

Stylistic analysis of selected British and American Political Newspapers

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the rhetorical and linguistic methods used in the construction of political discourse by analysing the stylistic features of political reporting in selected American and British newspapers. The study looks at how language, syntax, different or similar in both nations by examining well-known texts from each. Word choice, sentence structure, and the framing of political events are all examined using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in this study, such as corpus analysis and critical discourse analysis. The results advance knowledge of how political viewpoints are reflected in and shaped by the media in the US and the UK, influencing more general conversations about the function of journalism in modern democracies

Keywords : style, stylistics, political newspapers, discourse analysis, meta discourse

تحليل الاسلوبية لصحف امريكية وبريطانية مختارة

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وزارة التربية/ مديرية الرصافة الثالثة

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تقييم الأساليب البلاغية واللغوية المستعملة في بناء الخطاب السياسي من طريق تحليل الأسلوبية للتقارير السياسية في الصحف الأمريكية والبريطانية المختارة. تبين الدراسة الاختلاف والتشابه باللغة والنحو في كل من البلدين من طريق تحليل الباحثة لنصوص معروفة لكليهما. تم تحليل تركيب الجملة , نوع الكلمة واطار الاحداث السياسية من خلال المنهجيات الكمية والنوعية مثل تحليل النصوص وتحليل الخطاب النقدي. اظهرت

النتائج معرفة كيفية انعكاس وجهات النظر السياسية وتشكيلها بوساطة وسائل الإعلام في الولايات المتحدة والمملكة البريطانية مما يؤثر على المحادثات الأكثر عمومية حول وظيفة الصحافة في الديمقراطيات الحديثة.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الأسلوب، الأسلوبية، الصحف السياسية، تحليل الخطاب، ما وراء الخطاب

Introduction

Newspapers are important forums for creating and distributing narratives about world events. The media plays a critical role in influencing political discourse and public opinion. The political landscapes and journalistic traditions of the United States and the United Kingdom are often reflected in the varied stylistic approaches that political newspapers take while reporting on domestic policy and international crises.

Biber & Conrad (2022) defines stylistics as “Stylistics is increasingly seen as an interdisciplinary field that combines insights from linguistics, literary theory, and cognitive science to analyze how stylistic choices in language shape and influence textual meaning”. This definition highlights how stylistics is changing in response to new theoretical paradigms and research techniques.

Political discourse is generally understood to be an informational exchange between a speaker and a listener in which the speaker aims to convince the listener to adopt their viewpoints and opinions in order to strengthen their arguments. To accomplish this, the speaker makes use of a range of grammatical and lexical devices as well as linguistic features to project themselves as the speaker in a conversation, anticipate the audience's reactions, build rapport with them, and control authoritative and interpersonal relations.

Language plays a great role in politics. Language and politics are closely related, as many writers have noted. For instance, Fairclough (1989) demonstrates in his book the relationship between language and

power, or more specifically, the links between language use and uneven power relations, especially in the contemporary world. Joseph (2006) presented a compelling argument for the political nature of language.

The British news media frequently reflects the political beliefs of the general public and their political representatives. According to studies like Herman & Chomsky's from 2002, the American media reports differently about the "official enemy" or the "official friend" of the country's citizens in various ways. The political stance of the nation toward the UK determines these categories. The cultural narrative and its underlying scripts have an impact on the tales that emerge. A stylistic analysis of American newspapers indicates a broad range of methods based on the medium (print or digital) and the outlet's target audience and ideological position. The language, structure, tone, and images all play a part in the newspaper's overall identity and impact on society at large.

This research project aims to analyze two news articles one of them is British newspapers (BBC) and another is American newspaper (The New York Times) to examine the use of stylistic devices.

RQ 1: What are the most significant similarities and differences found in the ways that the two newspapers employ in reporting political intention?

1–Literature review

Stylistics is the study of the style, looks at how language is used to convey meaning in various circumstances. It is an interdisciplinary field that connects literary criticism and linguistics. Widdowson (1975) explains that stylistics "is concerned with relating linguistic facts to meaning in an explicit way." It focuses on how formal aspects of language influence interpretation. Verdonk (2002) describes stylistics as "the analysis of distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect." Simpson (2004) defines stylistics as "an

approach to textual interpretation where language is given priority over other elements."

Style refers to the unique way a writer or speaker utilizes language to convey ideas. It covers, among other things, choices about sentence form, figurative language, tone, and vocabulary. **Crystal (1997)** describes style as "a pattern of linguistic features that distinguishes one piece of writing from another or one author from another." This emphasizes the idea that style is the result of recurring linguistic choices that create a unique textual identity. **Wales (2001)** defines style as "the selection of certain features of language from a totality of the language system and the way those features are arranged." Simpson (2004) states that just as there is a perceived way of doing things, such as playing squash or painting, style refers to the perceived unique form of expression in writing or speaking.

There is great connection between style and stylistics. Short and Leech (2007) clarify the relation that Style is the manner in which a language is used, and stylistics is the study of that manner through the analysis and interpretation of the choices that the language user makes. Simpson (2004) adds that "stylistics is a method of analyzing text in which priority is given to language, and it employs methodologies and theories from linguistics to show how specific styles function in texts." So the object of study is style, and the analytical field that investigates the characteristics and implications of style is stylistics.

Language plays greatly in politics. Language and politics are closely related, as many writers have noted. For instance, Fairclough (1989) demonstrates in his book the relationship between language and power, or more specifically, the links between language use and varying power relations, especially in today's world. Joseph (2006) presented a compelling argument for the political nature of language.

2–The relationship between stylistics and politics

Political discourse, public opinion, and power are all shaped by language, and this is the basis for the relationship between stylistics and politics. Political actors employ language strategically to influence, manipulate, or establish authority. Stylistics offers the means to examine the linguistic elements of political texts and speeches. The two are related through:

i. Language as a Tool for Political Power: Political discourse, public opinion, and power dynamics are all shaped by language, and this is the basis for the relationship between stylistics and politics. Political actors employ language strategically to influence, manipulate, or establish authority. Stylistics offers the means to examine the linguistic elements of political texts and speeches. When talking about the purpose of language in politics, Fairclough (2000) points out that stylistics can reveal the ways in which political language is molded to uphold hierarchies of power. Style decisions made in political speeches, debates, and manifestos often reflect the ideologies being expressed.

ii. Critical Stylistics and Political Language : A subfield of stylistics known as "critical stylistics" combines stylistics and critical discourse analysis to investigate how language both reflects and maintains social and political inequality. It gives insight into how political language helps to uphold or undermine power systems by concentrating on how linguistic structures have certain ideological implications.

According to Jeffries (2010) in Critical Stylistics, stylistic analysis is an essential technique for understanding political discourse since it shows how texts promote prevailing beliefs.

iii. Persuasion and Ideology : Politicians frequently employ persuasive language to sway the opinions of their audience. The application of stylistic analysis reveals the ways in which particular linguistic constructions (such the usage of personal pronouns like "we" and "you") alienate opponents or foster solidarity with the audience. Van Dijk

(2006), for instance, demonstrates how political speeches' style decisions can quietly convey ideological viewpoints and influence public perception.

3–The Purpose of stylistics

Why is stylistics important? Studying stylistics entails investigating language, particularly the inventiveness of language use. Thus, engaging in stylistics enhances our perspectives on language, and as has been noted, examining language has a significant impact on how we comprehend (literary) works. Using all of the language models at our disposal allows for an analytical inquiry process that is intrinsically revealing. This type of inquiry has a significant reflective capacity because it can illuminate the language system from which it originates. It provides insight into the "rules" of language since it frequently examines texts in which those rules are twisted, expanded, or overextended. The focus of contemporary stylistic analysis is always on language, which typically focuses on language interest, therefore unless you have a strong interest in language, you should never pursue stylistics, Simpson (2004:3–4).

He (ibid) refers that it may be helpful to consider stylistics as adhering to the following three fundamental principles, which can be remembered as the three "Rs." According to the three Rs, it is stipulated that:

- stylistic analysis should be rigorous
- stylistic analysis should be retrievable
- stylistic analysis should be replicable.

In order for the stylistic method to be considered rigorous, it must have an established framework of analysis as its foundation. Rather than being the result of an unstructured series of impressionistic and impromptu remarks, stylistic analysis is supported by formal models of language and discourse that clarify how humans interpret and

comprehend different patterns in language. The organization of the analysis using clear words and standards, the definitions of which are accepted by other stylistics students, is necessary to support the claim that the stylistic technique is retrievable. While it has been challenging to define some characteristics of language precisely, most stylistics terminology has a generally accepted meaning. Through this consensus, other stylisticians are able to recover, or follow, the stylistic technique, by testing the categories employed in the study and observing how it came to its conclusion. Replicability in stylistic analysis does not imply that we should all aim to imitate one another's work. It simply implies that the techniques should be transparent enough for other stylisticians to confirm them, either by applying them outside of that text or by testing them on the same text. If the analysis's approach is understandable and repeatable, the findings drawn are reasonable. To this degree, stylistics' attempt to separate itself from work that relies exclusively on unproven or untestable intuition has come to be seen as a fundamental tenet.

4– Related Studies

Through a rhetorical stylistic analysis, this inquiry explores the language used while delivering political headlines. The main goal is to clarify how rhetorical stylistic links affect journalistic reporting. Examining the pattern used to transmit political information is the main goal. It asserts that in order to evaluate the linguistic expression in non-literary works, rhetorical style mechanisms are important and pertinent in non-literary compositions, especially in political headlines. The analysis included data taken from the American newspaper New York Times, Washington Examiner and the British broadsheet The Guardian, The BBC with a focus on their headlines.

The goal of the study was to demonstrate how stylistic and rhetorical approaches work together to accomplish the primary goal of language use, which is to enthrall and persuade the audience, through a

comparative examination. The study uncovered differences in the four newspapers' sentence patterns with regard to the interactions between the nucleus and satellite, highlighting the importance of these elements in a sentence. Foregrounding was mostly used in the New York Times as a strategy of diversion to maintain reader interest in the underlying content, demonstrating the different approaches taken by the media in covering war-related events. The study demonstrates how stylistic elements and rhetorical strategies are woven throughout newspaper articles.

Reisigl, & Wodak, (2001) adopt a stylistic method to investigate how language in the press, especially in American and British contexts, shapes social and political issues, even if its primary concentration is on discourse analysis. Reisigl and Wodak investigate how particular ideologies are furthered in political newspapers through the use of stylistic devices including argumentation, metaphor, and euphemism.

Toolan (2002) studies discourse and stylistic devices in political media, with an emphasis on British newspapers. His research is essential for a comparison of American and British political newspapers because it sheds light on how stylistic decisions influence political narratives and public conversation.

Bhatia (2006) investigates how American and British newspapers covered political press conferences using various stylistic elements. Bhatia focuses on the persuasive and rhetorical techniques used in political debate, as well as how these techniques are expressed in the media. It's helpful to comprehend how political goals are reflected in newspaper stylistic decisions. Conboy(2006) examines how language is used by British tabloid newspapers to create social and political realities. Conboy examines the literary devices used in tabloid political reporting, emphasizing the use of rhetoric, colloquialism, and sensationalism to pique readers' interest. The style devices are comparable to those seen

in American political publications, even though the concentration is on British tabloids.

Machin& Mayr (2012) provide a paradigm for integrating critical discourse analysis and stylistics to analyze political newspapers. Machin and Mayr concentrate on the language and visual components of newspapers, offering techniques to investigate the ways in which American and British political newspapers employ stylistic elements to create political narratives.

Barack Obama was acknowledged as a brilliant politician who knew how to use rhetorical devices and persuasive speaking to his advantage. During the 2013 UNGA, Najarzadegan (2017) examined the rhetorical approaches of Iranian President Rouhani and former President Barack Obama. Obama's talks were distinguished by a simple word choice that resulted in simple sentences, while Rouhani's speech was filled with intricate metaphors and repeated phrases. As was already established, the strategic tactic of using repeated phrases helped to imprint ideas in the audience's thoughts and increase the speech's effect. The study also showed that both leaders used rhetorical devices like victimhood, lexicalization, and polarization to persuade people and support their positions.

Sclafani (2018) concentrates on American political speech, particularly on the ways that language and stylistic choices influence political identity. The study examines how political newspapers—both American and British—report on political characters using stylistic methods, providing insight into the stylistic portrayal of political personalities—even if its focus is on Donald Trump's speech.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

This study used qualitative research design to investigate how newspaper sources in the British and American media use the

effectiveness of stylistics devices . Cavanagh (1997) asserts that content analysis's effectiveness stems from its flexibility when it comes to text analysis. Schenk (2012) conducted an investigation into the dissemination of nationalistic ideas in Russian newspapers through the use of content analysis. Content analysis is a quantitative technique for examining communication messages, according to Stroud and Higgins (2011).

5.2 Framework of the Study

Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics is a framework that is frequently used for discourse analysis (1985). This particular method of studying language is mostly linked to sociology since it explores how people use language to accomplish goals in a variety of settings. A key idea in this framework is the "context of situation," which refers to the organized relationship between the social context and the grammatical structure (Halliday, 1985).

The phrase "functional grammar" originates from Halliday (2014), who lays a strong focus on grammar in his theory. Grammar is the primary means of establishing meaning in this paradigm. The goal is to engage in discourse-based grammatical interaction. In order to support the idea that grammar and lexis are related (lexico-grammar), Halliday (2014) broadens the scope of his theory. Language structures and vocabulary are the main topics of lexico-grammar. Halliday describes Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), which sees grammar as a network of options that writers and speakers employ to convey meaning rather than just a collection of rules.

Three fundamental contextual factors, which are at the heart of M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, impact how language is used. These elements, which are frequently referred to

as the situational context, influence the way meaning is expressed through language. They are field, tenor and mode.

Field describes the subject matter of discussion or the exchange of information. It has to do with what kind of social activity or subject is being discussed. Because different topic areas require varied vocabularies, linguistic choices, and structures, the field influences the type of language employed. A legal contract, for instance, will use different language than informal chat since the former demands more formal, certain terms.

The second factor is toner which describes the interpersonal dynamics and social roles that exist between speakers. This covers the social distance, formality level, and power relationships between writers or speakers and their audience. For instance, the language used between friends in a casual, relaxed chat will not be the same as the language used between a teacher and student in a formal, respected situation.

The third factor is grammatical moods which There are four different grammatical moods: imperative, subjunctive, indicative, and infinitive. Simply said, the indicative mood formulates questions and factual statements; the imperative mood demands, commands, and advise; the subjunctive mood communicates doubt or uncertainty; and the infinitive mood designates specific actions or states without explicit subjects. Last but not least, mode refers to the manner in which the material is conveyed, more especially, the channel of communication. It also takes into account how well the language communicates the desired meaning. A conversation might take the form of written or spoken, planned or unplanned. The mode influences lexical usage and literary meaning. Together, field, tenor, and mode provide a thorough understanding of a text's operational elements.

6. Data Collection and Analysis

The materials used in this study are two articles. one of them is from American(The New York Times. The another is from British newspapers (The BBC) that include political speeches and interviews with press related to the issue of Gaza War in Palestine. All the data are taken from the internet (Newspaper BBC World website at www.bbc.co.uk The New York www.nytimes.com in 5/2024.

Using the Hallidayan model (Systemic functional linguistics) as the analytical framework, the researcher selected the relevant speeches and interviews given. The next step was to identify the linguistic features within the speeches. The researcher then went to work dissecting the discursive strategies, power relationships, and underlying nuanced ideas that were present in the speeches' use of language and sentence patterns. Two knowledgeable people reviewed these analyses. In particular, the researcher chose to draw attention to linguistic devices such as passivization, which allows a writer to deceive or protect readers by hiding the real agent behind actions (which must be vanquished). The danger of weapons of mass murder cannot be avoided. According to Nordlund (2003), modality is typically expressed by modal adjectives, disjuncts—adverbs that indicate attitudes—or modal auxiliary verbs (can, could, may, might, must, ought to, shall, should, will, would).

Through the perspective of Hallidayan systemic functional grammar, the researcher aims to carefully investigate the concept of modality in the political speeches of Biden and Netanyahu. Modality becomes the main means by which the speaker can use language to establish authority and control over the topic. According to Fairclough (2001), modality is the way that authority is expressed through verb tenses, modal adverbs, or modal auxiliaries. This example in particular sticks out because of its creative modality utilization.

6.1 Results and Discussion

Table 1 Quantitative data pertaining to Linguistic features (Modals) of the BBC

| Linguistic feature of the BBC | The number of it |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Can | 3 |
| Could | 3 |
| May | 0 |
| Might | 0 |
| Should | 0 |
| Would | 4 |
| Must | 0 |
| Ought to | 0 |
| Will | 8 |
| Shall | 1 |

Table 2

| the BBC | The number of it |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Passive sentences | 18 |

Table 3

Quantitative data pertaining to Linguistic features (Modals) of the New York Times

| Linguistic feature of the New York Times | The number of it |
|--|------------------|
| Can | 0 |
| Could | 2 |
| May | 1 |
| Might | 1 |
| Should | 0 |

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Would | 3 |
| Must | 0 |
| Ought to | 0 |
| Will | 0 |
| Shall | 0 |

Table 4 Quantitative data pertaining to Linguistic features (passive sentences of the New York Times

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| the New York Times | The number of it |
| Passive sentences | 8 |

This work aims to investigate and evaluate political speeches in order to identify the stylistic devices that contribute to their success and attractiveness. It is apparent that the selection of modality is strikingly consistent throughout each utterance. American politicians use *would*, *could*, *may* and *might* more than *will* and *shall* which often express uncertainty or politeness. This style is often viewed as more formal and indirect, giving a sense of balance and neutrality. While British politicians use *can* and *could* but *will* is more than other modalities which reflects more certainty or obligation. This reflects a tendency toward a more assertive or confident style in British journalism. Both of them are omitting (ought to) and (have to), thereby reducing the speaker's subjective imposition.

By evaluating the study's data on the usage of passive voice, politicians hope to influence public opinion and direct attention to specific activities. Passive voice is typically used in political speeches with the intention of hiding or backgrounding agency, primarily in the BBC. The number of passive sentences in BBC article is 18 while in New York Times is 8. The passive voice can create a sense of detachment or neutrality, which aligns with the British journalistic tradition of maintaining a more distant and impartial tone. The action or event itself can be

highlighted by using the passive structure, drawing attention away from the subject (such as a political actor).

The investigation is anticipated to provide advantages for individuals learning the English language, given that it is a common occurrence for them to encounter challenges in fully understanding genuine discourses. Typically, this difficulty stems from their inability to decipher the implicit assumptions of the author or more precisely, the ideology that shapes the discourses. According to Fairclough (1995), the initial phase in social engagements involves the acquisition of insight through a discourse analysis. The results can be deliberated with regards to enhancing the comprehension of second language users towards the linguistic and pragmatic norms of political communication and the manner in which communication is formulated via metadiscourse indicators. The media shapes people's perceptions, frames how people understand or misunderstand individuals and communities, and acts as an agent to (re)shape those perceptions (Alshahrani, 2021). The neat use of language by mass media shapes readers' concepts of understanding by imparting information (Triana, Kustati, Yusuf, & Reflinaldi, 2021). The media has become a weapon in the modern global age, primarily used through language, to mobilize millions of people. In all media, language has a persuasive function

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the crucial role of meta discourse markers in crafting political discourse. By analyzing political articles on the Gaza conflict, it becomes clear that the success of political communication heavily relies on the strategic use of both interactive and interactional meta discourse elements. These markers aid in structuring speech, engaging the audience, and enhancing the speaker's ability to present arguments convincingly. The findings

emphasize the context-dependent nature of these elements, revealing the complexity and subtlety inherent in political communication.

Furthermore, this research enriches our understanding of the linguistic and pragmatic norms that underlie political discourse, providing valuable insights for second language learners. Understanding the importance of meta discourse strategies enables language users to develop more nuanced and effective persuasive communication skills, particularly in political contexts. This study not only contributes to theoretical knowledge but also offers practical implications for enhancing the effectiveness of political communication across different languages

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