

**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF POPULIST RHETORIC
IN AMERICAN POLITICAL SPEECHES.**

Xushvaqtova Mohira

National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek

The teacher of Foreign Language and Literature department

e-mail: xushvaqtovadilnora@gmail.com

Tel: (88) 678 31 10

Annotation. *This study examines populist rhetoric in American political speeches through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It, meanwhile, examines the linguistic strategies through which politicians construct the opposition between “the people” and “the elite”. The analysis focuses on pronouns, repetition, metaphor, parallelism, and emotionally charged language. A qualitative analysis of selected speeches by Donald Trump, Barack Obama, and Bernie Sanders shows that these strategies help speakers create solidarity with their audiences, emphasize political divisions, and present particular groups positively or negatively. The findings suggest that linguistic choices contribute significantly to the persuasive and ideological character of political discourse.*

Keywords: populism, political discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis, political language, rhetoric, ideology, metaphor.

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu tadqiqot Amerika siyosiy nutqlaridagi populistik ritorikani Tanqidiy diskurs tahlili (CDA) nuqtayi nazaridan o'rganadi. Shuningdek, unda siyosatchilar “xalq” va “elita” o'rtasidagi qarama-qarshilikni til strategiyalari orqali shakllantirishi tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda olmoshlar, takror, metafora, parallelizm va hissiy jihatdan ta'sirchan til vositalariga e'tibor qaratiladi. Donald Tramp, Barak Obama va Berni Sandersning tanlangan nutqlari sifat jihatdan tahlil qilinib, ushbu strategiyalar siyosatchilarga auditoriya bilan birdamlikni shakllantirish, siyosiy qarama-qarshiliklarni kuchaytirish hamda*

ayrim guruhlarini ijobiy yoki salbiy tarzda ifodalashga yordam berishi aniqlandi. Tadqiqot natijalari til vositalari siyosiy diskursning ishonitiruvchanligi va mafkuraviy mazmunini shakllantirishda muhim ahamiyatga ega ekanini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: populizm, siyosiy diskurs, tanqidiy diskurs tahlili, siyosiy til, ritorika, mafkura, metafora.

Introduction

Political discourse is of essence in linguistic research as political figures not only communicate political ideas but also effect on public opinion. Political speeches are significantly important because they reflect rhetorical, emotional, persuasive and ideological elements in their scope. In this regard, politicians would be able to present themselves positively with confidence which influences audience to understand political and social issues much better via carefully chosen linguistic strategies.

Due to its characteristic division of society into ordinary people and a supposedly distant elite, populist rhetoric has attracted considerable attention among contemporary forms of political communication. Populist political discourse frequently constructs a strong distinction between “us” and “them.” With pronouns such as we, our and they, politicians can create solidarity with their supporters while distancing themselves from political opponents. Other rhetorical devices, including metaphor, repetition, and parallelism, can further strengthen these messages.

The aim of this study is to examine how populist rhetoric is constructed linguistically in American political speeches. The research, particularly, focuses on the ways that politicians construct social identities, represent political opponents, and use emotionally powerful language to influence audiences.

Research Methodology

The study uses a qualitative approach based on Critical Discourse Analysis. Selected speeches by Donald Trump, Barack Obama, and Bernie Sanders were examined for recurring linguistic and rhetorical patterns.

The analysis focuses on five major features: pronoun use, metaphor, repetition, parallelism, and emotional language. Particular attention is paid to the construction of “the people”, the representation of political elites, and the creation of “us versus them” relationships. The given examples are analyzed according to their linguistic form, rhetorical function and ideological meaning. This approach makes it possible to identify how seemingly simple linguistic choices contribute to broader political messages.

Results and Discussion

Construction of “Us” and “Them”

The distinction between different social groups is an important feature of the speeches examined. In his 2016 Republican National Convention speech, Donald Trump states, “**I am your voice**”. The possessive pronoun *your* establishes a direct relationship between the speaker and his audience, whereas the statement presents Trump as a representative of ordinary citizens.

A similar contrast is seen in Bernie Sanders’ political discourse, where references to working families are often placed against references to wealthy groups such as “millionaires and billionaires”. This contrast presents economic inequality as a conflict between ordinary citizens and economically powerful groups.

Pronouns and Group Identity

Pronouns are particularly effective in creating a sense of collective identity. Barack Obama’s well-known phrase “**Yes, we can**” provides a clear example. The pronoun *we* includes both the speaker and his audience, presenting political change as a collective rather than an individual effort. The repetition of this phrase also strengthens the sense of unity and shared purpose.

The use of inclusive pronouns, thus, performs more than a grammatical function. It helps speakers to establish a relationship with their audiences and construct a shared political identity.

Repetition and Parallelism

Repetition is another important rhetorical device found in the selected

speeches. In Obama's speech, the repeated structure **"Yes, we can"** creates rhythm and makes the central message which is easy to remember. Trump similarly uses parallel structures in his 2016 acceptance speech: "We will make America strong again", "We will make America proud again", and "We will make America safe again". The repeated grammatical structure gives emphasis to his promises and creates a strong rhetorical rhythm.

Metaphor and Emotional Language

Metaphorical expressions can simplify complicated political issues and give them a stronger emotional meaning. Trump's description of the political system as **"rigged"** frames politics as an unfair system that works against ordinary citizens. This language encourages the audience to view political problems through the framework of fairness and injustice. Emotional vocabulary also contributes to the persuasive effect of political speeches. References to forgotten citizens, national decline, hope, change, and insecurity appeal to feelings rather than relying only on factual arguments. In populist discourse, this emotional dimension can make political messages more immediate and personally relevant to audiences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study shows that populist rhetoric uses simple linguistic strategies to create solidarity and political divisions. Pronouns, repetition, metaphor, and emotional language help speakers present "the people" positively and distinguish them from opponents or elites. Overall, CDA helps reveal how these language choices make political messages more persuasive and powerful.

References:

1. Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Longman.
 2. Sanders, B. (2016). *Dear Mr. President: The transcript of Bernie's 90-minute speech on the budget*. U.S. Senate.
 3. van Dijk, T. A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), 249–283.
 4. van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Sage.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. Sage.