

A Study on The Use of Political Rhetoric Device and Discourse Analysis in Political Speeches

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Abstract

Political speeches involve a persuasive strategies and it aims to move audience. In an elaborate political process of choosing correct representative and in high stakes politics, speeches form a very important part. Ever wondered how speech like “I have a dream” became one of the most famous speeches across the world? The aim of the paper is to study the approaches of linguistics in political speeches. The sample speeches are Hon. Donald Trump’s Presidential Campaign Announcement in 2015 and Hon. Barack Obama’s Democratic National Committee’s speech in 2012. The analysis is mainly achieved through looking into the system of transitivity and renovation of language to represent how two presidents' language can integrate both ideology and power in their political speeches on masses. A study of their use of the political rhetoric device and discourse analysis is done. The intonation, repetition and pronouns used in the speech have been studied.

Key Words: Ideology, Power, Rhetoric, Repetition, Discourse Analysis

Introduction

Political speeches involve a persuasive strategies and it aims to move audience. In an elaborate political process of choosing correct representative and in high stakes politics, speeches form a very important part. Speeches intend to entice the audience through their capability. In the study of Michael Silverstein on the poetics of politics says that we the potential

electorate [...] learn how to listen to and look at political communication [...] always over the dependency on media commentators and planner of the ‘message.’ We have to appreciate, then, how political speech in the multi-layered jumble of the mass media is like articulate noise shouted into a chasm, a canyon. If it doesn’t just drive away and abscond, it echoes in particular situations as it is selected repetitively and interpretatively reshaped by a mediating press and other institutions in the public sphere”(2005).

Politics demands influencing the mass, and that’s why the most powerful personalities are amazing orators. They have the superpower of language manipulation. These Speakers can turn the mob or the crowd for good and bad. Shakespeare in his play “Julius Caesar” presents us with great speakers like Brutus and Antony change the mob in different ways. Not only in fiction but it is acknowledged that throughout the history of politics, scholars have always been in search of accurate and influential words, slogans and catchphrases. These speech helps a person who is addressing the mass to define their cultural identity in relation to national identity.

The entirety of the speech plays an important role as the speaker must know what he or she is going to achieve and should be able to predict the outcome. The wholesome effect of the speech is defined by the approach of the speaker. In the following speeches, Mr. Obama and Mr. Trump try to use a lot of hard facts to promote their nomination for election. This is one of the approaches adapted by the political leaders across the world. Apart from this, a sense of themselves is necessary as they should be relatable which can be done through sharing experience and making light jokes. The use of pronouns like ‘I’, ‘We’ and ‘They’ are studied in the following analysis and noticed that it helps in propagating unity.

“Language is influentially and instrumentally powerful. One clear characteristic of language and its role in social interaction is the instrumental and effective connection with power. In general, effective power affects people either in behaving in specific ways or in

making them adopting views/ attitudes without making clear force on them.” (Fairclough 2013).

Study on Hon. Barack Obama’s Speech

Hon. Barack Obama is one of the loved presidents of America, his speaking skills are admirable. His sophisticated way of speaking makes a perfect sample to inspect. The speech chosen to be sampled is Democratic National Committee’s speech in 2012.

Analyzing the political speech phonetically and phonologically is very vital in terms of intonation, rhymes, alliteration, poetic devices, repeating of vocabulary or phrases, and conveying the meaning behind the political speech.

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“We have opened thousands of acres in oil exploration and we will open more. Unlike my opponent, I won’t let Oil Company ride this country’s energy plan or endanger our

coastline or collect another 4 billion dollar in corporate welfare from our tax payers. We are offering a better path.”

The first line “We have opened thousands of acres in oil exploration and we will open more”, the pitch is middle range and slow with doesn’t have much of emphasis other than the phrase ‘open more’. But the pitch gets higher in the next line as he focuses his future plans which are better than his opponents. The line, “I won’t let Oil Company ride this country’s energy plan, endanger our coastline or collect another 4 billion dollar in corporate welfare from our tax payers” makes the crowd applause as he justifies his actions brilliantly. The raising pitch gets audience emotion which is a very good persuasive technique. The speech of Obama is a wholesome piece where he has a poetic rhythm. It has a number of lines which moves audience.

Pronouns ‘I’ and ‘Our’ is used in repetition to create the idea of unity as it makes it more persuasive. Most of the political speeches refer ‘I’ to denote their party as a whole. And ‘you’ is called out to refer to voters. Short pauses were seeming in Obama speech and it is to make the listeners prepared for receiving a crucial information that is about to come.

Discourse analysis is a broad field which is related to use of language in context. According to Tistcher, “discourse is a broad term with different definitions, which 'integrate a whole palette of meanings”. Discourse analysis takes into account different hypothetical and procedural approaches where material process is process of "doing". There are two participants in this process. Actor (The one who does the action); Goal (The one who is affected by the action.) and Process (action words either abstract or concrete) constitute the procedure. In Hon. Obamas speech there are plenty of examples of this. One if the quote justifies the above. It is analyzed below.

“Around the world we (Actor) have strengthened (Process) our alliances (Goal).

We (Actor) have reasserted (Process) our power across the pacific (Goal) and stood up

(Process) against China on behalf of our workers (Goal). South Sudan from Burma to Libya to us (Actor) have advanced (Process) the rights and dignity of all human beings, men and won (Goal).”

This sample can also be analyzed according to the Hymn’s SPEAKING theory.

	Definition	Sample
SETTING	Physicalcircumstances,subjective definition of an occasion	One speaker addressing many in a DNC Convention Hall.
PARTICIPANTS	Speaker/Sender/Addresser/Hearer/Receiver/Audience / addressee	Barack Obama to an audience
ENDS	Purposes and goals or outcomes	Persuade the mass to elect him as President for a second term
ACT SEQUENCE	Message form and content	His achievement and future plan
KEY	Tone, manner	Persuasive.
INSTRUMENTS	Channel (Verbal, non-verbal, physical) Forms of speech drawn from Community repertoire	Verbal
NORMS OF INTERACTION	Specific properties attached to speaking interpretation and interpretation of norms within cultural belief system.	Frozen form and no slangs allowed. Cannot use any vulgarisms. Highly political
GENRE	Textual categories	Public Speech

Study on Hon. Donald Trump’s Speech

Hon. Donald trump, who is the current president of America, has always been amidst controversies because of his impulsive remarks on racism and Americanism. Here, the paper will sample his one of the famous speech of Presidential Campaign Announcement in 2015 and try to find out what makes him popular among his people.

Tone in Hon. Trump's speech is patterned with frequent ups and down. End of the sentences are usually not stressed. The stressed and unstressed words, when heard together, creates melodic rhythm. His speech is mostly delimited on articulateness. There is no build up to the end of the speech. Whereas Hon. Obama's speeches are richly emotive that aims to move audience.

Hon. Trump uses simple sentence to convey a message. Hon. Trump's vocabulary and grammatical structure is meek and lacks diversity. According to studies, Hon. Trump averaged significantly fewer syllables per word than the last 14 Presidents, and used significantly fewer unique words.

Powerful speech tends to be subjective rather than objective, and is therefore decked with what we call pragmatic words and constructions; it expresses attitude rather than content. Hon. Trump also turns the lights on himself when he switches from "you" to "I" within the passage, which is an indication of the subjective nature of casual speech, even if his ample use of pronouns suggests an especially strong focus upon the self.

The following is a quote from Hon. Trump's speech which can be used to investigate, how persuasive he is in a public forum:

"Look, having nuclear – my uncle was a great professor and scientist and engineer, Dr. John Trump at M.I.T.; good genes, very good genes, O.K., very smart, the Wharton School of finance, very good, very smart –... if I were a liberal, if, like, O.K., if I ran as a liberal Democrat, they would say I'm one of the smartest people anywhere in the world – it's true! –

but when you're a conservative Republican they try – oh, they do a number – that's why I always start off: "Went to Wharton, was a good student, went there, went there, did this, built a fortune" – you know I have to give my life credentials all the time, because we're a little disadvantaged – but you look at the nuclear deal, the thing that really bothers me ..."

This passage lacks in unity and logic. Hon. Trump starts with addressing the nuclear deal with Iran, but then interposes some perceptions about his blood relation to his uncle's geniuses to the subject. The line "good genes, very good genes, O.K., very smart, the Wharton School of finance, very good, very smart" is placed unnecessarily and doesn't accord to his content. Mr. Trump tries to make the speech subjective but fails in comparison to Mr. Obama. By the end of the passage, he loses his focus from a very important topic of "Nuclear Deal" to his "genes". There are fewer use of persuasive devices like metaphors but a lot of subjective approaches noted in the speech of Hon. Trump. The constant use of "very" is to focus his ability as a political personality.

With these analysis we observe that language, rhetoric and discourse are politically interlinked. Language is used as a weapon not only in politics but also in science and journalism and in every aspect of mass indulgence. Political language is a term that was brought together by innovators of both propaganda research and the social sciences. Impelling control is one of the objectives, and hence these speech connect to power with language. The analysis was to help us to understand the art and science of power in relation to language, famously known as political semantics.

Conclusion

Transitivity and transformation is two of the principles seen. Words and phrases may come to be interpreted within different political frameworks and propagate their ideologies. This is hence, in relation to the "representation" of how language is employed to showcase

what we believe and think. This study endorses that these politicians use bare language to build a connection between politicians and the mass. Hon. Obama and Hon. Trump are both well-known speakers and use very different forms and patterns. Even though Hon. Barack Obama weighs more on the persuasive style and can be compared to leaders like Hon. Nelson Mandel in his style, Hon. Donald Trump uses implausible techniques, yet puts the message across. In both the cases they have agendas that can be understood.

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