

A Critical Discourse Analysis of President Biden's Speech on Fighting COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT:

This paper addresses the ways of how President Biden chose to use language in his speech about the Corona virus vaccination entitled (Remarks by President Biden on Fighting the COVID-19 Pandemic) on September 9, 2021. The speech was transcribed on the White House official website on the same date of the speech. This study has adopted for the analysis the three-dimensional analytical model of Critical Discourse Analysis model by Norman Fairclough (1995). Thus, the speech was analyzed through text analysis and described via social practice. The ideological and persuasive parts of the selected corpus are evaluated, which show Biden's language choices. The power shown in the language is also looked at. The study adopted a qualitative analysis that showed that the speech was meant to give real reasons why people should get vaccinated to stop the pandemic from spreading. This meant that the speech had to be kept. Results showed most of the ideas that came out were about nationalism, working together to fight the pandemic, and making the country's economy better. Also, results showed how the president and his subjects shared power by the president's use of the pronouns "we, our, and us," and his repeated use of the term "fellow Americans," his appeal became more palatable to the audience.

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1. Introduction:

Politics is the process of trying to get power (Bayram, 2010). It is a fight for power so that certain political, economic, and social ideas can be put into action. Language is a key part of this process because it is used to plan, explain, influence, and carry out every political action. It is one of the most important ways that politicians try to change the way people think about politics so they can sell their ideas to them.

According to Chimbarange, et.al. (2013), the main goal of politicians is to convince people that their political claims are true. When resources are used to change the beliefs and actions of other people, this has an effect on politics. This means that politicians try to convince voters to give up their political ideas and stick with theirs. A political speech is one that is about either fighting for power or keeping it and being in charge of it. It is varied because it includes all the different ways that politicians talk at political forums. A political speech could be the president's speech during a time of economic or health crisis. The goal of this kind of speech is not to win votes but to show that the government is serious about solving the current crisis. In this kind of speech, the president uses words to reassure the people that he or she will do everything possible to protect them from the bad effects of the crisis. In this situation, language can be seen more as a way to express ideas than as a way to change people's minds. During the pandemic, President Biden gave other speeches, but this one was chosen because it fit with what was going on in the country at the time. Since the first case was reported in January 2020, the pandemic has been in the country for more than a year. Since then, the government has taken a number of steps to stop the virus from spreading. But every day, more and more people were getting sick. The president gave the speech at a time when he was making sure that if we increase the number of people who get vaccinated, protect ourselves and others with masks and more tests, and find out who is infected, we can and will turn the tide on COVID-19. The study has highlighted how criticality has crystalized presidential speeches in supporting the fight against Covid-19. Thus, the present study fills a gap in literature by showing how President Biden has advocated his plans for fighting the pandemic and the ideas and power structures behind the speech can be found out.

2. Literature Review:

The goal of this paper is to analyze President Biden speech about Corona Vaccination critically. This is done so that his plans for fighting the pandemic and the ideas and power structures behind the speech can be found. They believe that language is being utilized to create hegemony, power, and dominance as a practice in society (Wodak & Fairclough 1997). It appears to be a comprehensive mirror of social norms. Societal relations are revealed by the forms of language used by members of society, such as when a director of a corporation communicates with a clerk or peon and the linguistic choice of the director reveals his or her dominant attitude. The historical context of the discourse is critical to understanding the text. It is important to understand the context in which a piece of writing was written in order to understand its meaning.

Horváth (2009) used CDA to look at how President Obama talked about politics. Based on the outline, the speech was broken down. The analysis showed both the strategies that were used to persuade and the ideas that were in the speech. This backs up the current study, which uses

CDA to look at American Presidential speech based on how it was put together. Wang (2010) performed a critical discourse analysis of Obama's speeches. He concluded that President Obama used simple and colloquial language, as well as modal verbs, tense, and first-person pronouns, in order to convey his message in an understandable way. He was able to gain public acceptance and support for his policies as a result of these factors. CDA is used in this study, but the speech was given during a crisis.

Houda (2016) looked at the structures of Hillary Clinton's campaign speeches for the 2016 presidential election. The framework of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis was used. The study tried to find out what gender references, rhetoric, frames, and intertextuality were all about. The results showed that Clinton's speech used gendered language, persuasive techniques, and framing that can all be taken as signs of her ideology.

Ali (2018) relied on Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model in order to conduct a critical discourse analysis of Trump's Inaugural Address. A micro-and macro-level analysis of Trump's speech is provided by Ali (2018) in his study. That is, his research uses Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional method to describe, interpret, and explain Trump's speeches; additionally, the research critically exposes discursive strategies used to exploit common Americans' emotions and opinions, such as repetition, the use of the pronoun "we," and the future tense. The use of Fairclough's model is very useful in revealing the power dynamics that operate in discourse. It is important to note that Ali's research was based on an inauguration address that is very different from the setting of the current paper's analysis. This research does show how the speaker used discursive methods, which is a useful addition to the investigation at hand.

Hamood (2019) looked at Trump's speech about recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of occupation and did a critical discourse analysis of it. The goal of the study was to find out how the official words of the American president affects what Jerusalem is. In this study, the speeches were looked at through the lens of Van Dijk's thematic theory. The results showed that Trump made his choice without consulting anyone else. And then Trump said things that were different from what he had said before about Palestinians, and his local political concerns about a rational and realistic approach to foreign policy were shown.

Faiz, Chojimah, and Khasanah (2020) did a study on Trump's ideas about Jerusalem in his speech about the city. They mostly looked at Trump's actions that didn't make sense and his ideas. They used Fairclough's three models of CDA, which include textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. The study found that there are five different kinds of illocutionary acts. Trump uses representatives the most. Trump's ideas about Jerusalem in his speech showed that he wanted to use his power to bring peace to Jerusalem.

2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis:

Critical discourse analysis, also known as CDA, has provided educational scholars with new tools for examining how people communicate in different social circumstances. It is via CDA's investigation of the ways in which texts depict the world in certain ways. According to specific objectives that the relationships between discourse and society, between text and context, and between linguistic power can be examined (Fairclough, 2001).

This paper utilizes of Fairclough's Model (1995) and Analytical Framework. There are three layers of analysis in Fairclough's framework: text, discursive practice, and socio-cultural practice. All of these discursive events share three characteristics: (i) they are either spoken or written texts; (ii) they are an example of discourse practice that includes both production and interpretation; and (iii) they are a component of social activity. There are many ways to analyze the text, but they all boil down to the study of the language structures that emerge in a discourse. An examination of what takes place inside a given socio-cultural framework concludes the analysis of socio-cultural activity. Discursive practice is the second dimension in Fairclough's model, which draws on Rodgers et.al. (2005) to study the production, interpretation, and consumption processes. This dimension focuses on how people perceive and re-create or re-imagine texts. "Social-cultural practice, the third dimension, focuses on power dynamics." An investigation into how discourses operate in various social settings "is what this dimension is all about." Even more specifically, the study of language use as socially shaped and socially shaped is an important part of CDA for Fairclough. Systemic functional linguistics, according to Halliday, serves as the theoretical foundation for his theory (SFL). To put it another way, according to Fairclough (1995), texts and discourses are socially constitutive because language use is always concurrently constitutive of social identities, social interactions, and systems of knowledge and beliefs. When it comes to analyzing social relationships, CDA takes a close look at how language is used within institutional and political discourses as well as specialized discourses. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) view social practices, such as language use in speech and writing, as a dialectical link between a particular discursive occurrence and the situations, institutions, and social structures that frame it. As a result of this two-way dynamic, discourse is viewed as both socially constituted and socially shaped. Discourses have the capacity to create and perpetuate power imbalances among different racial, social, gender, age, and professional groups.

3. Methodology:

Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model of CDA was used to analyze the study. President Biden gave the speech that was looked at on September 9, 2021, and it lasted about 30 minutes. The speech was given after the coronavirus pandemic in the US had been going on for more than a year. The speech was saved to a computer by using the Internet. It was chosen for analysis because it does not follow the usual way people talk in everyday situations. This shows a different way of using language during national or international crises. The speech also came at a time when many Americans thought that the steps taken to stop the spread of the virus would be undone. But the change didn't happen the way many Americans thought it would. The analysis was qualitative and was based on the structure of the speech and the content, both of which were analyzed with CDA, as was already mentioned.

4. Data Analysis:

4.1. Retrospective on the Pandemic Control Measures Taken

People talked a lot about what the government was doing to stop the virus from spreading in America and what could be done right now. So, the president talked about the fight against COVID-19, a Delta variant, and how hard it has been hitting this country. People can see where they have been, where they are going, and how the two places compare. Also, this serves as a reminder to the people of the US that the government cares about their safety and security. That he advises them that if they can work together as a country and use the tools they have, they can fight the virus

"My fellow Americans. I want to talk to you about where we are in the battle against COVID-19, the progress we've made, and the work we have left to do. And it starts with understanding this: Even as the Delta variant 19 [sic] has — COVID-19 — has been hitting this country hard, we have the tools to combat the virus, if we can come together as a country and use those tools. If we raise our vaccination rate, protect ourselves and others with masking and expanded testing, and identify people who are infected, we can and we will turn the tide on COVID-19. It will take a lot of hard work, and it's going to take some time. Many of us are frustrated with the nearly 80 million Americans who are still not vaccinated, even though the vaccine is safe, effective, and free. You might be confused about what is true and what is false about COVID-19. So before I outline the new steps to fight COVID-19 that I'm going to be announcing tonight, let me give you some clear information about where we stand"

It is a sign of nationalism that the president has addressed people as "fellow Americans" since it implies that he is a member of the audience. Because he hasn't alienated the audience, the president's address is more likely to be well-received. The president's use of the personal pronouns "we" and "us" indicates that he was working with others, most likely professionals, to devise a plan to stop the spread of the virus. When the president uses the word "I," he implies that he, as the head of state, was thinking about what could be done. The president's use of rhetorical questions prepares the audience for the following part of the speech, which lays out the dilemma.

4.2. Compared to the situation before and after the US President took office

"First, we have cons- — we have made considerable progress in battling COVID-19. When I became President, about 2 million Americans were fully vaccinated. Today, over 175 million Americans have that protection.

Before I took office, we hadn't ordered enough vaccine for every American. Just weeks in office, we did. The week before I took office, on January 20th of this year, over 25,000 Americans died that week from COVID-19. Last week, that grim weekly toll was down 70 percent. And in the three months before I took office, our economy was faltering, creating just 50,000 jobs a month. We're now averaging 700,000 new jobs a month in the past three months. This progress is real. But while America is in much better shape than it was seven months ago when I took office, I need to tell you a second fact."

The lines above compare the American president prior to and following his assumption of power. When he was president, he was able to deliver vaccines to the American people for the first time, but before his time in office, they had no access to vaccines. It is evident to the reader after this comparison that the American president wields enormous authority and ideology. Not just the distribution of vaccines but also the amount of work saved before and after getting power was compared.

4.3. Criticizing competitors and consulting experts

"And to make matters worse, there are elected officials actively working to undermine the fight against COVID-19. Instead of encouraging people to get vaccinated and mask up, they're ordering mobile morgues for the unvaccinated dying from COVID in their communities. This is totally unacceptable."

And fourth, I want to emphasize that the vaccines provide very strong protection from severe illness from COVID-19. I know there's a lot of confusion and misinformation. But the world's leading scientists confirm that if you are fully vaccinated, your risk of severe illness from COVID-19 is very low."

President Biden criticizes some politicians who encourage people not to get vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to show the American people that he is a strong and ideological leader who is trying to get people to get the vaccines that will protect them from getting sick from COVID-19. Here, the US president is using his personality and power to say that this is not allowed at all.

Also, the President talked with scientists about how people could benefit from getting vaccinated and how they could be fully protected from getting COVID-19. The president and the experts are shown to have power over each other. Since the president went to them for help, you could say that they have a lot of power. This shows that the president is smart because he doesn't want to act on his own without advice from experts. It also protects him from blame because many people at the time had high hopes that were not met.

4.4. The President's plans for Americans to be vaccinated

The following six short points show how the American President's plan tries to convince American society to get a vaccination. By focusing on how Biden has utilized his position, power and authority to convince people to following his points he has highlighted below:

1. *" First, we must increase vaccinations among the unvaccinated with new vaccination requirements. Of the nearly 80 million eligible Americans who have not gotten vaccinated.*
2. *The second piece of my plan is continuing to protect the vaccinated. For the vast majority of you who have gotten vaccinated, I understand your anger at those who haven't gotten vaccinated. I understand the anxiety about getting a "breakthrough" case.*
3. *The third piece of my plan is keeping — and maybe the most important — is keeping our children safe and our schools open. For any parent, it doesn't matter how low the risk of any illness or accident is when it comes to your child or grandchild. Trust me, I know.*
4. *The fourth piece of my plan is increasing testing and masking. From the start, America has failed to do enough COVID-19 testing. In order to better detect and control the Delta variant, I'm taking steps tonight to make testing more available, more affordable, and more convenient.*
5. *The fifth piece of my plan is protecting our economic recovery. Because of our vaccination program and the American Rescue Plan, which we passed early in my administration, we've had record job creation for a new administration, economic growth unmatched in 40 years. We cannot let unvaccinated do this progress — undo it, turn it back.*

6. *Sixth, we're going to continue to improve the care of those who do get COVID-19. In early July, I announced the deployment of surge response teams. These are teams comprised of experts from the Department of Health and Human Services, the CDC, the Defense Department, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency — FEMA — to areas in the country that need help to stem the spread of COVID-19."*

4.5. *The President's Practice of Power and Ideology*

From the above point, the president uses the pronoun "I" 38 and "my" 16 times in order to show his power and ideology and how he can give his decision to others elections. The second pronoun is "we" he uses 53 times and "out" 13 times, sometimes the president shows the cooperation between him and the experts to advise Americans to get the vaccination. While the second one is the president showed to the Americans to assist and cooperate with him to take the decision in order to protect American society from Covid19.

4.6. *Worst-Case Scenarios in the Absence of Vaccination*

"If you want to work with the federal government and do business with us, get vaccinated. If you want to do business with the federal government, vaccinate your workforce.

But as the science makes clear, if you're fully vaccinated, you're highly protected from severe illness, even if you get COVID-19.

Children have four times higher chance of getting hospitalized if they live in a state with low vaccination rates rather than the states with high vaccination rates.

If they'll not help — if these governors won't help us beat the pandemic, I'll use my power as President to get them out of the way. "

A total of 14 instances of "if" are used by the president in the above plans. The experts' worst-case scenarios were discussed in the speech. The "if clause," which is a conditional clause, is used repeatedly in his speech. This is done to make it clear that if the measures were to be relaxed now, the country would be in a much worse situation.

There was a clear picture in the minds of the American people because of the use of statistics and the mention of a large number of deaths, especially. The listeners were given a taste of what was to come with this declaration, which did not meet their expectations. When the president talks about the experts, he doesn't have to take responsibility for his decision because he puts the blame on the experts.

4.7. *The President's Promise to Protect the Economy of the Country*

In the next few paragraphs, the state's dedication to defending the economy is demonstrated. The president went over the details of the money that was given to help get the economy back on track.

"My plan also increases testing, protects our economy, and will make our kids safer in schools. It consists of six broad areas of action and many specific measures in each that...I believe and the scientists indicate, that in the months ahead we can reduce the number of unvaccinated Americans, decrease hospitalizations and deaths, and allow our children to go to school safely and keep our economy strong by keeping businesses open."

The aforementioned passage illustrates the philosophy of good governance and economic security in the country as a whole. In addition, President Kibaki assures Americans that they will be safe from the virus's consequences. It is his duty as a leader to keep the people he controls safe.

4.8. Ending

*"So let me close with this: **We** have so- — **we** 've made so much progress during the past seven months of this pandemic. The recent increases in vaccinations in August already are having an impact in some states where case counts are dropping in recent days. Even so, **we** remain at a critical moment, a critical time. **We** have the tools. Now **we** just have to finish the job with truth, with science, with confidence, and together as one nation. Look, **we** 're the United States of America. There's nothing — not a single thing — **we** 're unable to do if **we** do it together. So let's stay together. God bless you all and all those who continue to serve on the frontlines of this pandemic. And may God protect **our** troops."*

Then, the president concludes his speech by urging all Americans to take part in the fight against cancer. Pronouns like "we" and "our" are used, which include the president and place him or her in the same category as the rest of the people. Because he doesn't put himself above the people, his appeal is well-received. This demonstrates a sense of unity and camaraderie in the fight against the pandemic. The sickness is likened to a foe that must be defeated. By saying, "God bless you all," he ultimately invokes religion.

5. Conclusion:

In light of the current health crisis, the president's address served more as an educational tool than a tool of persuasion. The following are the main points of America's seven messages address on pandemic: 1) a look back at the Pandemic Containment Measures (PCM) was his first stop. To put everything into perspective, taken was launched. Because of the high anticipation that the measures would be loosened, it has imperative to consult experts and criticize competitors. The inclusion of terms like "Brain Trust," "experts," and "professionals" in the speech was intended to demonstrate a sense of unity and solidarity among the participants. (2) By offering the expert advice on what needed to be done before reducing the measures given the scenario at the time, the president demonstrated that he was not operating

alone. The president, following the suggestion, issued his directions and reaffirmed his commitment to preserving the country's economy. The government's actual financial data, he said, is used to provide economic cushioning. Biden has concluded by urging American people are taking responsibility for preventing the spread of the virus by adhering to the safeguards that have been put in place. As a result of the president's use of the pronouns "we, our, and us," and his repeated use of the term "fellow Americans," his appeal became more palatable to the audience. Despite not easing the measures as many had expected, the president was able to gain the support of the American people by adopting language that conveyed calm and truthful information. CDA analysts will be able to draw from this research in order to conduct further research projects based on the findings of this study.

تحليل خطاب نقدي لخطاب الرئيس بايدن حول مكافحة جائحة COVID-19

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ملخص البحث:

تتناول هذه الدراسة الطرق التي اختارها الرئيس بايدن في استخدام اللغة في خطابه حول التلقيح ضد فيروس كورونا بعنوان (ملاحظات الرئيس بايدن بشأن مكافحة وباء COVID-19) في 9 سبتمبر 2021. نُسخ نص الخطاب من على موقع البيت الأبيض الإلكتروني في نفس تاريخ الخطاب. اعتمدت هذه الدراسة في تحليل البيانات على النموذج التحليلي ثلاثي الأبعاد لنموذج تحليل الخطاب النقدي بواسطة نورمان فيركلاف (1995). وهكذا، تم تحليل الخطاب من خلال تحليل النص ووصفه عبر الممارسة الاجتماعية. وتم تقييم المقاطع الأيديولوجية والمقنعة من المجموعة المختارة، والتي تظهر اختيارات بايدن اللغوية. وأيضاً النظر إلى أسلوب القوة الموضحة في اللغة. اعتمدت الدراسة تحليلاً نوعياً أظهر أن الخطاب كان يهدف إلى إعطاء أسباب حقيقية لتلقيح الناس لمنع انتشار الوباء. هذا يعني أن الخطاب يجب أن يطبق. أظهرت النتائج أن معظم الأفكار التي تم طرحها كانت حول القومية، والعمل معاً لمحاربة الوباء، وتحسين اقتصاد البلاد. كما أظهرت النتائج كيف تقاسم الرئيس ورواياه السلطة من خلال استخدام الرئيس للضمائر "نحن، لنا، ونحن"، واستخدامه المتكرر لمصطلح "إخواننا الأمريكيين"، مما جعل جاذبيته أكثر قبولا لدى الجمهور.