Understanding the shifts of religious discourse in time and space: Fadhl Chaker and Diam’s as case studies

Samira Farhat
Faculty of Arts and Humanities Sousse, Tunisia

Diam’s was a French Rap singer who converted to Islam and totally changed her career, discourse, and worldview in 2010. Fadhel Chaker was a Lebanese singer who also changed from romantic lyrics to calls for Jihad, after his sudden allegiance with Salafist sheikh Ahmed al-Assir. Renouncing to music on religious grounds and retiring from one’s career to embrace a new discursive practice could be studied sociolinguistically in order to investigate the dialectics of ideological convictions and discourse through space and time. The rapid and outstanding construction of new values and members’ resources can happen in large societies, but sometimes it can be initiated by individuals in a short span of time. The power of discourse could be investigated by looking at these shifts of language usage in time and space. The two prominent figures that are chosen in this paper are among many other people who decide everyday to shift from one discourse community to another. This shift includes a change of register, channel of communication, and discursive habits. This paper argues that people are social actors who assume social roles and make use of an order of discourse that is often congruent with their mental worlds. People may draw on different members’ discourses at the same time, or can shift from one community to another and display totally different social practices. This paper undertakes a critical discourse analysis of different interviews with Fadel Chaker and Diam’s before and after their explicit exposure of religiosity. Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis model of discourse analysis is used to discuss how the changes in verbal and non-verbal behaviours could stand for an inherent change in the mental frames.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis – social practice – members’ resource.