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A Stylistic Analysis of Offensive Political Humor in Donald Trump's Speech (2024-2025)

Rawaa Akeel Abood:

Prof. Dr Sarab Kadir Mugair

Al-Iraqia Univeristy, College of Arts,

تحليل اسلوبي للدعابة السياسية الهجومية في خطاب دونالد ترامب ٢٠٢٤-٢٠٢٥

رواء عقيل عبود

الاستاذ الدكتور سراب قادر مغير

الجامعة العراقية – كلية الآداب

المخلص

يتناول هذا البحث الاستخدام الاسلوبي للدعابة السياسية الهجومية في خطابات مختارة القاها رئيس الولايات المتحدة الامريكية دونالد ترامب تكمن مشكلة البحث في ان الدراسات السابقة التي تناولت خطاب ترامب ركزت غالباً على وصف حسه الفكاهي بوصفه ظاهرة اعلامية، بينما قلما قدمت دراسات تحليلية اسلوبياً منظماً للبناء اللغوي لادوات الدعابة ووظائفها ضمن اطار نظري شامل يسعى هذا البحث الى سد الفجوة من خلال استخدام النظرية العامة للفكاهة اللفظية (HVTG) التي قدمها اتاردو وراكسين، بوصفها اطاراً تحليلياً يهدف الى تحديد وتفسير الاساليب الفكاهية المستخدمة في خطاب ترامب خلال حملته الانتخابية ٢٠٢٤-٢٠٢٥ بهدف البحث الى:

١-تحديد ابرز الاستراتيجيات الفكاهية المستخدمة في خطابات دونالد ترامب

٢-بيان كيفية التوظيف السياسي لهذه الاساليب بغرض الاقناع وتحقيق اهداف هجومية احياناً

٣-الكشف عن اكثر الادوات استخداماً ضمن اطار (HVTG)

وتسعى الدراسة للاجابة عن الاسئلة التالية : مالذي يعرف الفكاهة فعلاً؟وما الاستراتيجيات المحددة المستخدمة في انتاجها؟وكيف يوظف السياسيون وبشكل خاص دونالد ترامب الفكاهة في خطاباتهم العامة ؟ وبناءً على النظرية العامة للفكاهة اللفظية ما الاساليب الكوميديّة التي يستخدمها ترامب بكثرة؟يقال ان الرئيس يعتمد عادةً على عدد محدود من الاستراتيجيات الفكاهية خصوصاً السخرية والمبالغة بهدف التقليل من شأن منافسيه وتعزيز روابطه مع مؤيديه والحفاظ على صورته الشعبية وتعتمد الدراسة المنهج الاسلوبي النوعي لتحليل عينة منتقاة من خطابه بصفته الرئيس المنتخب خلال حملة ٢٠٢٤-٢٠٢٥ وتظهر نتائج التحليل ان ابرز الادوات البلاغية المستخدمة في خطابه تشمل : المبالغة، والسخرية، والمفارقة، وعدم الانسجام والمفاجأة المصطنعة تؤكد الدراسة صحة الافتراضات الاولى، وتبرز اهمية التحليل الاسلوبي واطار (HVTG) في تقييم القدرة الاقناعية للخطاب السياسي المعاصر .

Abstract

This research examines the stylistic use of challenging political humor in identified speeches presented by President of the United States of America, Donald Trump. The problem examined in the present study deals with research on Trump's discourse characterizing his humor primarily as a media phenomenon, while relatively few studies provide a systematic stylistic analysis of linguistic construction of humorous devices and their function within a comprehensive theoretical framework. The current study uses the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) by Attardo and Raskin as an analytical framework to identify and interpret the humor devices employed in Trump's 2024-2025 campaign speech in order to close this gap. This investigation

seeks to (a) delineate the primary humorous strategies employed in the speeches of Donald Trump, (b) illustrate the manner in which such strategies are utilized by a politician to attain persuasive and potentially offensive aims, and (c) identify the devices most commonly employed as per the GTVH framework.

This inquiry sets to address the following question: what actually defines humor and which specific strategies are utilized in its delivery? How do political figures, with specific reference to Donald Trump, utilize humor within their public addresses? Depending upon the GTVH, which comedic techniques does Trump most frequently employ? It is said that the president always uses a small number of entertaining strategies, especially sarcasm and hyperbole, to reduce his competitors, strengthen his followers, and keep his popular character. It utilizes a qualitative stylistic approach to investigate a constructed sample of conversations given in Donald Trump's 2024-2025 president -elect. According to the examination, the key rhetorical devices used in his communication include hyperbole, sarcasm, irony, incongruity, and fake surprise. This occurs to mock competitors, expose elections, and evoke sensations in others. The research confirmed first theories and highlights the significance of stylistic examination and the Generic Typological Value Hierarchy (GTVH) in assessing the ability to convince of modern speech on politics.

Keywords: Donald Trump; Stylistics; Political Discourse; Offensive Humor; General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH); Exaggeration; Sarcasm; Irony; Incongruity; Persuasion; Populism; Rhetorical Strategy

1.1 Introduction

Formal and institutional politics has provided the rise to media shows and entertainment. Politicians that use humor, emotions, and persuasive techniques in addition to facts are preferred by fans nowadays. In this context, irony and humor help politicians create ambiguity, soften significant issues, and mold their public persona. Political discourse has recently shifted from official and governmental formats to media content and talk programs. Instead than listening to politicians deliver lengthy, dull speeches, modern audiences prefer those that use humor, emotions, and persuasion to educate. Irony and comedy in these circumstances aid lawmakers in defusing sensitive subjects, creating ambiguity, and influencing public sentiment.

Donald Trump's political rhetoric demonstrates a prominent sample of this situation. His speeches are often distinguished by emotional statements, personal criticisms, and humorous or semi-humorous remarks aimed at critics, the media, and different kinds of people. Although this humor may amuse defenders, it also serves a more strategic purpose by undermining those who oppose reliability, strengthening the unity of the group, and presenting political events in a manner that advances his main point.

This study investigates the under-examined area of Donald Trump's humor. Despite considerable media coverage, a systematic stylistic analysis addressing the linguistic construction of his offensive political humor and its functions within a strong conceptual theory, specifically the (GTVH), is presently lacking. Therefore, the current investigation is designed to: 1. Analyze and outline the primary comedic techniques employed in select speeches provided by Donald Trump. 2. Analyze how Donald Trump, in his capacity as a political figure, uses these comedic procedures to accomplish persuasive and offensive objectives. 3. Identify the most common humor devices utilized, referencing the categories defined by the GTVH. To perform these aims, this study attempts to address the subsequent research questions: 1. Define humor and identify the primary techniques employed in its expression. 2. In what ways do political figures, specifically Donald Trump, utilize levity within their public addresses? 3. Considering the General Theory of Verbal Humor, which comedic techniques does Trump employ most often?

1.2 Humor's Functions

Humor is the mainly in effect method for eliciting enjoyment and satisfaction from a community or reader regarding the content they are experiencing. Humor serves diverse functions in various contexts. For instance, in literary works or within communities. It draws individuals' attraction and keeps their focus. The individual employing humor endeavors to elicit audience approval of their work.

1.3 Hypotheses

The next is hypothesized: 1. Particular, recurring rhetorical devices, including exaggeration, incongruity, irony, sarcasm, and astonishment, are formally identifiable in Donald Trump's speeches. 2. Trump intentionally employs objectionable humor to accomplish covert or informal political objectives, such as discrediting adversaries, strengthening group cohesion, and shaping political views to his advantage. 3. Specific humor mechanisms, notably exaggeration (hyperbole) and sarcasm, are observed with greater frequency in Trump's communication, and this phenomenon can be explained by the (GTVH).

1.4 Limitation of the Study

The examination is confined to a select few of the candidate's campaign speeches featuring explicit examples of humor, predominantly within the setting of the 2024 political election. It fails endeavor to include the entirety of his public remarks. 2. The research concentrates on humor devices as outlined from the (GTVH) and does not offer a comprehensive rhetorical or multimodal assessment of the speeches.

1.5 The Value of the Study

It is anticipated that this investigation will be helpful for the scholars of stylistics and students of English. For scholars, it provides an actual use of the (GTVH) to current political data and emphasizes the significance of objectionable humor in current nationalist discourse. To identify students, it can improve their fundamental comprehension of the way politicians employ language and humor as influencing devices, thus encouraging progress within their analytical and academic abilities.

2.1 Political Language

Political language is the language that uses at a specific situation it uses by politicians who work in a government or people who are related to politics. American scholars refer to different attitudes to political humor in community or they refer to the function of humor in political language as an alternative expression of enjoyment, humor in political language may possess a negatives provide inaccurate data, disguise problems, potential of misinterpretation (Lewis, 2006: 1).

Politicians use the official language for their countries such as political speech they use an attractive to capture people attention, they use a powerful tools for persuading audience sometimes establish connection and refute hostility, "when people need to relieve tension and pain gibe went to anger4 and reinforce the boundaries between in and out group members, they often resort to humor and redicute" (Fialkovea& Yeleneuskaya, 2013: 215-216).

2.2 Humor

Humor denotes the capacity to elicit enjoyment or joy. Individuals representing diverse cultural backgrounds and age groups exhibit varied responses to humor. Numerous hypotheses have been proposed to elucidate the nature of humor and its societal role. Regardless the number of theoretical frameworks, a complete comprehension of this subject matter is yet to be attained, thereby establishing a considerable imperative for scholarly inquiry, especially within the domain of mutual pragmatics: "Although humor has been the subject of considerable discussion, it continues to represent a field that necessitates further investigation." Humor presents an exciting subject for scholarly inquiry, warranting further empirical investigation within genuine contexts (Schnur 2010, p. 319).

Humor's application in discourse shows difference across diverse societal environments and social classes: Humor offers multiple purposes: it minimizes humiliation; it can signify violence; it demonstrates resilience; it facilitates social learning; and it operates as a tool of social impact. (Simpsons, 2003: 2).

Humor, in essence, represents a fundamental element of human society. The ability to elicit laughter is a valuable property, as it allows individuals to briefly relieve the burdens of daily existence. The term "humor" possesses multiple applications. In both advantageous and disadvantageous respects. For create a sense of satisfaction in others, focusing on encouraging sentiments and avoiding any mention of their perceived defects is advised. For example, a favorable discussion of a prominent individual is conducted with regard, whereas disparaging remarks may constitute mockery or offense, often under the guise of humor. Defining humor proves challenging, particularly when approached as an empirical discipline, "very difficult subject to talk about and it is an even more difficult subject to be scientific in nature" (Miller 1988: 60).

Schnur examines the negative effects of comedy, "the dark side of humor that is those instance of humor which are designed to put down or personally attack the addressee," Consequently, mutual entertainment between the conversational partners will not be achieved. Humor is employed in various contexts. Politicians, for example, occasionally utilize humor to alleviate tense situations or to circumvent challenging inquiries they prefer not to address (Schnur, 2010: 308).

2.3 Devices of Humor

Humor possesses mechanisms that influence individuals, and research identifies significant elements of comedy.

2.3.1 Exaggeration: Humor frequently relies on exaggerated personal behaviors, incidents, or circumstances, for instance, "I have heard that a million times." Occasionally, we employ hyperbole to enhance the

enjoyment of our narratives. The author or speaker employs hyperbole to influence individuals or to capture their interest. This device is utilized by numerous individuals to persuade others regarding their desires (literal.com).

2.3.2 Incongruity: It refers to the device that is considered incongruous when it fails to align with our standards or fails to correspond to a true representation of the human condition or the external world. For instance, it is inappropriate whenever a woman (such as Mrs. John) conducts in a childish manner. The incongruity of a statement is its oddity since it is considered in conjunction with different statements pertaining to an event (Collins, 1987: 1).

2.3.3. Irony: This device displays the inverse of the statement he or she states. The ironic statement is employed in comic or humorous literary works. Henry Watson Fowler, in *The King's English*, states: "any definition of irony, though hundreds might be given and very few of them would be accepted, must include this, the surface meaning and the underlying meaning of what is said are not the same. Irony is an effective device in a literary work in a conversation. Irony has two types: verbal irony and situational irony. example of an irony when a person doesn't like something and says "how nice it is" (Miessler, 2018: 1).

2.3.4 Surprise: Surprise is the state of experiencing an unexpected event or circumstance, such as Unforeseen occurrences are ubiquitous, frequently compelling immediate adjustments to established conduct. In the event a minor unexpectedly enters the roadway, a motorist is obligated to apply the brakes. Reactive in nature response is necessitated when unforeseen stimuli indicate the requirement to promptly cease current actions and initiate novel behaviors that are more appropriate to the prevailing circumstances. Consequently, recurrent response is essential to mitigate adverse consequences, thereby underscoring its critical role in behavioral adaptation behavior (Sebastian et al., 2021: 2447).

2.3.5 Sarcasm: Sarcasm is defined as expression or composition that conveys a meaning diametrically opposed to its literal interpretation, frequently employed to belittle or ridicule an individual. Sarcasm entails using of particular accents to convey the contrary of a statement, frequently with the aim of causing offense. Thank you for straight back my pocketbook; you have possessed it for merely a few months, he commented cynically (Longman, 1981: 205).

2.4 The General Theory of Verbal Humor

In 1991, Attardo and Raskin's reformulation of the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) superseded the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH). In the discourse between Attardo and Raskin, both theorists introduced a framework that diverged from prior models by facilitating the examination of more intricate humor forms, including interactive humor and monologues, while also broadening the semantic viewpoint to encompass pragmatic considerations (Attardo, 2008: 108).

The two most prominent linguistic theories of humor from the past twenty years are the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) and the Semantic-Script Theory of Humor (SSTH). The General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) was first introduced in 1991, with the publication of Attardo and Raskin's book that same year. In 1993, Raskin and Attardo, in collaboration with Willibald Ruch, conducted research that empirically validated several predictions of the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH). In 2001, Attardo published a monograph that extended the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) to encompass all written forms. The General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) represents an extension of Raskin's (1985) Script-based Semantic Theory of Humor (SSTH) and constitutes a facet of Attardo's taxonomy of textual relationships. Humorous narratives, or other textual forms, may exhibit intertextual relationships founded upon textual similarities, as well as in relation to other texts, as delineated by Attardo's taxonomy.

3.1 Methodology

This qualitative stylistic study examines Donald Trump's campaign speech's offensive political humor. Researchers in linguistics specializing in humor theory, such as Attardo and Raskin, developed the (GTVH) to analyze humorous speeches using method analysis, rational process, contextual setting, goal, comedic tactics, and linguistic components.

The research is qualitative and interpretive in nature. To ensure its accuracy, Donald Trump's New Hampshire primary victory speech (2024-225) was textually demonstrated on the video. Second, all comical or potentially humorous portions were determined and classified by (a) humor device (e.g., hyperbole, sarcasm) and (b) GTVH dimensions (e.g., target and script opposition). In the transcript, stylistic elements

(lexical choices, repetition, metaphorical language, evaluative adjectives, prosodic elements) and political use (undermining adversaries, strengthening intra-group cohesion, polarizing the audience) were examined. This strategy uses stylistics and humor theory to explain offensive humor's language composition and political function.

4.1 Data Analysis

The subsequent examples exemplify objectionable political humor strategies identified in Trump's 2024-2025 victory speech in New Hampshire, systematically categorized and clearly examined.

1. "We won New Hampshire three times now, and we win it every time." (Exaggeration or hyperbolic expression).

Donald Trump's depiction of his election record in New Hampshire overstates his achievements, presumably designed to project an image of confidence and control. The hyperbolic rhetoric utilized presents his accomplishments as ordinary and incontestable, thus fostering an impression of capability.

2. "She's doing a speech like she won. She didn't win, she lost." (Irony and sarcasm expressions).

Concerning Nikki Haley, Trump disregards the incongruity between her behavior and the vote's outcomes. The comedic restatement ("she didn't win, she lost") functions as a derisive alteration that undermines the other team's success.

3. "She ran up and she pretended she won Iowa ... Didn't she come in third?" (Mockery and incongruity expressions).

The humorous impact arises from the contrast among the facade of triumph and the reality of securing third spot. The mockery portrays Haley as disconnected from reality, so reinforcing Trump's self-image as the only authentic triumph.

4. "This is not your typical victory speech, but let's not have somebody take a victory when she had a very bad night, she had a very bad night." (Sarcasm and repeated expressions).

The repeated expression very poor night includes mockery to diminish any depiction of Haley's advancement, using rhythmic recurrence as a stylistic technique to deride her efforts.

5. "The now very unpopular governor of his state, this guy, he's got to be on something. I've never seen anybody with angry. He's like a hopscotch." (Incongruity and exaggeration expressions).

Employing the governor as a point of reference for a game of race constitutes an incongruous metaphor, generating amusement through the contrast between political significance and a childlike image. The implication that he was inebriated constitutes a disparaging assessment of his behavior.

6. "She's taking a victory lap, and we beat her so badly. But Ron beat her also. Ron came in second and he left. She came in third and she's still hanging around." (Sarcasm and ridiculing expressions).

Trump presents an evaluating portrayal: the ostensibly more "honourable" adversary departs after their loss, while Haley maintains her presence. The humor arises from satirical elements and the portrayal of her perseverance as inherently insane.

7. "Who the hell was the imposter that went up on the stage before and claimed a victory." (Surprise and sarcasm expressions).

The characterization of Haley as a "imposter" represents a face-insulting act, articulated through a derisive interrogation. The feigned astonishment ("Who the hell was...?" elicits humorous antagonism, thereby diminishing her claim to importance.

8. "You could almost say. 'awh the hell can't?' The man can't put two sentences together. He can't find the stairs off a stage." (Sarcasm and hyperbole expressions).

This assertion centers on Donald Trump's denunciation of Joe Biden. The humorous impact arises due to the amplification of assumed cognitive decline and physical clumsiness. The recurrent employment of "cannot" and the prominent visual depiction of an inability to find the staircase convey an ironic representation of incompetence.

9. "we have millions and millions of people flowing into our country illegally ... They come from prisons and they come from mental institutions ... They are drug dealers, they're everybody." (Exaggeration and stereotyping expressions).

The humor is distinguished by its harsh and gloomy tone, which is based on widespread oversimplification and the denigration of migrants. By using a hyperbolic amplification, the phrase "they're everybody" creates a dangerous outsiders that the public are both afraid of and mock.

10. "We got millions and millions of more votes the second time ... but we had COVID and they use COVID to cheat." (Conspiracy framing and hyperbole expressions).

While not inherently comedic, this assertion often elicits approving mirth during meetings, as it reframes purported voting trickery into a shared, internal social perspective. The expression "millions and millions" functions as a stylistic element, underscoring Trump's employment of hyperbole.

11. "If you took the 10 worst president in the history of this ... country and put them together ... they would not have done the damage that Crooked Joe Biden has done." (Exaggeration and insult expressions).

The significant inequality juxtaposes previous exaggeration with the disparaging epithet, "Crooked Joe Biden." Humor originates from the amplified nature of a statement and the way in which it is delivered.

12. "She's not going to win. She's not going to win. But if she did, she would be under investigation ... within minutes." (Irony and threat-humor expressions).

The declaration combines wit a potential implicit threat. The reiteration of "she's not going to win" underscores Haley's perceived absence of potential, while the suggestion that the woman would be "immediately" scrutinized evokes mirth concerning her presumed vulnerability. These occurrences illustrate that the provocative humor in the 2024 speech is not incidental but intentionally structured: it emphasizes particular out-groups (Haley, the governor, Biden, migrants) and employs consistent stylistic techniques (repetition, metaphor, exaggerated figures, mock inquiries).

4.2 Results and Discussion

Subsequent to a thorough statistical analysis of the discourse, the classification of humor devices is outlined below (approximate counts of individual instances):

Humorous Devices Repeatedly Employed Throughout the Discourse

Humor device	Times repetition
Exaggeration	7
Irony	4
Incongruity	3
sarcasm	5
surprise/mock-surprised	2
pun	0

In conclusion, these stylistic devices serve not merely to entertain but also to undermine political opponents, bolster group cohesion, and uphold a provocative nationalist narrative. Humor functions as an influential governmental tool, transforming critique into a form of diversion. This method enables Trump to enhance community engagement while concurrently promoting a confrontational ideological viewpoint.

Conclusion

This comprehensive analysis of objectionable humor methods determines that President Trump employed them in his speeches to convey his personality and perspectives. Trump employed embellishment to overstate events on numerous occasions. As a political figure, President Donald Trump employed political rhetoric and humor that occasionally led to misunderstandings and engendered complications within the government.

This research explores offensive humor, an element of human culture, and examines the way President Trump employs various stylistic methods to humor. Trump predominantly employed exaggerated

expressions. Contemporary politicians employ comedy as a strategic tool to critique rivals, elicit fellow citizens endorsement, and draw scrutiny to uphold and enhance their public images. Rhetorical devices enhance lucidity, persuasiveness, and overall impact; however, their primary advantage lies in leaving a more profound impression on the audience.

It is essential to recognize that humor arises not exclusively from the audience's subjective interpretation, but also from intrinsic conceptual elements within the text that facilitate or signify audience participation. A refocused emphasis on contradictions and audience understanding might allow researchers to utilize current theoretical paradigms to improve our comprehension of the micro-level cognitive mechanisms that contribute to humor enjoyment. In summation, the complex characteristics of the current interconnected digital landscape render linear sender-receiver models insufficient for a thorough evaluation of the impact of political satire. As a result, researchers of political satire will increasingly need to utilize alternative strategies and new methods.

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