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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: EXAMINING DONALD TRUMP'S POLITICAL SPEECHES

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Abstract

Donald Trump's linguistic strategies have been analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Trump's speeches feature issues, such as domestic political considerations, individualism in decision-making, and his political vision. Trump's dialogues disclose in the ideology of consistent with tactical patterns of us versus them. He constructs reality for his audience via representations of social actors. Language continues to be used to communicate political ideas and actions to followers. This study utilizes the Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) approach to illustrate the influence of President Trump's language (in political speech) to his audience. The review attempts to identify and explain influential aspects of the President's speeches, such as modality, coherence, and transitivity. President Trump remains as one of the most prominent global leaders meaning that his use of linguistic CDA linguistic concepts impacts how he communicates with audiences across the United States as well as globally (Wang & Liu, 2018). Overall, this research discussion identifies and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of Trump's speeches to understand his political discourse that he discloses via different linguistic elements to influence his followers and audiences.

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Introduction:-

Critical discourse analysis is a multidisciplinary concept to discourse and stress on language as a form of social practice. It highlights that linguistic and social practices significantly impact on each other and underscores the construction and reinforcement of societal power relations using language. According to Mohammadi and Javadi (2017), CDA arose from etymology in the 1970s and was advanced at the University of East Anglia. They were advanced by Norman Fairclough who established and presented different representations for text analysis based on CDA. Critical discourse analysis allows the review of language and discourses in social institutions; it focusses on how social relations, identity, power, and knowledge are created via written as well as spoken texts. CDA is currently an influential concept of analyzing political and social speeches, especially those covering influential world leaders, such as Donald Trump. Many scholars are applying CDA concepts to study and understand the use of linguistic characteristics to describe how many leaders influence their followers by employing selected words and concepts.

CDA analyzes fundamental causes and consequences of issues. A study by Sujito and Muttaqin (2019) examines persuasive strategies employed by President Trump to win the US 2016 election. The authors apply van Dijk's frameworks of politics, ideology, and discourse to identify and explain the discursive structure contained in the

transcript of Trump's speech. Trump exploits linguistic as a tool to influence his followers and form contracts with his hearers. Sujito and Muttaqin (2019) point out that politicians' capacity to persuade and impress their followers is a key factor that determines their success in realizing their goals and winning public consensus. Individuals who win public consensus are able to use language, words, terms and symbolic expressions to communicate to their audiences (Rachman&Yunianti, 2017). These concepts or capacities to effectively use symbolic expressions and terms creates a discursive structure of language that promotes a deep understanding of the communicated message by the listener.

Political Discourse Analysis:

Political speeches are intended to communicate specific messages and goals to audiences. Therefore, public speakers tend to employ languages that match their objectives and mirror their points of view. Political discourse pertains to a classic discourse, entailing slogan, speech, and replies given in press conferences. It establishes a relationship with the audience to gain politicians' recognition and support. A critical review of political speeches increases an individual's understanding of the role of proper use of language to communicate with audiences (Wodak, 2015). Therefore, the political declaration is different from other discussions since it takes the stand of the speaker, elucidates his view, and pronounces his proposal with its essential aspect being to achieve political objectives. A study by Chen (2018) examines political discourses by demonstrating how speakers convince their audiences to support and accept their opinions. The author establishes that language one uses can portray the views, stance, and attitudes of that person revealing his/her intentions. Politicians often use metaphors that may be challenging for some people to comprehend or figure out their intended message. Hence, the review of political discourse analysis can aid in understanding the political objective of the speaker.

Propositional Structures:

The use of actors and pronouns:

President Trump often utilizes the pronouns "I" and "my" to denote to himself as a leader sponsoring the country's financial developments. According to Bonilla (2016), employing these pronouns when denoting economic improvement proposes that despite the financial depression the country faces, the budget is not as bad as it should credit to his corporate efforts and business contributions. Trump also uses the pronoun "we" as a president to include himself and other Americans. Consequently, Trump, as the president, sees Americans as ingroup about the economic development resulting from the combined efforts of all Americans. Bonilla (2016, p. 414) quotes Trump's speech, "Some 75,000 New Jerseyans and their families are working because of my business; more than 43,000 directly in Atlantic City. In 1992 alone I paid more than a billion dollars in wages and benefits to our people. (S. Oct 5, 1993)." Therefore, Trump frequently uses the pronouns "I", "my", and "we" to communicate and influence his followers.

The use of modality:

Trump, as a businessperson, often exploits modal verbs to signpost likelihood, indecision, and option. In this regard, he engages modal verbs of opportunity to demonstrate that he is less convinced, reducing the degree of accountability to what he said. Nonetheless, as a president, Trump involves more accountability in his discourses, which is emphasized by the usage of theories that mirror or reflect on certainty. For example, Bonilla (2016, p. 414) quotes him saying, "I think that America is a country that has tremendous, tremendous potential, I think that America is using very very little of its potential. I feel that this country with the proper leadership could go on to become what it once was, and I hope and certainly hope that it does go on to be what it should be. (I. Oct 6, 1980)." Also, on February 16, 2017, Trump said that Walmart managed to create 10,000 jobs in the United States as a result of different administrative policies and initiatives and in the end assured more employment opportunities. Therefore, Trump's use of modal verbs conveys different interpretations when communicating as a businessperson or as the president.

Modality can also be used to express an individual's desire to reflect on their faith and inclination. According to Chen (2018), modality frequently appears in political speeches and declarations. The author further illustrates that high modality indicates a persons' firm stance and attitude, where moderate modality demonstrates a mitigatory mood. President Trump frequently employs modality to express his views and feelings. For example, he often uses "will", but rarely uses "must". The president mostly uses middle modality to forecast the future and explain a resolution. His goal is to build great confidence to excite the audiences' passions. According to Chen (2018), he encourages and persuades his audiences to accept his attitude and ideas. As noted earlier, Trump has the tendency to use personal pronouns to express his interpersonal meaning. Chen (2018) points out that the relationship between

political speakers and audiences is improved by selecting diverse personal pronouns creating a peaceful and united environment.

Coherence:

President Trump employs different linguistic aspects or features to make his speeches coherent. Chen (2018) analyzes Donald Trump's inaugural speech by focusing on perspectives of coherence, personal pronoun, modality, and attitude to disclose Trump's political intention and assist readers to comprehend the meaning of discourse and nurture their crucial awareness and logical aptitude. In this regard, CDA concentrates on the discourse's structure and content. Chen (2018) illustrates that the most apparent aspect of Trump's inaugural speech is a parallelism that increases the compactness of the content. Trump employs parallelism to engage the audiences and empower them to feel mighty and grandiose. For example, he says, "Together, we will make America strong again. We will make America wealthy again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again. And, yes, together, we will make America great again (Chen, 2018, p. 971)." Trump deliberates hot topics relating to Americans' life, such as healthcare, employment, border, and facilities. These problems are common among Americans; therefore, Trump ensures he explicitly communicates his ideas and plans. He uses this parallel aspect to strengthen the credibility of his speech and to arouse the audiences' sentiments.

In the inaugural speeches, Trump employs repetition to highlight build American's confidence and inspire them towards making America great again as well as emphasize the improvements in the lives of many Americans (Chen, 2018). In the speeches, Trump repeatedly uses the word "together" demanding the audiences to perform an active role in restoring America. He uses some words repetitively to build solidarity and cooperation as well as encourage them to inherit the good traditions of the country's founding fathers and make great achievements. Chen (2018) notes that the use of parallelism is convincing; however, it lacks concrete and material contents. Trump employs his influence and superiority to brainwash Americans as he intends to bound himself to American revival as well as accomplish his political goals. For example, he says, "The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer (Chen, 2018, p.971)." This use of passive voice underscores the leading role of men and women. He creates high expectations to encourage Americans to make great efforts toward realizing the American dream. He also employs marked themes; for example, he says, "Now arrives the hour of action (Chen, 2018, p. 971)." The use of "now" is intended to interact with audiences' attention since he is a businessperson who comprehends the urgency of time. Trump emphasizes the implications of action and urges Americans to take immediate action. For example, he says "empty is over" to appeal to them the importance of taking action in building entrepreneurial spirit. As a result, he creates awareness to the Americans about the urgency of building up establishments.

Trump's speeches are incomprehensible to some Americans, especially since only a few of his big speeches are scripted. In his speeches, he often speaks off the cuff creating many unscripted moments that are characterized by fractured and unfinished sentences. Many people consider this approach to be incoherent and claim there are many differences between Trump's remarks and listening to him at rallies. Donald Trump, in his inaugural speech he frequently employed these two features to communicate with the audience. In Trump's speeches that could be considered as coherent, for example, his inaugural speech, he employs cohesive, meaningful, unified, and comprehensible language to audiences. Hence, coherence in Trump's speeches can sometimes depend on the audiences to understand his words as well as the use of scripted remarks.

Transitivity:

Transitivity defines the ideational function illustrating individuals' perspective, attitude, stance. In many cases, it mirrors a speaker's intentions towards influencing the audience. According to Chen (2018), in speeches, it comprises of two key concepts: relational and material processes.

Material process:

Chen (2018) demonstrates that Trump, in his speeches, uses the material process to inform audiences regarding projected American achievements and strategic moves. This approach can trigger the patriotic passions of Americans as well as support their efforts towards realizing the American dream. For example, Trump says, "Because today we are not merely transferring power from one Administration to another, or from one party to another but we are transferring power from Washington DC and giving it back to you, the people (Chen, 2018, p. 969)." In this quote, Trump employs the material process to explain that his administration will be taking the side of fellow Americans and the people's power. Therefore, it means that his presidency will focus concentrate on people's demands and interests. He uses specific words, "transferring" and "giving" to reveal that his administration will

implement formal control on behalf of the Americans. Utilizing such linguistic terms can stir or trigger enthusiasm and inspire Americans towards being proud of the administration, giving the president support from the public (Yulia, 2018). Trump can use such material processes to enlist the support of audiences; for example, “For too long, a small group in our nation’s Capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost (Chen, 2018, p. 970).” These material processes are essential linguistic components applied by politicians to influence their followers towards a common political objective.

Relational process:

This concept defines a permanent, objective, and authoritative linguistic perception. Trump regularly employs this notion; for example, during his presidential inauguration, he said, “This is your day. This is your celebration. And this, the United States of America, is your country (Chen, 2018, p. 970).” Trump utilizes such as comments to encourage and reinforce Americans to strive towards realizing the American dream. He claims that all U.S. citizens are accountable for their success and should also be actively involved in protecting and building the nation. He employs the relational process to emphasize that if all Americans could collectively work together, the country would be more powerful and prosperous. The relationship between Trump and Americans is explicit and well-defined towards the American dream. In other words, it outlines Trump’s American goal based on what he says on speeches, economically, socially, military, and politically. The country currently has a robust foreign policy the defines Trump’s long-term administrative agenda. Therefore, the use of the relational process can build the public’s confidence towards accomplishing a certain political, social, and economic goal.

Conclusion:-

CDA is a contemporary concept that is receiving increased attention from researchers and other academicians. President Trump's speeches are constantly analyzed, applying CDA concepts to illustrate his use of language to influence audiences. Trump employs many linguistic characteristics, such as modality, coherence, and transitivity, to persuade ‘fellow Americans’ to accept his ideas of making America great again. CDA is an essential tool that defines and illustrates different aspects of language used to communicate ideas and to determine the generalizability and applicability of political concepts of influencing followers in different partisan contexts. Analysis of multiple Trump’s speeches illustrates the effective use of linguistic characteristics, such as parallelism and modality, to communicate political goals. Trump frequently employs such language forms that fit his political intentions, interests, and objectives to pass a message to his audience.

This review has analyzed as well as interpreted Trump’s speeches to identify and disclose the use of linguistic concepts in Trump’s speeches. The study emphasizes the influence of modality, transitivity, and coherence in political dialogues to persuade listeners towards specific political goals. This form of communication imitates an individual’s observation, stance, and attitude that reveal his objectives. Therefore, employing such language features encourages as well as inspires audiences and alters their beliefs and viewpoints convincing of the strengths of the speaker’s ideas. Trump is a frequent user of such linguistic factors to influence the standpoints of his followers. The field of CDA has only received limited attention from scholars and academicians, however, over the last few years, many researchers are focusing on CDA of political speeches of influential politicians, such as Donald Trump. This field of CDA has also received increased attention due to the contemporary significance of social and political setups. This area also needs additional research to include sociocultural, sociohistorical, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Overall, using CDA to evaluate different Trump’s political speeches is enlightening and informing on the use of different linguistic features and facets to influence audiences’ perceptions.

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