

Racism in Selected Political Speeches: A Critical Discourse Analysis Perspective

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Abstract: The current paper deals with the phenomenon of racism in political speeches. It studies racism in Trump political speeches by applying critical discourse analysis (CDA henceforth). In CDA, language is dealt with not only as an impersonal tool, but as a social practice that echoes ideology and power relations. By analyzing metaphors, symbolic references, and direct language, the study aims at ; Identifying the linguistic strategies used in political discourse that reflect racism, highlighting how language reinforces power relations and ideological positions, and identifying the ways in which political speeches construct and perpetuate social hierarchies and racialized perceptions.

According to the objectives of the study, it is hypothesized that: Political speeches employ both implicit and explicit linguistic strategies to express racialized meanings, the use of metaphor, symbolism, and direct language in political discourse influences public perception and reinforces social hierarchies, language in political discourse is a tool for maintaining ideological and power relations, contributing to systemic racism. Finally, the present study provides valuable insights for scholars, students, and practitioners interested in CDA, political communication, and the role of language in reinforcing social inequality.

Key Words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Racism, Political Speeches, Ideology, Power

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العنصرية في خطابات سياسية منتقاة: منظور تحليل النقدي للخطاب

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الملخص: يتناول البحث الحالي ظاهرة العنصرية في الخطابات السياسية. يدرس العنصرية في خطابات ترابمب السياسية من خلال تطبيق تحليل الخطاب النقدي ، لا يتم التعامل مع اللغة كأداة غير شخصية فحسب، بل كممارسة اجتماعية تعكس الأيديولوجية وعلاقات القوة. ومن خلال تحليل الاستعارات والمراجع الرمزية واللغة المباشرة تهدف الدراسة إلى: تحديد الاستراتيجيات اللغوية المستخدمة في الخطاب السياسي التي تعكس العنصرية، وتسليط الضوء على كيفية تعزيز اللغة لعلاقات القوة والمواقف الأيديولوجية، وتحديد الطرق التي تبني بها الخطابات السياسية وتديم التسلسل الهرمي الاجتماعي والتصورات العنصرية.

وفقاً لأهداف الدراسة، يُفترض أن: الخطابات السياسية تستخدم استراتيجيات لغوية ضمنية وصروحة للتعبير عن المعاني العنصرية، واستخدام الاستعارة والرمزية واللغة المباشرة في الخطاب السياسي يؤثر على الإدراك العام ويعزز التسلسل الهرمي الاجتماعي، كما أن اللغة في الخطاب السياسي هي أداة للحفاظ على العلاقات الأيديولوجية وعلاقات القوة بين الافراد أخيراً، توفر هذه الدراسة رؤى قيمة للباحثين والطلاب والممارسين المهتمين بالتحليل النقدي للخطابات والتواصل السياسي ودور اللغة في تعزيز عدم المساواة الاجتماعية.

أخيراً، توفر هذه الدراسة رؤى قيمة للباحثين والطلاب والممارسين المهتمين بالتحليل النقدي للخطابات والتواصل السياسي ودور اللغة في تعزيز عدم المساواة الاجتماعية

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحليل النقدي للخطاب، العنصرية، الخطابات السياسية، الأيديولوجيا، السلطة

1. Introduction

Political discourse plays a crucial role in influencing the public belief and social behaviour. In political speeches, language has two important roles: first it is a means of communication, second it is a powerful tool for expressing ideology, reinforcing power, and constructing racial and social identities. Many political speeches,

however, contain implicit and explicit forms of racism, typecasts, These linguistic choices can manipulate public perception, reinforce inequality, and legitimize discriminatory policies. Accordingly, this paper attempts to FIND THE gap of the subsequent problems:

1. In what way do political figures use language to convey racist ideas in speeches?
2. What linguistic strategies are employed to reinforce power and ideology?
3. How do metaphors, symbolism, and direct language function to construct racialized narratives in political discourse?

This study aims at:

1. Identifying the linguistic strategies used in political discourse that reflect racism.
2. Highlighting how language reinforces power relations and ideological positions.
3. Showing the ways in which political speeches construct and perpetuate social hierarchies and racialized perceptions.

This study hypothesizes that:

1. Political speeches employ both implicit and explicit linguistic strategies to express racialized meanings.
2. The use of metaphors, symbolism, and direct language in political discourse influences public perception and reinforces social hierarchies.
3. Language in political discourse is a tool for maintaining ideological and power relations, contributing to systemic racism.

The present study provides valuable insights for scholars, students, and practitioners interested in CDA, political communication, and the role of language in reinforcing social inequality.

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2. Discourse Analysis

DA deals with the way language is used in actual states , not just in single sentences. It shows the way people interact their ideas, express feelings, and share information in everyday life. This field focuses on how meaning is created when people talk or write to each other (Stubbs, 1983, p.1).

DA investigates the way sentences can come together to make bigger, more meaningful units like texts , conversations, interviews, etc. For instance, discourse analysis examines how the use of articles, pronouns, and tenses influences the structure of speech . The way that statements in a conversation are related to each other , the actions taken by speakers to bring up a new subject, switch subjects, or say that they are in a higher position than the other people in the conversation Conversational analysis is another name for the study of spoken discourse. Some linguists refer to the examination of written discourse as text linguistics. Discourse analysis also looks at the language used in the classroom. These kinds of analyses can help you learn about how well teaching approaches work and what kinds of relationships happen between teachers and students (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, p. 174).

Finally, discourse can shape power relations. Some forms of speech or writing can control, influence, or silence others. By studying how texts and conversations are organized, researchers can uncover patterns that show how authority, persuasion, or inequality operate in communication (Fairclough, 1992).

3. Critical Discourse Analysis

"CDA is the study of how language is used in actual circumstances to solve social problems. It analyses texts to reveal their hidden ideology and it shows the values under them. It deals with the benefits and power relations in any

institutional and socio-historical context through analyzing the ways that people use language" (Crystal, 2008, p.145).

CDA is a method to DA that is explicitly concerned with uncovering the way language is used as a means of socio-political control. It focuses on examining the ways in which discourse enacts, sustains, and legitimizes power relations, particularly those involving dominance, inequality, and social injustice within political and social contexts (Widdowson, 2004, p. 89). In this sense, CDA is not neutral or purely descriptive; rather, it adopts an overtly critical stance, aiming to understand, expose, and ultimately resist forms of social inequality that are reproduced through text and talk (Widdowson, 2004, p. 89).

4. Racism

Racism is the idea that people can be judged based on their race and that some "races" are superior or inferior than others . posits that racism entails formulating absolute generalisations that assess actual or imagined inequalities injurious to the accused . A racist individual evaluates their target unfavourably to rationalise and validate their own privileged position and the victim's marginalised status. Racism is also seen as a general term for all kinds of hostile and discriminatory behaviours towards those who are seen as "different." Another word for this is "heterophobia," which means an unreasonable fear or loathing of any group that is different from you. Racism is ideological, meaning that it is built into different theological, social, and pseudoscientific views. These beliefs are expressed through language and lead to specific groups of people being stereotyped. Racism can lead to violence and, in certain instances, genocide (Ellece and Baker, 2011, p.57)

Understanding racism entails questioning its main perceptions, chronological development, and the ways it is reproduced within cultural domains such as media and institutional practices (Bonilla-Silva, 2017).

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Racism is also closely tied to linguistic practices and communicative power. May defines racism as "acts and/or projects that use linguistic resources as a means of discrimination and subordination" (May, 2023, p. 652), highlighting the active role of language in producing racial inequality. Similarly, Merriam-Webster defines racism as the belief that race determines human traits and capacities and justifies the superiority of one racial group over another, including behaviors and attitudes that reinforce such beliefs and systemic oppression (Merriam-Webster, 2021).

5. Ideology

Ideology has been extensively addressed in CDA as a fundamental concept. A few scholars in CDA have given definitions of the term "ideology." Fairclough's definition of ideology will be utilised as the operational definition, supplemented by the inclusion of the link to social cognition, given that discourse reflects the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the individual engaging in it. So, ideology is a way for group members to think about certain parts of the world that help create and keep power, domination, and exploitation relationships (Fairclough, 2003, p.57).

An ideology is a group of ideas, beliefs, and concepts that make up the basis of a political, educational, or economic system. Critical theory and critical linguistics are mainly concerned with how ideology, language, and discourse are related to each other (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, p.267).

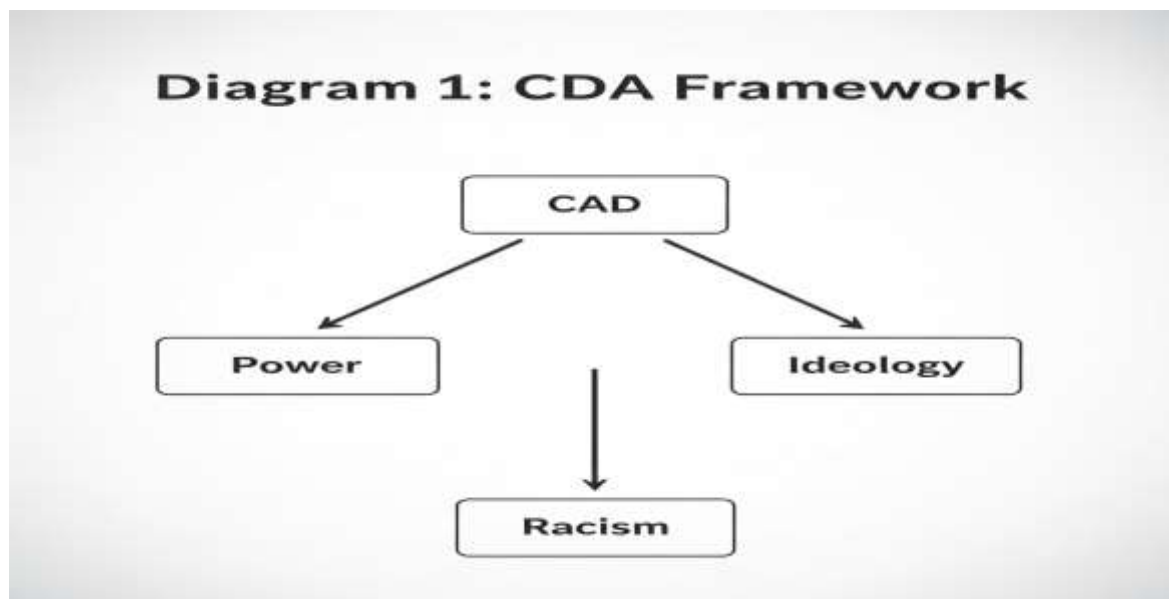
According to Ellece and Baker (2011, p.57) Ideology is typically seen as the collection of ideas, beliefs, and objectives that an individual or group possesses. Language serves as a medium through which ideologies are produced, preserved, and contested. Fairclough (1992: 88–89) asserts that ideologies

cannot be directly inferred from texts, as meanings are generated through readings of texts.

6. Data Analysis

This section analyses five extracts of Trump speeches showing the implicit and explicit racist language .

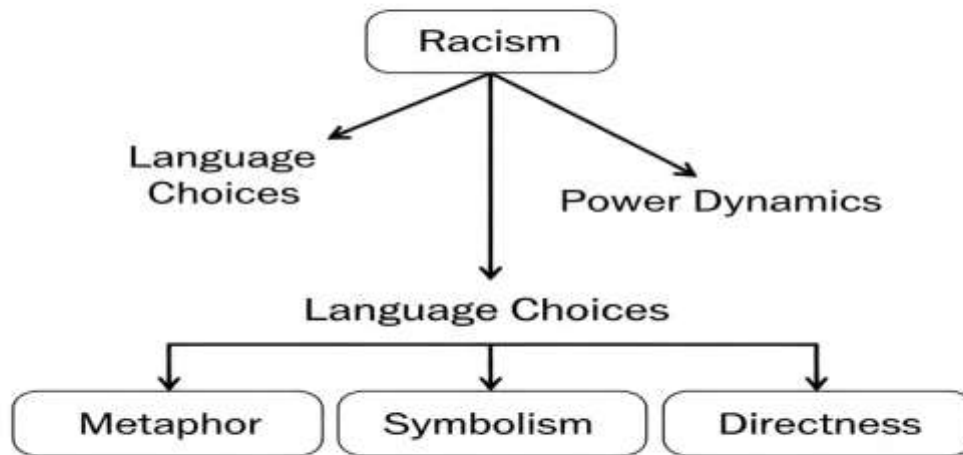
7. The Model



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**Diagram 2:
Language Mechanisms of Racism**



The above figure shows the linguistic strategies which examined in Trump extracts to highlight racism.

8. The Analysis

Text 1:

"There's literally a floating island of garbage in the middle of the ocean right now. Yeah, I think it's called Puerto Rico. Believe it or not, people, I welcome migrants to the United States of America with open arms, and by 'open arms' I mean like this. These Latinos, they love making babies too".

Analysis:

1. **Metaphor:** “floating island of garbage” dehumanizes Puerto Rico and frames it negatively.
2. **Symbolism:** “making babies” creates a stereotype about Latinos as overly fertile.

3. **Directness:** The phrase emphasizes a supposed threat, positioning Latinos as outsiders.
4. **Power & Ideology:** Language reflects and reinforces hierarchical social perceptions and political ideology targeting a marginalized group.

Text 2:

"Well, we know something about why they did this. The Trump campaign from the outset has been courting young men who listen to podcasts, alternative media... and Rogan is a Hing Cliff fan. He was recommending months ago that the Trump campaign tap Hing Cliff to write some material for his campaign. Not that Trump needed it. Trump just has a very deadpan, insulting comedic style that's worked pretty well for him".

Analysis:

- **Language Choice:** Shows Trump's ideology as “deadpan, insulting,” normalizing aggressive rhetoric.
- **Indirect Racism:** It shows media targeting specific demographics (young men, podcast listeners), it indicates manipulation of certain social groups.
- **Power Dynamics:** Shows how political campaigns use discourse strategically to influence opinions and maintain authority.

Text 3

"There are a lot of Puerto Ricans in Pennsylvania. The Trump campaign had spent a lot of time and effort courting Latino voters, Puerto Rican voters... bringing Puerto Rican rappers to a Trump rally to campaign. And they worry that this would undermine that... as much as Trump and his movement are

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known for not being politically correct, that this took on some life of its own and this might be a problem".

Analysis:

1. Directness: Explicitly identifies Puerto Rican voters as a key group, marking them as politically influential.
2. Symbolism: Using rappers as campaign tools could stereotype cultural identity for political gain.
3. Ideology & Racism: Emphasizes differences between groups, subtly framing Puerto Ricans as “problematic” or disruptive.

Text

4

4

"Some of the numbers I've seen there's about 470,000 people with Puerto Rican roots in Pennsylvania... you look where the polls are... it really matters even in a state as large as Pennsylvania... This fits into the argument they're making that second argument, and Republicans again, the way they're reacting is not total confidence that they can brush this off".

Analysis:

1. Language Choice: Statistics are used rhetorically to emphasize group size and importance, highlighting political influence.
2. Power Dynamics: Highlights how awareness of racial/ethnic demographics shapes campaign strategy.
3. Ideology: Suggests concern or unease about Puerto Rican voters' potential impact, framing them as a political “threat.”

Text5

"This wasn't him saying it, but one of the Harris campaign has two closing arguments: one is her economic message, middle class tax cut, cheaper health

care... the other is Trump without guard rails... Trump with more power to do what he wants as president and fewer people telling him no would be dangerous. And you don't want to sign up for four years of that even if you're frustrated by prices... Don't vote for that".

Analysis:

1. Directness: Trump describes Harris campaign as an unrestricted power. He implicitly contrasting Harris campaign with marginalized groups.
2. Language Choice: the use of such terms as “dangerous” and “fewer people telling him no” overstates danger and implies terror.
3. Ideology and Power: shaping political choice as an ethical and social decision, It implies indirectly the leadership style with racialized or societal penalties.

9. Results

The above texts show that racism can be manifested in two ways: implicit and explicit. It is found that through metaphors, stereotypes, and direct language, shaping how certain social groups are perceived. Trump as a politician deliberately uses these strategies to build and support social hierarchies, positioning particular communities as threats or inferior within the societal framework. Ideology strengthens these linguistic strategies, highlighting the close relationship between discourse, power, and racial attitudes. The use of these linguistic choices reflects not only political aims but also their social behaviour.

10. Conclusion

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It is concluded that racism is a credence that one's own social group is superior to another's group. It is a deeply rooted idea or belief in one's own superiority to others. In politics, racism is a central ideology practiced by politicians to discriminate among groups. The current paper has dealt with racist language used by such politicians as Trump. He uses an implicit and explicit linguistic strategies to reveal his ideology and his way of thinking among groups.

The findings of the current paper noticeably confirms the first hypothesis which reads : *racist ideas are embedded in discourse through systematic and intentional language use*. The second hypothesis : *The use of metaphors, symbolism, and direct language in political discourse influences public perception and reinforces social hierarchies* are also confirmed. The current paper also verifies the third hypothesis which reads as : *Language in political discourse is a tool for maintaining ideological and power relations, contributing to systemic racism*.

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