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Critical Discourse Analysis of Persuasion in Donald Trumps 2024 Victory Speech

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Abstract
This research is a Critical Discourse Analysis of CDA Persuasion in Donald Trumps 2024 Victory Speech. The Victory speech was examined thoroughly because it was hailed and accepted with great belief in the aspirations as proposed during the Campaign; therefore persuasive lexical items were identified and explained contextually. Critical discourse Analysis is the theory chosen for the analysis. Data was downloaded from the internet and presentation and analysis was done simultaneously to keep track and not give room to ambiguity. There were so many short sentences in order to drive home particular points. A lot of persuasive words and phrases were used to appeal to the psychology of the voters and this got them over successfully. Personification was used minimally to create the picture of a handicapped nation, a sick nation that needs healing. It is therefore not surprising that Trump was voted into office because he appeared to know the problems and set backs of the Country.

Introduction

Persuasion is an important device that helps politicians to achieve their gssoals, it helps to convince people faster than any other device (Ferrari,2012). Lakoff (1992) defines persuasion as the moves by a particular group of people/party to change the behaviors feelings, intentions or viewpoint of another group/party. Pshghadam and Rasouli (2011) see persuasion as a direct speech act performed by a speaker with the intention of making listener to perform an action thereby reshaping/changing the listeners' feelings, behaviors based on his/her ideology. Grass (2018) maintains that politicians use persuasion to influence their audience and gain their full support persuasion and rhetoric can be used interchangeably as was the practice in ancient Greece with philosophers like Plato, Aristotle. Etc

Background of the Study

Donald John Trump (born June 14, 1946) is an American politician, media personality, and businessman who served as the 45th president of the United States from 2017 to 2021. Having won the 2024 presidential election as the Republican Party's nominee, he is scheduled to be inaugurated as the 47th president on January 20, 2025.

Trump graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Pennsylvania in 1968. Becoming president of the family real estate business in 1971, he focused on luxury accommodation. After a series of bankruptcies in the 1990s he launched side ventures, mostly by licensing the Trump name. From 2004 to 2015, he produced and

hosted the reality television series *The Apprentice*.

Trump won the 2016 presidential election as the Republican nominee. His election and policies sparked numerous protests. He ordered a travel ban targeting Muslims and refugees, expanded the U.S.–Mexico border wall, and implemented a family separation policy. He rolled back more than 100 environmental policies and regulations, signed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, and appointed three justices to the Supreme Court. He initiated a trade war with China in 2018, withdrew the U.S. from several international agreements,[a] and met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un without progress on denuclearization. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, he downplayed its severity, contradicted guidance from international public health bodies, and signed the CARES Act economic stimulus. He was impeached in 2019 for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress, and in 2021 for incitement of insurrection; the Senate acquitted him in both cases.

Trump's politics and rhetoric led to the Trumpism movement. Many of his comments and actions have been characterized as racially charged, racist, and misogynistic. He promoted conspiracy theories and made many false and misleading statements during his campaigns and presidency, to a degree unprecedented in American politics. After his first term, scholars and historians ranked him as one of the worst presidents in American history. He lost the 2020 presidential election, but did not concede, falsely claiming widespread electoral fraud and attempting to overturn the results, including his involvement in the January 6 Capitol attack. In 2024, he was found guilty of falsifying business records, making him the first U.S. president to be convicted of a felony. He faced more felony indictments related to his interference in the 2020 election and his handling of classified documents, which were dismissed after the 2024 election.

Literature Review:

Critical discourse Analysis can be traced down history lane to the Frankfort school before the Second World War ii (Agger 1992 and Rasmussen, 1996) however the application of CDA came up from the United Kingdom and Australia towards the end of 1970. CDA has also been liaised with other critical philosophical developments in the field of social sciences (socio-Liguistics Psychology sociology hence its definition from different perspectives (Ibarez and Iniguez 1997, Singh 1996, Thomas 1993) Fairclough (2001) sees CDA as a farm of critical social science thereby highlighting the problems envisaged by people in their daily social life and how to overcome such problems. CDA also looks at how social power abuse using dominance inequality enacted, reproduced and resisted in the context of socio-political discourse.

As an interdisciplinary analytical viewpoint that analyse authority, dominance and social inequality.

While discourse analysis can be applied to all types of research, CDA focuses on social problems primarily the role of discourse in the creation and recreation of power abuse or domination (Van Djik 2001). CDA attempts to create a relationship between language and power. Wodak (2021) says CDA is mainly concerned with analyzing with transparent and non-transparent structural relationship of dominance, discrimination, power and control as it is inherent in the language. As for CDA Wodak (2001) claims that critical here means an indept study/examination thus digging up the complexities, educationist dogmatism and diachotomies being self reflexist Fairclough and Wodak (1997) enlist eight categories or principles of CDA as:

i. CDA address social problems.
ii. Power relations are discussive.
iii. Discourse constitudes social and culture.
iv. Discuss does ideological work.
v. Discourse is historical.
vi. The link between text and society is mediated.
vii. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory.
viii. Discourse is a form of social action.

CDA is generally used in analyzing texts of politicians in order to reveal their political agenda (Cameron, 2001).

Political Discourse Analysis (PDA)

Van Djik (1998) maintains the focus of PDA is on the analysis of political discourse particularly with the reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination through political discourse. Thus both Fairclough (1995) and Van Djik (1998) agree that PDA is basically above the discursive condition and consequence of social and political inequality that result from political domination. It is also imperative to note that PDA is a class of genre defined by the social domains (which is politics of educational discourse, scientific discourse, legal discourse, political discourse which encompasses government deliberation, parliamentary debates, party programs, political interviews and speeches by politicians etc. PDA apparently devices such strategies as persuasions to examine such text.

Political Discourse serve as a platform for spreading ideologies, propose policies and programs of politician and political parties. This promotes active democratic participation and citizenship. Analyzing political discourse helps electorate to actively participate and make inform decision during elections. It also helps to evaluate the purposes, legitimacy and expected outcomes of various political messages.

Persuasion in Language use.

Persuasion is an important devices that helps politicians to achieve their goals, it helps to convince people faster than any other devices (Ferarri, 2012). Lakoff (1972) defines persuasion as the moves by a particular group of people/party to change the behaviors,feelings intentions or view point of another group/party. Pishghadam and Rasouli (2011). Maintains that persuasion is a direct speech act performed by a speaker with the intention of making listener to perfomed an action.

Thereby reshaping/changing the listeners feeling, behaviors based on his/her ideology.

(Gass, 2018) maintains that politicians used persuasion to influence their audience and gain their full support. Persuasion and rhetorics can be used interchangeably as was the practices in ancient Greece with philosophers like Plato, Aristotle etc.

Rhetoric: Partington (2010) claims rhetoric in the art of persuasive discourse, Fairclough (2012) on the other hand states that persuasive language is written to cajole/persuade the audience to buy a product with the believe that it is the best. Van Djik (1997) states that rhetoric is the art or study of persuasive public discoursed which employs such Linguistics features as intensifiers, adjectives,lexical items as well as non-linguistic features like metaphor, personification,repetition to make discourse more expressive, persuasive develop an attractive.

Principle of Persuasion:

Cialdini (2001) postulates six principles

i. **Reciprocation Principle**

this is based on the law of karma which traditionally is believed that whatever one does to other to be revisited on him thus politicians make big promises in return for the peoples but.

ii**. Principle of Scarcity**:

Here the politicians create the impression that he is scarce to come by (that is his likes are not many around). Therefore he is a messiah.

iii. **The Principle of authority**

The ranking of the person in the society is what matters here thus out of respect for a party leader his words are taking for real and he win the people votes.

iv. **The principle of Consistency**

consistency here refer to what is most liked/prioritized or desired by the people thus a constant repetition of such promises create a sense of commitment.

v. **The principle of Consensus**

this principle is based on majority carry the vote Cialdini (2001) states that consensus is a principle of human behavior whereby people tend to determine what is correct and what is not by examining the action of others i.e they assume that an action is correct if pother person agree with it or when they are told that many other person are doing it. Persuaders in political discourse tend to used this principle to project their candidates as consensus candidates who have gained national acceptance.

vi. **The principle of liking**

Here the politicians gains peoples votes base on their affection for him because they feel he likes them too i.e he identifies with them.

Rhetorical/persuasive Strategies

Many linguistic devices are used in discourse to persuade or convince the audience these items are referred to as rhetorical persuasive strategies. Obeng (1997). Van Djik (2011). Thomas et al (2004) have suggested the following persuasive strategies.

i. **Creativity:** this helps in structuring a political discourse towards a show of truthfulness.

ii. **Indirectness:** Van Djik (2011) claims this is similar to politeness whereby politicians spread negative ideas about their opponents through invendos metaphors, circumlocution etc.

iii. **Intertextuality**: Genette (1983) says it's the presence of a text in another text Fairclough (1992) claims that all texts are intertextual as every text is a constituent of another. Intertextuality is used by politicians to strengthen their speech and reinforce religious, sociocultural and historical context. (Kitawa and Ozerova (2019). Obeng (1997) claims that intertextuality increases the credibility of a text and attracts the attention of the audience to believe in the speakers words.

Choice of lexis: the use of certain words highlights the seriousness of the speaker in concerning people (Aman, 2005). Denham and Roy (2005) claim the choice of vocabulary provides valuable insight into those words which surround or support a concept,

Cohesion: this is a grammatical and lexical connection that glue the text together to facilitate meaning. Halliday and Hassan 1976) maintain cordial relationship between sentence keeping relivance and harmomy in between sentences.

Van Djik (1984) maintain that whenever there is a social struggle or competition over different aspect of life contrast comes in to play. Van Djik (2000) maintains that repetition is a devices that can be found in many discourse, it is form at the word phrasal or sentential level and it is a current phenomenon.

Modality: modal verbs are used to modify different proportion in order to create many semantic functions such as probability, ability, possibility depending on the context of situation. A speaker can employ both 'deontic' epistemic' modality which means he can used obligation, permission and probability or probability is his speech to exhibit power by giving command, making true claims and announcement

References; personal pronoun play an important role in sending persuasive message by political leader. Thomas et al (2004). Says the first person pronoun 'I' is use in emphasizing concept and in declaring some kind of responsibility 'we'a third person pronoun is used to show togetherness, inclusiveness or exclusiveness is exemplified through the used of 'our'we'us' inclusive while the pronoun 'they''their' them' is exclusive. Other rhetorical devices are metaphor which is a strong persuasive device representing abstract objects as concrete intities. Personification is when non human intities are represented as human. Evidence concretise the speakers claims or statement. Rhetorical questions state the obvious thus they do not need an answer. Anology creates comparison.

Ideology in politics: from the perspective of CDA Datondji and

Amousu (2019) define ideology as a mental representation of the world with implication in power relation such as those of domination and suppression ideologies are abstract mental system that Dorham (2007) sees ideology as a political term an enlist it different conception thus:

i. A political believe system
ii. An action oriented set of political ideas
iii. The ideas of the rulling class.
iv. The world view of a particular social class or social group.
v. Political ideas that embodied or articulate class or social interest.
vi. Ideas that for propagate fulse consciousness among the exploited or oppressed.
vii. Ideas that situate the individuals within a social context and generate a sense of collective belonging.
viii. An official sanctions set of ideas used to legitimize a political system or regime.
ix. Embracing political doctorine that claim a momopoly of truth.

Empirical Studies

Scholars have research into different aspect of theory of idealogy and persuation. Ehirechi (20140 critically analysed the ideological uses of modal by Nigerian politicians in electioneerer campaign. Data was collected from the political manifesto of Barrister Rutimi Akredolu of the action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and Dr. Olusegun Mimiko of Labour party (LP) during their (2012) electioneer campaign. Using CDA as the yardstick of analysis it was found that modal 'will' and 'shall' have the highest frequency of usage thus showing the party manifesto as full of promises and pledges. Other modal as 'can i ' must' are used to indicate obligations, promises and soliciting for support and manipulation. Rashidi and Rasti. (2012) research into the textual modes used by the west to impose it own values and ideologies in its media representations especially with the strong sanction against Iran. Data was obtained often from four news report and stories taken from foremost US online Paper. The economists an express, after applying Theo Van Leed Wen's theory, the findings shows.

Methodology

This consists of how data is collected, presented and analyzed.

Data Collection: here data for this research is downloaded from the internet.

Data Presentation and Analysis: Data is presented after a careful extraction of aspects of Donald Trumps Speech that highlight Persuasion (CDA Criteria). Analysis follows simultaneously alongside the data presentation for easy understanding, then discussion follow finally.

Theoretical Framework:

Various theoretical Frameworks have been propounded for the analysis of CDA but the one theory chosen for analysis in this research is Yan Djiks Socio-cognitive Approach (2006)

Van Djiks Socio-cognitive theory has two levels of discourse analysis, macro and micro. Macro level refers to power dominance and inequality between social groups while micro is determined by language use, discourse, verbal interaction and communication. Van djik states that

ideological Discourse is generally organized by a general strategy of positive self presentation (boasting) and negatives other presentation (derogation). Infact Van Djik claims that CDA should not limit itself to a study of the relationship between discourse and social structure but language use as discourse always presupposes the intervening mental models, goals and general social representations (knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, values) of language users. Therefore the study of discourse circulates between society/culture/situation, cognition, Discourse language. Van Djiks socio-cognitive approach tends to make clear ideological dimension of 'us' versus 'them' and demonstrate the discursive structures and strategies used in exercising the dominant power. Unlike other theories Van Djik maintains that discourse structures and social structures can only be related through the mental representation of language users as individuals and as social members. The term 'xvcangel' signifies the relatedness of discourse, cognition and society. Ideologies are the product of social institution. These group specific ideologies in turn shape the discourse or texts produced by members of such group; the discourse produced by such group members are then used to maintain social interaction.

Additionally the socio-cognitive approach aims to address problems of power abuse, domination and resistance as found in discourse branching into three categories: cognitive, social and discourse components. While the cognitive includes memory, mental (personal cognition of the setting, participants, their identities, roles and relationships action and events and social cognition (socially shared knowledge, ideologies and opinions, the social components delas with intergroup and intergroup relationships.

Van Djik (2007) proposes the following in analyzing ideologies:

i. Emphasize positive-things abouit its;
ii. Emphasize negative things about them;
iii. De-emphasize negative things about its;
iv. De-emphasize positive things about them;

Other ways of emphasizing or de-emphasizing positive and negative descriptions are headlining foregrounding, Topicalization, active structures examples and illustrations contrast paragraph order, metaphors, hyperboles, irony and some other rhetorical devices can be used to emphasize positive things about us and negative things about them. De-emphasize negative things about us and negative things about them can be done with passive structures, small letter, euphemism, implicit information, back grounding, hedging, vagueness modality disclaimers, synonym, paraphrase and low-level description among Van Djik (2015)

i. polarization: this concerns representation of the agents i.e the positive representation of the in-group and negative depiction of out group.

ii. The pronouns "we (us,our) and they (them, there are regarded as political pronouns. They are used to

represent the actors and their enemies.
iii. Emphasis of positive self description and negative other descriptions.
iv. Activities; what the in-group does and must do are represented
v. Norms and values; what is good or bad depending on the ideologies of the group is depicted as the justification of what is right might not be generally right in the larger society
vi. Interest; it refers to the discourse representation of the groups struggle or interest. While analyzing the linguistic items used as persuasive/rhetorical strategies such as creativity, modality, inter textuality, coherence indirectness, reference among others will be used. Even though these strategies have been explained in the literature review. The ideological implications behind the use of such strategies by the politicians will be revealed.

Data presentation and analysis:
Data has been expunged from Donald Trumps 2024 Victory speech. In fact the whole text was numbered from sentence one to sentence one hundred and fifty five with some of the statements merged up to make complete sentences.

Sentence:
1 " these are our friends
2 " we have thousands of friends in this incredible movement.
' friends' in the sentences above is used to show the multitude of Americans present at the point of declaration of his Victory of course the opposition is not expected to be there.
The lexical items are 'friends' and 'incredible' where 'friends' refers to the party supporters that voted Trump into Victory thus 'friends' is used positively. 'incredible' describes the greatness of his party so 'thousand of friends' in this incredible movement this refers to the millions of Americans that turned out to show him true 'friendship' and support with their votes.
3 " we're going to fix our boarders"
4 " we're going to fix everything about our country"
When he says: " we're going to fix our boarders" 'fixing' here is not physical rather it's a metaphoric use of language to show that the boarders are porous that is the immigration and security at the boarders are not doing a good job as the country is full of immigrants from other places entering/infiltrating into the country illegally thus the need to 'fix' the boarders. In second sentence he says 'we're' going to fix everything about our country' so himself and other party executives that will be sworn into office would have to do a complete overhauling of the system, so its not just the security or immigration that needs new changes, the whole system of government to be changed with fresh/new hands to take the place of those that had been manning the different positions with the government.
5….. we made history for a reason tonight.
6…..we overcame obstacles that nobody thought possible.
'history' here refers to the miraculous landslide Victory as the 45th president he was outsted/voted out of office and replaced by Joe Biden from an

opposition party, however, its only 'God will'/destiny that got him voted back to office as the 47th president elect so obviously its historical and monumental achievement. We overcome obstacles ….' Reference is made to the difficulties their party encountered in trying to gain back the loyalty of voters who had been lost to the opposition.

7 " every single day I will be fighting for you and with every breath in my body, I will not rest until we have delivered the strong, safe and prosperous America that our children deserve and that you deserve" here is a show of gratitude to the voters he (Trumps) has promised to keep struggling/fighting to ensure that America rises once again to greatness. The use of such words as 'fighting' 'last breath' 'delivered' all refer to the determination and will power so that America will be delivered from the shackles of weakness insecurity with all the boarders highly porous into strength, safety and prosperity.

8 '…….this is magnificent Victory for the American people, the Victory of his being voted back into office is not just for him and his party but rather for the generality of Americans. The lexical items are magnificent (meaning perfect, incredible) while victory refers to the success of the win.

9……on addition to having won the battleground states of North Carolina…….the states of North Carolina is referred to as a battleground because of the problems they encountered against the opposition as it was the opposition stronghold, so they had to go the extra mile to Campaign and play real politics to have it won by his party. The lexical items are battleground and states' thus giving the picture of clashes/fighting.

10"……. They made the Journey with me and we are going to make you proud of your votes" 'they' refers to the party executives who stood by him throughout the Campaign exercise, thus referred to as 'the Journey' it was really a long journey because at some point it seemed unachievable but with continuous encouragement from the party members they were able to get to the end of the journey successfully. Therefore, as party back for their constant loyalty and dedication, he promised to make them happy by keeping their promises, by not going back or backing down on such promises, thus making the people proud of their votes.

11…….. 'I want to also thank my Beautiful Wife Melania, first lady, who has not bestselling book in the Country'.

Even without seeing or knowing Trump wife, this use of the adjective Beautiful gives one an imagination that is positive about her looks; then his addressing her as the 'firstlady' has created an aura of respect, power while the disclosure that she has the bestselling book which is rated as No. 1 in the whole Country further gives the impression of wealth, affluence. The lexical items are; beautiful, firstlady, bestselling.

12 '……. and today you showed up in record number to deliver a Victory like really/probably, like no other this was something special. Contextually 'record number' refers to the millions of voters that turned out while to

deliver here does not refer to giving birth to a baby but giving birth to a new government/voting in a new government thus a Victory-success at the polls, this simple act is regarded as very important in fact something special. The lexical items are 'deliver' , 'Victory' special and their meaning are as explained

13 '……. we've built the biggest the broadest the most unified coalition'.

The lexical items 'built' , 'biggest' , broadest' and 'unified coalition' have been used metaphorically. The party formation from inception is related to a building which is described as being th 'biggest' and 'broadest' in contrast to other political parties which cannot boast of such great number, despite its size the party is further described as unified coalition because there were no cases of member leaving and cross-carpeting to the opposition party, the lexical items are 'built', ;biggest' , broadest, 'unified, 'coalition'.

14 'together going to unlock America's glorious destiny"

Above Trump states that the task of moving the country forward is not for him alone but all hands must be on deck to open up the prospects/glory that had remained 'locked' up while concentrating backing up people to go to war instead of saving lives, making peace and diving deep to make new discoveries as it highly blessed. His starting 'together' the voter inclusive in the vow to reach the ' promise land' together gives people a sense of belonging, hope and feelings that they have a herculean task ahead, thus persuading them to give their votes so that they will navigate and reach the ' promised land' 'together'.

15 " I said that many people have told me that God spared my life for a reason and that reason was to save our country and to restore American to greatness and we're going to fulfill that mission together Trumps presents himself as a messiah with the idea of having been spared for a purpose which is to 'restore' America back to its previous glory as a World power.

The lexical items are: 'restore', 'greatness', 'mission, 'spared' all these were used figuratively to communicate the message hope and glory.

Personification:

The instances of personification (which is giving inanimate objects the qualities of humans in order to put across a strong message) are minimal.

1 "……. now its going to reach a new level of importance because we're going to help our country heal-help our country heal. America has been highlighted as a human who is highly sick and needs medication to heal, that medication is the combined efforts by the voters the , party executives and Trump himself to come together and help the nation to come out of the sickness and transcend to the next level, the new level "……. we're going to help our country heal. The lexical items are : help and heal.

2 "…….. And today you showed up in record number to deliver a Victory like really I probably no other" this was something they use of the lexical item delivery has personified the process of voting him into office as the 47th President. Delivery in this situation does not refer to a woman having a new born baby rather it

refers to the new hope and new beginning full of new changes that their taking office would represent. Americans are highlighted as the heart and soul of this great movement that is the party.

Conclusion

Donald Trump is a good orator he was able to persuade the voters by the choice of words which was full of appealing and cajoling and this subsequently led to their change of discretion and even those from the opposition crossed over to come and give him their votes, he reminded them about how he ran the government during his first term in office as the 45th President and since they come out in 'record number' to topple kamala Harris' …. This was something special so they should all come onboard to give in their best. Trump further gave a picturestique view of the state of the country personifying it as sick and needing to be healed. Americans are further referred to as the heart and soul of the party. Therefore from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, this research has shown that the secret behind Trumps oration. In his acknowledging the strength of Americans, in taking important decisions thus he promises to abide by their demand.

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