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Decoding the socio-political meanings of Presidential “I” in Mubarak’s last presidential speech: A systemic-functional approach

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Abstract: This paper seeks to explain the socio-political meanings of the deictic centre “I” in Mubarak’s last presidential speech on 10 February 2011. Crucially, the whole speech thematically revolves around such a deictic centre whose pragma-semantic gravity is well worth a thorough linguistic research, so that the following overarching research question can be addressed: what are the socio-political meanings pertaining to the pronoun “I” in Mubarak’s last presidential speech on 10 February 2011? The paper employs a tripartite systemic-functional (SF) model of analysis: transitivity, mood, and theme. Each analytic strand corresponds to one aspect of contextual meaning in the speech: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. There are two important findings, theoretical and practical. First, an SF approach can be text-analytically more explanatory only when the macro socio-political context, underlying the micro co-text, is taken into account. Second, in Mubarak’s last presidential speech, there emerges a political discourse that tends to valorize a Presidential “I” in a way that reflects a dominant self-presentation versus a subordinate other-presentation.

Subject: Arts & Humanities, Language & Linguistics, Discourse Analysis, Semantics, Language & Power, Political Leaders, Political Communication

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The present study explores the language of the last presidential speech delivered by Mubarak on 10 February 2011, soon before his stepping down at a very critical time in the politics of contemporary Egypt. The speech is presented as Mubarak’s last-ditch attempt at dissuading the Egyptians in Tahrir Square from continuing their protest against the then-ruling regime of National Democratic Party (NDP). The study undertakes a linguistic analysis of Mubarak’s political discourse in a way that reveals a highly subjective message which is egoistically centred on the self-promotional pronoun “I”. The ultimate goal of the study is to uncover the socio-political meanings underlying Mubarak’s rhetorical reference to himself as a well-deserved President of Egypt, regardless of the people’s revolutionary stance across the country. The pronoun “I” in Mubarak’s last speech was proved to take on many different functional roles that are intended to manipulate the public mind.

During the unprecedented 2011 political crisis, which is historically marked out as the 25-January Egyptian revolution, the then-President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, gave what can be described as his last presidential speech¹ on Thursday 10th February 2011. The speech was broadcast live on state TV, only one day before Mubarak's historic decision to step down as a President of Egypt on Friday 11th February 2011. It seems likely that this speech was intended to be Mubarak's last-ditch attempt to dissuade the revolutionary Egyptian masses from their populist anger at the then-ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) in Egypt, which was headed by Mubarak himself. With the wisdom of hindsight, such an attempt totally backfired and consequently the NDP, which was notoriously unpopular with grass root masses in Egypt, was dissolved; its members have been socially and politically stigmatized as being remnants (in Arabic, *fulu:l*) of the ex-regime of Mubarak.

The significance of Mubarak's last presidential speech can be ascribed to the fact that it came as a forerunner to the politically historic moment of Mubarak stepping down as a military ruler of Egypt, which has been governed by the Military Armed Forces since the Nasserite regime in 1952. Indeed, the political impact that this speech had on the Egyptian revolutionaries then was so counter-productive that on the day following the speech Omar Suleiman, the ex-chief of the Egyptian General Intelligence Service, announced Mubarak's resignation from the official position of presidency over Egypt. As such, for its political weight, the present speech offers a political discourse which can be said to be worthy of linguistic research and textual analysis.

This paper follows a systemic-functional (SF) approach towards explaining the socio-political meanings of the deictic centre "I" in Mubarak's last presidential speech. Crucially, the whole speech thematically revolves around a deictic centre whose pragma-semantic gravity is well worth thorough linguistic research, so that the underlying meanings pertaining to Mubarak's self-presentation can be analysed. This can be distilled in the following overarching research question: what are the socio-political meanings attached to the pronoun "I" in Mubarak's last presidential speech on 10 February 2011?

The structure of the present paper unfolds as an answer to the foregoing research question. Section 1 below is a brief historical background on the SF approach and its methodological impact on critical discourse studies. Section 2 proposes the theoretical framework utilized in the present study; the framework relies on Michael Halliday's SF approach, which has a socially oriented interpretation of language, with the lexico-grammatical resources of Transitivity, Mood, and Theme as toolkits for linguistic analysis. Section 3 involves an outline of the research data, Mubarak's last presidential speech, used for analysis in the study. Section 4 is the analysis of research data based on the theoretical framework introduced earlier. Section 5 is a conclusion with the most important findings in the study and a recommendation for future research that is relevant to the current study.

1. Halliday's SF approach: a brief history

The SF approach has developed as a descriptive and (partially) interpretive framework wherein language is viewed as a meaning-making resource. The approach can be said to have had its roots in the view of the relation between language and society, which was proposed by the anthropologist Malinowski (1923). According to Kress (1976, p. viii), Malinowski made a crucial distinction between the immediate *context of utterance* and the general *context of situation*. Based on this distinction, Malinowski defined meaning as derived, "not from a passive contemplation of the word, but from an analysis of its functions, with reference to the given culture" (Malinowski, 1923, cited in Kress 1976, p. viii). Such a Malinowskian view has eventually led to the meaning-as-function-in-context premise, which is generally recognized as the foundation of the SF approach.

As a linguist, Firth (1957) sought to employ Malinowski's sociolinguistic insights into the study of language. The clearest manifestation of this process is Firth's integration of the notion "context of situation" into a general theory of language:

A text was an object of theoretical study in its own right; and what Firth did was to map the notion of “context of situation” into a general theory of levels of language. All linguistic analysis, Firth said, was a study of meaning, and meaning could be defined operationally as “function in context”; so to study meaning you took each of the traditional divisions of linguistic theory – phonetic, phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic – and treated it as a kind of context. (Halliday, 1999, p. 5)

Hasan (1977, p. 228) rightly argues that the SF approach comes very close to the Firthian view of language (Firth, 1956), where “a major part of the semantics of a sentence could be stated only if the sentence were studied as part of a text, occurring within a context.”

Halliday is the linguist known for establishing the SF approach and bringing it within the scope of text and discourse analysis (Halliday 1973, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1985, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2007). The main reason for that is Halliday’s groundbreaking meaning-based grammar, which is functionally oriented towards exploring new horizons of analysing the text as a “semantic [and not grammatical] unit” (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Hasan, 1976). This has led Halliday (1994, p. xvi) into a strong counter-argument against a discourse analyst or a text linguist who may conceive of a version of “discourse analysis” or “text linguistics” as being possibly “carried on without [functional] grammar.” Halliday has even dubbed this kind of conception “an illusion”; and thereupon, he has reached a definitive conclusion: “A discourse analysis that is not based on grammar is not an analysis at all, but simply a running commentary on a text” (ibid.).

Inspired by both Malinowski and Firth, especially the latter (see Webster’s introduction to Halliday [2002, p. 18]), Halliday has exploited and developed two essential aspects that underpin the SF approach: first, the conception of meaning as “function in context”; second, the multifunctionality of language. Halliday sees that “function” is the fundamental property of language; and its functional basis is semantically realized in a tripartite form of meaning, viz. experiential, interpersonal, and textual. That three-part meaning somehow corresponds to three contextual variables, respectively field, tenor, and mode.² As such, Halliday proposes a realizational link, where three types of meanings—which are known as three meta-functions that language is structured to serve—are realized in the foregoing contextual variables, technically labelled in the Firthian tradition as “context of situation.” Hence the function-in-context conception of meaning.

Also, significantly, Halliday has always stressed the fact that the semiotic structure of language, i.e. the set of lexico-grammatical choices made in using the language, realizes these three types of meaning simultaneously in the clausal structure of the text. As such, the semiotic clausal structure of language is essentially multifunctional. All in all, then, according to Halliday the SF approach combines two inseparable elements, that is, the social and the semiotic, famously known as a social-semiotic perspective towards text analysis. (This perspective has been succinctly outlined by Halliday and Hasan in a shared monograph of two parts [1989].)

Perhaps, it is this social-semiotic element that has attracted many discourse analysts in general, and critical discourse analysts (practising CDA) in particular, to integrate the SF approach into their research agenda. Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995) has been preoccupied with a textually oriented discourse analysis which combines methods of text analysis of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) with theories of ideology. Indeed, as Fairclough (2003, p. 5) argues, the SFL model, being “always oriented to the social character of texts,” is such “a valuable resource for critical discourse analysis”; and significantly he adds that “major contributions to critical discourse analysis have developed out of SFL.” Following the same approach developed by Fairclough, Richardson (2004) has studied the discursive representation of Islam and Muslims in British broadsheet newspapers, analysing “the ways in which they reproduce anti-Muslim racism” (2004, p. xvi). Also, influenced by the SFL approach, Benwell and Stokoe (2006) have focused on the idea of arranging lexico-grammatical choices in CDA: “In CDA’s language analysis, discourse is treated as a system of lexico-grammatical

options from which texts/authors make their choices about what to include or exclude and how to arrange them” (2006, p. 108). Further, van Leeuwen (2008) has incorporated new tools for CDA based on a socio-semantic classification that has manifested the influence of SFL; these tools have proven particularly useful in explaining the discursive construction of “legitimation” and “purpose” (pp. 105–135).

2. Linguistic resources and realization

At this point, it can be said that Halliday’s SF approach is generally based on the notion of *realization*, or rather technically *encoding*; that is, the lexico-grammar of language realizes or encodes what Halliday and Hasan (1976) call “three major functional-semantic components, the IDEATIONAL, the INTERPERSONAL and the TEXTUAL” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 26, capitals in original). Halliday and Hasan (1976, pp. 26–27) have elaborated on the three components. According to them, the ideational relates to the “content,” or topical aboutness, which is subdivided into the experiential and the logical, where the former is concerned with the representation of our world experience and the latter with the expression of “the abstract logical relations which derive only indirectly from experience” (ibid., p. 26). As regards the interpersonal component, it has to do with “the social, expressive and conative functions of language,” (ibid.) in terms of the speaker’s stance. Last, the textual component comprises “the resources that language has for creating text” (ibid., p. 27).

The above-mentioned functional-semantic components are the social functions which the language system, as a social-semiotic system in the Hallidayan sense, has evolved to serve. This is where the lexico-grammar of language system appears as a realizational medium with three corresponding linguistic resources: (1) the Transitivity resource for realizing (or encoding) the ideational, more specifically the experiential, meaning; (2) the Mood resource for realizing (or encoding) the interpersonal meaning; (3) the Theme resource for realizing (or encoding) the textual meaning. In the following subsections, there will be room for the mechanics of each linguistic (lexico-grammatical) resource.

2.1. Transitivity

As explained earlier, Transitivity is the lexico-grammatical resource realizing or encoding the ideational aspect of meaning in text. Transitivity in the systemic-functional sense is concerned with construing “the world of experience [physical or mental] into a manageable set of PROCESS TYPES” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 170, capitals in original). These process types, depending on the world of experience, may be material (e.g. *move*), verbal (e.g. *tell*), mental (e.g. *think*), relational (e.g. *be*), or behavioural (e.g. *laugh*). From the whole gamut of process types, only those which are relevant to the present research data (Mubarak’s last presidential speech) will be tackled. Thus, the classification of Transitivity process types presented here is by no means exhaustive; rather, it is restricted to the present context of research.

In the Transitivity system, process, typically realized in clause as a verb, assigns a semantic role to the participants associated with it. For example, a verbal process (e.g. *criticize*) ideally presupposes the existence of (1) a “sayer,” the human participant verbalizing a message (e.g. *criticizer*), (2) “verbiage,” denoting the content of the message (e.g. *criticism*), (3) “receiver,” the human participant “to whom the saying is addressed” (e.g. the *criticized* person), and (4) “target,” the participant whom the saying is “directed at, rather than addressed to” (e.g. the *performance* of the criticized person) (Thompson, 2004, pp. 100–102). Hence the verbal clause can be formalized as “*x says a to y*”. Now, in a similar vein, let us move to relational clauses.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 216), there are two principal types of relational clause: (i) “attributive,” where “*a is an attribute of x*”, and (ii) “identifying,” where “*a is the identity of x*”; and each of the two types has three forms in text: (1) “intensive ‘*x is a*,’” (2) “possessive ‘*x has a*,’” and (3) “circumstantial ‘*x is at a*.’” Again, because of considerations related to the present research data, I shall confine theoretical discussion here to the intensive attributive relational clause as the

one type dominant in the data. The process in this type of clause has two main participants: “attribute” as the epithetic form carried by a given entity, which is the “carrier” – “the ‘carrier’ of the ‘attribute’” (Halliday & Matthiessen, *ibid.*, p. 219). This presupposes a semantic scope of attribution, where one participant (carrier) is clausally represented as having a particular epithet (attribute) in text.

In this connection, there remains one type of process, that is, the behavioural process; but, before coming to this type of process, there should be some space for discussing other types of process, namely, material and mental processes, as behavioural processes are a blend of the two. First, material processes are typically associated with participants having the semantic roles of “actor” (i.e. the participant enacting the process) and “goal” (i.e. the participant affected by the process) as in the clause *John moved the table*, where the participants *John* and *the table* are actor and goal, respectively. Second, mental processes are semantically glued to the participants “senser” and “phenomenon,” where the two designate a “process of sensing” that can be “construed either as flowing from a person’s consciousness or as impinging on it” (*ibid.* 2004: 197). This can be exemplified through the instance *x remembered y*, with *x* as the participant sensing the phenomenon *y* which impinges on *x*’s consciousness. Thus, sensing processes may subsume mental categories such as “perceptive” (e.g. *perceive, sense, see, smell, etc.*), “cognitive” (e.g. *think, guess, imagine, doubt, etc.*), “desiderative” (e.g. *want, hope, determine, agree, etc.*), and “emotive” (e.g. *like, hate, deplore, enjoy, etc.*) (*ibid.*, p. 210).

As we alluded earlier, regarding the so-called “behavioural” processes, they are “intermediate between mental and material processes,” and are largely identifiable with the operation of semantic criteria:

They [behavioural processes] relate to specifically human physiological processes; and one of the main reasons for setting up this category is that they allow us to distinguish between purely mental processes and the outward physical signs of these processes. For example, many mental perception processes have paired processes which express a conscious physical act involved in perception: ‘see’ (mental) and ‘watch’, ‘look’, etc. (behavioural); ‘hear’ (mental) and ‘listen’ (behavioural) and so on. (Thompson, 2004, p. 103)

Indeed, further, Thompson (*ibid.*) argues that typically behavioural processes have one participant, that is, “Behaver”; but he (*ibid.*, p. 104) continues to argue that in some cases there can be another participant (“typically functioning as Complement”), which is the “Behaviour,” or in Halliday & Matthiessen’s (2004, p. 192) terms “Range,” which “is not a real participant but merely adds [semantic] specification to the process” (Thompson, *ibid.*, p. 104). Thus, as Thompson (*ibid.*) illustrates, if one says *She waved her hands helplessly*, the Transitivity analysis may conceivably run as follows: *She* (Behaver) + *waved* (Process: behavioural) + *her hands* (Behaviour/Range) + *helplessly* (Circumstance). In this model analysis, the last Transitivity element, *circumstance*, will immediately be tackled below.

Other than “process” and “participant,” the Transitivity system has the element of “circumstance,” which is described by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 175) as being “associated with the process.” To Halliday and Matthiessen (*ibid.*), circumstantial elements are “almost always optional augmentations of the clause rather than obligatory components”; and, as he continues to argue, these elements contrast with participants in that the latter are “inherent in the process: every experiential type of clause has at least one participant and certain types have up to three participants” (*ibid.*). Adopting a Hallidayan approach, Bloor and Bloor (1995, p. 126) reiterate the peripheral status of circumstances, compared with participants, in the ideational structure of transitivity, where circumstantial elements are “concerned with such matters as the settings, temporal and physical, the manner in which the process is implemented, the people or other entities accompanying the process rather than directly engaged in it.”

2.2. Mood

As Eggins (1994, pp. 83–84) puts it, Mood includes three major lexico-grammatical patterns in text: “(a) type of clause structure used: e.g. declarative, interrogative, imperative; (b) modality [...]; and (c) attitude: expressions of positive or negative attitude.” In the present context of research, the first two patterns, clause type and modality, merit further elaboration. Clause patterns in the Mood system instantiate the “propositions and proposals that we exchange in discourse,” and these in turn serve to “set up basic interactive roles for us in the language event” (Stillar, 1998, p. 34). Each clause pattern corresponds to a particular speech function in interaction; for example, a declarative clause has the speech function of statement, which assigns the interactive roles of affirmation or negation. Likewise, an interrogative clause offers the speech function of question, and thereby constructing the interactive roles of questioner versus respondent; and of course the same holds true for an imperative clause that bears the speech function of a command which may well suggest asymmetrical interactive roles of power relations, where there is a commander-compliant discursive relationship in text.

The second aspect of Mood is modality. This aspect is inseparable from the Mood grammar of declarative, interrogative and imperative clauses, particularly if we take into account the speech functions, mentioned above, corresponding to these clause types. This can easily be discerned from Halliday and Matthiessen’s definition of modality:

Modality refers to the area of meaning that lies between yes and no – the intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity. What this implies more specifically will depend on the underlying speech function of the clause. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 618)

Here, also, one may well see the idea of modality-based attitude which is closely linked to the non-polar stance (or, rather, opinion) taken by interactants towards the propositions they causally or sententially express in textual patterns. Simpson (1993), following an SF tradition, pays meticulous attention to this aspect of modal meaning. He (*ibid.*, pp. 43–47) outlines four modal systems: *deontic*, *boulomaic*, *epistemic*, and *perception*. Since the present research data prominently features deontic, boulomaic and epistemic modal systems, theoretical focus will be strictly laid on these three aspects of modality.

According to Simpson (*ibid.*, p. 43), deontic modality is “the modal system of ‘duty’, as it is concerned with a speaker’s [or writer’s] attitude to the degree of obligation attaching to the performance of certain actions.” Further, Simpson (*ibid.*, p. 44) argues that deontic modality bears a close relation to boulomaic modality, where the latter can be expressed in “expressions of ‘desire’”; for example, “[m]odal lexical verbs, indicating the wishes and desires of the speaker.” On the whole, it can be said that boulomaic modals are concerned with the linguistic expression of the psychological state of mind in terms of inside feelings and emotions. As regards the epistemic system of modality, Simpson (*ibid.*) continues to argue that it has to do with “the speaker’s confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of a proposition expressed” (*ibid.*, p. 44). He instantiates the meaning of epistemic modality via the basic proposition *You are right*, which purports to be a “categorical assertion,” i.e. the expression of “the strongest possible degree of speaker commitment” (Lyons, 1977, p. 763, cited in Simpson, 1993, p. 45). Such a categorical assertion, Simpson (*ibid.*, pp. 44–45) maintains, can be represented on a continuum of epistemic modality: *You could/may/must/might/should be right*.

One useful observation made by Simpson about modality in general is the fact that the four modal systems outlined above can be actualized in text either directly in the form of modal auxiliaries (e.g. *may*, *might*, *must*, *should*, *could*, etc.) or indirectly by being “grammaticized through a range of other [linguistic] devices”; for example, the use of the modal lexical verbs *think*, *suppose*, or *believe*; or, alternatively, the modal lexical adjectives *probable*, *necessary*, or *possible*, to express epistemic

modality: *I think you are right* and *It is probable that you are right*. Crucially, this observation by Simpson makes for the different discursive representations of *subjective* and *objective* sources of modality in text.

2.3. Theme

Introducing the concept of “Theme,” Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 58, bold in original) remark that it “functions in the structure of the **clause as a message**,” and add that a “clause has meaning as a message, a quantum of information,” where “the Theme is the point of departure for the message”; and, as such, Theme is “the element that the speaker [or writer] selects for ‘grounding’ what he is going on to say.” Continuing the argument, Halliday & Matthiessen (*ibid.*, p. 64) introduce the concept of Rheme as the “remainder of the message is, the part in which the Theme is developed.” Thus, as Halliday & Matthiessen (*ibid.*, p. 65) explain, in its textual capacity as a message, a clause comprises a “Theme accompanied by a Rheme; and the structure is expressed by the order – whatever is chosen as the Theme is put first.” (It should be made clear that both concepts of Theme and Rheme have been borrowed by Halliday from the Prague school of linguists.)

Indeed, Halliday has long argued for the interface between Theme patterns and information structure in text. Halliday (1979, pp. 67–68) refers to “thematic prominence,” or thematic focus, where “in English it is associated with the first position in the clause,” that is the Theme, or in his own terms, “the status of a theme.” This is technically labelled “the focus of information” or the “Given” information (*ibid.*, p. 68). In addition to thematic focus, Halliday (*ibid.*) adds, there is the “focus of information,” which “signals the climax of what is new in the message”; and, according to Halliday (*ibid.*), this kind of “focal prominence” may well be “assigned at any point in the clause; it is not [necessarily] REALIZED by final position, in the way that thematic prominence is realized by initial position” (Capitals in original).

Thus, Halliday has reached the following conclusion about Theme structure and meaning focus in text:

So there is a peak of prominence at the beginning, which is the Theme; and another peak of prominence, usually at the end, which is the focus of information or, simply, the New. The two are different in meaning. The Theme is speaker-oriented; it is the speaker’s signal of concern, what it is that he is on about [...]. The New is hearer-oriented (though still, of course, SELECTED by the speaker); it is the speaker’s presentation of information as in part already recoverable to the hearer (the Given) and in part not recoverable (the New). (Halliday, 1979, p. 68)

As is clear from Halliday’s account, the Theme-Rheme structure is organizational in nature; it contributes to the overall build-up of text, and eventually serves as a sensitive indicator to more or less significant “quanta information” in text.

3. Research data

The data used for analysis in this study is the English translation of Mubarak’s last speech as a President of Egypt; it was broadcast on the Egyptian state television on 10 February 2011, one day before his stepping down from presidency. This speech followed another speech that was delivered by Mubarak on 1 February 2011, as a reaction to the popular uprising in Egypt starting on 25 January of that year. According to Salama (2014), such a popular uprising, alleged to have had the makings of a fully-fledged revolution, “is known to have been staged by the Egyptian youths who managed to electronically disseminate calls for political reform in Egypt; this is what has come to be known as the Egyptian ‘Facebook Revolution’ – one in which the political is interfaced with the technological.”

It should be made clear that there will be a systematic Arabic transliteration of the English translation of Mubarak’s speech throughout the analysis section. This is a transliteration of the original language in which the speech was written and delivered, that is, Modern Standard Arabic

(MSA). At the end of this paper, there is an [Appendix](#) with the symbols used for the transliteration and their phonetic description as pronounced MSA (with a few slight modifications; see Salama, 2014).

4. Mubarak's last speech in systemic-functional perspective

Now, let us bring Mubarak's last presidential speech in the analytical framework of Halliday's Systemic-Functional perspective, where the pronoun "I" is linguistically investigated at two levels of meaning, viz. the ideational and the interpersonal. Therefore, analytic focus will be on the lexico-grammatical patterns of Transitivity and Mood throughout the whole speech. With the investigation of these textual lexico-grammatical patterns, the abstract semantic meanings of the Presidential "I" can be realized, and then taken as significant clues to the political context in which the speech was produced. Thus, the procedure proposed here is dedicated to handling three essential points that correspond to the two sub-questions in the subsection below. First, an ideational analysis of the Participant Presidential "I" is conducted by means of the Transitivity structure wherein it is semantically embedded. Second, an interpersonal analysis of the Subject Presidential "I" is set in motion through the Mood structure in terms of clause-type realizations and the pragmatically oriented speech functions corresponding with them as well as modality patterns and the speech acts associated with their pragmatic meanings. Both the first and second phases of the procedure constitute the co-textual analysis of the pragma-semantic meanings of the use of Presidential "I" in the whole speech. The third phase of the procedure is directed at the contextual analysis of the political situation where the three variables of field, tenor and mode are explained against the backdrop of the co-textual pragma-semantic analysis of Presidential "I". As such, it can be said that the present procedure integrates two levels of systemic-functional analysis: first, the micro co-textual analysis of the lexico-grammatical environments of the self-referential pronoun "I" in its Transitivity and Mood structures in text; second, the macro contextual analysis of the socio-political meanings underlying the language use of "I".

4.1. The semantics of Mubarak's "I"

At a glance, it can be said that in Mubarak's last presidential speech the first-person pronoun "I" does constitute a deictic centre around which the whole speech revolves. This is the case both in the MSA source text and in its English-translation target text. While the "I" is explicitly instantiated in the latter (target) English text, it has less explicit manifestations in the former (source) MSA text. These manifestations are two in number. First, the pronoun "I" can be prominent in form; for example, it can be realized as *ya:ʔ* (i.e. an Arabic first-person pro-form), which is in most cases morphologically suffixed onto the "affirmation particles" (أنا) *ʔinna* or (أنا) *ʔanna* (Abdul-Raof, 2006, p. 26). Second, the pronoun "I" can be "latent"; that is, it "disappears after the verb whether in speaking or in writing" (El-Dahdah, 1993, p. 566), but it is contextually assumed to be there. Indeed, the point of syntactic explicitness merits some elaboration, before moving on to the analysis of the ideational meanings underlying the pronoun "I" in the speech.

Of course syntactic explicitness plays a significant role in the lexico-grammatical functional analysis of the present MSA text of Mubarak, especially when it comes to the thematic analysis of "I"; but even when the pronoun "I" is latent post-verbally, it should be considered topically significant at discourse level so long as the (pro-)noun takes the semantic role of human agency. On this point Abdul-Raof (1998, p. 4) reports Givón (1984, p. 175): "the human agent is the most likely discourse-topic in human communication." Besides, it should be made clear that MSA as a Semitic language is subsumed under what Li and Thompson (1976, p. 459; cited in Abdul-Raof, 1998, pp. 3–4) call "subject-prominent languages," where "the structure of sentence favours a description in which grammatical relation subject-predicate plays a major role." For these considerations, I shall *explicitize* the thematic function of the MSA latent usages of "I" in Mubarak's speech. This should take the concept of Theme beyond its limited intra-textual (organizational) function as a sentence-initial element towards some other macro-pragmatic (underlying) functions (see Sanz, 2000). After all, in a subject-prominent language like MSA, a contextually presumed latent pronoun can possibly be considered a "topic," which is defined as "what the utterance is primarily about or [...] the entity about

which the predication predicates something in a given setting” (Siewierska, 1991, p. 151). Such topical prominence of the latent usage of “I” has been made clear in the English-translation target text of Mubarak speech, where the pronominal form “I” is unfailingly thematically explicit.

Now, let us focus on the ideational analysis of the pronoun “I” which can detect the semantics underlying its use as a participant in the Transitivity system—alongside process types and circumstantial elements—of the speech. Throughout the whole speech, the semantics of Mubarak’s “I” can be ideationally captured in three dominant participant roles, that is, Sayer, Carrier, and Behavior. The coming subsections are devoted to these three dominant participant roles.

4.1.1. The saying “I” of Mubarak

The first dominant participant role of the first-person “I” referring to Mubarak in his speech is that of Sayer. In other words, Mubarak is clausally represented as uttering a verbal process to a target audience. Table 1 below summarizes all the instances of this participant role, with the number of occurrences in the whole speech.

In the opening part of his speech, Mubarak uses the verbal process *am addressing* (*/ʔatawadjhu bi-ħadi:θil/*) twice with the same Receiver, *the youth of Egypt* (*/li-s:aba:bi misr/*), to whom the act of revolution has been repeatedly ascribed. Here, there seems to be a form of address that is intended to grab the attention of the most important element protesting in Tahrir Square. At this point, Mubarak’s self-referential “I” is semantically featured as a participant whose main purpose in the speech is to address the youth of Egypt as another significant participant. Obviously, here, Mubarak invites this significant participant to receive the message of the speech at stake.

Proceeding with the same participant role of Sayer, Mubarak addresses the same Receiver about one of the most important political issues at the moment of producing the speech: *the blood of your martyrs and injured*.³ Such an element is presented as the verbiage *the blood of your martyrs and injured will not go in vain*.⁴ This renders Mubarak as being a promise-maker, who has verbally committed himself to the act of retribution for killing those martyrs and injuring the youth. The same meaning has been made explicit in the next verbal process in the clause *I assure you that I will not relent in harshly punishing those responsible*,⁵ where Mubarak makes a point of reassuring the Receiver via the verbiage mediated in his speech. Still, this verbiage element in the clause is intended as a speech act of promise, wherein the Sayer (*I or Mubarak*) expresses a future act to the benefit of the Receiver (*the youth of Egypt*). In the next verbal clause *I tell the families of those innocent victims that I suffered plenty for them*,⁶ Mubarak is keen to set up an emotional bond between the Sayer (*I*) and the Receiver (*the families of innocent victims*) via the verbiage *that-clause* (*[that] I suffered plenty for them*). It may be useful here to attempt an ideational analysis of the present clausal verbiage: Table 2.

Table 1. Sayer “I” in Mubarak’s last presidential speech

Sayer	Process: verbal	Receiver	Arabic transliteration	Number of occurrence
I	am telling	you	<i>/ʔa:qu:lu lakum/</i>	3
	am addressing	the youth of Egypt/ you	<i>/ʔatawadjhu bi-ħadi:θi ... li-s:aba:bi misr/ʔilaykum/</i>	2
	tell	the families	<i>/wa ʔa:qu:lu li-ʔa:ʔila:t/</i>	1
	declared	∅	<i>/la-qā:d ʔaʔlantu/</i>	2
	assure	you	<i>/wa ʔuʔakidu lakum/</i>	1
	am asserting	∅	<i>/maʔa taʔki:d/</i>	1
	say	∅	<i>/wa ʔa:qu:l/</i>	1

Table 2. Ideational analysis of the verbiage I suffered plenty for them

I	Suffered	Plenty	For them
Senser	Process: mental, reaction	Circumstance: degree	Circumstance: cause

Patently, at this point Mubarak presents himself as a sympathetic participant who can sense and react to the miserable situation of the families of the innocent victims. He even intensifies that element of sympathy in the background of the clause circumstances of degree and cause. Thus, the whole clausal picture may read as follows: the cause of Mubarak’s great suffering is the misery of bereaved families of the victims. Note here that Mubarak constructs himself as being a sympathizer, and not as being an apologizer. After all, those victims were killed by the military agency of Mubarak’s ex-regime. It thus can be said that such a clausal representation of sympathy is intended to masquerade Mubarak’s agency in having caused the misery of his Receiver, or audience.

Continuing with the same kind of representation attaching to the Participant “I”, Mubarak utters two verbal clauses based on the process *am telling*, which targets the same Receiver. This can be displayed in Extract 1 below:

Extracts:

- (1) I am telling you that heeding to your voice, your message and demands is an irretraceable commitment.⁷
- (2) I am telling you that as a president I find no shame in listening to my country’s youth and interacting with them.⁸

The clausal verbiages in A and B in Extract 1 above are meant to establish a communicative link between the Sayer “I” and the Receiver “you”; that is, between Mubarak and the youth of Egypt, including the families of the victims mentioned earlier in other verbal clauses. In the two verbiages, the core components encoding this interactive meaning are *heeding to* in clause A as well as *listening to* and *interacting with* in clause B. This is to reflect the Sayer’s conscious readiness to interact with the Receiver. As a corollary to such a highly interactive meaning, another verbal clause is uttered with an accentuation on the nominal-phrase verbiage *my readiness: I am asserting my readiness to ...*⁹ As such, the same meaning has been systematically condensed into a phrase-unit verbiage, which can readily be expanded into a full intensive, relational clause: *I am ready (/?nnani ?ala ?isti?da:d/)*.

There are two other closely related verbal clauses with the process *declared*. The first clause is *I have unequivocally declared that I will not run for president in the next elections*.¹⁰ In this clause, there is no explicit Receiver, yet it may be inferred from the overall clausal matrix throughout the whole speech, where the Receiver is understood to be the Egyptian youth waiting then in the Square. What matters most here is the verbiage semantically associated with lexical item “declared”: the ex-president’s future act of not running “for president in the next elections.” Almost the same meaning is encoded in the second verbal clause *I declared my commitment to that*.¹¹ Indeed, such an accentuated declaration is one essential Theme in the whole speech, not least because Mubarak’s audience by no means have enough confidence in Mubarak’s declaration not to go for another presidency term. Therefore, here, Mubarak intends to verbally reassure the protesting Egyptians who are ill at ease with the idea of Mubarak’s presidency over contemporary Egypt. That may explain why, towards the end of his speech, Mubarak attempts to capitalize on the emotions of his audience by uttering the pathos-raising verbal clause *I say again that I lived for the sake of this country*.¹² Here, the verbiage element targets the sympathy of the implicit Receiver, who is in no political mood to enter into a dialogue with Mubarak.

There is yet another aspect of the ideational representation of “I” as the first-person pronoun referring to Mubarak, that is, “I” as a Carrier of certain attributes.

4.1.2. The carrying “I” of Mubarak

The second dominant participant role of the first-person “I” referring to Mubarak in the present speech is the Carrier role. That is, Mubarak is clausally represented as possessing a number of defining attributes. Table 3 below summarizes all the instances of this participant role, with the number of occurrences in the whole speech.

The first thing to observe about all the relational, attributive clauses in Mubarak’s speech is the present time-reference of quality attribution. It seems that Mubarak’s focus is on describing himself strictly more in relation to the moment of producing the speech than to any narratives preceding his speech. The two instances of the clause *I am determined* are positively oriented to Mubarak’s serious intention to fulfil his promises. The two relational clauses are thus directed to the future, which the great majority of Egyptians are most concerned about. Crucially, the clauses relate Mubarak to such a great degree in a way that projects a good image of a president who commits himself to his words.

Another attribute that is presented as being carried by “I” in the speech is the quality of “pride”: *I am proud of you (/ʔinnani ʔaʔtazu bi-kum/)*. In this particular example, Mubarak expresses his positive attitude towards his addressees in such a way as to negate any presupposed meanings of Mubarak’s dissatisfaction with the protesting Egyptians in Tahrir Square. Apparently, this meaning is intended to challenge the assumptions held by revolutionaries and activists about Mubarak’s nonchalance towards the demands of the disillusioned Egyptians. The same meaning is consolidated in the two closely linked relational, attributive clauses in Extract 2 below:

Extract:

- (3) I am completely aware of the seriousness of the current hard turn of events as I am convinced that Egypt is crossing a landmark point in its history ...¹³

(My emphasis)

Here between the two relational clauses there lies what Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, pp. 376–377) term a “logico-semantic relation” of extending the first attributive meaning of Mubarak’s being *aware* of the seriousness of the current hard turn of events into the second attributive meaning of his being *convinced* that Egypt is crossing a landmark in its history. That expansion of attributive meaning enhances Mubarak’s discursive position as a president who is well informed about as well as interested in the gravity of the political situation of revolutionary Egyptians and contemporary Egypt. Note that the structural relation holding between the two relational, attributive clauses are paratactic in form, i.e. of equal status, where each clause (in the whole clause-complex) contributes to the overall meaning of attribution. Thus, at this point in the speech, semantic focus is equally distributed over Mubarak’s self-attributive representation.

Additionally, there is another equally important relational, attributive clause in the speech, where the pronoun “I” is qualified by a prophetic meaning: *I am certain that Egypt will overcome its crisis*.¹⁴ As discussed earlier, the clause *Egypt will overcome its crisis* bears the meaning of prophecy, which is qualified within the frame of the epistemic modality grammaticized in the attribute *certain*.

Table 3. Carrier “I” in Mubarak’s last presidential speech

Carrier	Process: relational	Attribute	Arabic transliteration	Number of occurrence
I	am	determined	/ʔinnani ʔazimun/	2
	am	proud	/ʔinnani ʔaʔtazu/	1
	was	young	/laqād kuntu s:a:ban/	1
	am	aware	/ʔinnani ʔaʔi/	1
	am	convinced	/ʔiqṭina:ʔan min djanibil/	1
	am	certain	/ʔinnani ʔaʔlamu ʔilm ʔal-yaqi:n/	1

However, there is yet another important aspect of semantic representation here: Mubarak as the Carrier of certitude, being *certain* about the projected clause of prophecy. Again, this should construct an image of Mubarak as a well-informed president who can predict how Egypt will progress in future.

The last instance of relational, attributive clauses is *I was as young as Egypt’s youth today*.¹⁵ This is the only example of a past-time attributive clause, which instantiates a significant narrative about Mubarak: *when I learned the Egyptian military honour, allegiance and sacrifice for my country*. In this part, the first-person pronoun “I” is taken back in time when Mubarak was as young as Egypt’s youth at the moment of producing the speech. Such a temporal shift places Mubarak on a par with his immediate audience, the revolutionary Egyptian youth. Obviously, this is to create some sort of solidarity between Mubarak and his addressees.

4.1.3. The behaving “I” of Mubarak

The third dominant participant role of the first-person “I” (referring to Mubarak) in the present speech is the Behaver role. That is, Mubarak is clausally represented as behaving in a certain way towards specific issues. Table 4 below is a summary of all the instances of this participant role, with the number of its occurrences in the whole speech.

In the present speech, there is a rhetorical tendency on Mubarak’s part to make use of the semantic category of behavioural processes, which are distinctly structured in the Hallidayan sense as such: Behaver + behavioural Process + Behaviour (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 251). Such an ideational construction of the Behaver “I” enables Mubarak to present himself through both “mental and material aspects” of the behavioural processes (Thompson, 2004, p. 104). On these semantic grounds, Mubarak can be said to be partially an Actor of some material aspect in the behavioural processes in the speech and partially a Senser of some mental aspect in the same processes. Rhetorically, this subtle representation would place him on a scale between two extremes of involvement and detachment—being neither too involved nor too detached—in relation to the processes that entail immediate actions on his part in such a politically turbulent moment in the history of contemporary Egypt. Let us discuss the instantiations of such representation in the speech.

The first important behavioural clause is *This is the oath I took before God and my country ...*,¹⁶ where the Behaviour *oath* (*qāsam*) precedes its behavioural process *took* (*?aqsamtu*). As such, the Behaviour is invested with a thematic prominence over the behavioural process itself, which should call the attention of the addressed audiences towards a given speech act of oath. It should be noted that the behavioural meaning here is a presidential pledge, which is taken by Mubarak (the Behaver). Significantly, Mubarak’s behaviour of oath-taking involves two witnesses in the picture: God and

Table 4. Behaver “I” in Mubarak’s last presidential speech

Behaver	Process: behavioural	Behaviour	Arabic transliteration	Number of occurrence
I	took	oath	/ðɑ:lɪkɑ huwɑ ?ɑl-qɑsɑmɑ ?ɑl-lɑðɪ ?ɑqsɑmtuhɑ/	1
	set/presented	vision	/tɑrɑhtu ru?ɪyɑh/	2
	issued	instructions	?ɑsdɑrtu tɑ?lɪmɑ:t/	1
	submitted	request	/tɑqɑdɑmtu bɪ-tɑlɑb/	1
	faced	death	/wɑdʒɑhtu ?ɑl-mɑwɑt/	1
	kept	peace	/hɑ:fɑðtu ?ɑlɑ ?ɑ-ssɑlɑ:m/	1
	sought	power	?ɑs?ɑ lɪ-sultɑh/	1

Egypt, the latter being relationally represented as *Egypt is my country*. This can be interpreted as an attempt by Mubarak to put on a semblance of sincerity to his ideational behaviour; and, simultaneously, it serves as an ideological presupposition that both God and Egypt are the most trusted witnesses to Mubarak's pledge.

The second behavioural clauses uttered by Mubarak are (1) *I have set a defined vision to come out of this crisis ...*¹⁷ and (2) *I presented this vision, committed to my responsibility in getting the nation out of these difficult times ...*¹⁸ Here, Mubarak constructs a self-image of a president with a visionary behaviour, which is juxtaposed to two circumstantial elements of purpose and reason: (a) *to come out of this crisis* and (b) *committed to my responsibility in getting the nation out of these difficult times*, respectively. Both circumstantial elements bring out Mubarak's positive self-presentation as a leader who is motivated by and responsible for the noble mission of handling the politically problematic state of affairs in Egypt then; and, all in all, such an ideational representation leaves the audience (and probably the reader of the speech script) with a public-spirited leader who behaves like a saviour to all Egyptians.

The next two examples of behavioural clauses may be viewed as a more concrete realization of Mubarak's foregoing representation as a visionary leader: (1) *I immediately issued my instructions to complete the investigation about last week's events ...*¹⁹ and (2) *I have submitted a request today asking for the amendment of six constitutional clauses ...*²⁰ The two types of behaviour mentioned in these two examples (instruction-issuing and request-submitting) portray the Behaver Mubarak in an authoritative light: a president whose executive power extends far beyond the mere rhetoric of saying or telling towards the realm of action. Using these action-oriented behavioural processes marks out a persona of Mubarak that comprises both the mental aspect of *cognitively* considering serious procedures and the material aspect of *actively* taking certain high measures at a time of political crisis.

Regarding the behavioural clause *I faced death many times as a pilot ...*,²¹ there is a special kind of self-presentation. In this context, facing death is purported to betoken a daring behaviour that is characteristically motivated by a courageous participant. This ideational meaning is maintained via the role-circumstance *as a pilot*, which casts a heroic light on Mubarak by foregrounding his self-sacrifice attitude. Also, equally important, this sense of heroism is emphasized by the frequency-circumstance element *many times* in a quantifying fashion, so that it appears like an objective fact in the life of Mubarak, the pilot.

Another important behavioural clause is *I kept the peace*. At this point of ideational self-presentation, Mubarak offers a picture of himself as a leader who has always been keen on keeping peace; a pattern of behaviour that appeals to the populist eagerness to live in peace and avoid war. Thus, Mubarak, the peace-keeper, enlists his past behaviour as a medium wherein he can redeem himself under the difficult circumstances in which the speech was delivered. Further, the use of this behavioural process demonstrates the mental and material efforts exerted by Mubarak in order to keep Egypt away from war. Here, it should be noted, the sense of war can easily be inferred from the sense of peace; the two concepts, standing as absolute opposites, cannot be co-present; rather, one should replace, yet strongly evoke, the other.

The last behavioural clause uttered by Mubarak is *I never sought power or fake popularity*,²² where an assertively negated behaviour is couched in the *never-seeking* formula. Here, Mubarak claims himself to be a non-seeker of power or fake popularity. He negates types of behaviour with which he has been charged by the protesting Egyptians in the Square. It can be said then that while Mubarak is at some points in the speech keen to associate himself with certain kinds of noble behaviour, he is equally keen at some other points to dissociate or distance himself from other kinds of corrupt behaviour. Thus, in his last presidential speech, Mubarak does not present himself only as a Behaver of some types of behaviour, but he does present himself as a non-behaver of some other types of behaviour as well. Here, it may be assumed that Mubarak's self-presentation is sensitive to the

collective perception of the revolutionary public in Egypt; and that is why he enacts and suspends his participant role as a behavior accordingly.

This last point should lead our discussion to the pragmatic dimension of Mubarak's self-reference which is certainly reactive to the perception of the Egyptian people during the political crisis.

4.2. *The pragmatics of Mubarak's "I"*

At an interpersonal level of meaning, Mubarak speaks from the Subject position of "I", which constructs him in two significant ways: first, Mubarak as a person with certain commitments in the declarative Mood structure of many statements in the speech; second, Mubarak as a person with specific attitudes towards given events or people. The two interpersonal aspects will be handled together in a way that reveals the pragmatic force (i.e. intended meanings) attaching to Mubarak's "I".

A whole grammatical pattern of declarative sentences has been utilized throughout the speech with a view to effecting self-assurance. For example, *I will not relent in ..., I will hold those who ..., I have not done and will never do ..., I will not run for president ..., I lived the days of defeat ..., I raised the flag of Egypt ..., I faced death many times ..., I kept the peace, I never sought power*, and so forth. Such a pattern of declarative Mood is consistently couched in two time frames, respectively the future and the past. Indeed, both are complementary for the full gamut of Mubarak's self-presentation as a then-President who tried to substantiate the validity of his promises by emphasizing a glorious narrative about his military and political history. Thus, while the future declarative statements above attempted to re-assure Mubarak's audience about his intentions, the past declarative statements were enunciated in order to scaffold the authenticity of these intentions. As such, for the most part, the declarative Mood structure built around the pronoun "I" in Mubarak's speech can be viewed as a dialogic medium between the speaker (Mubarak) and his audience (protesting Egyptians). Perhaps Mubarak's future and past declaratives encapsulate the persuasive end of manipulating the revolutionary behaviour of the angry Egyptians.

Continuing with the interpersonal level of the meaning of "I" in Mubarak's speech, it should be noted that there are different types of modality that Mubarak has consciously utilized in his speech. To begin with, deontic modality plays a significant role in creating a responsible "I", which renders Mubarak as a committed President. There are two prominent examples in this respect.

Extract:

- (4) I assure you that I will not relent in harshly punishing those responsible. I will hold those who persecuted our youth accountable with the maximum deterrent sentences.²³

In the above extract, there are two statements that construct the interrelation between the speaker "I" (Mubarak) as a Subject with moral obligations and his audience (the revolutionary Egyptians) in Tahrir Square in Cairo. This deontic interpersonal meaning is grounded in what Railton (2003, p. 361) terms "practical morality," i.e. answering the question "What ought I to do?". It is in this practical sense of morality that Mubarak commits himself to what he ought to do against the persecutors of the Egyptian youth in the Square.

Now, let us move to the second example of the declarative Mood structure.

Extract:

- (5) I am determined to live up to my promises with all firmness and honesty and I am totally determined to implement (them), without hesitation or reconsideration.²⁴

The above declarative statement is compound in structure, where two simple clauses are coordinated by the conjunction *and*. The two clauses are notably parallel in structure: each is structured as Subject + Finite + Complement. Most striking about this parallel structure is the repetition of the deontic Complement *determined* (?a:zimum), which reflects Mubarak's sincere will to act. This interpersonal meaning has been made grammatically stable by means of the timeless simple-present

tense expressed in the Finite (*am*), whose rhetorical function is to negate the doubts publicly casted upon the persona of Mubarak in the course of producing this speech. Underlying the present deontic meaning of active commitment is the action meaning voiced in the nominal speech act *my promises* (*bi-ma ta?ahat*), which has been juxtaposed to the positively intensifying adverbial phrase *with all firmness and honesty* (*bi-kuli ?al-djidiyati wa-assidq*).

As well as using deontic modality with the self-reference pronoun “I”, Mubarak has capitalized on the epistemic aspect of modality, where he tried to manifest the maximal degree of confidence in the propositional meanings conveyed to his audience in Tahrir Square. In this connection, there are three significant examples in the speech. In all three examples the epistemic meaning of self-confidence has been grammaticized into different forms, viz. adverbial, verbal, and adjectival. Let us discuss each in turn.

Extract:

(6) I have unequivocally declared that I will not run for president in the next elections

Here the underlined adverbial *unequivocally* (*/bi-?ibarā:tin la taḥtamil ?al-djadal ?aw ?a-tta?wi:l/*)²⁵ bears the epistemic meaning of absolute confidence in support of the most important declaration in the whole speech, that is, the ex-president’s decision “not to run for president in the next elections.” At this point, the epistemic adverbial *unequivocally* enhances what Searle (1969, p. 63) calls the “sincerity rule” of the speech act *declared* (*?a?lantu*): qualifying this speech act with such a highly epistemic adverbial, Mubarak reinforces the intention of his declaration utterance; and thereby places himself under an obligation to carry out the act within the utterance’s propositional content. Notably, operating as “institutionalized performatives” (Huang 2007, p. 108), declarations of this sort purport to consolidate Mubarak’s official status as still holding the felicity conditions of a ruler who can perform the act of declaration; and hence he can readily project an attitude of confidence towards the propositional content of his message.

The second instance of the epistemic modality associated with “I” in the speech can be realized in the following utterance: *I am asserting my readiness to submit ...* . This is verbal epistemic modality, where the verb (*am*) *asserting* (*/ma?a ta?ki:d/*) semantically reflects an air of self-confidence in performing the act of submission. Again, the protesting audience is the target of such a confident attitude on the part of Mubarak, who desperately needs to assure his honest intentions. Hence, in this context he attaches such an epistemically modal meaning to himself as a speaking Subject.

More interesting is the third instance of epistemic modality with the pronoun “I”: *I am certain that Egypt will overcome its crisis*. In this utterance, Mubarak places the projected clause *Egypt will overcome its crisis* within the semantic frame of the epistemic-modal adjective *certain* (*/?a?lamu ?ilma ?al-yaqi:n/*)²⁶. That use of epistemic modality imparts a prophetic sense to the pronoun “I”, where Mubarak presents himself as a confident prophet with a certain message of reassurance to the protesting audience. However, the modalized message itself is patently abstract since there is no mention of any concrete agency behind Egypt’s crisis (as if the crisis were a mere happening!). Of course, in such a politically anxious moment, addressing the Egyptian people with such an abstract *parole*—with the wisdom of hindsight—turned out to be counterproductive.

In addition to epistemic modality, Mubarak has also expressed himself through boulomaic modality in the speech. This kind of modality tends to be strongly expressive of the speaker’s inner feelings, wishes and hopes towards his audiences. In the present speech, there are two instances of modality that carry forth such an expressive meaning. First, addressing the Egyptian families who had victims in the revolutionary incidents of violence, Mubarak used an important instance of boulomaic modality: “... *I suffered plenty for them, as much as they did.*”²⁷ Here, Mubarak seems to *modally* manifest his pain and grief for the innocent victims. Significantly, such a boulomaic modal meaning is directed towards the families of those victims with whom Mubarak explicitly expresses his empathy through

the comparator *as much as (Imiθlama)*. Thus, Mubarak's modality is designed to create an interpersonal link with the bereaved addressees, the families of innocent victims. This sets up an interaction medium wherein Mubarak is an *empathizer* and the bereaved families are *empathizees*.

The second important instance of boulomaic modality expressed by Mubarak reads "*It pains me to see how some of my countrymen are treating me today.*"²⁸ It can be argued that this part is the most pathos-raising throughout the whole speech. Here, Mubarak expresses his disenchanting state of mind as a result of the "improper" practices (or maltreatment) committed against him by some of his fellow Egyptians, the protesting Egyptians. That was presumably intended to bring into play an implied speech act of blame, whose hoped-for *perlocution* (on Mubarak's part) was to dissuade the target protesting audience from persisting with such practices. Again, crucially, this boulomaic modal meaning attempts to create an interactional medium with Mubarak as a *sufferer* and the revolutionary Egyptians as *pain-inflictors*. Interestingly then, in both cases of boulomaic modality, Mubarak is the emotionally affected party to the interactive situation and the addressed Egyptians, families and protestors, are the agents behind Mubarak's emotionally affected state of mind. Rhetorically, such an interpersonal meaning of (boulomaic) modality heightens the pathos inside the speech in a way that renders Mubarak a victim to the protestors in Tahrir Square: while Mubarak empathizes with the grieved Egyptian families, he suffers at the hands of the same families.

Now, having finished with the semantic and pragmatic meanings underlying the self-referential use of "I" as part of the co-text in Mubarak's speech, it is time we moved to the contextual factors (field, tenor, mode) that make up the overall political situation wherein "I" has been used.

4.3. "I" in the political context of situation

Based on the foregoing systemic-functional analysis, the pronoun "I" is integral to the present speech's political context of situation in terms of the three variables of field, tenor and mode. First, at the level of field, the whole speech is topically oriented towards the persona of Mubarak as the speaker, who so frequently refers to himself that he has become more or less the deictic centre of the whole speech. The total number of occurrences of the pronoun "I" in the speech is 51. Second, at the level of tenor, the pronoun "I" has been invested with the interpersonal meanings encoded in both Mood and Modality structures in the speech; each of the two structures has had an interactional role in mediating Mubarak's presidential image to the target audiences outside the text. Last, in the English-translation version of the speech, at the level of mode the pronoun "I" predominantly occupies the textual position of Theme in the overall clause structure of the speech, which is indicative of a systematic method of developing a first-person speaker-pronoun Theme of Mubarak in a typically spoken mode of communication (for a discussion of the thematic status of the contextually presumed "I" in MSA, see Section 4.1 above). In the rest of this section, I shall analyse in-depth each of these three situational variables (field, tenor, mode) in relation to the use of Presidential "I" in the whole speech.

The first component of the political context of situation, wherein Presidential "I" is embedded, is the field ideationally composed of the different participant roles associated with Mubarak's self-referential "I" in the speech: Sayer, Carrier and Behaver (see the analysis section above). All three participant roles have contributed to significantly topical strands, which collectively constitute the field of the speech. First, the Sayer Mubarak has verbalized messages with various political contents: reforms, promises, declarations, and commitments. Notably, these all have been directed towards social actions which are performed in a way that subtly conceals the verbal rhetoric permeating the whole speech. Second, the Carrier Mubarak has been represented as bearing noble characteristics of various types: personal, professional (or military), social, and political. Such a representation has given textual space for a chain of topics on the eligibility of Mubarak as a President of Egypt. Third, the Behaver Mubarak has been constructed as being committed to certain types of behaviour whereby Mubarak comported himself in a way that reflects his military and political contributions to Egypt.

Thus, the speech is topically bound by three main participant roles of Mubarak (performed by the self-referential “I” in the speech) as Sayer, Carrier and Behavior. These collectively constitute the ideational field in the speech.

The second component of the present political context of situation, with Presidential “I”, is tenor; that is, how Mubarak relates himself (in the political situation) to his target revolutionary audiences in the Square and across Egypt. This component has been established in the forgoing analysis as the pragmatic dimension of interaction between Mubarak as an addresser and his addressees (see the analysis section above). There are essential interpersonal Mood elements here: clause pattern and modality. First, regarding clause pattern, “I” takes the position of a grammatical Subject in a pattern of declarative sentences running through the speech. In this way, Mubarak takes on an interactional position of a person who mostly gives information to his audiences. This is understandably expected at a politically critical time when Mubarak is required more to explain and justify, rather than to impose or force, himself or the subject “I”.

As regards the second interpersonal element, modality, it serves as an important resource for the political context of situation attaching to presidential “I”. It is through such a pragmatically motivated resource that Mubarak has textually positioned himself (the Subject “I”) as non-categorical or non-polar in his stance towards his angry target audiences; indeed, polarity (or extreme “yes” and “no”), if unwisely employed, may well break down the communicative link between Mubarak and these audiences. Also, it is through the same interpersonal resource of modality that Mubarak could build up a political image of a committed president (by using deontic modality) who has had a belief (by using epistemic modality) in the moral propositional contents he addressed to the audiences. Significantly, the events in this moral propositional content are attached to the same concept “I”, which denotes Mubarak as a President of Egypt. (For a detailed discussion of the Concept-Event structure of propositions, see Renkema [2009, pp. 41–44].)

The third, and last, component of the political context of situation surrounding Mubarak’s Presidential “I” is mode. This component corresponds to the textual function of “I” as a reiterated Theme in the whole (English-version) speech. Such a thematic progression reflects a type of textual “method of development,” that is, “Theme re-iteration” (Eggins, 1994, p. 303). As far as the textual pattern “I + Rheme” clause is concerned, there seems to be a systematic method of developing Mubarak’s last presidential speech in a way that casts a topical focus on Presidential “I” as a recurrent Theme in the overall context of political situation. Importantly, such a topical Theme has an information structure Given (i.e. being old information) while the rest information structure, information about “I” (Rheme), is New (i.e. being new information). As such, Presidential “I” is constructed as a springboard (or, in Halliday & Matthiessen’s [2004, p. 64] terms, “a point of departure”) for a systematically revealing information content about Mubarak: this has been textually reflected in the Theme-reiteration method of developing Mubarak as a President.

Such a systematic thematic presentation of Mubarak is interestingly revealing a more or less personal spoken-like mode of discourse, where the speech has had the topical focus of the first-person pronoun “I”. This can be explained against the peculiar political context wherein the speech was produced; the speech was mainly intended to placate the revolutionary masses of Egyptians who were then persistent in their attempts to topple Mubarak’s regime. The speech was the last-ditch attempt to dissuade these masses from their political actions; and that is why Mubarak’s tone was exceptionally and uncharacteristically personalized in comparison with the mainstream presidential speeches, which were normally spin-doctored by professional speechwriters to be scripted performances on the political stage.

However, it should be made clear that even though Mubarak’s last presidential speech was made by a speechwriter, his authorial voice cannot be dismissed away. According to Charteris-Black, “[t]he role of speechwriters is [...] to support the marketing of a ‘brand’ that is created by the individual politician and therefore it is the politician who must be considered as the author of his or her speeches”

(Charteris-Black, 2005, p. 8). Further, it should be added that the political context of situation strongly reflects what Wodak (2009, p. 7) describes as the “discrepancy between the *ideal*, projected self image” of Mubarak’s Presidential “I” as used in the speech on the one hand, and “the *real* self-image” that is actually protested against in the public sphere, which has been symbolized in the setting of Tahrir Square, on the other hand.

5. Conclusion

The foregoing analysis of Mubarak’s last presidential speech aimed at unravelling the socio-political meanings underlying Mubarak’s self-reference “I”, which designated his official status as the ex-President of Egypt at a politically critical time, the 25th of January revolution. As demonstrated in the analysis section above, there are two significant dimensions to the pronoun “I” in Mubarak’s last presidential speech. The first is semantic, and it has to do with the ideational representation of Mubarak in the speech, where the diverse participant roles of “I” significantly revealed how Mubarak experienced his presidential identity on the socio-political scale during the then ongoing crisis in Egypt in the wake of the 25th of January 2011. The second dimension of the political meaning of Mubarak’s “I” in the speech is essentially pragmatic, and it underscores the interpersonal action of Mubarak, as a President who attempted to construct a communicative link with the revolutionary target audiences in Tahrir Square. However, a third dimension of the political meaning of “I” has been imperative for the sake of a full-fledged analysis of Mubarak’s last presidential speech, that is, the textual meaning. With this level of meaning, the aforementioned dimensions of the political meaning of Mubarak’s self-reference have been enabled, and by now they can technically be labelled the pragma-semantics of Mubarak’s “I” in the speech. Such a textual level of meaning has been realized in the thematic patterns associated with the pronoun “I” in the overall speech; this has textually demarcated the ideational and interpersonal meanings of “I” both as a Participant and as a Subject, respectively, in the text structure of the speech.

Further, with this last textual dimension of meaning, the political context of situation wherein Mubarak’s Presidential “I” was embedded began to crystallize in terms of field, tenor, and mode. These components of the political situation of “I” enter into a dialectical relationship with the ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning dimensions to the pronoun “I”. As such, the first contextual component of field relates to the topical status of “I” in the speech, where Mubarak seemed keen on highlighting his presidential status. The second contextual component of tenor pertains to the interactive persona of Mubarak, that is, his relation with the target audience as a people under the rule of a “legitimate” president, whose political status is in genuine peril. The last contextual component of mode has to do with the medium of political communication, i.e. the speech itself, which was written to be performed in a semi-formal manner. It can be said that the Theme-reiteration style of the first-person pronoun “I”, discussed earlier, makes for an informal aspect of communication, or a more or less conversational style, with a view to opening up some space for dialogue between the public and the president, where the former are situationally averse to having any contact with the latter.

There emerge two significant findings out of this study, one is theoretical and the other practical. First, on a theoretical level, Halliday’s SF approach can be operationalized in the service of revealing subtly hidden meanings in presidential speeches (subtextual meanings). This is conditioned by implementing the approach as a whole; that is, in terms of both the co-textual analysis of Transitivity, Mood and Theme on the one hand, and the contextual analysis of field, tenor and mode, respectively, on the other hand. However, this should be done in a complementary fashion that features the analytically systematic correspondences between the two layers (co-textual and contextual) of analysis. Indeed, this can be a safeguard against the one of the deficiencies critiqued by Bell (1991, p. 214) against critical linguists in their “belief” that “there is ideological significance in every syntactic option.” The SF approach, going beyond such a generalization, derives its analytical vigour from its potential for detecting such correspondences between the micro linguistic meaning (semantic and pragmatic) and the macro socio-political meaning of the situation wherein the text/speech is performed.

Second, on a practical level, Mubarak's last presidential speech turned out to be a self-preservation attempt, whose textual focus on the self-referential "I" makes for an ego-centric representation of the politically dilapidated power of Mubarak in the wake of the 25th of January revolution. This local finding has been reached through the systematic and full application of Halliday's SF approach to the co-textual use of the first singular speaker-pronoun "I" in the speech, and the bearings it has had on the overall political context of situation. Crucially, and perhaps rather counterproductively, Mubarak's last presidential speech seems to have been spin-doctored in a solipsistic manner, which focused more on the *subjective* self-presentation of Mubarak than on the *objective* other-presentation of the protesting masses in Tahrir Square. Having done with the micro-macro analysis of the last presidential speech of Mubarak, one can safely assume that the whole speech appeared to be *politically anachronistic*; that is, it has utterly failed to be synchronous with the politically revolutionary moment in contemporary Egypt, where the needs of the Egyptian people had transcended politics and were by now concerned with mere physical necessities such as food, clothing and housing.

Finally, for future research, the same SF approach can be applied to the other political speeches by Mubarak before and after the 25 January revolution, with the purpose of detecting the potential differences in conveying political meanings to the same Egyptian audiences. This would be even more interesting were one to utilize specialized corpus data from various print-media sources; such electronic data could be manipulated by technologically sophisticated corpus software for the sake of a full-fledged textual analysis.

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Notes

1. The speech script is accurately translated from Arabic into English at BBC-News website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12427091>, last accessed on 20/04/2012.
2. Halliday (1978, p. 33) reports the three terms of "field," "tenor," and "mode" as constituting the overall context of situation where a text meaningfully unfolds: (a) *field* includes "not only the subject-matter in hand but the whole activity of the speaker or participant in a setting," (b) *tenor* refers to "the relationship between participants" in terms of "formality" and "the degree of emotional charge in it," (c) *mode* denotes "the channel of communication adopted."
3. Arabic transliteration: /ʔinna dima:ʔa s:uhada:ʔakum wa djarħa:kum/.
4. Arabic transliteration: /ʔinna dima:ʔa s:uhada:ʔakum wa djarħa:kum lan tadi:ʔa hadaran/.
5. Arabic transliteration: /wa ʔuʔakidu ʔannani lan ʔatahawan fi muʔa:qabati ʔal-mutasabbi:na/.
6. Arabic transliteration: /wa ʔaʔu:lu li-ʔa:ʔila:ti ha:ʔula:ʔi ʔadha:ya al-ʔabriya:ʔi ʔinnani taʔalamtu kula ʔal-ʔalami min ʔadjlihim/.
7. Arabic transliteration: /wa ʔaʔu:lu lakum ʔinna ʔistdja:bati li-sāwtikum wa risalatikum wa matā:libikum huwa ʔiltiza:mun la rādʔata fihil/.

8. Arabic transliteration: /wa ʔaʔu:lu lakum ʔinnani ka-rāʔi:sin lil-djumhuriya la ʔadjidu haradjan aw g:ādā:dā ʔabadan fi ʔal-ʔistima:ʔi li-s:aba:bi bila:di wa ʔattadja:wuba maʔahul/.
9. Arabic transliteration: /maʔa taʔki:di ʔal-ʔistiʔda: di li ... /.
10. Arabic transliteration: /laʔad ʔaʔlantu bi-ʔibarā:tin la tahtamilu ʔal-djadala aw ʔattaʔwi:la ʔadama taras:uhi li-ʔal-ʔintixaba:ti ʔal-ʔri:ʔa:siyati ʔal-muqbilah/.
11. Arabic transliteration: /ʔaʔlantu tamasuki bi-ʔalik/.
12. Arabic transliteration: /ʔaʔu:lu min djadi:d ʔinnaniʔis:tu min ʔadjli haḏa ʔal-wātān/.
13. Arabic transliteration: /ʔaʔi xutu:rat ʔal-muftaraʔ ʔassāʔb ʔal-ħa:li wa ʔiqṭina:ʔan min dja:nibi bi-ʔanna misra tadjta:zu lahḏāh fa:riqah fi ta:rixaha/.
14. Arabic transliteration: /ʔinnani ʔaʔlamuʔilm ʔal-yaqi:n ʔanna misra sa-tatadja:waz ʔazmataha/.
15. Arabic transliteration: /laʔad kuntu s:a:ban miḏla s:aba:ba misra ʔal-yawm/.
16. Arabic transliteration: /ḏa:lika huwa ʔal-qāsamu ʔal-laḏi ʔaqsamtuhu ʔama:ma ʔallahi wa ʔalwātān/.
17. Arabic transliteration: /laʔad tāraḥtu ruʔyah muhadadah lil-xuru:dj min ʔal-ʔazmah ʔa-rrā:hinah/.
18. Arabic transliteration: /tāraḥtu ha:ḏihi ʔa-rruʔyah multaziman bi-masʔu:liyati fi ʔal-xuru:dj bil-wātān min ha:ḏihi: ʔal-awqā:ti ʔal-ʔasi:bah/.
19. Arabic transliteration: /ʔasdartu taʔlima:ti bi-surʔati ʔal-ʔintiha:ʔi min ʔa-tahqīqā:ti ʔal-ʔusbu:ʔi ʔal-mā:dil/.
20. Arabic transliteration: /fa-qād taqadamtu ʔal-yawma bi-tālabi taʔdi:li siti mawa:din dustu:riyah/.
21. Arabic transliteration: /wadjahtu ʔal-mawta mā:rrā:tin ʔadi:dah tā:yā:ran ... /.
22. Arabic transliteration: /lam ʔasʔa yawman li-sultātin aw s:aʔbiyatīn za:ʔifah/.
23. Arabic transliteration: /wa ʔuʔakidu ʔannani lan ʔatahawan fi muʔa:qabati ʔal-mutasabbi:na biha bi-kuli ʔa-s:idiati wa ʔal-ħasm wa sa-ʔuħa:sibu ʔal-laḏi:na ʔadjramu: fi ḥaʔi s:aba:bina bi-ʔaʔsā: ma tuqārriruhu ʔahka:mu ʔal-qā:nun min ʔuqu:ba:tin rā:diʔah/.
24. Arabic transliteration: /wa ʔinnani ʔa:zimun kul ʔal-ʔazm ʔala ʔal-wafa:ʔi bi-ma taʔahatu bi-hi bi-kuli ʔal-djidiyati

- wa-assidq wa hari:sin kuli ?al-hirs ?ala tanfi:ðihi du:na ?irtida:ðin ?aw ?awdatin lil-wārā:?.*
25. It should be noted here that the English-translation adverbial *unequivocally* is equivalent to the prepositional phrase *lbi-?ibarā:tin la tahtamil ?al-djadal ?aw ?a-tta?wi:l/* in MSA. However, this MSA prepositional phrase has the same syntactic function of an adverbial as it qualifies the verb *declared* (*?a?lantu*). Indeed, this translation technically maintains what Enani (2000, p. 60) describes as “semantic equivalence,” in that both the MSA prepositional phrase and its equivalent adverbial in English have one and the same semantic function of the epistemic meaning of modality.
26. Here, again, the translation principle of “semantic equivalence” (see Note 25 above) holds as the English adjective *certain* and its clause-structure equivalent *?a?lamu ?ilma ?al-yaqī:n/* in MSA denote the same epistemic meaning of modality, and minutely reflects the speaker’s stance towards the propositional content of the message at stake.
27. Arabic transliteration: *?innani ta?alamtu kula ?al-?alami min adjlihim mi?lama ta?alamtum/*.
28. Arabic transliteration: *?wa yahizu fi nafsī ma ?ulaqīhi ?al-yawma min ba?di bani wātānil/*.

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Appendix

Phonetic symbols for Standard-Arabic forms

I. Vowels:

Symbol	Phonetic description
i	half-close to close front short vowel; lips are slightly spread
i:	close-front long vowel; lips are slightly spread
u	half-close back to central short vowel; lips are rounded
u:	close-back long vowel; lips are moderately rounded
a	half-front open short vowel; lips are slightly spread
a:	front-open long vowel; lips are slightly rounded
ā	back-open short vowel; lip position is neutral
ā:	back-open long vowel; lip position is neutral

II. Consonants & Semi-vowels:

Symbol	Phonetic description
b	voiced bilabial plosive consonant
d	voiced alveo-dental (non-emphatic) plosive consonant
d̤	voiced pharyngeal alveolar (emphatic) plosive consonant
t	voiceless alveo-dental (non-emphatic) plosive consonant
t̤	voiceless pharyngeal alveo-dental (emphatic) plosive consonant
k	voiceless velar plosive consonant
q	voiceless uvular plosive consonant
ʔ	voiceless glottal plosive consonant
f	voiceless labio-dental fricative consonant
θ	voiceless interdental fricative consonant
ð	voiced interdental fricative consonant
ð̤	voiced pharyngeal interdental fricative consonant
s	voiceless alveo-dental (non-emphatic) fricative consonant
s̤	voiceless pharyngeal alveo-dental (emphatic) fricative consonant
z	voiced alveo-dental fricative consonant
s:	voiceless alveo-palatal fricative consonant
ʔ̤	voiced pharyngeal fricative consonant
g:	voiced uvular fricative consonant
h	voiceless glottal fricative consonant
ħ	voiceless pharyngeal fricative consonant
x	voiceless uvular fricative consonant
dj	voiced palatal affricate consonant
m	voiced bilabial nasal consonant

Symbol	Phonetic description
n	voiced alveo-dental nasal consonant
r	voiced alveolar flap consonant
rr	voiced alveolar trill consonant
l	voiced alveolar lateral consonant
y	voiced palatal semi-vowel
w	rounded labio-velar semi-vowel



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