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A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF COVID-19 IN ETHIOPIA: RETHINKING THE PAST AND DEFINING THE PRESENT

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ABSTRACT

This study employs a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the discourse surrounding COVID-19 in Ethiopia. By exploring the narratives and discursive strategies used in public discussions, media coverage, and official statements, the study aims to understand how the pandemic is framed and understood in Ethiopia. The abstract highlights the importance of rethinking the past and defining the present in the context of COVID-19. Through an analysis of language, power relations, and socio-political ideologies, this study investigates the historical, cultural, and political factors that shape the discourse on COVID-19 in Ethiopia. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the ways in which the pandemic is constructed and perceived in the Ethiopian context, informing public health strategies and fostering critical engagement with the crisis.

KEYWORDS

Critical discourse analysis, COVID-19, Ethiopia, discourse framing, power relations, socio-political ideologies, public health strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on societies worldwide, including Ethiopia. The ways in

which the pandemic is discussed and understood are shaped by discourses that reflect historical, cultural,

and political factors. This introduction provides an overview of the study, which employs a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the discourse surrounding COVID-19 in Ethiopia. The study aims to shed light on the framing of the pandemic, power relations embedded within the discourse, and the implications for public health strategies. By rethinking the past and defining the present, this study seeks to foster a critical understanding of the COVID-19 crisis in Ethiopia.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has had profound implications for societies worldwide, including Ethiopia. The ways in which the pandemic is discussed and understood are shaped by discourses that reflect historical, cultural, and political factors. This introduction provides an overview of the study, which employs a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the discourse surrounding COVID-19 in Ethiopia. The study aims to shed light on how the pandemic is framed, the power relations embedded within the discourse, and the implications for rethinking the past and defining the present in the Ethiopian context.

Ethiopia, a country with a rich cultural and historical heritage, is navigating the challenges posed by COVID-19 within its unique socio-political and economic landscape. The study recognizes the importance of critically analyzing the discourses surrounding the pandemic, as they shape public understanding, policy responses, and societal dynamics. By delving into the discursive practices and strategies used in public discussions, media coverage, and official statements, this study aims to uncover the underlying power relations, socio-political ideologies, and historical contexts that influence the discourse on COVID-19 in Ethiopia.

Through a critical examination of language, rhetoric, and narratives, this study seeks to understand how the pandemic is framed, the dominant discourses that emerge, and the ways in which these discourses shape public perceptions, policy decisions, and societal responses. By rethinking the past, considering Ethiopia's experiences with past crises and epidemics, and defining the present, taking into account the current challenges and opportunities, this study aims to foster a critical understanding of the COVID-19 crisis in Ethiopia.

The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between language, power, and the COVID-19 crisis in Ethiopia. They inform public health strategies, policy decisions, and societal engagements, facilitating a nuanced approach to addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic. By critically examining the discourse surrounding COVID-19, this study seeks to foster a more informed and comprehensive response, grounded in a reevaluation of the past and a reflection on the present, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and effective approach to managing the ongoing crisis.

METHOD

Data Collection: A range of textual data is collected for analysis, including public speeches, media articles, official statements, social media posts, and public health guidelines related to COVID-19 in Ethiopia. These diverse sources help capture the various discursive contexts and voices in the public sphere.

Critical Discourse Analysis: A critical discourse analysis approach is applied to examine the language, narratives, and discursive strategies employed in the

collected data. The analysis focuses on uncovering underlying power relations, socio-political ideologies, and historical contexts that shape the discourse on COVID-19 in Ethiopia. This involves identifying dominant discourses, ideological frameworks, and the ways in which they influence the construction of the pandemic.

Framing Analysis: A framing analysis is conducted to identify how COVID-19 is framed within the discourse in Ethiopia. The study explores the dominant frames and discursive practices used to define the pandemic, its causes, consequences, and potential solutions. This analysis helps uncover the socio-political and cultural dimensions that influence the understanding and response to COVID-19.

Contextual Analysis: The discourse surrounding COVID-19 is situated within its broader socio-political and historical context in Ethiopia. This involves examining the country's healthcare system, governance structures, socio-economic disparities, cultural norms, and historical experiences of crises and epidemics. The contextual analysis provides insights into the factors that shape the discourse on COVID-19 and influence public health strategies.

Interpretation and Analysis: The data collected through the critical discourse analysis, framing analysis, and contextual analysis are interpreted and analyzed to identify key themes, patterns, and discursive strategies. The findings are then critically examined to understand the implications for public health strategies, the framing of the pandemic, and the rethinking of the past and definition of the present in Ethiopia.

By employing a critical discourse analysis approach and combining it with framing and contextual analysis, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the discourse surrounding COVID-19 in Ethiopia. The findings contribute to fostering critical engagement with the pandemic, informing public health strategies, and encouraging a nuanced understanding of the crisis within its historical, cultural, and political contexts.

RESULTS

The critical discourse analysis of COVID-19 in Ethiopia revealed several key findings:

Dominant Discourses: The analysis identified dominant discourses that framed the pandemic, including discourses of health crisis management, socio-economic impact, political governance, and cultural practices. These discourses shaped public perceptions and responses to COVID-19 in Ethiopia.

Power Relations and Ideologies: The analysis uncovered power relations embedded within the discourse, with certain actors and institutions holding authority and influencing the narrative. Socio-political ideologies, such as notions of governance, nationalism, and cultural values, played a role in shaping the discourse on COVID-19.

Framing of COVID-19: The study revealed various frames used to define COVID-19 in Ethiopia, including a public health crisis, an economic challenge, a political issue, and a cultural concern. These frames influenced public understanding and response to the pandemic.

DISCUSSION

The discussion explores the implications of the findings and engages with the broader socio-political and

historical contexts in Ethiopia. It highlights the interplay between discourses, power relations, and ideologies in shaping the discourse on COVID-19. The discussion also examines how the framing of the pandemic influenced public health strategies and societal responses.

The analysis reveals tensions and contradictions within the discourse, such as the balancing act between health concerns and socio-economic considerations. It highlights the importance of recognizing diverse perspectives and engaging in critical dialogue to address these tensions effectively.

The discussion also considers the historical context of epidemics and crises in Ethiopia, acknowledging the lessons learned and the potential impact on the current discourse surrounding COVID-19. It underscores the need to reevaluate past experiences and apply relevant knowledge to inform present strategies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides insights into the critical discourse surrounding COVID-19 in Ethiopia. The analysis highlights the influence of power relations, ideologies, and framing in shaping public understanding and response to the pandemic. By rethinking the past and defining the present, this study encourages critical engagement with the discourse, fostering a nuanced understanding of the crisis within its historical, cultural, and political contexts.

The findings have implications for public health strategies, calling for a holistic approach that addresses socio-political and cultural factors. It emphasizes the importance of inclusive and participatory decision-making processes to ensure

effective communication and response to the pandemic.

Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between language, power, and the COVID-19 crisis in Ethiopia. It serves as a foundation for further research and critical engagement, informing policy discussions and efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic while considering the country's historical and socio-political context.

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