ini dibuktikan dengan hasil riset yang diadakan pada tahun 2012 oleh asosiasi pers bahwa, saat ini, limapuluh satu persen penduduk Amerika adalah rasis. Hasil ini meningkat dari empatpuluh delapan persen pada penelitian yang diadakan pada tahun 2008. Hasil penelitian tersebut membawa momoar rasisme yang terjadi dalam debat politik Lincoln-Douglas di Ottawa pada tahun 1858. Oleh karena itu, melalui penerapan Analisis Wacana Kritis (CDA), diskriminasi ras yang terjadi dalam debat tersebut terbukti secara. Selain itu, dengan menerapkan salah satu dari Sistem Linguistik Fungsional (SFL) yaitu sistem transitivitas artikel ini juga memberikan analisis yang mendalam pada sistem peilihan bahasa yang digunakan oleh Lincoln dan Douglas. Hasil penelitian juga diperkuat dengan teori rasism dari Quastoff. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa Lincoln dan Douglas adalah orang yang rasis. Fakta ini megejutkan, mengingat bahwa Abraham Lincoln, sebagai salah satu tokoh penting penghapus perbudakan di Amerika, pada kenyataannya adalah orang yang rasis.

**Kata kunci:** Analisis Wacana Kritis, sistem Linguistik Fungsional, sistem transitivitas, rasisme

## Introduction

Racism has been a crucial matter of American society since hundreds of years. It embeds in the social, economic, and political angles. Even though, this statement is sometimes rejected by some parts of the American society, however, undeniably, it entangles in their daily lives. This can be comprehended from the figuration of their beliefs that black people belong to the lowest rank of hierarchical society. This argumentation, then, legitimates America as the racist country. This goes without saying that the historian claims racism has been in America's DNA. This fact is strongly assumed to relate with the history of slavery in America as far back as the 1860s. Therefore, in this research, we uncover the memories of the portrayal of racism practice by concentrating on the greatest political parliamentary debate ever held in Ottawa 1858. This becomes a fascinating case to discuss because it uncovers the very different angle of the sixteenth American president's life, *Abraham Lincoln*, as the slavery abolitionist orator and the slavery orators, *Stephen A Douglas*.

Parliamentary debate becomes an interesting topic to discuss because "parliamentary debate is commonly structured by a set of legal values in which the rational argumentation and counter-argumentation, order, clarity, justice and equality are prevailing" (Carbó, 2004:303). However, unlike general parliamentary debate, Lincoln-Douglas (LD) Parliamentary debate reflects the sketch of racial inequality. Moreover, it is revealed that several facts of LD debate in Ottawa containing insults, crudes, and racial slurs (<http://history1800s.about.com/od/abrahamlincoln/a/Lincoln-Douglas-Seven-Facts.html>, accessed on February 14, 2013).

The first concern of this study is the linguistic choice system used by Lincoln and Douglas which leads to the practice of racism. However, this mechanism can only be delineated through analyzing the script or the text of the debate rigidly. Therefore, we apply Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. The systemic view of SFL regards the grammar of speaker choice of a language as a system of options and every choice of the speaker linguistic forms always has a certain meaning (Mayr 2008:19). Each of them represents the particular point of view of speakers towards their surroundings. Besides, the social circumstances in which the debate is settled also are captured. By using one of its subdivisions, which is transitivity system, the representation of racism definitely unfolds. Transitivity system which views a clause as representation of meaning makes us possible to depict the way racial inequality occurs in the script.

Therefore, from above description, we propose the research question to guide this research in order to avoid too broad discussion :

1. How is racism analyzed by looking at the dominant verb processes used by both Lincoln and Douglas in Ottawa in 1858?
2. Does the racism reflect in language used by Lincoln and Douglas in debate in Ottawa in 1858?
3. Who is the doer of the racism in LD debate in Ottawa in 1858?

From the research question, then, some goals come up as the main concern of the research as follows;

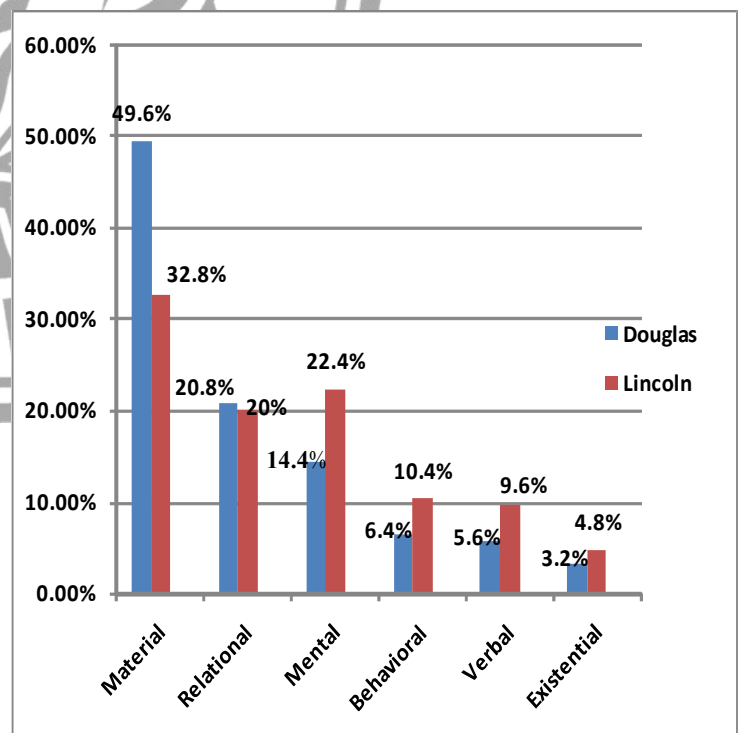
1. To analyze racism by investigating the dominant verb processes used by both Lincoln and Douglas.
2. To find out whether the racism reflects or not in the language used by Lincoln-Douglas in Ottawa in 1858.
3. To figure out the doer of racism in Lincoln and Douglas debate through analyzing the dominant verb processes.

## Method of Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative researches are applied in this research. The debate script, as primary data, is taken from memorial book: *The Class of 1901*, Lincoln room of Illinois university library, founded by Harlan Hoyt Horner and Henrietta Calhoun Horner. Besides, to collect the data from debate script, we use documentary method to make it easier to examine and categorize the data according to the type of process and racist expression.

The data taken are from 1<sup>st</sup>Affirmative turn and 1<sup>st</sup>Negative rebuttal turn. There are 125 verbs of each turn from the total 1206 verbs of clauses in those turns as the sample to analyse. Next, to analyze the data, descriptive, statistical and interpretative methods are used. The proceed methods are precious to come across the statistic of verb processes. In another word, the possibilities of doing racism are revealed in the debate.

## The Result of Data Analysis



## Discussion of Transitivity Analysis of Verb Processes of Douglas Selected Clauses

Primarily, transitivity analysis indicates that the dominant verb clauses used by Douglas is material process. It is as

much as 49,6%. The relations of power may be implicitly inscribed by the relationship between Actor and Goal (Mayr, 2008:18). In line with this, Douglas measures his power over Lincoln through the relation of Douglas as an actor and the way he applies the principles of slavery in material processes.

1. In order that, when I *trot* him down to lower Egypt, I *may put* the same questions with him.
2. Since, I thus *defeated* his infamous scheme.
3. I *made* as good a school-teacher.
4. and when a cabinet-maker I *made* a good bedstead and tables,
5. I *succeeded* better with bureaus and secretaries than anything else
6. I *helped* to do it.

As stated by Martin *et al* (1997:103) that actor is the one who does the deed. This positioning places actor as the one who is more powerful to affect others. Regarding Levorato's statement that the greater the ability of the actor affects 'others', the greater the power she/he will have (2003:47), it is concluded that Douglas positions his role as the powerful actor.

In another angle, the result of transitivity analysis shows that Relational process is dominantly used by Douglas beside Material process. Relational process has two modes; attributive and identifying mode. Douglas uses this process 20,8% from the overall verb processes. This process purposes to explain the things of the subject called as *Carrier*. Carrier can be said as the one who carries some characteristics that attributed to it.

The first mode of relational process, attributive mode, talks about the class membership of the entity. In the debate, Douglas employs this type to describe his opinion upon African-American people in America as the sample speeches below;

1. I *am* delighted to hear you Black Republican say "good"
2. For one, I *am* opposed to negro citizenship in any and every form.
3. and I *am* in favor of confining citizenship to white men,
4. For thousands of years the negro *has been* a race upon the earth
5. he *has been* inferior to the race

Besides attributive mode, the second type of relational process is identifying mode. Martin *et al* (1997:106) asserts that "the difference between attributive and identifying category is the difference between class membership (Attributive) and symbolization (Identifying)".

1. and positively deny that he *is* my brother, or any kin to me whatever.
2. that because the negro *is* our inferior
3. that therefore he *ought to be* a slave.
4. that he *shall not be* a citizen,

From the analysis of relational process, briefly, it is found that Douglas frequently describes African-American or negro 42,3% and other people 38,5% than himself 19,2% either attributive or identifying category. From the total of

relational process, it can be formulated that the ratio is about 1: 2,2: 2.

The next dominant verb processes used dominantly by Douglas is Mental Process. The percentage of the process is 14,4 % which indicates Douglas 66,6% as the Senser. The ratio of Douglas as the senser and other people as the senser is 1:2.

1. I *believe* this government was made on
2. the white basis
3. I *believe* It was made by white men, for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever
4. I *do not believe* that the Almighty ever *intended* the negro to be the equal of the white man. but for my own part, I *do not regard* the negro as my equal,
5. If you *desire* negro citizenship, if you *desire to allow* them to come into the State and settle with the white man, if you *desire* them to vote on an equality with yourselves,

From the total number of mental process, it indicates that cognition process is dominantly used by Douglas who places him as the senser; it is around 61,1%. Cognition process is more powerful to express his belief and view in order to construct someone else's perception toward African-American. As stated by Levorato (2003:47) that "the greater the power of the social actor in question the more cognitive reactions s/he will be attributed; the lesser the power, the more emotive, affective reactions s/he will have".

The next verb process used by Douglas is Behavioral around 6,4%. This process places Douglas and other as behavior.

1. I *sympathized* with him
2. I will prove to you if you *will listen* to me,
3. Lincoln now *takes* his stand and proclaims
4. his Abolition doctrines.
5. He *holds* that the negro *was born* his equal and yours

This process depicts what behavior the behavior has. This leads to the understanding of the person's behavior. By using this kind of mode, Douglas depicts his good behavior while other is not.

Further, the dominant process used by Douglas is Verbal process. It reaches 5,6% from the total process and 85,7% as the sayer. Douglas uses this mode to proclaim something to the audience.

1. I *can proclaim* them alike in the North, the South, the East, and the West.
2. I am delighted to hear you Black Republican say "good"
3. I *do not question* Mr. Lincoln's conscientious belief
4. and *refusing* to put him on an equality with the white man

Verbal process, the sayer just has power to say something and the receiver as the one whom the message addressed has the capacity to perceive the information (Martin *et al*, 1997:108) especially the audience and African-American people.

The least process is the Existential process. Douglas uses this process as much as 3,2%. It legitimates his presence as the existence of being the one who is opposed to the negro citizenship as follows;

1. and *there is* no man in the State who would be more strenuous in his opposition to the introduction of slavery than I would.
2. *There can be* no diversity of opinion.
3. *There is* a far more important one to you,
4. *There were* many points of sympathy between us

#### Discussion of Transitivity Analysis of Verb Processes of Lincoln Selected Clauses

From the transitivity analysis, Material process is the dominant process used by Lincoln in countering Douglas's argument; it is around 32,8%. Lincoln uses 'I' as actor to strengthen his argument. As stated by Fairclough that a "powerful" person will act to intervene in a series of events to affect their outcome (1995:17) especially to strengthen his power.

1. I certainly *cannot introduce* testimony to show the negative about things,
2. I agree to the fact, and I *account* for it by looking at the position in which our fathers originally placed it
3. That I *was doing* anything to bring about a war between the free and slave states.
4. I *shall come* to close at the end of that branch
5. I *cannot shake* Judge Douglas's teeth loose from the Dred Scot decision

The material used by Lincoln proved his ability to counter Douglas argument about him. The way Lincoln representing his action as an actor deals with Leeuwen's argument (1995:81) that the way social actor represents his/her social action, it measures his/her attitudes.

Besides, Lincoln's utterances consist of Mental process. It reaches 22,4%. The ratio of others and his as the senser is 1:6.

1. I *think* no man not even Judge Douglas can prove it, because it is not true.
2. I *think* this is true,
3. and I *think* if he *will remember* accurately
4. I *think* I have no prejudice against the Southern people.
5. I *think* I would not hold one in slavery, at any rate

From the total mental process analysis, cognition mode is the most dominant one used by Lincoln than affection and perception mode. It is around 67,9% from the overall mental process. This result has similar idea of Leeuwen (2008: 58) that the greater the power of the social actor the more probable it is that cognitive reactions will be attributed to them rather than affective reactions.

The next dominant process frequently used by Lincoln is Relational process. It is around 20% from the total verb process. Lincoln dominantly uses two categories of the categories; attributive and identifying.

1. I think this *is* true,
2. It *is* true they did place my name, though without authority, upon the committee,
3. Its sudden execution *is* impossible.
4. He *is* not my equal in many respects, certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment.

5. He *is* my equal, and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man.

Behavioral process occurs around 10,4% of total verb process. In this point, Lincoln uses 'I' as the behavior of the action he performed to show his behavior in countering slavery toward the audience below;

1. I think I *would not hold* one in slavery, at any rate
2. who *would not hold* slaves under any circumstances
3. That there must be a difference, to which I *belong* having the superior position.
4. I *agree* with Judge Douglas he is not my equal in many respects, certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment.
5. I *agree* to the fact, and I account for it by looking at the position in which our fathers originally placed it

The further verb process used by Lincoln is Verbal process. It reaches around 9,6%. By using sentences 1-5 which mean reporting something, Lincoln as sayer uses verbal interaction to prove his innocence upon Douglas's judgment.

1. I *will say* here, while upon' this subject, that I have no purpose, directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States.
2. I *have said*, that I believe we shall not have peace upon the question until the opponents of slavery arrest the further spread of it.
3. I *must confess* my weaknesses
4. I *ask* the attention of the people here assembled and elsewhere
5. I *ask* your attention to them

The least verb process frequently used by Lincoln is Existential process. It occurs 4,8% from the total of verb process.

1. that *there must be* a difference, to which I belong having the superior position.
2. *There is* a physical difference between the two which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality;
3. and *there are* not surplus shipping and surplus money enough in the world to carry them there in many times ten days
4. *there is* no danger of going over there and making war upon them
5. Doubtless *there are* individuals on both sides

#### Discussion of Racism in Lincoln-Douglas Debate in Ottawa in 1858

From the rigid analysis, Douglas utterances are dominantly material process around 49,6% and Lincoln 32,8%. As stated by Levorato (2003:47) that there is a link between the power a social actor has and the type of action s/he performs: the greater the power, the greater the ability to affect 'others'. The result that Douglas is more powerful than Lincoln in alleging language drives him to be the dominant one.

Tracing back to the theory of racism proposed by Quastoff (cited in Reisigl and Wodak, 2005: 20) shows that racism can be tracked down by linguistic choices analysis. Chiefly, Quastoff unfolds the pattern of clauses or utterances by looking at the pattern of the subject (Actor) and predicate (Verb process).

Quastoff (cited in Reisigl and Wodak, 2005: 20) argues that racism can be measured by the analytical proposition. The pattern of this analysis places the group as the subject and the quality or behaviour pattern as the predicate. The similar pattern is also found in Douglas utterances below;

1. For thousands of years the negro *has been* a race upon the earth, he *has been* inferior to the race
2. That because the negro *is* our inferior
3. And positively deny that he *is* my brother,
4. That therefore he *ought to be* a slave
5. That he *shall not be* a citizen
6. It *must inevitably have been* the uniformity of slavery everywhere,
7. On the other hand, I also find the patterns in Lincoln utterances as follow;
8. He *is* not my equal in many respects, certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment.
9. He *is* my equal, and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man.

According to the linguistic choices in transitivity system, those utterances (1-9) are respectively a realization of relational verb processes. As stated by Martin *et al* (1997:106) this type of verb process talks about the class membership and symbolization of the entity. From the investigation above, unquestionably, Douglas and Lincoln have defined and symbolized that African-American people or the negro are a race upon the earth that is inferior and they deserves neither to be equal race nor American citizen.

On the other hand, the surprised findings of Lincoln utterances, as the well-known slavery abolitionist, prove that he also confesses the inequality between African-American and White people by attaching the identical appearance of a physical difference between them. This analysis is supported by Van Dijk (2005:2) assertion that the identical attribute attached based on constructed differences of ethnicity, appearance, origin, culture and/or language lead to the practice of racism.

Besides, by using relational process, Douglas himself shows still his hatred as follows;

1. For one, I *am* opposed to negro citizenship in any and every form.
2. And I *am* in favor of confining citizenship to white men, men of European birth and descent, instead of conferring it upon negroes, Indians, and other inferior races

Looking what Douglas judges upon African-American people as the object of intimidation, it matches of Fairclough assertion (1989:47) that "more powerful participants may be able to treat conventions in a more cavalier way, as well as to allow or disallow varying degrees of latitude to less powerful participants".

The next pattern analysis is direct stereotype expression. This is utterances in which the speaker explicitly refers to himself and herself by using personal construction such as deictic expression 'I' and *a verb of believing* or *verb of thinking* (Quastoff cited in Reisigl and Wodak, 2005: 20). In his utterances, beside showing his powerful side, Douglas also expresses his belief upon the African-American people through mental process of cognition below;

1. Now I *do not believe* that the Almighty ever intended the negro to be the equal of the white man.

2. I *believe* this government was made on the white basis
3. I *believe* It was made by white men, for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever

To support his argument, Douglas also expresses a direct stereotype explicitly toward African-American people.

1. He belongs to an inferior race, and *must* always occupy an inferior position
2. and *refusing* to put him on an equality with the white man
3. and we *have provided* that he shall not be a citizen, but protect him in his civil rights, in his life, his person and his property, only depriving him of all political rights whatsoever,

Those utterances definitely affirm him as the more powerful figure. By using mental process of cognition, Douglas convinces the audience through his judgments. Fairclough (cited in Mayr, 2003:18) states that verb of cognition (think, believe, feel) is a unit of language that can express the writer's/speaker's affinity with what s/he writes/says and the speaker's/writer's judgment regarding the relevance of the message.

Further, racism can be elucidated by the analysis of modified statements which provide the speaker's or writer's perspective through the use of signal such as subjunctive and impersonal construction with *the verb of saying* such or *the verb of feeling* in the surface structure of the utterance such as hate, embarrass, dislike, etc (Quastoff cited in Reisigl and Wodak, 2005: 20). However, semantic level of the statement does not show the stereotype toward black on the other hand the statements show the stereotype toward slavery. To conclude, Lincoln does not hold slavery.

1. I *hate* it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself.
2. Now, gentlemen, I *hate* to waste my time on such things;
3. I *hate* it because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world,
4. I *will say* here, while upon' this subject, that I have no purpose, directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States.

The stereotype is expressed implicitly for example 'He is nigger but he is very nice' and the prejudiced meaning that usually nigger is not nice. However, the interpretation of this type linguistic stereotype depends on the knowledge of context because this type cannot randomly be guessed unless the context is figured out (Quastoff cited in Reisigl and Wodak, 2005: 20).

1. if you desire negro citizenship, if you desire to allow them to come into the State and settle with the white man, if you desire them to vote on an equality with yourselves, and to make them eligible to office, to serve on juries, and to adjudge your right, then supports Mr. Lincoln and the Black republican party, who are in favor of the citizenship of negro.

Furthermore, the previous analysis of racism shows that Douglas dominantly indicates his racist opinion and judgment than Lincoln does through the use of relational process. Related to the result of transitivity system, Douglas also dominantly uses relational process 20,8% and Lincoln 20%. From the analysis of relational process, it is found that

Douglas frequently describes African-American or negro 42,3% and other people 38,5% than himself 19,2%. From the total process, it can be formulated that the ratio of them is about 1: 2,2: 2. To conclude, the previous analysis of result of transitivity and racism shows that Douglas symbolizes the identical attributes and membership of African-American such as *inferior race*, *slave*, and *unequal*. This analysis is supported by Dijk assertion (2005:2) that the identical attribute attached based on constructed differences of ethnicity, appearance, origin, culture and/or language lead to the practice of racism.

### Conclusion

The result of the study states that racism relates to the measurement of power. It is performed by the result of material process domination used by Douglas as much as 49% than Lincoln 32,8%. These results drive him to be the dominant debater. Besides, this result is supported by the social hierarchical structure of Douglas has as the white people who dominate African-American people.

In addition, this research shows that the language used by both debaters, Douglas and Lincoln, contains of many racial slurs, and insults. From the overall analysis, it shows that both Lincoln and Douglas are racists. This is proven by the finding of the linguistic prejudice and stereotypic pattern in language used by Lincoln and Douglas referring to African-American people. On the one hand, Lincoln who is well-known as the abolitionist orator is racist. It is shown by the finding of similar pattern of the linguistic prejudice and stereotypic expression in his language even though the amount of the pattern is not as much as Douglas has.

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