

RESEARCH TITLE

**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE
IN THE AMERICAN AND IRAQI ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS**

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the strategies that the political candidates use to approach a persuasive communications with voters and how ideological differences are noticeable in the discourse of the American and Iraqi political candidates in their electoral campaigns using persuasive language throughout different strategies to persuade their audience to participate and elect them . After the critical analysis of two reports based on van Dijk's (2000) framework, it was found that the two candidates represent totally different matters. The strategies used to analyze are : Actor Description, Burden, Numbers, Euphemism, and Metaphor .

Key Words: candidate, strategy, persuasion, political.

1. Introduction

Language is viewed as advanced and multilayered means of communication. The use of the words and their combinations in a language are repeatedly used to be politically and socially loaded. Political figures often makes use of this advanced instrument of language to manipulate the people to accept their own opinions and policies by making the language to be more persuaded and convincing. The language is mainly used by politicians to mediate and compromise certain ideology (van Dijk, 1997).

It is an admitted fact that the political speeches and deliverances are meant to persuade rather than to entertain or to inform. Political speech is viewed as intentional speech that is meant to make up an interaction between the speaker and the audience. The linguistic repertoire is taken into account in the way to reconstruct reality and shifting individuals' or groups' stands or behaviours. This change can be directed towards the specific issues or ideologies by manipulating written or spoken discourse (Borchers, 2002).

2. Aim of the Study

The current paper aims mainly at investigating the analysis of the persuasive language strategies that American and Iraqi political candidates use in their electoral campaigns as a contrastive study by using a method and analytical framework from CDA; which is Van Dijk's (2000) Ideologies.

3. The concept of Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is considered one of the interdisciplinary domains between the human study and social sciences. The critical discourse analysis is a new analytical approach of discourse analysis. This approach considers as an important branch of discourse analysis. The approach of critical discourse analysis has come to be a significant and modern linguistic research. This approach is viewed as a critical instrument that can be applied and used to analyze specific discourse in specific situation. Critical discourse analysis uncovers the ideologies and process in a given text. It pinpoints the practical and social participation in the construction of the society (Krings et al, 1993).

Critical discourse is connected with discourse. It is a branch of discourse is defined by Brown and Yule (1983) as "communicative action in the medium of language". In this respect, it is found in any form of language that is being in used particularly the spoken language. Furthermore, discourse analysis is related with the way in which human use the language to effectively communicate with each other. However, discourse analysis is related to the study of how sentence are incorporated in the written or spoken form of a language. The sentence is considered a meaningful unit in the larger language piece such as conversation, paragraphs of interviews. This makes clear that the meaning of the sentence in relation to a larger frame is being related to the study of discourse analysis.

In addition, Fairclough (1993) viewed that the critical discourse analysis is as "analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships

of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles overpower; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony”.

The objective of critical discourse analysis is to examine a dialect manipulation as being a social practice. The user of the dialect is not working in disconnection. They are working in socialized mental codes (Signes, 2000).

Critical discourse analysis emphasizes the social setting and deals with connection of the structure the text. It also takes the social connection into consideration. It aims at coordinating the similarity between the structures of the content and the social capacity. It also concentrates on the contrast among the power relation. Critical discourse analysis is represented in the way of describing the formal feature of the text. It is also deals with the interpretation of the text and with the source of the interaction, as well as it explains the interaction with the social context (Fairclough, 1993).

In addition, Critical discourse analysis is a linguistic instrument that is used to be applied to the specific discourse analysis such as the analysis of the press. This analysis is made by the use of analytically accepted method of social analysis (Fowler et al, 1979).

Critical discourse analysis works mainly in the ideological and political processes. Thus, the critical discourse analysis is defined as “the uncovering of implicit ideologies in texts. It unveils the underlying ideological prejudices and therefore the exercise of power in texts” (Widdowson, 2000).

Furthermore, according to VanDjik, (1993) critical discourse analysis is defined as “a shared perspective on doing linguistics, semiotics, or discourse analysis”. Krings et al (1993) views critical discourse analysis as the practical connection to the social and political involvement that help to construct the society.

4. Persuasive Language

The concept persuasion is originated from the Latin word ‘persuade’. The form can be further divided into the initial forms ‘pre’ which means ‘through’ and ‘suade’ which means to ‘argue or advice’ Persuasion generally viewed as being a kind of discourse that comes to impact the behaviour, feeling or thought. It is significant to maintain the fact that the persuasion is wholeheartedly related with speech persuasiveness (Dediac, 2006).

The achievement of persuasion is regarded as a complex process since it needs to maintain the meanings of comprehension, retention and acceptance (Oliver, 1986).

In addition, persuasion is considered as complicated and sophisticated process of interaction in which the persuader endeavors hard to change a

response or an opinion. Thus, persuasion is viewed as a method by which the receiver can influence the message to mark certain intention. Persuasive method can then be an innate or natural skill (Wilcox, 2005).

There is a general consensus that most of the speech is done in order to persuade the listeners to do an action. This persuasion needs a kind of specific language such as the emotional language to be persuaded. Furthermore, the speakers often try to grasp the attention of the hearer by establishing reliance and desiring productive policy. Thus, persuasion is seen to be an act where the speaker wants to persuade the listeners to focus their attention toward on certain opinions. The process of persuasion is acknowledged by the conditions of delineating the language and presenting opinions in favor for others. Persuasion is mainly directed to affect attitudes and opinions. It is also directed to influence principles and views (Osborn & Osborn, 1997).

The persuading techniques are basically used by the leaders to reflect power. They mainly show power by the verbal power of persuasions. They often use the persuading techniques to make clear that the profits are increased in their reign time. It is clear that persuading process is one of basic techniques to demonstrate the various political structures of powers. The increasing democratic social orientations lead to the fact that leaders are to be persuaded so as to convince the potential community to follow their opinions and accept their policies (Duranti, 2006).

The use of the persuading speeches is important to make policies to be more trusted and decorated .Hence, the political speech encompasses tremendous amount of the persuading language to convince the public community. Therefore, the government officials, activists and politicians extensively manipulate the language of persuasion as part of their rhetoric speech. The mostly accepted method to promote the persuasion is to tackle the emotional issues that can gain the persuasion of the audience. Having knowledge about the language of persuasion, politicians can identify the problems that may face them and then they use the right strategy to describe an argument (Beard, 2000).

Persuasion and rhetoric are considered to be inseparable. Rhetoric means the art of persuading and it mainly revolves around the convincing processes. Persuasion differs from rhetoric in the fact the persuading approach deals with both speaker's intention and the positive consequences , whereas rhetoric is related to the art of communication in relation to the listeners' perspectives .This means that the speaker being more rhetoric, he is more persuasive (Charteris-Black, 2005).

5.Electoral Campaigns

The process of elections is now considered as experience where almost all countries have come through. The most important attempt of this process is to accomplish the effective political communication. The entire electing process is made for political communication. The communication is necessary among the campaign leaders, campaign volunteers, donors, activists and

supporters. The election procedure aims at making the entire process to be attractive and advertising process. It is meant to build up relationship and connection among the groups. The whole political campaign is meant to make the political communication to be massively influential and operative. The electoral campaign can be spread out via various media communication (Strömbäck, & Kiouisis, 2014).

The political visual communication is considered one of the effective means of electoral communication where many aims and strategies are designated to draw the attention of the voters. The use of posters and picture for the purpose of making propaganda for the election parties seem to have well-known and widely spread phenomena in all of the countries especially during the election time. The poster techniques remain as one of the best activities done by the political figures to make their programs and credentials available to the public. The primary role for picture and poster is to make up a political campaign (Gass & Seiter, 2010).

The time of the election is considered the cherished time for these political posters and pictures that use a culturally political choice. The use of the posters can also explain the ideology of the candidates and the need for voters (Baker & Ellece, 2011).

The use of poster and picture can also reflect power in the election where it can convey common grounds with the voters. It is clear the use of poster and picture can help to promote motivation in the electing time and can be a means of winning the election as the propaganda is made up in such a way that help attract the community to adopt certain political ideas or opinions (Dumitrescu, 2011)

6.Methodology

6.1 Sources of Data

The sources of data for this study will be two reports which are delivered by the political candidates for the parliament electional campaigns in the 2020-2021 elections in America by Biden and Iraq by Al: Amiri collected from their electoral campaigns 2020-2021. The data collection process is based on selecting the most appropriate speeches in time they are delivered and the same purpose of the political event.

6.2The Model

The modal that is followed in this study is Van Dijk's (2000) framework which is based on the ideological square. This modal presents a practical method for analyzing discourse. There are common strategies for this framework which can be demonstrated as follows;

1. Actor Description

Discourse contains various types of actor description. They are described as members of individual and group. They are described by the first name or family names or job designations. These actors can be described in term of the role or group name or as being specific or unspecific.

2. Burden

This strategy is based on various arguments which reflect the principles that are ensured and granted. It is also based in the self-evident and accepting conclusions.

3. Euphemism

This strategy is considered as a rhetorical one. It is a “semantic mitigation of the positive self-presentation”.

4. Metaphor

This refers to the persuasive meaning and rhetorical speeches which can be ‘negative’ and be included under the strategy of “negative other description or ‘positive’ for positive self-description”.

5. Number game

Numbers and statics are used to emphasize objectives. For the discourse has to be persuaded, facts and numbers are presented against the impressions and opinions.

7. Data Analysis

This section is devoted to the analysis of the data , first , the English data then the Arabic.

7.1 English Data Analysis

1. Actor Description

((A lot of people don't get it. You're in the front lines of this pandemic. And as we've all seen too clearly this week, COVID-19 is still a threat to our health, as well as our economic security. We have to do so much more to step up to get this virus under control.))

In this strategy, the candidate uses certain linguistic units such people and we to indicate the American society as a whole in front of a big dilemma that is presented by the international spread of Covid 19. The speaker, Biden tries to convince people that they have to take into consideration that critically huge threat which is surrounding the lives of the people.

They have to be determined in taking serious steps in order to overcome that bad situation. The speaker intends to use this strategy positively to show how all Americans are equally to take action and avoid that danger.

2. Burden

((You deserve leadership in government who will be there for you, will fight for you, prioritize your health, your safety, and in the process, prioritizing everybody's health and safety.))

To illustrate that it is the responsibility of all to be as one leader. The candidates talk to the audience as if he guarantees their positive attitude to fight and compete to prioritize their health and safety. He uses the priority of health and safety to win their opinion and support.

This particular strategy is positively used by the speaker so as to show that the audience can take responsibility upon their shoulder. In spite of the strategy of include is being used, the speaker maintain the self-confidence as he speaks to the audience as if he substantiates their bearing to the responsibility.

3. Numbers

((More than 200,000 Americans have died from COVID. 7.3 million have been infected. 30 million have lost paychecks, hours, or their jobs entirely.))

For the sake of reliability, the speaker uses the strategy of ‘number’. He tries to persuade people about reliable statistics how serious he is in reflecting the truth in his speech. The use of numbers and statistical information can help to promote the truth of the speech.

He tries to show the danger of the situation it is when a large number of people are dying every hour. Such strategy is used to show how much serious the attitude is to be and how much attention to focus upon the increasing number of victims.

4- Euphemism

((Brothers and sisters, thank you for joining us today for this special event.))

The rhetorical strategy of euphemism is used by the candidate when he uses the words ‘brothers and sisters’, considering his audience as members of his family or as his brother and sisters. This is also persuasive strategy to indicate that fact that it is pure and royal attitude toward the community or the society as whole.

The audience imagines the way the candidate considers them. Throughout this strategy, the speaker is to refer to the closeness and intimacy he feels about his people. This technique is considered very persuasive in that it is used with family with unity indication that helps be convincing.

5. Metaphor

((We aren’t blue states and red states. We’re the United States. United States.))

The speaker used the metaphor as a strategy in his speech to show the fact the United States isn’t these simple power and dominant countries. He used the terms “blue and red states”. By this strategy, Biden wants to convey message to the American society as well as to the entire world that America is the power and the dominant authority is the power all over the world. America is the super power and it represents a leading country for the entire world. He doesn’t mean the literal use of colors but he attempts to show that American is something different in a positive view.

7.2 Arabic Data Analysis

1. Actor Description

((نحمي العراق بأرواحنا وما قوافل الشهداء التي قدمها أبناء الحشد وجحافل المقاومة إلا دليل قاطع على .
صدق ما نقول))

((We protect Iraq with our souls, and the martyrs presented by the public mobilization and the sons of resistance hordes are conclusive evidence of the sincerity and commitment.))

Al Amiri in a persuasive strategy tries to convince the voters that he is to protect Iraq and Iraqi society. He declares that he is, as a leader, obliged to defend Iraqi. He and his fighters have sacrificed everything for the sake of Iraq and the Iraqi souls. He stresses that they did their best to fight eh militant group of terrorists represented by ISIS of years. Peace and stability of Iraq and Iraqi people were their main goals not privacies.

Focusing on the large numbers of martyrs who sacrificed for the sake of achieving peace of Iraq and Iraqis, Ali Amiri uses certain strategy to prove their role personally in the process of protection and using that as a clear evidence to show that he is loyal and honest to his country and people.

2. Burden

((سنتحمل بالمرحلة القادمة المسؤولية الكاملة في التصدي والنهوض بإعمار البلاد ونحن قادرون على
بنائه كما حميناه من شر الإرهاب))

((In the coming stage, we will bear the full responsibility for confronting and promoting the reconstruction of the country, and we are able to build it as we protected it from the evil of terrorism.))

In this particular tragedy, the candidates show that they are a group of candidates belonging to one political party. They are able to be in the position of a highly sensitive responsibility. As an independent party, his candidates shows that they have the ability to reconstruct their country and population as they were able to protect the country and population from the danger of ISIS. Al Amiri tries to peruse his audience that they can take the responsibility to reconstruct the different system in Iraqi government.

3. Numbers

((سنتبنى مبادرة 100 الف برميل من النفط يومياً مقابل الخدمات وتوفير فرص العمل))

((We will adopt the initiative of 100,000 barrels of oil per day in exchange for services and job opportunities))

The candidate tries to clarify his intention to improve the economic status of individuals. He declare s that his party intends to specify particular number of oil barrels or percentage of the oil value is to go for increasing the economical and service issues to create opportunities or to give the floor to the group of the youth to work and improve their economic conditions as well as social level.

The candidate uses the language of number so as to persuade the voters that he has set forth a successful program in case he won the election as a strategy for persuasion.

4- Euphemism

((ستبقى عوائل الشهداء والجرحى أمانة في أعناقنا ولن نتخلى عنهم وعن دعمهم وتوفير كامل احتياجاتهم))

((The families of the martyrs and the wounded will remain our responsibility, and we will not abandon them. We will support them, and provide their needs.))

The candidate uses to show the intimacy towards the families of the martyrs and the families of the wounded defenders. He tries to show his constant support to those who sacrificed their souls, families and money just to protect their country and people.

The candidate insists and repeats his words to show his positive and supportive attitude to those who protected their people and to provide all their needs. In this strategy, the speaker tries to show his positive feeling and attitude to his voters or the audience he is talking to in his electoral campaign.

5. Metaphor

((حماية مجتمعنا من الآفات الخطيرة التي تهدده، وفي مقدمتها أفة المخدرات))

((We will commit ourselves to the mission of protecting our society from the dangerous conspiracies and problems that threaten it, especially the drug scourge.))

Throughout his speech the candidate lists a number of problems that the society suffers from. Many real dangerous problems the society confronts are to be the seriously treated. The drug is described as a curse or an insect that threatens the society.

The candidate uses metaphor to describe the drug addiction in the form of the bad insect that is regarded as a deadly problem that must get rid of it. The strategy of metaphor here is used to give clear image to the serious current danger that affect very badly on the behaviour of the whole life of the youth.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the same strategies are used but the difference is very clear throughout the speeches of the two candidates. The Iraqi candidate always uses the first pronoun and repeats frequently (we will) referring to his party as if the party individually will be the decision maker whereas the American candidate although repeats the use of the pronoun (we) but he intends that both the government and the Americans both are to be the decision maker. It is also concluded that the Iraqi candidate always tries to show that only the political party he belongs to was able and will be the only party the able to defend the country whereas the American shows that he is one of the ordinary people and that all they have to be responsible for the role.

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