



The Power of language to Influence Global Politics
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Abstract

Language is a powerful political weapon; it shapes people's thoughts and opinions. In political domain language is used in a way that best suits politician's agenda. So, choosing the appropriate terms and phrases is very important in order to assert power, persuasion, dominance and other political intentions. The paper is an investigation for different ways language is used to achieve global aspects. We are focusing on clarifying certain linguistic devices and figures of speech used in different political areas and highlighting these figures with related examples from various resources. The study arrives at some conclusions which reveal that the investment of a variety of linguistics devices and figures of speech is a powerful way to attract public's attention to a specific language and emphasizing the intended meaning of such a language.

Keywords: language, power, global politics

قوة اللغة في التأثير على السياسة العالمية

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الخلاصة: تعتبر اللغة سلاح سياسي قوي التأثير. فهي تشكل أفكار الناس وآرائهم، فعلى الصعيد السياسي تستعمل اللغة بطريقة تناسب الى حد ما اجندات السياسيين وتطلعاتهم لذلك فان اختيار المصطلحات والعبارات المناسبة مهم للغاية لتأكيد القوة والاقناع والهيمنة وغيرها من النوايا والاهداف السياسية. تعتبر هذه الورقة البحثية تقصي لاهم الطرق التي يتم بواسطتها استعمال اللغة لتحقيق جوانب عالمية. نحن نركز على توضيح بعض الأدوات اللغوية والصور البلاغية المستعملة في مختلف المجالات السياسية مرفقة بعدة امثلة ذات الصلة من مصادر متنوعة. توصل البحث الى عدة نتائج والتي تكشف ان استثمار الأدوات اللغوية والصور البلاغية يعد وسيلة قوية لجذب انتباه الجمهور الى لغة معينة والتأكيد على المعنى المقصود من هذه اللغة

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة، السلطة، السياسة العالمية

1-Introduction

language is the play of verbal symbols which are based on imagery (Palmer 1996, p.3). Aristotle the legendary Greek philosopher said:

Man is by nature a political animal, and a man that is by nature and not merely by fortune citiless is either low in the scale of humanity or above it, and why man is a political animal in a greater measure than any bee or gregarious animal is clear. For nature does nothing without purpose; and man alone of the animals possesses speech? (Aristotle, 1932, p. 9) Hence, to be social you need to use language, which



has always been felt to form the property that distinguishes humans from other species (Cohen, 2013, p. 3). Language has an important role in our lives that is because it is considered as a functional system of human communication. It is the main tool by which societies are organized and cultures are expanded (Gentti, 2014, p. 4) In his essay on language, Hall (1968, p.158), defines language as, the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by utilizing habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols". According to Sapir (1921, p.7) "language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires using voluntarily produced symbols". For Salzman et al (2012, p. 2) language exists in an extensive variety of human situations and its scientific study is the key to understand a lot of human behavior. According to Atchison (1996, p. 20) language nowadays is used for many purposes this includes:

1-Providing information:

The train at platform five is the London-York Express.

2-Giving commands:

Don't shout!

3-Social talking:

Hi, how are you doing today?

4-Expressing feelings:

Oh, what a beautiful morning!

5-Wordplay and poetry:

The apple made cider inside her in side.

6-Talking about language:

"Donking" isn't a word.

Part of understanding the philosophy of language is to examine the deep relationship between the power of language and its use in global politics and how language shapes and constructs political reality.

2-The Concept of Power

The English word "Power" derives from the French word "Pouvoir" which means to have the ability and force to do something (Fleming and Tibbins, 1857:421). The term "Power" is used in a variety of ways, and there are different approaches to categories the Possible Perspectives. For example, in his book. Power A Radical view, Lukes (2021: 1/3) distinguishes between "faces" of Power, it also called 'three dimensions of Power'. The first dimension is related to basic decision Making, which is the most observable and the most visible of the three faces of Power. It centers on the actual behavior and Particular outcomes of decision-making processes. In this dimension Power is handled by those who dominate in decision making. Lukes Summarize this dimension by saying that such view of Power Comprise a concentration of behavior in decisions Making on issues which Contain



a noticeable conflict of interest. Among the supporters of such dimension are Robert A. Dahl, Netson Polsby, and Raymond & Wolfinger. The second dimension "face" of Power is the institutionalist or the Power of non-decision Making. Proponents of this face such as Bachrach and Baratz suggested that decisions are made by a complex system, which means that Power is not only a matter of decision making but also about surrounding agenda which leads to such decisions (Lukes, 2021: 24).

In addition to the two faces of Power Lukes (2021: 30) adds a third deeper face which is called Power through domination. Such dimension works on influencing the thoughts and desires of People in order to look for things they used to refuse. According to Lukes such dimension can be seen in the ways issues are left out of public discussion and whether consensus in a specific society is real or manipulated. Foucault the writers who saw that Power is not a negative, prohibitive or exclusionary thing that forces People to do things they do not wish to do but it can be also a positive and necessary thing in a society, (Gaventa 2003: 2). Foucault (1991:194) concentrate on the importance of abandoning the description of Power in negative terms. like it "excludes", it "represses", its "censors", it abstracts "sit" masks", instead, Power has productively it produces reality and knowledge gained by People.

In his book "Economy and society" Weber (1978:53) defines Power as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests.

3-Language Power relationships

In his book Language and Power, Fairclough (1989, p. 55) discusses the idea of power that lies behind discourse. He discusses the notion of social order and the idea of how power is imposed upon all by those who are in a higher institutional hierarchy. This power that is behind discourse is the result of a known and accepted status inherent in hierarchical structures. It is commonly and accepted by many cultures that the legal system, police, and individuals, like doctors, and heads of organizations have power over people according to their role in society. What makes people trust the words from a doctor is the context behind discourse because society gave doctors status and respect and accept their knowledge to be correct. Eventually, even doctors are subjected to the power of medical institutions or systems.

Romaine (1994: p.33) argued that usually the more powerful groups in any society can force their language upon the less powerful. She provides an example to support that fact. In Finland for example, Sami (Lapps), Romanians, and Swedes have to learn Finnish, but Finns do not have to learn any of those languages.



3-Language Power and Global Politics

According to Heywood (2011:2) global politics is that kind of politics which is managed at a global level instead of regional or national level.

Crystal (2003: 4) suggested two ways by which a language could achieve global statuses. First, Language can be used as a tool of communication in different sectors such as law Court, government, the media and the education system. People need to master the official language which often called "Second Language" and at the same time considered a Person's Mother tongue. Such important role of official language is best shown in different Countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, India, Singapore and Vanuatu which have developed English a considerable official use.

Secondly, language can have a prime concern in a country's foreign language teaching Such Priority achieved by teaching children in school and even adults who had never learned it or learned it to some extent. For example, in the Countries of former Soviet Union, Russian occupied a recognizable Position for many years.

In his book "The rise of English Global Politics and the power of language" Salomone discusses the domination of English as a lingua franca and its Consequences on global economy, national identity and educational Policies and access. He states that English now is the language that Brazilians talk to Dutch and Japanese talk to the Italians (Salamone, 2022: 9). The number of nonnative speakers of English in the world higher than native speakers, 1.5 billion out of 7.7. billions of earth's Populations speaks English, which is a clue to state that UK and USA do not own English any longer and it becomes the language of the world (ibid:9). Salomone Provides example for the Skillful strategic use of language that achieve a higher level of contact with larger Political audience, French President Emmanuel Macron who has a considerable awareness. for the importance of English language to the French economy He realize the global value of English to contact with world leaders and to prove his leadership and this is what happen at the World Economic forum Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2018. (Ibid:10). The following is a list table for the top 15 most spoken languages in the world (2024) and their number of speakers.

Sr. No.	Language	Number of speakers
1.	English	1.5 billion
2.	Mandarin Chinese	1.3 billion
3.	Hindi	615 million
4.	Spanish	595 million
5.	French	235 million
6.	Bengali	234 million



7.	Modern Arabic	270 million
8.	Portuguese	263 million
9.	Russian	257 million
10.	Urdu	234 million
11.	Indonesia	200 million
12.	German	134 million
13.	Japanese	125.4 million
14.	Nigerian Pidgin	120.7 million
15.	Marathi	99.1 million

Table 1: 15 Most Spoken Languages in The World (2024)

<https://myclasstracks.com/most-spoken-languages>

4-The influence of language on global politics

O'Barr (1976: 5) explained that Language and politics are related to each other depending on the fact that verbal communication system is connected with every system that we may refer to as *government*. In addition, there are three crucial types of relations between language and politics: 1) those situations in which governments intervene in an attempt to control the communication system itself; (2) those in which language factors intervene in and thus affect the processes of government and politics; and (3) those in which language and politics are in mutual interaction, feeding back upon one another.

War is considered the most prominent domain that political and ideological effects for language can be seen. (Mooney and Evans 2015:51) Carol Cohn is the founding director of the Consortium on Gender, Security and Human rights, she is well known for addressing affairs related to global Politics, (gender and security organization.2024).

In her article. Cohn (1987:690) discussed that language is more than just a tool for Communication, far beyond so, language has a great influence on the way by which speakers Can think and, thereafter act. Cohn Proved her discussion by choosing specific Language, which she referred to as "techno Strategic language" such language is used by the defense intellectuals, a group of specialists in defense speeches in the aspect of nuclear arms. (Ibid :692). Cohn assumes that many Linguistics devices are used by defense intellectuals such devices have huge influence on its speakers. (Ibid:690). A noticeable device is using **abstractions** in the form of abbreviations. for example, BAMBI, which means Ballistic Missile



Boost Intercept. Cohn states that using such Concept reveals Positive feelings which leads to distance the speakers from terrible matters they are dealing with. (Ibid :698). Another important device. is the use of **Euphemisms**. for instance, using the terms "clean bombs" or " damage limitation weapons "to arouse an idea that such destroyable are much less destructive than they are actually seems to be. (Ibid:691.). Table 1.2 illustrates examples of abstractions and euphemisms. (Moony and Evans 2015:52).

Euphemism	Gloss
Clean Bombs and	‘weapons which are largely fusion rather than fission which therefore release a higher quantity of energy not as radiation but as blast’ (Cohn 1987: 17)
Countervalue Attacks	‘incinerating cities’ (Cohn 1987: 17)
Christmas tree farm	‘where missiles are lined up in their silos ready for launching’ (Cohn 1987: 20)
Footprint	‘the pattern in which bombs fall’ (Cohn 1987: 20)
Cookie Cutter	‘a particular model of nuclear attack’ (Cohn 1987: 20)

Wood (2007:93) adds another way by Which language and nuclear weapons are explored. He emphasis the notion of ' Proliferation' which is a term refers to the spread of nuclear arms. Woods assures that such word ' Proliferation' paradoxically stopped the spread of nuclear weapons and the reason for that is the shape of the word itself.

Metaphor is another important linguistics device which make and assert an equivalence between two things. A good example of metaphors is " This is a worldwide global Spring” which is a familiar example in recent years, it is a series of anti-Government uprisings that takes place in Middle East and north Africa between 2010 and 2011. Using a global Spring in the previous example by the author of the manifesto is an assertion for the world that such movement is a new start just like the coming of Spring. (Mooney and Evans2015:50).

An additional figure of speech is **metonymy**, which is a method used to replace the name of something with another thing that is associated with it without changing the whole meaning. for example, the term “The White House “is used to refer to the president of the United States, the government and advisors. (Beard2000:19). According to Webster dictionary metonymy involves using the name of one thing



for another which belong or attribute to it the word Crown for example means “king” or “Queen”

Parallelism is another important figure of speech which is used by politicians when they want to their message to be noticed and get attention.in such figure of speech many ideas are expressed in a series of identical structures to show that such ideas have similar importance and hence adding a kind of rhythm and symmetry, which makes the speech unforgettable. (Thomas et al.,2004:51).

Pronouns is Another important device that can be used to reveal certain message they are used by speakers to refer to themselves or to their audience. . (Thomas et al.,2004:52). consider the employment of pronouns in the following texts which are parts of Donald trump speech in one of his Rally in Reno 12/17/23

But people will know that I will catch them. We will catch them. We’ll catch them together. We’re going to send them back. We’re going to send them out of our country. Given the unprecedented millions of Biden illegal aliens who are invading our country, it is only common sense that when I’m reelected, we will begin. And we have no choice. The largest deportation operation in American history. We have no choice.

In this text trump used the third personal pronoun we 8 times. Such frequent use of we might be a way of encouraging team building and avoiding individuality, or it could be a defense mechanism that helps him justify irrational or unacceptable things.

I read an article recently, in a paper. It’s a fake newspaper, but I assume the article was true. Most of them are unfortunately. Look at it back there. But most of them are. And it was by a man and about a man who runs a mental institution in South America. And by the way, they’re coming from all over the world. They’re coming from Africa, from Asia all over but this happened to be in South America, and he was sitting reading a newspaper, sort of leisurely, and they were asking him, “What are you doing?” “I was very busy all my life. I was very proud. I worked 24 hours a day. I was so busy all the time. But now I’m in this mental institution,” where he’s been for years. “And I’m in the mental institution and I worked very hard on my patients, but now we don’t have any patients. They’ve all been brought to the United States.” This is what’s happening. This is what’s happening. And I read that. And you can multiply that by hundreds and even thousands of different places all over the world.

In this text there is a shift use of pronouns, Trump turned to use the first personal pronoun I instead of we to express himself individually or to express his own thoughts and opinions



Conclusion

Language is so powerful; it can determine thoughts and actions. The domination of certain language may cause the speakers of that language to experience different feelings. It could make someone happy or even disappointment. language can be manipulated; words can be transformed. metaphors can be used, and so many linguistic devices enrolled. All of the previous tools are used to fulfill certain goals and objectives. language politic relationship is a highly significant one; such relationship can be best highlighted by the investment of a variety of linguistics devices and figures of speeches such as **abstractions, Euphemisms, Metonymy, metaphor, pronouns** and **parallelism**. Using such devices aims to attract the public's attention to a specific language and emphasizing the intending meaning of such a language.

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