

Manipulation in Donald Trump's Nomination Speech 2020 Election from a CDA Account

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Abstract – Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an analytical approach that refers to the use of linguistic tools to uncover the opacities in discourse which contribute to the exercise, maintenance, and reproduction of unequal power relations (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). This research critically analyzes the nomination speech of the president Donald Trump delivered on 27th August 2020 using socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis account.

Keywords – CDA, Socio-Cognitive Discourse Analysis, Manipulation, Lexicalization, Deixis.

I. INTRODUCTION

Critical Discourse Analysis is used to refer to the theory identified as Critical Linguistics. CDA sees discourse_ language use in speech and writing as a form of social practice. As stated by Chilton (2004), “analyzing political discourse is a must for anyone interested in the way language is used in the world of politics.” Political discourse has been investigated by many discourse analytical approaches as it is a form of social cognition that involves an ideology or socially shared representations. Indeed, political discourse is a kind of discourse that takes the speaker's stand and clarifies his view. Studies of political discourse have shown that politicians make use of discursive strategies enabling them to achieve their ideological ends.

More precisely, the study aims at identifying, describing and analyzing the structure of Trump's discourse to look for ideologically salient features which are characteristic of power relations and which play a significant role in realizing the candidate's goals.

II. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical Discourse Analysis is a socio-linguistic theory that has as a goal to uncover language power and reveal dominance and bias as well as to unveil the complex system of power inequalities, and even abuse, by unmasking its mechanisms through textual analysis (Hodge & Kress, 1979). As stated by Fairclough (1989), discourse helps maintain existing power relations, or change them to establish new relations of power and knowledge. Hence, Discourse analysis is defined as “(1) concerned with language use beyond the boundaries of a sentence/utterance, (2) concerned with the interrelationship between language and society and (3) as concerned with the interactive or dialogic properties of everyday communication (Stubbs, 1983, p. 1).

The term describing discourse as a social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them (Fairclough, 1989, p. 22). That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned it constitutes a part of the social

processes and practices. Hence, critical discourse analysis offers 'not only a description and interpretation of discourses in social context but also offers an explanation of why and how discourses work.' (Rogers, 2004, p.2).

Fairclough (1989) stresses the importance of describing as well as explaining how the struggle for power and power distribution are created. In fact according to Fairclough power in discourse refers to how power relations are exercised and enacted in discourse.

In addition, Van Dijk (1993, p. 254) further explains that power is mostly "cognitive and enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to change the mind of others in one's own interests". Meanwhile Van Dijk (2006, p. 360) states that "manipulation is one of the discursive social practices of dominant groups geared toward the reproduction of their power.'

Such dominant groups may do so in many other ways as well, e.g. 'through persuasion, providing information, [...] and other social practices that are aimed at influencing the knowledge, beliefs and (indirectly) the actions of the recipients'. This view about power fits in with this study because one major objective of this research is to illustrate how politicians and precisely president Trump shape the social cognition by manipulating through language.

2.1. Power

As Van Dijk states "language is considered not only as a medium of the communication of values, meanings and knowledge, but also an instrument of exercising power especially in regard to the construction of systems of discourse" (Van Dijk, 2004, p. XXI).

For Fairclough, the exercise of power is achieved through the ideological workings of language. He refers to two major aspects of power/ language relationships which are power in discourse and power behind discourse. Power in discourse has to do with powerful participants controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants.

Chilton also claims that "politics is viewed as a struggle of power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it" (Chilton, 2004, p. 3).

According to Fairclough (1989, p. 35) power relations are not reducible to class relations. In fact, class relations define the nature of the society. They are relations of struggle; class struggle is a necessary and inherent property of a social system in which the maximization of the profits and power of one class depends upon the maximization of its exploitation and domination of another.

2.2. Manipulation

As defined by Van Dijk (2006), manipulation is one of the crucial notions of Critical Discourse Analysis. According to Van Dijk manipulation is a social phenomenon, a cognitive phenomenon and a discursive semiotic phenomenon (2006). Socially, manipulation is defined as illegitimate domination confirming social inequalities. Cognitively, manipulation as mind control involves the interference with processes of understanding, the formation of biased mental models and social representations such as knowledge and ideologies. Discursively, manipulation involves the usual forms and formats of ideological discourse, such as emphasizing *our* good things, and emphasizing *their* bad things. In addition, Van Dijk (2006) refers to the phenomenon of manipulation in the same article as an abuse of power (p. 370). In fact, manipulation refers to the discursive practices that involve power abuse. Hence, power holders or powerful groups deploy various manipulation strategies to control or influence others.

Van Dijk (2006) uses a triangulation framework to examine the notion of manipulation. He argues that this concept should be tackled in relation to discourse, cognition, and society because firstly, this notion takes place by text and talk (discourse). Secondly, human beings are manipulated through the manipulation of their minds (cognition). Hence, a cognitive account is needed to highlight the processes of manipulation. Thirdly, manipulation implies power, and more specifically power abuse, so it is necessary to approach it socially (society).

Van Dijk (2006) distinguishes between manipulation and persuasion. While dealing with the difference between manipulation and persuasion, Van Dijk (2006) refers to them in terms of legitimacy: he associates the adjective 'legitimate' with persuasion and 'illegitimate' with manipulation. Manipulation is different from persuasion in that it involves power abuse and domination (Van Dijk, 2006: pp. 261-262). While in persuasion the interlocutors are free to act as they please depending on whether or not they accept the argument of the persuader, in manipulation recipients are typically assigned a more passive role: they are the victims of a manipulative discourse (Van Dijk, 2006: p. 261).

In addition, for Van Dijk (2006), manipulation is defined as a manipulator who exercises control over other people, usually against their will or against their best interests. Thus, this notion has negative connotation because this practice violates social norms.

Amongst the distinctive discursive strategies preferred in manipulation are deixis and lexicalization.

2.2.1. Deixis

Personal deixis has been studied within the framework of general linguistic theory. They are called pronouns shifters due to their ability to shift into different directions within the pronominal system (Yelinker 2006, p. 102).

Triki and Sellami Baklouti(2002, p.187) state that ‘deixis is the linguistic realization of the speaker’s act of locating an entity in terms of person, space and time with respect to a given Deictic Center. Indeed deixis have a shifting nature, that is to say, they are called shifters because ‘when appropriated, what is conventional becomes something personal’ (Triki, 1989, p.8). The mystifying effect of pronouns emanates from ‘the speaker’s engaging’ (or ‘shifting in’) or ‘the speaker’s disengaging’ (or ‘shifting out’) (Triki and Taman, 2004 p. 206) for example the manipulation of the addressee when the speaker shifts from ‘inclusive we’ to ‘exclusive we’.

2.2.2. Lexicalization

Lexical choice can be strategically used to achieve certain political and ideological aims such as constructing a representation of the ‘OTHER’ or ‘THEM’ in comparison with the ‘US’. The strategy of positive self representation and negative other presentation is typical to the accounts of the facts in favour of the politician’s interests. For instance, in-group members and their supporters, as well as friends, and allies are described in a positive way, whereas out groups, enemies, or opponents are referred to in negative terms (Van Dijk 1995, p. 143).

The choice of lexis servers political functions namely, legitimization and delegitimization. Where legitimization focuses on the positive representation of the self, delegitimization represents the negative image of the other. Hence, using this strategy can shape and monitor the audience vision.

The aim of studying lexicalization in Trump’s nomination speech is to depict the manipulative lexical choices used by Trump to shape and manipulate his audience.

III. METHODOLOGY

The data of this study consisted of a speech by Donald Trump as the representative of the Republican Party delivered on the South Lawn of the White House on the fourth and final night of the Republican convention, accepting his party’s nomination for president.

The current study will adopt Van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model of CDA as a framework of analysis to investigate the manipulative strategies in Trump’s speech.

IV. ANALYSIS

The analysis part will be divided into two sections, the first deals with results related to the use of personal pronouns, and the second focuses on the results obtained after analyzing the lexical choices.

2.3. Findings related to pronouns

The following table illustrates the frequency of occurrence of different deictic categories.

Table 1. The frequency of occurrence of pronouns

Pronoun	We	Our	Us	I	They	Their	He	You	Your
Frequency	139	77	13	47	46	38	26	24	14

As illustrated in table 1, person deictics are unevenly distributed in Trump’s speech. The first person plural pronoun ‘we’ is the most frequently used (139). When Trump uses the first person plural pronoun ‘we’ and its variants (our, us), he refers to a variety

of referents including first, audience members, as they are present during the delivery of the speech. It also refers to Trump and his administration, Trump and the U.S. government, and Trump and American citizens.

This result suggests that Trump organizes his physical and social worlds more on a collective than on an individual basis. This distribution reflects Trump's intention to create a sense of unity between himself and the audience (American people). In other words, Trump is trying to build a relationship of solidarity and identify with all Americans. This serves to stress the notion of unity that he is trying to promote among his fellow Americans. In addition, this might imply that Trump is using 'we' more than 'I' for political reasons such as he wants to generalize responsibility for actions and thus minimize his personal involvement in those actions.

The use of 'I' is meant to stress the potential responsibility and commitment of Trump toward America and the American people. In fact, the first personal pronoun 'I' is used in situations where Trump is referring to his personal beliefs and his future promises toward his audience and the American people as a problem-solver. Hence, the high frequency of the deictic use of 'I' and the inclusive 'we' has as goal to determine the criteria for entry into the in-group. In addition, these pronouns occurred as actors in positive actions such as *to protect, to save, to defend, to win, to lead, to create....*

As far as the personal pronouns 'he' and 'they' are concerned, they are referring to the out group or the 'OTER' category. In other words, these two pronouns refer to entities placed outside the domain of 'US' namely the second candidate for the election Biden and his party. The alternation between the use of the first person singular and plural deictics 'I' and 'we', on the one hand, and the third person singular and plural deictics 'he' and 'they', on the other, stresses the fact that Trump is representing the world on the basis of 'US' versus 'Them' dichotomy.

2.4. Findings related to lexicalization

The analysis of the lexicalization strategy in Trump's speech showed that it was basically based on bipolarized frames, that is, frames about 'US' and frames about 'THEM'. The following table presents the category frames depicted in the corpus.

Table 2. Category frames in Trump's speech

Category Frames	
'US': Trump and his allies	Courage, professionalism, solidarity, liberty, help, support, commitment, democracy, humanitarian
'THEM': Biden and his supporters	Extremism, dishonesty, destructiveness, dictatorship

Findings from table 2 above showed that 'US' category was accorded the most positive frames. The candidate is very straightforward in his attempt to convey a bright image of himself and of his supporters as responsible for defending the values of freedom and democracy. Indeed, Trump made use of very positive lexical items that strongly enhance his positive face.

The speech is based on a dualism: while the frames of self representation conveys a positive image of Trump and his administration by using lexis conveying positive connotation, the frame of the other 'THEM' conveys a negative image by deploying pejorative lexis as illustrated in the following table.

Table 3. Lexis items used by Trump

Positive lexis related to 'US'	Build, defend, protect, lead, rekindle, save, create, develop, support, sacrifice, know, understand, secure, record, united, determined, courageous, noble, honorable, patriotic, confident, honoured, willing
Negative lexis related to 'THEM'	Crush, attack, demolish, dismantle, destroy, punish, tear down, ripping down, threaten, violent, anarchists, agitators, criminals, radical, destroyer, flag burners, rioters, weak

An interesting aspect that exists in Trump's speech is the way he emphasizes the negative representation of Biden and his supporters and describes them as the menace of American safety and prosperity and portrays himself as the solution for all the problems. This is a common ideology consisting on emphasizing positive self-representation and de-emphasizing other positive representation. Hence, by presenting the differences between him and his rival, including their different agenda and vision, Trump tries to get closer to voters.

V. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the personal pronouns use in the corpus has shown that Trump seems to present a dichotomizing picture of 'I' and 'He' where he emphasizes all positive conducts about the Self and all negative actions about the 'He' as referring to the 'Other' and his direct competitor over presidency John Biden. This manipulative strategy is meant to persuade the electorate that Biden is not the right person to elect. This result is reinforced by the second strategy deployed by Trump which is the selection of certain lexical items to shape the audience's mental models to make them fit his Self assertive plans.

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