Intersecting Discourses: A Socio-Stylistic Analysis of Language Use and Social Identity

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تقاطع الخطابات: تحليل اجتماعي-أسلوبي لاستخدام اللغة والهوية الاجتماعية

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Abstract:

This paper serves as an attempt to explore some of the ways in which political candidates use the language of campaign speeches in order to create their public persona and align with the many constituencies of voters. Working from a corpus of campaign speeches gathered during a recent election season, this research brings together Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995) with the theory of Penelope Eckert's sociolinguistic variation (Eckert, 2000). It was based on Fairclough's framework of understanding how the linguistic strategies in speeches represent and uphold the political ideology and relation of power. However, it also used Eckert's theory on how stylistic choices have been altered to resonate with different social demographics and hence reflect and construct social identities. Formal and informal languages have been used to present oneself as an authority and relate to people, respectively. In this case, candidates frame their discourse in the ways they perceived to be most appealing to sections of electors. The integrated approach offers ways in which language functions in political communication and interrelates the discourses and social identity that underpin the creation of political influence.

Key words: Intersectionality, Discourse Analysis, CDA, Socio-Stylistics, campaign speeches

الملخص:

تفحص الدراسة الحالية كيف يستخدم المرشحون السياسيون اللغة في خطب الحملات لبناء هوياتهم العامة والتفاعل مع مجموعات الناخبين المتنوعة. من خلال تحليل مجموعة من خطب الحملات من مرشحين مختلفين خلال فترة انتخابية حديثة، تدمج الدراسة بين تحليل الخطاب النقدي لنورمان فايركلاف (فايركلاف، ١٩٩٥) ونظرية التنوع الاجتماعي اللغوي لبينيلوبي إيكرت (إيكرت، ٢٠٠٠). يُستخدم نموذج فايركلاف لاستكشاف كيف تعكس استراتيجيات اللغة في الخطب وتعزز الأيديولوجيات السياسية وهياكل القوة. في الوقت نفسه، تُستخدم نظرية إيكرت لتحليل كيفية تكييف الخيارات الأسلوبية لتتوافق مع التركيبة الاجتماعية المختلفة، مما يعكس ويبني الهويات الاجتماعية. تكشف الدراسة عن أنماط في كيفية استخدام المرشحين للغة الرسمية وغير الرسمية لإظهار السلطة أو القابلية للتواصل، مخصصين خطاباتهم لجذب شرائح معينة من الناخبين. توفر هذه المقاربة المدمجة فهمًا شاملاً لكيفية عمل اللغة في التواصل السياسي، مقدمةً رؤى حول تفاعل الخطاب والهويات

الاجتماعية والنفوذ السياسي.الكلمات المفتاحية: التداخلية، تحليل الخطاب، التحليل النقدي للخطاب، الأسلوب الاجتماعي، خطب الحملات الانتخابية.

1. **Introduction** Political campaign speeches are among the most important ways by which candidates construct their public personas and relate to the electorate. The language of campaign speeches is a major factor in the construction of political personalities and the appeal to different social groups. This paper examines how political candidates employ language in their campaign speeches through the analysis of a set of speeches from various candidates during the recent American election period.The analysis is grounded in Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Penelope Eckert's sociolinguistic variation theory. Norman Fairclough's CDA provides a framework for examining how language reflects and perpetuates power relations and ideological positions within political discourse (Fairclough, 1995). This approach enables an exploration of how candidates use rhetorical strategies and discourse structures to frame issues, project authority, and construct their public image. Penelope Eckert's sociolinguistic variation theory offers insights into how language varies according to social factors such as class, age, and gender, and how these variations reflect and construct social identities (Eckert, 2000). This perspective allows for an investigation into how candidates adapt their linguistic styles to resonate with different demographic groups, thereby aligning their messages with the social identities of their audiences. By combining these frameworks, the study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the interplay between discourse, identity, and political influence.Examining varied campaign speeches allows one to identify patterns in how language is strategically used to address and appeal to different segments of voters. It enhances the understanding of how linguistic strategies in political communication function to reflect and shape social and political dynamics.

2.Theoretical framework

The research on political discourse has touched various aspects of the campaign speeches, such as rhetorical strategies, the construction of identity, and the engagement of the voter. Works on political language by Chilton and Schaffner (1997) and on presidential rhetoric by Hart (2000) point to the way in which language is constitutive of and constituted by political contexts. These studies have given further insight into how language has been used within political campaigns and what implications may be brought into public perception.

١. Discourse: This is the aspect of language which is put to use in the establishment and negotiation of meaning within a given context. For example, Michel Foucault's 1972 work shows how discourse can bear witness to relationships of power and positioning of ideology. A discourse analysis might thus show, through campaign speeches, how candidates construct their political identities and appeal to the concerns of voters within broader social and political contexts of struggles.

٢. Socio-Stylistics: It deals with the dependence of linguistic styles upon social factors and how such styles change with context. Indeed, William Labov (1972) showed that language style is correlated with social status- a concept that directly applies to political speech, where candidates consciously try to change their language to appeal to the many different demographics of voters.

Another helpful framework for making sense of various alternative methods through which political messages are addressed to specific audiences is Bernstein's 1971 elaborated and restricted code theory. 3. Social Identity Theory: SIT was a theory introduced by Tajfel and Turner in 1979. It refers to the process with which individuals identify with social groups, and subsequently how that identification influences their behaviors and communications. Among other things, linguistic use is one of the ways through which candidates construct and cement group identities, appeal to sections of the electorate, and create shared identity through campaign speeches. For example, candidates may use inclusive language either in establishing collective identity or marking boundaries against opponents.

٤. Language and Social Identity in Political Discourse: The language of political speeches contributes much to the construction of social identity and shaping public perception. As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) have pointed out, language use reflects and constructs social identity, which has implications for how politicians construct their speeches in concert or in opposition to public identities. The same idea is extended by Bucholtz and Hall (2005), explaining how language can be used to negotiate identity within political discourse and in the strategic use of rhetoric in appealing to voters.

٥. Intersecting Discourses: The notion of intersecting discourses deals with how discourses cross and interrelate within a political context. Goffman's work on self-presentation, published in 1959, provides the foundation for explaining a description of how candidates manage their public selves through speech and position themselves

in relationship to different discourses. Bakhtin's work on dialogism, published in 1981, extends the explanation of how political speeches address various voices and standpoints, reflecting the great variegation of campaign narratives and public discourse.

٦. Theoretical Models and Frameworks: As put by Norman Fairclough, 1995, Critical Discourse Analysis provides a systematic way to explore how political discourse constructs and is determined by power relations and ideologies. James Paul Gee's theory of discourse analysis, 2014, explains how language works in establishing social identities and structures of power, which would be useful in analyzing strategic elements of the campaign speeches. These models are therefore convenient in the illustration of how political discourse reflects and reinforces political strategies as well as perceptions of the electorate. This paper consequently adopts a hybrid theoretical framework that combines the theories of Norman Fairclough and Penelope Eckert in its analysis of the speeches of the two political campaign contestants. 1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): Norman Fairclough's CDA provides a lens for understanding how language functions in relation to power and ideology (Fairclough, 1995).In other words, for Fairclough, discourse is not a reflection of social power but one of the constitutive mechanisms, hailing power relations and ideological positions into being.CDA provides a framework within which to analyze how linguistic choices in vocabulary, grammar, and rhetorical devices build political identities and frame political issues. The framework will be able to explicate how the political candidate projects authority through the use of language, appeals to support, and shapes public perception. 2. Sociolinguistic Variation: Penelope Eckert's theory of sociolinguistic variation explores how language use varies across different social categories, including age, gender, and class, and how these variations are linked to social identities (Eckert, 2000). Although Eckert's model does not claim that linguistic stylistic choices are forms adapted to appeal to and represent the social selves of groups, in this case, it would mean that candidates rhetorically adjust their campaigning speeches concerning the different demographics by constructing and negotiating social identity within the realm of politics.Fairclough's CDA combined with Eckert's structural approach to variation may, therefore, analyze how language in political campaign speeches functions holistically on the following levels: social identification.In this, Fairclough's framework helps to understand how discourse constructs and maintains power and ideology, while the theory by Eckert has shown that stylistic variation signals and appeals to a range of different social identities. Both put together, therefore, have the capacity for the detailed analysis of language in use strategically to address diverse voter segments for political outcomes.

3. Methodology

١. Data selection

١. Joe Biden's Acceptance Speech at the 2020 Democratic National Convention:

Joe Biden's acceptance speech was one of the defining moments in the 2020 election cycle, the culmination of the Democratic Party's campaign efforts. This speech was designed as an address to heal the divided nation. His key theme in the speech focused on unity, reconciliation, and he stressed bringing back democratic norms. Biden's rhetoric, especially the appeal for empathy and inclusiveness, really enables us to see how language constructs a vision of social identity at variance with the dominant political climate. Overcoming divisions in order to achieve common identity, as this speech really underlines, symbolizes wider socio-political values and is a rich text of stylistic elements in projecting such a unitary narrative.

٢.

Donald Trump's Speech at the 2020 Republican National Convention:

This acceptance speech by Donald Trump, to a great extent, represents a continuance of the populist and nationalist rhetorics in his campaigns where such themes as economic prosperity, law and order, and American exceptionalism have been salient. The preceding will be directly and confidently presented in order to solidify existing social identities and political beliefs among his base. This paper examines the speech to explore how the language used by Trump solidifies one particular social identity and responds to perceived threats to his vision of America. The different rhetorical strategies identified in this speech provide insight into how Trump constructs and communicates political identity, reinforcing his populist agenda. Rationale for Comparison: The juxtaposition of Biden and Trump underlines some of the diverse ways in which the use of language and social identity interrelate within the American political landscape.

While Biden's appeal was for unity and healing, Trump had the divisive rhetoric on full display. Each thus contributes to a wider study of how the use of language functions to frame and mirror various candidates' political careers, each having its own social problems. These speeches will form the corpus of the socio-stylistic

analysis that follows, which provides examples of how rhetoric functions in American politics to shape and mirror attitudes and identities of that society. 2. Model adopted The model to be adopted for this research is hybrid; it builds upon a framework of the methods of Fairclough and Eckert, illustrating ways these may be brought together to provide an increased subtlety of interpretation of the speeches of political campaigns. This includes the following aspects: a. Critical Discourse Analysis: The CDA framework of Fairclough (1995) deals with how language reflects and sustains power relations and ideologies. It has three major constituents, namely: Text Analysis: Looks into the linguistic features of campaign speeches in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and rhetoric. Discursive Practice: How speeches are produced, distributed, and consumed in the context of politics and media.

- Social Practice: It locates speeches in the reflection and reinforcement of power relations and social relations.
b. Sociolinguistic Perspective: The sociolinguistic theory of Eckert (2000) comes to the fore in highlighting the ways language functions in reflecting and constituting social identity. The key considerations include: -
Language Variation: It looks at how languages vary across social groups and contexts.
- Identity Construction: It deals with how language practices are used in the construction and negotiation of identities within specific social contexts.
c. Difference between Fairclough's CDA and Eckert's Approach:
- Focus: While Fairclough's CDA is primarily interested in how practices of language reveal and constitute power relations and ideologies across texts and social practices, the approach by Eckert seeks to answer how language reflects and construes social identities within specific social contexts.
- Scope of Analysis: CDA tends to be broader in socio-political scope, analyzing texts within a wider framework of power relations and social structures. The focus of Eckert's analysis is the micro-level individual and group identities, and she researches the differential use of language across social contexts.
Emphasis on Method: CDA proceeds with a critical point of view to bring out the underlying structure of power and ideologies in texts. In the case of Eckert, the approach would be to use sociolinguistic methods to understand language use in understanding social identity or group membership.

4.Data Analysis

The framework of this analysis will avail itself mainly of Fairclough's CDA, supplementing this approach with insights afforded by Eckert's Sociolinguistic Variation Theory to explain how the speeches by Biden and Trump construct and project social identity, ideology, and power relations within the context of the 2020 American elections. Each speech will be looked at separately:

1. Joe Biden's Acceptance Speech (2020 Democratic National Convention) Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis:

Textual Analysis (Discourse):

Lexical Choices: The examples of the inclusive sets of lexis, "we," "unity," "together," thus could be found in Biden's speech, creating thereby an "in-group feeling" with regard to the shared goal. This choice underlines that his campaign is about the healing of divisions, uniting the country.Metaphors: Biden uses metaphors of healing and rebuilding, setting his campaign within the frame of a restorative process-for example, "a battle for the soul of the nation." This kind of metaphorical language frames the needs perceived in the nation and what leadership is or should be.- Story Scheme: The speech is organized on the lines of stories of overcoming division to restore values among Americans. That works to further inculcate Biden's character as a uniting leader as against perceived divisions within the incumbent administration.

٢. Discursive Practice: Production and Consumption.

Production Context: The speech is at the Democratic National Convention; Biden's speech is built from an appeal for moderates to undecided voters. This is evident through the strategic use of language that positions Biden as a bridge-builder and healer.Reception: An inclusive, empathetic rhetoric that addresses the wide stratum of target groups to bring them together, to call people into action. Media responses and audience comments may be very interesting in determining how well Biden's language corresponded to socio-political needs in such settings. 3. Social Practice Ideology and Power Relations Ideological Consequences: The speech ideologically talked of unity, restoration, and presupposed an indictment of the incumbent's administration's way of divisiveness. Biden's language recomposes political discourse into that of healing and collective progress.

• Power Dynamics: Biden's rhetoric puts him in a leadership role, able to restore the norms and bridge divides. Implicitly, his rhetoric is a threat to existing power dynamics; his rhetoric stands in negation to the kind of leadership represented by the present administration.

Penelope Eckert's *Sociolinguistic Variation Theory***:**

١ . Social Identity Construction:

- Community of Practice: Biden's speech targets the wide American audience, trying to build a common sense of identity and belonging. His language is an attempt at the unification of all kinds of diversities by appealing to common values and experiences.

Social Categories: Biden's rhetoric is couched in a manner to appeal to moderates, progressives, and disaffected Republicans alike. His emphasis on unity and inclusiveness reflects an attempt at the building of a broad coalition.

٢. Stylistic Choices:

Speech Style: The speech is formal yet relatable, full of personal anecdotes, as Biden uses empathetic language to establish rapport and project a sense of authenticity. This, he does in connecting with the voters at a personal level and helps build his image as a truly caring leader.

Variety and Change: Indeed, Biden's speech was articulation to the variation of changing socio-political rhetoric for unity and healing against the incumbent's divisive rhetoric. The so-called stylistic decisions have been considered in light of addressing contemporary social concerns and promoting the essence of social cohesion.

2. Donald Trump's Acceptance Speech (2020 Republican National Convention) Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis:

Textual Analysis (Discourse):

Choices such as "law and order," "radical left," "America First"-this speech was chock-full of the decisive, divisive word choice that made him, to an audience both horrified and intrigued, really firm up support and present this as a presidency-a bulwark-against a set of perceived threats. Indeed, some word choices can help identify such an in-group distinction.

Metaphors: By metaphors, Trump casts the administration as fighting off both internal and external threats in some sort of "battle" or "fight for the soul of the nation." It serves to frame their struggles and resisters in this struggle.

- Storyline Patterns: The speech relies on thematic elements of strength, resilience, and exceptionality. Trump's rhetoric gives evidence regarding the successes of his administration and at the same time constructs perceived failures of his opponents. 2. Discursive Practice (Production and Consumption):

Production Context: This is a speech to cement base support at the Republican National Convention, and it characterizes this election as strong presidency versus chaos. The language in this section should convey to these supporters that he is one of them and has their backs while mobilizing them for the election.

- Reception: This hostile and stirring rhetoric is a resource for the activation of Trump's supporters and the buttressing of his base. Reception could be understood through media coverage and audience reactions, providing insight into how Trump's language resonated well with his target audience. 3. Social Practice-Ideology and Power Relations

Ideological Consequences: This speech creates an ideology of nationalism and populism in which Trump is posed as the protector of the traditional values of America from its radical changes. It epitomizes the view of the political landscape as a battlefield between competing visions of America.

Power dynamics: Trump's rhetoric consolidates his image as a strong leader, going against the tide and opposing anything which appears threatening. A speech for consolidation, by using fear and resentment as an appeal to loyalty.

Penelope Eckert's *Sociolinguistic Variation Theory***:**

١ . Construction of Social Identity:

- Community of Practice: Trump's speech addresses a particular community of American voters, believing in the cause of nationalism and populism. His language constructs a strong in-group identity that emphasizes loyalty to his vision of America.

Social Categories: Trump speaks to the social categories that are feeling threatened or ostracized by current political trends. His use of divisive language helps to re-establish identity and cohesion with his support base.

2. Stylistic Choices:

Speech Style: The blunt, combative rhetoric of Trump is to repeat the slogan-type phrases or emphatic utterances for his base to resonate and feel strong; it sells his brand, rallies his base.

The variation and change present in Trump's language represent an attempt at socio-political status quo maintenance, as defined by his administration. His stylistic choices aim at readjusting already existing social cleavages and solidifying support within his base.

Qualitative and Quantitative Analyses

Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were done based on the findings from Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis and Penelope Eckert's Sociolinguistic Variation Theory. Combining both approaches will give a wide understanding of how language is used to construct and reflect social identities and political ideologies in these speeches.

Qualitative Analysis

١. Discourse Themes and Ideologies:
- Joe Biden's Speech:
- Themes: Unity, healing, and restoration.
- Ideologies: Emphasizes collective identity and inclusiveness. Biden's speech constructs a vision of America that is beyond political divisions, encouraging the return to shared values and norms.
- Language Use: Inclusive language, an empathetic tone, metaphors of healing and rebuilding create a unifying narrative.

Donald Trump's Speech:
- Themes: Strength, nationalism, and opposition to perceived threats.
- Ideologies: Nurture a perception of America as a battleground between traditional values and radical change. Trump's rhetoric reinforces strong in-group identity and places his administration as a defender against threats.
- Language Use: Assertive and confrontational language, metaphors of conflict and threat reinforce a narrative of resistance and exceptionalism.

2. Social Identity Construction:
- Joe Biden:
Community of Practice: It appeals to all people and is inclusive in nature. Language creates an identity shared across diverse groups and gives a sense of community.
- Social Categories: It appeals to moderates, progressives, and disillusioned Republicans, building a wide coalition of people with words that emphasize values and goals shared by all.
- Donald Trump:
- Community of Practice: Targets a specific group aligned with nationalist and populist ideals. Language creates a strong in-group identity, emphasizing loyalty and solidarity among supporters.
- Social Categories: Appeals to those feeling marginalized or threatened by political changes, reinforcing a sense of identity through divisive rhetoric.

3. Power Dynamics:
Joe Biden: -Power Relations: He presents positions to show that he is a unifying character, one who can surmount the rift. The speech dares the position of the current administration and presents another view of leadership committed to healing.
- Donald Trump: - Power Relations: Reinforces Trump's image as a strong leader who defends traditional values. The rhetoric consolidates power by framing the election as a choice between stability and chaos. The table below summarizes these elements.Table (1) qualitative Analysis

No.	Linguistic elements		Joe Biden	Donald Trump
1.	Discourse themes and ideologies	Themes	Unity, healing, and restoration	Strength, nationalism, and opposition to perceived threats.
		Ideologies	Emphasizes collective identity and inclusiveness	strong in-group identity, a defender against threats
		Language use	Inclusive , metaphors related to rebuilding	Assertive , metaphors of conflict and threat

No.				
2.	Social identity construction	Community of Practice	Inclusiveness, shared identity	strong in-group identity, solidarity
		Social Categories	Progressives	marginalized or threatened
3.	Power dynamics	Power relations	a unifying leader capable of bridging divides	a strong leader defending traditional values

Quantitative Analysis

The most recurrent linguistic elements revealed by the analysis are summarized in the table below.

Table(2) quantitative Analysis

No.	Linguistic Elements	Biden	Recurrence	Trump	Recurrence
1.	Lexical frequency (keywords)	Unity together America hope heal	14 5 29 11 2	Law and order Radical Threat Strong America	10 5 4 6 65
2.	Metaphor Usage	Healing and rebuilding	15	Battle, fight, threat	10
3.	Sentiment	Positive, focusing on hope and unity	14	Mixed to negative, with a focus on threats and challenges	6
4.	Rhetorical Devices	Use of inclusive language, appeals to common values, and personal anecdotes	15	Use of assertive language, repetition, and divisive rhetoric	20

Through inclusive language and metaphors of hope, the speech by Biden has been oriented towards unity and healing. Using divisive language, conflict metaphors, and overall structure, the speech by Trump orients toward strength and resistance. These contrasting rhetorical approaches are the reflection of the different strategies adopted by the leaders to approach the American electorate and shape their respective political narratives.

5.Conclusion

This research has focused on how political candidates employ language in their campaign speeches in building their public identities and identifying with their target demographics. By integrating Norman Fairclough's CDA into Penelope Eckert's sociolinguistic variation theory, it offers a sensitive elaboration of the complex relations between discourse, identity, and political power. Indeed, the findings proved that candidates exploit linguistic strategies for projecting authority and identifying themselves with their respective audience groups.Fairclough's CDA has revealed how discourse structures and rhetorical procedures frame political issues, reinforce ideological positions, and build up political personas. Among the key findings were the use of persuasive language to establish credibility and galvanize support, framing issues in light of the candidates' political agendas.In fact, Eckert's theory of sociolinguistic variation alone showed how speech stylistic choices adapt in an attempt to align with different social groups. Indeed, this paper has found that variation in language formality, regional dialects, and colloquial expressions is used as an attachment to connect with certain demographics and represent their social identities.In sum, the study underlines how language is used as a tool in political communication. The research, while tracing the crossroads of discourse and socio-stylistic variables, has shown how candidates' linguistic choices reflect and build their political identities and shape voter perceptions.

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Official sites for the full texts of Joe Biden's and Donald Trump's acceptance speeches from the 2020 conventions:

 1. Joe Biden's Acceptance Speech:

- FULL TEXT: Joe Biden's 2020 Democratic National Convention Speech - ABC News https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/full-text-joe-bidens-2020-democratic-national-convention/story?id=72513129

2. Donald Trump's Acceptance Speech:

- FULL TEXT: Donald Trump's 2020 Republican National Convention speech - ABC News https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/full-text-donald-trumps-2020-republican-national-convention/story?id=72659782