

The Discursive Construction of Saudi National Identity: Examining Interdiscursivity and Intertextuality Between Discourses from Top-Down and Bottom-Up

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Abstract:

Saudi Arabia is undergoing significant infrastructural changes guided by the Saudi 2030 Vision, a strategic plan to reform the country and reconstruct its national image. As a result, the discourse on Saudi national identity is also undergoing a process of reconstruction.

The Vision document explicitly states that all government and educational institutions will be utilised to pave the way for reform implementation. Indeed, institutionalised texts, such as educational textbooks, have demonstrated their role in promoting the Vision's objectives and recontextualising discourses about national identity that align with the Vision's objectives.

This study explores the top-down perspectives within the discourse on Saudi national identity constructed in school textbooks and the discursive means employed in constructing them. It also explores bottom-up perspectives within the discourse on Saudi national identity, as revealed in interviews with teachers and students who interacted with the analysed textbooks.

This presentation will focus on how the Saudi national identity is discursively constructed in top-down and bottom-up discourses and how top-down and bottom-up perspectives are intertextually and interdiscursively linked.

This investigation used the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) as its main conceptual and methodological framework. To mitigate the DHA's limitations, tools from Corpus Linguistics (CL), Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), and Conversation Analysis (CA) were incorporated with tools from the DHA.