Donald Trump's Political Speeches Analysis with Reference to Critical Discourse Analysis

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"دراسة تحليلية لنصوص دونالد ترامب السياسية : من منظور تحليل الخطاب النقدي"

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ABSTRACT
This study investigates how critical discourse analysis (CDA) illustrates the link between language and social context in political utterances. It analyzes speeches by Donald Trump to reveal power and ideological relations by adopting Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (2011). Trump's agenda is promoted through his language by appealing to cultural values, and reinforcing his ideology. The significance of understanding intertextuality, discursive techniques, and power links in analyzing political speeches, is emphasized in this study.Keywords: critical discourse analysis, political utterances, intertextuality, discursive tactics, ideology and power.

الخلاصة

تتناول هذه الدراسة كيفية توظيف التحليل النقدي للخطاب للكشف عن الصلة بين اللغة والسياق الاجتماعي في الخطابات السياسية. وهي تحلل خطابات دونالد ترامب للكشف عن علاقات القوة والأيديولوجيا، من خلال اعتماد منهجية روث ووداك في التحليل التاريخي للخطاب (٢٠١١). ويُظهر البحث كيف يروّج ترامب لأجندته عبر لغته من خلال استدعاء القيم الثقافية وتعزيز أيديولوجيته. كما تؤكد الدراسة على أهمية فهم التناص، وأساليب الخطاب، وروابط القوة في تحليل الخطابات السياسية **الكلمات المفتاحية:** تحليل الخطاب النقدي، النصوص السياسية، التناص، الاستراتيجيات الخطابية، الأيديولوجيا، القوة.

SECTION ONE
INTRODUCTION
1.1. Statement of the Problem
The realization that discourse is both socially shaped and socially constitutive is not well understood or comprehended by many learners and analysts. Because CDA emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between language and sociopolitical context learners' comprehension is sometimes absent in this insight. Donald Trump's speeches produce an important challenge and opportunity for CDA, as his discourse is highly effective, debatable, and often ideologically loaded. Trump's rhetoric has been misunderstood or misinterpreted by both national and international audiences, especially due to his distinctive communication style. This study treats these gaps by analyzing Trump's discourse through DHA to reveal how his language transfers power relations and ideological constructs.

1.2. Aims of the Study
The aims of this study are:
1. To give an account of the critical discourse analysis scope.
2. To apply CDA to comprehend and interpret Donald Trump's political speeches.
3. To reveal power and ideological relations in Trump's political discourses.

1.3. Questions of the Study
The study seeks to answer the following questions:
1. How does the researcher give an account of the critical discourse analysis scope?
2. What are the most salient discursive strategies, speech techniques, and intertextual practices employed in Donald Trump's political speeches according to CDA?

3. Why is critical discourse analysis regarded the distinguished way for detecting power and ideological influences in the political source texts?

1.4. Hypotheses of the Study

The researcher has developed the following hypotheses based on the literature and analytical aims:

1. If the CDA scope is described precisely, the analysis of Trump's political texts will be more fully developed.
2. When discursive strategies, speech techniques, and intertextuality are used effectively, greater understanding of Trump's political discourse will be achieved.
3. It is hypothesized that revealing power and ideological relations enhances the analytical depth and accuracy of Trump's political discourse.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is significant for scholars and students of linguistics, political science, and discourse analysis. By applying Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach to Donald Trump's speeches, the study supplies insight into how language constructs ideology and power. The findings provide a model for analyzing political discourse and contribute to a better understanding of how political leaders employ language to impact public opinion. Moreover, the study benefits as a resource for educators, interpreters, and translators working with ideologically charged texts.

1.6. Discourse Analysis

Discourse refers to any communicative situation, whether spoken or written, that constitutes social interaction. Fairclough (1989:24) defines discourse as the entire process of social interaction of which a text is only a part. Crystal (1991:106) identifies discourse as a continuous stretch of speech larger than a sentence. Titscher et al. (1998:42) describe discourse as a broad term encompassing multiple layers of meaning. Van Dijk (2008:104) notes that discourse can refer to a single genre, a collection of texts, or broader social discourses. This variety highlights discourse as a key unit in comprehending the interplay between language and society.

1.7. Critical Discourse Analysis Vs Political Discourse Analysis Van Dijk (1993:131) notices that 'critical discourse analysis (CDA) is not a homogeneous model, nor a school or a paradigm, but at most a shared perspective on doing linguistics, semiotics, or discourse analysis.' Crystal (2006:123) says that CDA is a perspective that examines how discourse situations are shaped by and shape sociopolitical and cultural contexts. Wodak (2011:38) highlights that CDA is interdisciplinary and concentrates on how language reflects and effects power, identity, politics, economy, and culture. This study employs CDA to investigate how Donald Trump's language uncovers underlying ideological commitments and power structures.According to Van Dijk (1997:1), political discourse analysis is concerned with how political power, abuse, and dominance are represented and resisted through discourse. PDA also regards how political language conveys meanings that align with particular ideologies or values, which may only be realized by certain audiences (Van Dijk, 1997:37). Donald Trump's utterances frequently show such dynamics, making them typical for this sort of analytical framework.

1.8. Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)

Wodak's DHA is chosen for this study because of its ability to merge contextual, intertextual, and historical information in the interpretation of discourse. It permits researchers to analyze multiple layers of a text and how several discursive acts related to broader social phenomena (Wodak, 2013:199). This approach is especially helpful in analyzing contradictions, ideological tensions, and value conflicts present in Trump's political discourse (Wodak, 2009:314). DHA also promotes interdisciplinary perspectives, making it influential for political texts that intersect with media, policy, and social identity.

1.9. Intertextuality Vs Discursive Strategies

Jorgensen and Phillips (2002:73-74) explain that intertextuality refers to the way every communicative situation draws upon previous texts, thereby affecting and being influenced by historical discourse. Intertextuality uncovers how Trump's discourses are shaped by past political narratives, and how he tries to reshape history through his rhetoric. Intertextuality plays a central role in instituting credibility and aligning oneself with dominant ideologies.Discursive strategies are intentional plans utilized to achieve political objectives. According to Wodak (2011:39), these strategies involve positive self-presentation, negative other-presentation, and justification. Trump's rhetoric heavily depends on constructing in-groups and out-groups, often through nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivation, and intensification/mitigation. These strategies support ideological messaging and legitimize policy decisions.

1.10. Ideology Vs Power

Hatim and Mason (1997:144) depict ideology as the tacit assumptions and values shared by social groups. Van Dijk (2000:207) describes ideology as the essential beliefs of group members, which may be positive or negative. Fairclough (2003:9) adds that ideology includes the exemplification of the world that preserves power relations. Trump's utterances show ideological traits such as nationalism, populism, and anti-globalism, often embedded in the framing of economic and security policies.Power in discourse uncovers the employment of language to predominate or rule others (Fairclough, 1989:1). Van Dijk (2008:66) debates that such control is often institutionalized. Trump's speech reflects both public and interpersonal dimensions of power, whether through social media, formal addresses, or press briefings. Thomas et al. (2004:10) differentiate between language in public discourse and interpersonal communication — both of which Trump strategically utilizes to preserve power.

SECTION TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.1.IntroductionThis section outlines the methodological framework employed in the present study. The analysis is grounded in Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA, 2011), which integrates linguistic, historical, and sociopolitical perspectives to interpret political discourse. DHA enables a systematic exploration of multiple layers of meaning, incorporating both textual features and contextual factors. A qualitative research design was adopted to capture the nuanced interplay between language, ideology, and power in Donald Trump's speeches. Data was drawn from six selected political speeches delivered in varied national and international contexts between 2016 and 2020.

2.2. MaterialsThe corpus comprises six original speeches delivered by Donald J. Trump during his presidency and electoral campaigns (2016–2020). Selection criteria included:

1-Source authenticity: speeches retrieved from verified governmental and media archives.

2-Thematic relevance: inclusion of speeches addressing nationalism, immigration, economic policygovernance and foreign relations.

3-Ideological salience: discourses containing explicit references to ideological constructs (e.g., American exceptionalism, populism).

4-Diversity of context: ensuring a balance between domestic and international addresses. These speeches were chosen for their rhetorical complexity, public impact, and potential to reveal ideological positioning through discursive strategies.

2.3. Research Design

The study employs a qualitative, interpretive design, following Croker's (2009:3-4) view that qualitative research encompasses varied communicative data such as speeches, interviews, and media statements. The design facilitates:- Textual analysis: examining linguistic structures, rhetorical devices, and intertextual references.- Contextual analysis: situating the speeches within their sociopolitical and historical frameworks.- Comparative analysis: tracing recurring ideological themes across different contexts and audiences.

2.4. Analytical Framework & ModelThe Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) was selected as the primary analytical framework for three key reasons:

1-Interdisciplinarity: combining linguistic analysis with historical, sociological, and political insights (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). 2-Focus on ideology and power: revealing how discourse legitimizes authority, constructs identities, and reinforces political agendas. 3-Empirical rigor: offering systematic analytical tools such as discursive strategy classification and intertextual mapping (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009).Ruth Wodak's CDA model, Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), was also adopted and applied by the researcher to this study as an analytical framework for the incorporation of linguistic analysis with historical and sociological perception to demonstrate how Trump's speech functions ideologically and politically was clarified in this model. An analytical instruments for tracing rhetorical tactics, intertextual references, and power within political utterances were supplied according to the DHA framework.

2.5. DHA in Practice

The DHA framework operationalizes analysis through:

A- Contextualization: embedding each text within its immediate political circumstances and broader historical narratives.

B- Identification of macro-topics: recurring themes such as "Make America Great Again," border security, and economic nationalism.

C- Analysis of intertextuality: tracing references to prior speeches, historical events, and political slogans.

D- Classification of discursive strategies (Wodak, 2007:207):

 1. Nomination: categorizing social actors into in-groups and out-groups.

 2. Prediction: attributing positive or negative qualities.

 3. Argumentation: justifying political claims through topoi (e.g., threat, burden, values).

 4. Perspectivation: indicating stance and point of view.

 5. Intensification/Mitigation: strengthening or softening assertions.A strong methodology for the analysis of Trump's political speech is represented by the use of Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). "DHA enables researchers to analyze political communication systematically and empirically. It combines background knowledge, contextual information, and intertextual references to interpret multiple layers of meaning in a discourse"(Wodak ,2013b:198). Tenorio (2011:191) and Wodak and Reisigl (2015:583) assure that DHA's interdisciplinary and multi-methodological nature, which makes it in specific useful for analyzing ideologically charged statements like Trump's discourses. It is also emphasized that DHA's ability to integrate linguistic, historical, and sociological viewpoints. (Lawton ,2008:84).

2.6. Macro-topic-relatedness: Intertextuality and Discursive StrategiesThe recognition of macro-topics related to Donald Trump's political topics, like patriotic peace, economic restoration, American exceptionalism and immigration dominance starts the analysis. These macro-topics emerge repeatedly across his speeches in different contexts. According to Wagner and Wodak (2006:393), macro-topic relatedness helps uncover how intertextual references and discursive strategies are repeatedly utilized to highlights particular ideological commitments and portray consistent political narratives.

2.6.1. IntertextualityIn the Discourse-Historical Approach, intertextuality points out how texts reference or echo one another either explicitly or implicitly. Kwon et al. (2009:278–281) notice that such references help reveal underlying ideologies, belief systems, and power structures. Trump frequently uses intertextual references to historical American slogans ('Make America Great Again'), past presidents, founding fathers, and international events to position himself within an authoritative national tradition. Allen (2000:1) and Warren (2013:13) debate that intertextuality anchors a speaker's legitimacy by embedding their discourse within historically accepted frameworks.Intertextuality is particularly analyzed following Jorgensen & Phillips (2002) and Allen (2000), focusing on how Trump's rhetoric draws upon and reshapes past political narratives. Macro-topic relatedness (Wagner & Wodak, 2006) was used to track thematic consistency across speeches, highlighting ideological continuity and strategic framing.

2.6.2. The Discursive Strategies

According to Wodak (2007:207), the five discursive strategies central to DHA are adopted to the analysis of Trump's utterances. These involve:

1. Referential/Nomination : Utilized to classify social actors into in-groups ('the American people') and out-groups ('the radical left', 'illegal immigrants').

2. Predicational : Employed to categorize actors positively or negatively through adjectives, metaphors, and implicit attributions.

3. Argumentation : Used to vindicate political claims through topoi such as threat, burden, or values (e.g., 'to protect American jobs').

4. Perspectivation : Illustrates Trump's personal stance and alignment by referencing his own experiences, quotes, or reporting events.

5. Intensification/Mitigation : Utilized to strengthen or soften the force of his assertions (e.g., 'very strongly', 'maybe', 'believe me').

2.7. Pluri-perspectivity: Ideology and Power AnalysisThe study examines how Trump's discourse reflects and reproduces ideological stances (e.g., populism, nationalism) and power relations. Following Wodak (2011) and Van Dijk (2000). DHA supplies various instruments including topics, discursive strategies, and linguistic means. The following elements are analyzed (Wodak, 2011:38–40):

1. Topics– central political and ideological concerns. (e.g., nationalism, border control, economic dominance).

2. Discursive strategies – demographic and ideological alignment. (e.g., in-group unification, out-group demonization, presupposition, implicature).

3. Linguistic means – use of pronouns, slogans, and metaphors. (e.g., use of pronouns like 'we' vs. 'they', historical analogies, political slogans).

4. Discursive community – legitimization, mobilization, and identity construction. (target audience like working-class Americans, veterans, religious groups).

5. Actions (positive self-presentation, vote-gathering, mobilization, legitimization of authority).

2.8.Procedures

This study adopts a qualitative research design using Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to examine Donald Trump's political speeches delivered between 2016 and 2020. The data consists of six speeches selected from verified governmental archives, representing topics such as nationalism, immigration, economic policy, and governance. Selection criteria included relevance to key ideological themes, public impact, and diversity of contexts.

The analysis followed these steps:

1-Data collection: retrieving six speeches from official archives.
2-Contextual profiling: summarizing historical, political, and situational background.
3-Text segmentation: breaking speeches into analyzable units.
4-Intertextual mapping: identifying explicit and implicit references.
5-Discursive strategy coding: classifying rhetorical moves per DHA typology (nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivation, and intensification/mitigation).
6-Ideology-power linkage: mapping language features to ideological and power constructs and Linking language patterns to ideological constructs and power relations

7-Triangulation: validating interpretations through cross-referencing with scholarly and media analyses with secondary sources to validate interpretations.The analysis is also composed of two core steps. First, the macro-topical analysis is conducted employing intertextuality and discursive strategies to track recurring ideas, phrases, and ideological messaging across different speeches. Second, power and ideology are explored through pluri-perspectivity tools to uncover how Trump frames his political identity, legitimizes his policies, and engages with different audiences. The interaction between these two steps presents a comprehensive comprehension of how Trump's language reinforces particular political ideologies and consolidates power.

SECTION THREE

DATA ANALYSIS, AND RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONIn this section, six selected political texts delivered by Donald Trump are going to be analysed. The analysis adopts Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), with a concentration on intertextuality and discursive strategies in Section 3.1, accompanied by the examination of ideology and power in Section 3.2. Each selected political text is analyzed in its authentic English form alongside its Arabic translation. The analysis asserts how Trump employs discourse to achieve political authority, mobilize supporters, and promote ideological points of view.

3.1. Six Political Statements' analysis in virtue of Intertextuality and Discursive Tactics

How Donald Trump's political discourse employs intertextuality and discursive Techniques is illustrated in this section.

1. The Genuine Text: "We will make America strong again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again. And we will make America great again". (Inaugural Address, 2017)

Arabic Target Text:

"سنجعل أمريكا قوية مرة أخرى. سنجعل أمريكا فخورة مرة أخرى. سنجعل أمريكا آمنة مرة أخرى. وسنجعل أمريكا عظيمة مرة أخرى."

In this political text, Trump employs intertextuality through the repetition of the celebrated campaign phrase 'Make America Great Again'. This phrase agitates feelings of nostalgia for past national power. His utilization of equivalent clause construction and reiteration reinforces a discursive technique of confederation and authorization. By the use of personal agency ('we will') he asserts and promotes collective identity and action.

2. The Authentic Text: "The United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord." (Speech on Climate Policy, 2017)

Arabic Target Text:

" ستنسحب الولايات المتحدة من اتفاقية باريس للمناخ."

Here, Trump employs a tactic of differentiation to position the U.S. as separate from international consensus. He gives the decision as defending American workers and sovereignty, he also draws intertextual references to nationalist economic ideologies. The decision is justified through the lens of burden and victimhood, implying unfair treatment under international agreements.

3. English Original Text: "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people." (Campaign Announcement, 2015)

Arabic Target Text:

" انهم يجلبون المخدرات. إنهم يجلبون الجريمة. إنهم مغتصبون. وبعضهم، أعتقد، أشخاص طيبون."

Trump's statement utilizes a discursive strategy of labeling and negative other-presentation to characterize Mexican immigrants. This discourse amplifies intensification of fear and threat by drawing on intertextual associations with stereotypes linking them to crime and public safety cases. The sudden shift to a mitigated acknowledgment of 'some good people' softens the message rhetorically to cover the generalization.

4. The Original Text: "We will build a great wall along the southern border, and Mexico will pay for the wall." (Presidential Campaign, 2016)

Arabic Target Text:

" سنقوم ببناء جدار عظيم على طول الحدود الجنوبية، وستدفع المكسيك ثمن الجدار."

This discourse uses discursive techniques of referential nomination and labeling. Trump makes a clear distinction between 'us' (Americans) from 'them' (Mexican immigrants) through the space and economic burden. The wall symbolize both a physical and metaphorical boarder. The rhetoric strategy builds on the theme of protection, victimhood, and securing national authority, while also drawing on intertextual links to historic boundary like the Berlin Wall.

5. The Authentic Text: "Nobody has done more for the Black community than Donald Trump... with the possible exception of Abraham Lincoln." (Campaign Speech, 2020)

Arabic Target Text:

" لا أحد قدّم أكثر للمجتمع الأسود من دونالد ترامب... مع الاستثناء المحتمل لأبراهام لنكولن."

This statement shows Perspective and argumentation tactics, where Trump aligns himself within the historical lineage of American figures as a prominent leader . The intertextual reference to Abraham Lincoln draws on moral leadership and legacy. The utilization of self-aggrandizement ('nobody has done more') strengthens the claim, while the reference to Lincoln describes the speaker as both exceptional and humble in historical comparison.

6. The Original Text: "America will never be a socialist country." (State of the Union Address, 2019)

Arabic Target Text:

" امريكا لن تكون أبداً دولة اشتراكية."

In this discourse, Trump utilizes an obvious referential and ideological discursive technique. The topos of threat is employed to link socialism with failure or danger. This speech supports the idea of American exceptionalism and reinforce capitalist ideology. By invoking Cold War-era themes, the statement aligns Trump with traditional conservative values and mobilizes opposition to left-wing movements.

3.2. Analysis of six Political Texts according to Ideology and Power

This section explores how Donald Trump's political speech uncovers ideologies and power structures. Each discourse not only communicates policy positions but also reflects deeper ideological themes. The analysis

adopts DHA's pluri-perspectival model, revealing how Trump's discourse reinforces group identities, legitimizes power, and marginalizes dissenting points of view.

1.The Authentic Text: "We will make America strong again... great again." (Inaugural Address, 2017)

Arabic Target Text:

"سنجعل أمريكا قوية مرة أخرى. سنجعل أمريكا فخورة مرة أخرى. سنجعل أمريكا آمنة مرة أخرى. وسنجعل أمريكا عظيمة مرة أخرى."

Trump used repeatedly the phrase 'Make America Great Again' to reflect nationalist ideology. The slogan evokes an ideal past while proposing power and restoration. Through the use of rhetoric tactic of decline and revival, Trump positions himself as a defender of national identity. The ideological framing puts the U.S. as a victim of globalist forces and Trump as its saviour.

2. English Original Text: "The United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord." (2017)

Arabic Target Text:

" ستنسحب الولايات المتحدة من اتفاقية باريس للمناخ."

This utterance shows an ideology of economic nationalism and distrust of international governance. Trump illustrates the withdrawal as a move to regain national dominance, besides, emphasizing institutional authority. The statement asserts domestic management over environmental policy and aligns with populist ideologies that challenge international elites.

3. The Original Text: "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people." (Campaign Announcement, 2015)

Arabic Target Text:

"انهم يجلبون المخدرات. إنهم يجلبون الجريمة. إنهم مغتصبون. وبعضهم، أعتقد، أشخاص طيبون."

Trump employs tactic power in his language to describe immigrants as danger. This speech supports securitization and social exclusion policy. This rhetoric justifies strict immigration policies and strengthens a legitimizing discourse authority through fear rhetoric.

4. The Authentic Text: "We will build a great wall along the southern border, and Mexico will pay for the wall." (Presidential Campaign, 2016)

Arabic Target Text:

" سنقوم ببناء جدار عظيم على طول الحدود الجنوبية، وستدفع المكسيك ثمن الجدار."

In this discourse the wall stands for national protection, power, and territorial dominance. Trump's authority is framed as protective instead of aggressive. The ideology that lies behind this utterance reflects nationalism, border control, and a belief in America. This shows the use power to transform spatial borders into symbols, projecting dominance over territory and identity.

5. English Original Text: "Nobody has done more for the Black community than Donald Trump... with the possible exception of Abraham Lincoln." (Campaign Speech, 2020)

Arabic Target Text:

" لا أحد قدّم أكثر للمجتمع الأسود من دونالد ترامب... مع الاستثناء المحتمل لأبراهام لنكولن."

Trump presents himself as an ideal leader as compared to Lincoln, engaging in historical comparison to validate his leadership. He utilizes the themes of success and self-legitimization to emphasize moral and racial power. However, critics may debate this move as a strategic ideological posture rather than real leadership.

6. English Genuine Text: "America will never be a socialist country." (State of the Union Address, 2019)

Arabic Target Text:

" امريكا لن تكون أبداً دولة اشتراكية."

This discourse draws on Cold War-era fears to encourage anti-socialist ideology rooted in of communism. Trump asserts capitalist supremacy and portrays socialism as a danger to freedom. By drawing sharp ideological lines, he emphasizes dominance over national economic policy and links to conservative political identity.

SECTION FOUR

CONCLUSIONS:

The researcher has come up with the following conclusions:

1- Trump's political discourse analysis by the application of Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) has clarified how language functions as a powerful tool for supporting ideology, practicing dominance, and structuring patriotic identity.

2-Trump's political texts are full of discursive techniques, such as nomination, predication, justification and perspectivation, which help position him as a leader and authoritative character.

3-Trump's rhetorical approach explores a clear ideological orientation found in nationalism, populism, and economic protectionism.

4- The use of intertextuality in his political speech illustrates how he always calls for American exceptionalism, employs binary oppositions (us vs. them)

5- Besides, supplication of historical references (e.g., Abraham Lincoln, Cold War) is utilized to enhance his policies and build common support.

6-The political analysis also explains that power in Trump's discourse depends on reiteration, personalization, emotional attraction, and strategic ambiguity.

7-It is obvious that Trump constructs a communal message by situating himself as the guardian of the 'forgotten people' and the protector of traditional criteria through the DHA viewpoint by describing foreign entities such as immigrants, international institutions, and political opponents as threats, therefore, he justifies his controversial decisions and promoting fear-based support.

8-The significance of Critical Discourse Analysis in this study emphasizes the deeper ideological currents within political rhetoric.

9- Trump's statements reveals how language is functioned to make reality, influence audiences, and emphasize political control.

10-The layers of intertextuality uncovers the identity construction, and power manipulation rooted in political discourse proves to be effective.

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