

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

English Department \ College of Education for Human Sciences / Babylon
University

MA. Program in Linguistics

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)
-2025 2024

Abstract

This study explains the persuasive ideology that Trump and Kamala used to influence their audience in the 2024 debate, and what they did to convince the crowd of about 67 million to choose one of them as a president. The research aims is to study the possible implications of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris choice of certain lexical items, and their use of certain grammatical structures. The study hypothesized that Trump and Kamala use certain grammatical constructions and lexical choices in order to persuade their audience, with Trump being the most effective due to his dominance.

Keywords: Kamala Harris, Donald Trump, ideology, persuasion, Debate

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

1. Theoretical Background

1.1 Introduction

The study of discourse analysis examines how language is used in different works and how it is used in social and cultural settings . As part of discourse analysis, the way people use words can show different understandings and points of view about the world. When people talk to each other, their relationships affect how they use language. It also looks at how language uses social identities and relationships Through conversation, Zellig Harris came up with the word "discourse analysis" in 1952 as a way to look at how speech and writing are connected. Harris was mostly interested in two things: looking at language beyond the level of the sentence and looking at how language and behaviour are connected. He looked at the first one in more depth because he wanted to find a way to describe how language traits are spread out in texts and how they are put together in different types and styles of texts.(paltridge, 2006)

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. Ideologies represent a set of beliefs and values that show how dominant organizations influence the actions of others (Mayer, 1982). Simpson (1993) defined ideology as : “From a critical linguistic perspective, the term [ideology] normally describes the ways in which what we say and think interacts with society. An ideology, therefore, derives from the taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs, and value systems which are shared collectively

by social groups. And when an ideology is the ideology of a particularly powerful social group, it is said to be dominant. Thus, dominant ideologies are mediated through powerful political and social institutions like the government, the law, and the medical profession. Our perceptions of these institutions, moreover, will be shaped in part by the linguistic practices of the social groups [which] comprise them.” (p. 5) Ideologies, to put it briefly, are common and acknowledged views, beliefs, ideas, and values among members of a society. These ideals, attitudes, and perceptions are made up of the language used in particular situations. Thus, the institutions of governance are those that grant permission for ideologies to be those in charge. (DIJK, 2015)

Persuasion and (CDA) are closely tangled areas of study, as CDA often focuses on analyzing how persuasion is achieved through language and discourse, particularly in the context of power and ideology. CDA goes beyond surface-level analysis of persuasive techniques and delves into the underlying power dynamics, ideologies, and ethical considerations present in persuasive communication. It explores how language is used to influence, frame issues, and shape public opinion while considering the broader societal and political context. By critically evaluating the impact of persuasion, CDA contributes to a deeper understanding of how discourse influences our beliefs, attitudes, and the functioning of democracy. (Dunya Al Jazrawi, 2022)

The study of ideologies that are used to persuade an audience depends on some important aspects. The choice of words and how they reflect on your opponent in debate, as well as sentence structures you employ , such as repetition, complex sentences and simple sentences. Furthermore , your appearance on TV , your confidence in front of cameras , and your reaction about your competitor’s words reflect your ideas and influence your persuasiveness .

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

2. Methodology

2.1 Van Dijk's square theory

Van Dijk's Farmwork which is focuses on analyzing speech ideology and exploring the hidden meaning behind every speech. The research after gathering the data and analyses this data depending on the (*us and them*) square theory . According to van Dijk (1998), the ideological square stands for the positives and negatives of in-groups and out-groups which are emphasized and de-emphasized respectively. Daghigh et al. (2018) mention that the positive presentation of in-groups represents "US" on a positive side but de-emphasize their negative side whereas Negative other presentations represent the members of the outgroups " Them " in a negative way by de-emphasising their positive and emphasising their negative characteristics.

Figure 1
Van Dijk Square Theory

| Other Negative Representation | Self-Positive Representation |
|--|--|
| Emphasizing their bad things by preserving & promoting the negative representations of ST in TT | Emphasizing our good things by preserving & promoting the positive representations of ST in TT |
| De-emphasizing their good things by blocking & demoting the positive representations of ST in TT | De-emphasizing our bad things by blocking & demoting the negative representations of ST in TT |

2.2 Data Description

The data of the current study encompass eight extracts presented by Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in their election debate who assumed in September, 2024. The extracts explains some different Topics about abortion and immigration. These extracts are taken from the official website in a transcript format. The selected extracts are taken from this link :

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/harris-trump-presidential-debate-transcript/story?id=113560542>

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

Extract 1

VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS: “ *Well, I would love to. Let's talk about what Donald Trump left us. Donald Trump left us the worst unemployment since the Great Depression. Donald Trump left us the worst public health epidemic in a century. Donald Trump left us the worst attack on our democracy since the Civil War. And what we have done is clean up Donald Trump's mess. What we have done and what I intend to do is build on what we know are the aspirations and the hopes of the American people. But I'm going to tell you all, in this debate tonight, you're going to hear from the same old, tired playbook, a bunch of lies, grievances and name-calling. What you're going to hear tonight is a detailed and dangerous plan called Project 2025 that the former president intends on implementing if he were elected again. I believe very strongly that the American people want a president who understands the importance of bringing us together knowing we have so much more in common than what separates us. And I pledge to you to be a president for all Americans*”.

(Hoffman, 2024)

Analysis /

Harris pointed out that she is the right president for the United States . she said “*I believe very strongly that the American people want a president who understands the importance of bringing us together knowing we have so much more in common than what separates us.*” She tells the audience that she is the

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

right one to be the future president of the USA, and she focuses on unity by saying “*the importance of bringing us together*” so she uses this topic as a persuasion tool to take the audience’s attention and persuade them as well as she focuses on the bad side of trump and the problems that he did when he was the president of the united status.

“Donald Trump left us the worst unemployment since the Great Depression. Donald Trump left us the worst public health epidemic in a century. Donald Trump left us the worst attack on our democracy since the Civil War. And what we have done is clean up Donald Trump's mess.”

She emphasized every bad aspect of the Trump period of presidency, such as leaving America with the worst unemployment since the Great Depression or the worst health care in the coronavirus pandemic. Moreover, she talked about democracy and accused Trump of leaving them a threat since the Civil War. Harris states, “*And what we have done is clean up Donald Trump's mess*” Moreover, she repeatedly emphasized the good side of her presidency while highlighting the negative aspects of Trump's. furthermore, Harris attacks Trump from multiple sides to convince her audience that she is the right person to be president.

“*But I'm going to tell you all, in this debate tonight, you're going to hear from the same old, tired playbook, a bunch of lies, grievances and name-calling. What you're going to hear tonight is a detailed and dangerous plan called Project 2025 that the former president intends on implementing*”

The structures and word choices are used in order to persuade her audience. She uses a lot of emphasis and comparison between her (US) and Trump (Them). In addition, she characterizes Trump as “*the same old, tired playbook, a*

bunch of lies, grievances and name-calling.” Framing him as an unworthy man She tries to say that do not take his ideas because we already hear him and we gave him a period in the white house but he did not do anything. Also, she repeats “Donald Trump left us “ to emphasise the unworthiness and he is not a trustworthy person. she focused on this term trying to convey that we cannot trust him enough because he left us in a bad situation without any solutions. she is trying to convince the audience by showing her good side and emphasising Trump’s bad aspects.

Word choice: She uses words related to hope such as “ aspirations “ , and “ hopes “ to tell her audience as long as I am here, expects something good for America. She described Trump in different bad words “ old, tired, bunch of lies, grievances and name calling “ to give a bad impression of Trump and emphasise his bad to persuade the audience in order to choose her. Harris did use positive words to describe herself and awful aspects to describe Trump.

Structure: We can notice that she repeated the sentence “ Donald Trump left us “ four times to indicate that Trump is not a worthy man to trust. Furthermore, she used three simple sentences and four complex sentences. Also, she used simple sentences to show her strength and dominance, but she used complex sentences to prove that she understands politics well. I think, her use of complex sentences related to her as a woman because most of people think that women do not understand politics, so she used complex sentences to prove that she understands politics well and to built credibility between her and her audience .

Extract 2

FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: *Number one, I have nothing to do, as you know and as she knows better than anyone, I have nothing to do with Project 2025. That's out there. I haven't read it. I don't want to read it, purposely. I'm not going to read it. This was a group of people that got together, they came up with some ideas. I guess some good, some bad. But it makes no difference. I have nothing to do -- everybody knows I'm an open book. Everybody knows what I'm going to do. Cut taxes*

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

very substantially. And create a great economy like I did before. We had the greatest economy. We got hit with a pandemic. And the pandemic was, not since 1917 where 100 million people died has there been anything like it? We did a phenomenal job with the pandemic. We handed them over a country where the economy and where the stock market was higher than it was before the pandemic came in. Nobody's ever seen anything like it. We made ventilators for the entire world. We got gowns. We got masks. We did things that nobody thought possible. And people give me credit for rebuilding the military. They give me credit for a lot of things. But not enough credit for the great job we did with the pandemic. But the only jobs they got were bounce-back jobs. These were jobs, bounce back. And it bounced back and it went to their benefit. But I was the one that created them. They know it and so does everybody else.

(Hoffman, 2024)

Analysis / Trump focuses on his accomplishments throughout his period in the white house. He is trying to persuade his audience to elect him again. Moreover, he is trying to show his positive side and what she said about him is lying, as well as he did not do anything bad. Harris accused Trump that America was a disaster place, with no democracy, and no health care because of what he did. Trump responded to her accusations that the pandemic caused a lot of problems in his period of presidency, there were some problems but he did not leave America in serious problems. on the contrary, he left the white house with the “*greatest economy*” .

“ We handed them over a country where the economy and where the stock market was higher than it was before the pandemic came in. Nobody's ever seen anything like it.”

Trump is sure that he left America with a good economy and a great stock market which was higher before the Coronavirus came. Trump said we made

masks, gowns and ventilators for everyone around the world. Hence, he uses the pandemic crises to get people's sympathy and he is trying to tell them implicitly that I saved your life through the pandemic which is something that may happen again and you cannot find another person saving them like me. it is a smart strategy from him to remind people of that thing. Trump emphasizes his role in building the economy and handling the pandemic. His leadership and his policies were one of the main causes of success in his period of presidency . He accused Kamala and others of riding on the coattails of his success and benefiting from what he did. Trump did not talk about his negative aspects and did not mention anything bad in this period as a way to avoid everything terrible and focus on what is positive. He mentions his success and his contribution continually to show himself as a reliable and important figure in American life .

Word choice: He used more simple and direct words from Harris such as “ good, bad, and open “. He said “Phenomenal job “ he used the word phenomenal rather than any other word as a positive self-image for himself to make American elections see his actions positively.

Structure / If we want to analyse the structure of sentences in this extract , we can notice that the majority of the sentences are simple about twenty sentences and the implication of using such kinds of sentences is being direct, confident, and leadership and it is easier to understand than complex sentences which are nine sentences. Trump used “*Everybody knows* “ and “ The Greatest Economy “ twice to give an idea about common sense and general information that everybody knows about what he did in the economy and how great the economy we did.

Extract 3

VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS: “ *Talk about extreme. Um, you know, this is I think one of the reasons why in this election I actually have the endorsement of 200 Republicans who have formally worked with President Bush, Mitt Romney, and John McCain including the endorsement of former Vice President Dick Cheney and Congressman Liz*

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

Cheney. And if you want to really know the inside track on who the former president is, if he didn't make it clear already, just ask people who have worked with him. His former chief of staff, a four-star general, has said he has contempt for the constitution of the United States. His former national security adviser has said he is dangerous and unfit. His former secretary of defense has said the nation, the republic would never survive another Trump term. And when we listen to this kind of rhetoric, when the issues that affect the American people are not being addressed, I think the choice is clear in this election.” (Hoffman, 2024)

Analysis /

Harris emphasis her endorsements of “ 200 Republicans who have formally worked with President Bush, Mitt Romney, and John McCain including the endorsement of former Vice President Dick Cheney and Congressman Liz Cheney. “ when she associated herself with such great Republicans, she positions herself as a strong candidate for elections. When she related herself with President Dick Cheney and Congressman Liz Cheney, she enhances her chances to win the election and gives her voters unity because those who supported her are powerful people. Kamala highlights Trump's behaviour is a threat to the republic . Kamala stated, “The republic would never survive another.” She communicates a kind of danger and threat to America so she is not framing him as a bad candidate but also a threat to whole America.

Kamala attacks Trump strongly and accuses him of being an extremist. She attacked him and showed his bad side according to some former colleagues who were working for him. This was a smart move from her because she was trying to convince and persuade her audience she is the right president of the United States. Despite the problems with Bidan period of presidency, America was full of problems but she does not talk about it at all as well as she tries to tell her audience that when she will become a president, she is going to make the USA

heaven but Trump is going to make it hell. She is trying to change her audience's ideology by telling them the right things about herself and her party;

telling them about every problem that happened during Trump's presidency. She chose some words which give a strong impression about Trump such as "extreme ". Moreover, She used "contempt for the constitution of the United States "which is a tough sentence from her because as a president you should keep the constitution and follow it in order to keep the country under control so your competitive telling you this in front of every social media and front of 67 million people in the USA, it is really a strong sentence. totally persuasive ideology to show her enemy's weakness and gather all evidence against him to persuade her audience with strong words and structures . she perfectly applies Van Dijk's theory; I show my good side and mitigate my bad side but I am going to emphasize their bad side and mitigate their good side.

Word choice: you can notice how she carefully chooses her words when she uses " extreme ", " contempt ", " dangerous " and " unfit "These are strong words and convey a sense of seriousness related to the persuasive tone that she is trying to convey to describes her audience. The word extreme describes Trump's actions as outside the acceptable behaviour of politicians and threatens Democratic values. Also, she used the word "contempt " as she accused him of having contempt of the Constitution which is a strong accusation from Harris and by saying this she is framing him as unworthy of presidential power. She used " Dangerous and unfit " to tell her audience Trump is a threat to the safety of the nation and these words encouraged listeners to view her as a good choice. when she uses some former leaders as evidence against him is a strong point when she chooses "endorsement " and " formerly worked with " as if she tells him even the people you trusts, are now with us.

Structure: she used two simple sentences and five complex ones so she is trying to make sophisticated statements to make the audience feel that she understands what she is doing and what she will do in the future. She repeated

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

“endorsement” to emphasise that Trump has been left by his former leaders and he is not a worthy man to trust.

Extract 4

FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: “ *Yeah. Thank you. Because when I hear that -- see, I'm a different kind of a person. I fired most of those people. Not so graciously. They did bad things or a bad job. I fired them. They never fired one person. They didn't fire anybody having to do with Afghanistan and the Taliban and the 13 people whose, whose, were just killed viciously and violently killed and I got to know the parents and the family. They should have fired all those generals, all those top people because that was one of the most incompetently handled situations anybody has ever seen. So when somebody does a bad job I fire them. And you take a guy like Esper. He was no good, I fired him. So he writes a book. Another one writes a book. Because with me they can write books. With nobody else can they. But they have done such a poor job. And they never fire anybody. Look at the economy. Look at the inflation. They didn't fire any of their economists. They have the same people. That's a good way not to have books written about you. But just to finish, I got more votes than any Republican in history by far. In fact, I got more votes than any president, sitting president in history by far.* ” (Hoffman, 2024)

Analysis \

When Kamala talked about people who used to work with Trump but now work for her, Trump told her, "They did bad things or a bad job." The simple answer "I fired them" told a lot about what those people did to Trump. To protect himself from Kamala's charges and the crowd, he said, "*You take a guy like Esper.*" He didn't do a good job, so I fired him. After going through this, he

wrote a book. Another thing is that he tries to explain why he fired Esper, but he can't come up with a good reason but Trump explained that the generals were financial corrupts and they deserve firing because they did not do their job well . The economy was bad and they did not anything to fix ; they did not change and they kept the same people, even though they destroy the economy. Trump shows the bad sides of the people working with Kamala and accuses them of financial corruption because they did nothing when the economy was falling apart. He shows how competitive he is and points out the bad things about people who will work with her. One of his strengths, though, is *that "To conclude, I received more votes than any Republican in history and I actually got a lot more votes than any other president in history "* . Trump talks a lot about how he is the most popular president in U.S. history, having gotten more votes than any other Republican. He talked about how important to be the most powerful president in U.S. history, which helped him to get votes. He used this as a persuasive idea to reflect his good , positive side and as a threat to his competitor Kamala.

Word choice : he is direct in using his words and he used words simply , directly to respond to Kamala accusations such as “ graciously, viciously , violently and , inflation. “. Trump does not speak without intention or without any means. Is he speaking without any planning for the words that he is going to say? Sure, there is a plan for every word he says and even the adjectives that he uses to convey his feelings about the former generals. He described himself as “ *Not so graciously*” which means according to the Oxford dictionary “ kind and show mercy “ but he does not show mercy for those generals and describes the people who were killed because of the generals viciously and violently which are callous words. viciously means “violent and cruel way “ and violently “ very strongly or severely ” We can not say that there is not any implication behind using these words; there is an implication behind them to describe himself or people who were killed and using a strong word is a persuasive

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

strategy to make people feel empathy and influenced by him . he used the word “ inflation “ to highlight the catastrophic situation of the American’s economy, describing the negative history and reminded them of a difficult time, hoping to get their voters.

Structure: From the extract, we can notice that Trump used twenty-four short and simple sentences and three complex sentences, reflecting his directive, powerful and dominant character. he conveys his ideas simply and directly without manipulation or using complex structures. Trump emphasized firing his former generals by repeating the word “fired/fire” nine times. Furthermore, he used the word “ bad “ to describe the situation in America and he repeated the word “people” five times to emphasise unity and make people feel included .

Extract 5

VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS: “ *Well, let's be clear that the Trump administration resulted in a trade deficit, one of the highest we've ever seen in the history of America. He invited trade wars, you wanna talk about his deal with China what he ended up doing is under Donald Trump's presidency he ended up selling American chips to China to help them improve and modernize their military sold us out when a policy about China should be in making sure the United States of America wins the competition for the 21st century. Which means focusing on the details of what that requires, focusing on relationships with our allies, focusing on investing in American based technology so that we win the race on A.I. and quantum computing, focusing on what we need to do to support America's workforce, so that we don't end up having the on the short end of the stick in terms of workers' rights. But what Donald Trump did let's talk about this with COVID, is he actually thanked President XI for what he did during COVID. Look at his tweet. "Thank you, President XI," exclamation point. When we know that XI was responsible for lacking and not giving us transparency about the origins of COVID.*” (Hoffman, 2024)

Analysis / Harris does not stop hitting Trump with words, phrases and accusations to prove to the crowd that he is wrong, and this is one of the main reasons for the establishment of any debate, which is to prove the speaker's point of view and refute everything against them. she told him that he makes A trade deficit that does not happen to America at all , he sells America to China . Also, she tries to present every negative job he has did as a way to persuade and convince her audience . She shows that he is not a man we can really give him another presidency period. In addition , She reflected her good side and emphasized Trump's bad side as a way to show people that he does not deserve to be president again. Hence, She continues her strong criticism of Trump's period presidency in the white house to gain extra voters by telling them about how China destroyed the USA because of Trump. Harris adds that Trump made our relationship with our allies bad , and he did not help America to grow up ; she focused on the former president's mistakes in his period in the white house and showed his bad side to let her audience see that Trump does not deserve a chance to become a president again.

Word choice: In this extract, Harris used simpler forms rather than other extracts, which surprised me, as I generally associated her with more complex words but here she is more confident than in other speeches . She used simple words to describe the situation such as “*clear, deficit, improve , modernize* “. I cannot deny that using simple words to criticize someone is not a smart way. It is a smart way because the more you use the simple words, the more your idea is going to be clear. She used informal words like “ wanna “ , We expect presidents to be formal but this is another way to build a relationship with her audience and closer to them .

Structure: we were surprised by using simple words, we are going to surprise by using an equal number of simple and complex sentences . she used four simple and complex sentences which is something new from her previous speeches; she started balancing herself and her confidence began to grow

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

gradually. Also, she repeats the phrase “focusing on “because she creates a persuasive effect on the audience by repeating certain phrases to make them focus on something important, she wants them to focus on what Trump did and emphasize his bad side in order to raise herself. Also , she repeats “ *COVID* ” to emphasize on Donald Trump's work on the pandemic and make the audience focus on what did he during that period.

Extract 6

FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: “ *First of all, they bought their chips from Taiwan. We hardly make chips anymore because of philosophies like they have and policies like they have. I don't say her because she has no policy. Everything that she believed three years ago and four years ago is out the window. She's going to my philosophy now. In fact, I was going to send her a MAGA hat. She's gone to my philosophy. But if she ever got elected, she'd change it. And it will be the end of our country. She's a Marxist. Everybody knows she's a Marxist. Her father's a Marxist professor in economics. And he taught her well. But when you look at what she's done to our country and when you look at these millions and millions of people that are pouring into our country monthly where it's I believe 21 million people, not the 15 that people say, and I think it's a lot higher than the 21. That's bigger than New York state. Pouring in. And just look at what they're doing to our country. They're criminals. Many of these people coming in are criminals. And that's bad for our economy too. You mentioned before, we'll talk about immigration later.*” (Hoffman, 2024)

Analysis /

Trump's speech is full of strong statements and strong critics of Kamala's personal life and policy. nothing has changed, Trump when he started hitting, he did not stop. Trump started his speech by saying “ *We hardly make chips*

anymore because of philosophies like they have and policies like they have. I will not say her because she has no policy.” We do not make chips and we hardly do it because of her philosophy or let me tell you this she is not have any uses (us and and he attacks sides to prove of the not just and saying any policy, he Marxist and her what she “ a Marxist economics” . debate in TV or YouTube, you will see her strange reaction when mentions this which is something a little bit weird.



Figure 2

Kamala’s reaction when Trump talked about her father

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

Her reaction is not something simple, He hits her strongly and this is Trump's Character ; It is not something new , I think Trump knew this thing and he tried to use it against her and her policy ; he even mentions “ *But if she ever got elected, she'd change it. And it will be the end of our country.* “

He told all the people who were watching the debate and they were about 67 million that Kamala is going to destroy us if she became president so he shows her bad side and continuously hit her in all his speeches. I felt when I saw the debate on TV that he does not care about her criticism and everything she said and this appears in his reaction when he laughed while she started talking about him and this caught my attention. Also, his confidence gave the impression that maybe Trump is going to win the election because of his Charisma and how he made the audience feel about him; even though people who do not care about the American elections as me focused on him. when Kamala started speaking he did not even look at her but she when started speaking she focused on him. Another important body language, Kamala as vice president should be more stable than what we saw in the debate, but she was not stable; she was moving a lot but Trump was stable and confident when he was looking at the camera. As an audience seeing Kamala talking; I feel confused as a result of her moving which made me confused between focusing on her speech or her movements.

“ *But when you look at what she's done to our country and when you look at these millions and millions of people that are pouring into our country monthly where it's I believe 21 million people, not the 15 that people say, and I think it's a lot higher than the 21. That's bigger than New York state. Pouring in. And just*

look at what they're doing to our country. They're criminals. Many of these people coming in are criminals."

He criticized her immigration policy and he said that 21 million people immigrate to our country and all of them are criminals. Furthermore, when he said ‘ *They're criminals* ’ he emphasised fear and negative emotions; he was trying to tell them to be afraid because Kamala is going to destroy America.

Word choice: Trump started his speech more strongly, critically and focused tone; he used direct, assertive and reflected his dominant character such as “ criminals, MAGA hat, philosophy, Marxist “. All of these words are very strong and have influential implications. all of Immigrations that Kamala stands with are criminals, Trump said that Kamala is going to take his philosophy when she becomes president. Also, Trump is mocking Kamala because he thinks that she adopted his philosophy or his policy , he used the MAGA hat which is one of the hats that Trump’s advocates wear “ Make America Great Again “ to tell her, you can be one of my advocates. when he told her that I am going to send you a MAGA hat, he meant that even his competitors agreed with his election slogan “Make America Great Again “

Structure: Trump used fourteen simple sentences and six complex sentences. he repeated the word “ philosophy “ three times , “ Marxist “ four times, “ Million or Millions of people pouring in “ three times, and “Criminals “ repeated twice. Trump is still the same man with strong ideas and a powerful, dominant, and assertive character .

Extract 7

LINSEY DAVIS: There is no state in this country where it is legal to kill a baby after it's born. Madam Vice President, I want to get your response to President Trump.

VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS: “ *Well, as I said, you're going to hear a bunch of lies. And that's not actually a surprising fact. Let's understand how we got here. Donald Trump hand-selected three members of the United States Supreme Court with the intention*

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

that they would undo the protections of Roe v. Wade. And they did exactly as he intended. And now in over 20 states there are Trump abortion bans which make it criminal for a doctor or nurse to provide health care. In one state it provides prison for life. Trump abortion bans that make no exception even for rape and incest. Which understand what that means. A survivor of a crime, a violation to their body, does not have the right to decide what happens to their body next. That is immoral. And one does not have to abandon their faith or deeply held beliefs to agree the government, and Donald Trump certainly, should not be telling a woman what to do with her body.” (Hoffman, 2024)

Analysis / DAVIS asked a question about abortion bans which is an important and sensitive topic for the American election. Kamala attacked Trump because he banned abortion in more than 20 states in the USA. Therefore, Trump is not a popular figure among women and banning abortion made his popularity down so Kamala exploited this topic very well and attacks him strongly in order to show his bad side and tell the woman Trump is against you and I am the best choice. Moreover, she criticizes him and states that “ *In one state it provides prison for life* “ Kamala takes advantage of this topic and explains everything maybe not as a vice president but as a woman who feels what women feel and she said “ *Trump abortion bans that make no exception even for rape and incest.* “, He even does not give exceptions for necessary and exceptional issues.

“ *A survivor of a crime, a violation to their body, does not have the right to decide what happens to their body next. That is immoral. And one does not have to abandon their faith or deeply held beliefs to agree the government, and Donald Trump certainly, should not be telling a woman what to do with her body* “

She explains the important reasons for stopping this ban and when she states that Donald Trump certainly, should not be telling a woman what to do with her body; she is telling the audience directly that she is going to cancel the ban and she is going to give the woman the freedom to choose what to do in her body. Hence, she explains directly her positive side when women choose her as their president and shows Trump's bad side.

Word choice: The abortion topic makes Kamala's words clear and strong such as “ a bunch of lies, prison, rape, incest, a survivor of a crime, the violation to their body and telling a woman what to do with her body.” These words are summarized what she said in the above extract. Furthermore, these words are very strong because by using them , she sends a strong message to every woman in America that if you choose me, I am going to do my best to stop abortion banned.

Structure: Nothing has changed about Kamala's complex and simple sentences, She used seven complex sentences and five simple sentences but the simple sentence has grown more than other extracts which reflected sensitivity about this topic and defended women strongly without any hesitation . I felt that she defended every woman on earth , not American's ones . she repeated “ abortion bans , make it criminal , body “ more than one time to emphasis on women rights to do what they want on their body .

Extract 8

FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: “ *Well, the reason I'm doing that vote is because the plan is, as you know, the vote is, they have abortion in the ninth month. They even have, and you can look at the governor of West Virginia, the previous governor of West Virginia, not the current governor, who's doing an excellent job, but the governor before. He said the baby will be born and we will decide what to do with the baby. In other words, we'll execute the baby. And that's why I did that, because that predominates. Because they're radical. The Democrats are radical in that. And her vice presidential pick, which I think was a horrible pick, by the way for our country, because he is really out of it. But her vice presidential pick says abortion in the ninth month is absolutely fine. He also says execution*

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

after birth, it's execution, no longer abortion, because the baby is born, is okay. And that's not okay with me. Hence the vote. But what I did is something for 52 years they've been trying to get Roe v. Wade into the states. And through the genius and heart and strength of six supreme court justices we were able to do that. Now, I believe in the exceptions for rape, incest and life of the mother. I believe strongly in it. Ronald Reagan did also. 85% of Republicans do. Exceptions. Very important. But we were able to get it. And now states are voting on it. And for the first time you're going to see -- look, this is an issue that's torn our country apart for 52 years. Every legal scholar, every Democrat, every Republican, liberal, conservative, they all wanted this issue to be brought back to the states where the people could vote. And that's what happened, happened. Now, Ohio, the vote was somewhat liberal. Kansas the vote was somewhat liberal. Much more liberal than people would have thought. But each individual state is voting. It's the vote of the people now. It's not tied up in the federal government. I did a great service in doing it. It took courage to do it. And the supreme court had great courage in doing it. And I give tremendous credit to those six justices.” (Hoffman, 2024)

Analysis /

Trump is talking about abortion and criticized the former law. furthermore, he said that the child when born according to the abortion law, the abortion will happen in nine-month so they are trying to “ we'll execute the baby” . he has a point in this, how can you wait until nine months and after that, we will try to know what we are going to do with the baby . “ He said the baby will be born and we will decide what to do with the baby. In other words, we'll execute the baby. And that's why I did that, “ Moreover , he started criticizing the Democrats and said “ The Democrats are radical in that. And her vice presidential pick, which I think was a horrible pick, by the way for our country, because he is really out of it.” He gives his point of view and shows his positive and good side when he tells his voters or audience that this is an

execution for the baby, not an abortion. He attacked the Democrats describing them as “ radicals “ and stating that their president is a “ horrible pick “ and “ he is really out of it “ he laughed at Biden and criticized him strongly about abortion law. Furthermore, Trump defends strongly and he is trying to show women that he is on their side as a way to make them vote for him in the next election. Also, he shows that he supports women because he should do it in order to get votes and if he does not do it , he is going to lose .

He used the word “ execution “ to describe abortion , which is a powerful and touchy word , especially for women . By choosing this word, he taps into emotional side and the relationship between woman and her child . He is a smart man since that he shows a bad side for Biden and de-emphasis this side; he shows the good and positive side for him and de-emphasis this good side.

Trump defended himself in front of people, women and Kamala about some exceptions about abortion and he said “ *Now, I believe in the exceptions for rape, incest and life of the mother. I believe strongly in it. Ronald Reagan did also. 85% of Republicans do. Exceptions. Very important. But we were able to get it.* ” Another smart point has been mentioned by Trump when Kamala said how there is not any exceptions about some emergency cases in abortion such as “ *rape, incest* “ Trump turned the table on them and find a way to support his ideas . He does not want abortion in nine months and he will support some changes in the law about exceptional cases to be fair with women. Furthermore, Despite his unpopularity with women , he is trying to convince them especially about the abortion law , and he's trying to tell them that I'm in your side which is a smart move from him to try to gain women support in the election. In addition , He is telling people this issue torn our country apart about 52 years and everyone in our country has the freedom to vote according to his state and he mentioned “ *ohio and Kansas* , “ . He ends his speech by praising himself and what he did during the election period and praising the Supreme Court and its courage in making such a decision. Thus, He praises himself and shows his

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

positive side and tries to focus on this positive side and ignores the negative aspects that Kamala raised about the disadvantages that occurred because of the abortion law in his presidency period.

Word choice: As we know , every important word has its own implication and something to do to complete Trump's ideas . obviously, he used “ execution, genius, great, strength, courage “ all of these words have roles to complete what Trump wants. Furthermore, When Trump describes the abortion law in Biden's time as an execution. He is trying to make Biden look like a criminal. There are also other meanings to use this word because he wants to make Biden look the worst For women. In addition , He praises the Supreme Court for its justice, intelligence and strength in making such decisions. Also, He says that all people have a problem with the abortion law “Every legal scholar, every Democrat, every Republican, liberal, conservative “ from all classes; he tells them we are trying to find a unified law that satisfies everyone, undoubtedly, the implication of using such words has a strong impact on people especially when he chooses his words carefully and he describes a lot of things that happened in Biden presidency as bad and criticizes them in a very tough and strong way. Finally, his purpose to Show his good side and focus on their opponent's bad side and de-emphasize their bad side.

Structure: Trump used twenty simple sentences and fourteen complex sentence which is not something surprised because he reflected his power through using simple and clear forms .

Table 1

The most occurring words in Trump 4 extracts

| The word | The number |
|----------|------------|
| People | 14 |
| Got | 9 |
| That's | 8 |
| Vote | 7 |
| Look | 7 |

Figure 3

The most occurring words in Trump 4 extracts

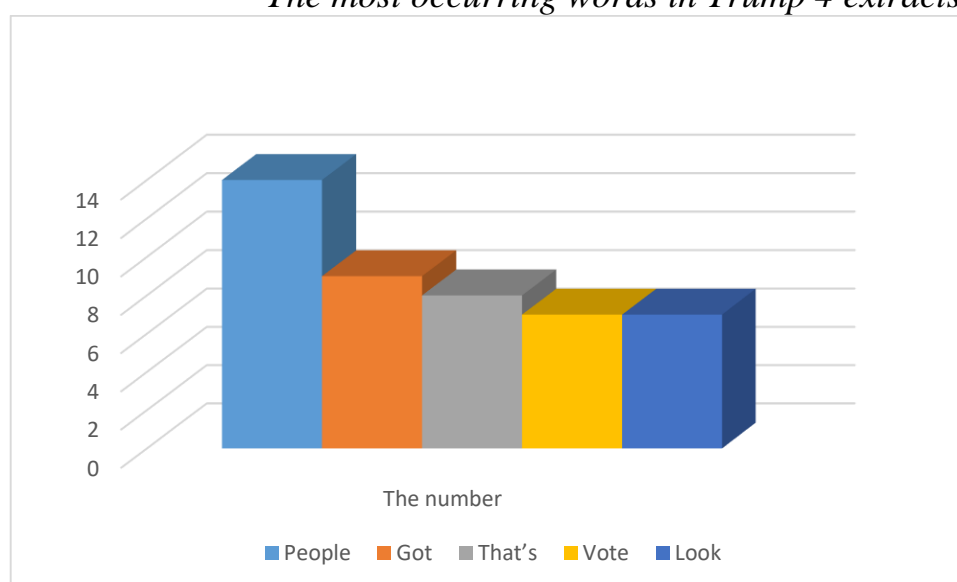


Table 2:

The most occurring words in Kamala 4 extracts

| The word | The number |
|-----------|------------|
| Trump | 11 |
| Donald | 9 |
| President | 8 |
| American | 5 |
| Talk | 4 |

Figure 4

The most occurring words in Kamala 4 extracts

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)

Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

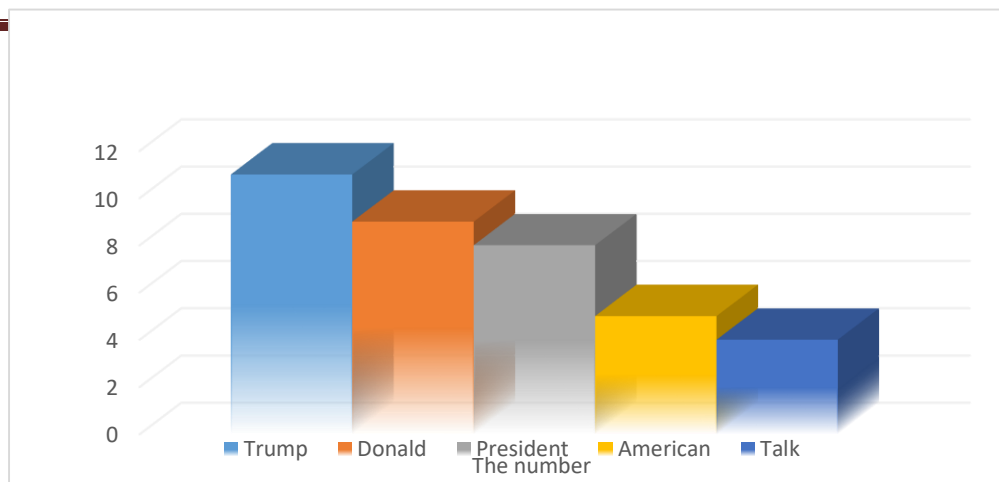
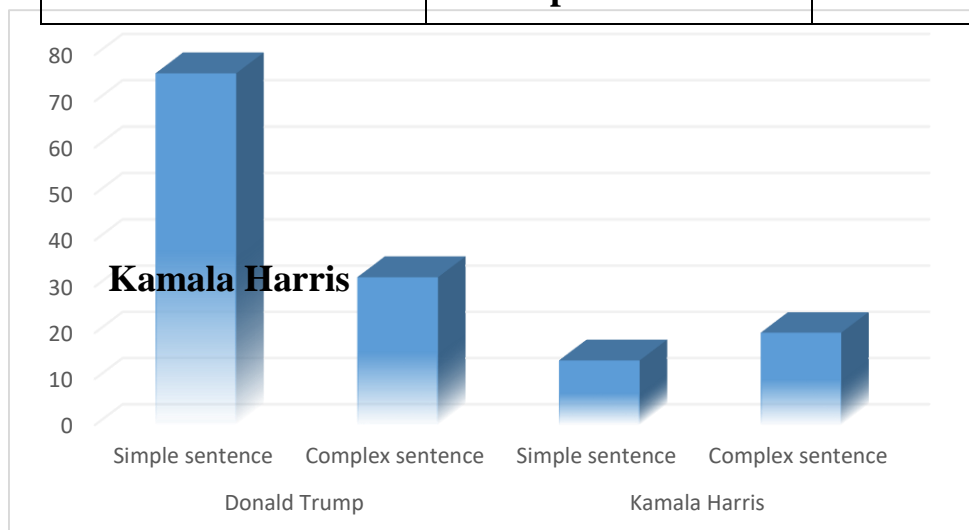


Table 3
Complex

and simple sentence in Trump and Kamala Extracts

| | | |
|--------------|------------------|----|
| Donald Trump | Simple sentence | 76 |
| | Complex sentence | 32 |
| | Simple sentence | 14 |



| | | |
|--|------------------|----|
| | Complex sentence | 20 |
|--|------------------|----|

Figure 5

Complex and simple sentence in Trump and Kamala Extracts

Kamala Harris

The hypothesis is validated by the findings the researcher did find in analyzing words and structure; in applying Van Dijk Square Theory. Trump and Kamala used words and structures in order to convince their audience; they used simple, complex sentences and repetition. Also, they used words to influence the audience to vote for them and to provoke anger against each other .

4. Conclusions

Trump used simple sentences to reflect his directness, prominence and dominative character whereas Kamala used more complex sentences to convey her ideas and her leadership capabilities that she knew much about politics and she can lead the country from bad economy to great economy which was one of her accusations to Trump because she told him that he left America with a bad economy but Trump said I left America with “Great economy “ . On Tv Trump appeared more self-assured with steady confidence and stable body language and this make him more acceptable for the viewers and audience who were watching through Tv . In contrast Harris movements were more complicated and less stable . Furthermore , when Trump was speaking , Kamala maintained eye contact with him but Trump rarely look at her which is something can show his strength and charisma.

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Persuasive Ideology of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Their Election Debate.

Prof. Qasim Abbas Dhayef Altufayl (Ph.D.)
Tabarak Ali Hussein Khalf

5. References

- Ali Jalalian, S. S. (2018). Modeling van Dijk's Ideological Square in Translation Studies: Investigating Manipulation in Political Discourse Translation investigating Manipulation in Political Discourse Translation. *ResearchGate* , 8.
- DIJK, T. A. (2015). Critical Discourse Analysis.
- Dunya Al Jazrawi, Z. A. (2022). Persuasion Strategies in Political Discourse: A Narrative Review of Recent Studies from Linguistics perspective . *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*.
- Hoffman, R. (2024, September 11). *abc NEWS*. Retrieved from READ: Harris-Trump presidential debate transcript: <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/harris-trump-presidential-debate-transcript/story?id=113560542>
- Paltridge, B. (2012). *Discourse Analysis* . New York : Bloomsbury Publishing .