

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Specific Features of Political Discourse: Study and Interpretation

Abduxamidova Hilola Dilshod qizi

Lecturer, University of Business and Science, Uzbekistan

VOLUME: Vol.06 Issue03 2026

PAGE: 134-137

Copyright © 2026 European International Journal of Philological Sciences, this is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License. Licensed under Creative Commons License a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Abstract

The article analyses the distinctive features of political discourse and the analytical procedures used to interpret it. Political discourse is treated as a field defined by its participants, institutions and purposes rather than by a special vocabulary. The study draws on critical discourse analysis, conceptual metaphor theory and the theory of legitimation. The main features examined are the persuasive orientation of the text, the multiple addressee, the opposition between us and them, metaphorical framing, strategic vagueness and the recontextualisation of political speech in the media.

KEY WORDS

Political discourse, critical discourse analysis, ideology, persuasion, legitimation, metaphorical framing, deixis, strategic vagueness, media recontextualisation.

INTRODUCTION

Political activity is carried out mainly by verbal means. Parliamentary debate, election campaigning, negotiation, the drafting of programmes and the daily work of press services all consist of talk and text. Political power is therefore inseparable from control over language, and a change of political course is normally announced as a change of vocabulary [1]. This makes political discourse one of the most productive objects of modern linguistic research.

The boundaries of the field are set by context rather than by form. Van Dijk [11] argues that a text belongs to political discourse when it is produced by political actors in institutional political settings for political purposes. A speech in parliament, an interview with a minister and a party programme belong to the field, while the same words in a private conversation do not. This criterion is important for methodology, because it directs the analyst towards the situation of production and reception instead of towards a closed list of political words.

The relevance of the topic has grown with the transformation of the media environment. Political messages now circulate in short digital formats, they are quoted out of their original

context and they reach audiences that the speaker did not directly address. Under such conditions the ability to recognise persuasive technique becomes an element of civic literacy. The aim of the present research is to describe the constitutive features of political discourse, to show the linguistic mechanisms through which these features are realised, and to bring the main analytical approaches into one working framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Van Dijk [10] developed the sociocognitive model of ideology, which occupies a central place in the study of political discourse. He treats ideology as a socially shared system of beliefs that organises group identity, and he shows how this system is expressed in concrete textual choices. His notion of the ideological square describes four regular strategies, namely the emphasis of positive information about the own group, the emphasis of negative information about the other group, and the corresponding suppression of the opposite information in each case. This model has the advantage of linking macro-level social structures with observable features

of individual sentences [11].

Fairclough [4; 5] established critical discourse analysis as a systematic method. In his three-dimensional framework every communicative event is examined as a text, as a discursive practice and as a social practice, which allows the analyst to move between linguistic detail and institutional power. His concept of the naturalisation of ideology explains why certain political formulations are perceived as common sense, and his later work on the discourse of economic modernisation showed how managerial vocabulary enters political language. Fairclough also insisted that critical analysis must state its own normative position openly.

Wodak [12; 13] elaborated the discourse-historical approach, which adds the dimension of context and intertextual history to the analysis. Her study of political practice in its everyday institutional settings demonstrated that the public speech of politicians is only the visible part of a long chain of drafting, negotiation and recontextualisation. Together with Reisigl [9] she described the referential and predication strategies used in the construction of social groups, including nomination, attribution and argumentation through topoi. This apparatus is particularly useful for the analysis of discourse about migration, nationality and social conflict.

Chilton [3] proposed a cognitive model of political discourse based on deictic positioning. He described three strategic functions, which are coercion, legitimation together with delegitimation, and representation together with misrepresentation. His notion of discourse space explains how a speaker places events and participants along spatial, temporal and axiological axes, and how distant threats can be brought rhetorically close to the audience. Hart [6] developed this cognitive direction further and connected it with the analysis of news reporting on immigration.

The study of metaphor forms a separate and productive tradition within the field. Lakoff [7] showed that political positions rest on coherent moral conceptualisations of the nation as a family, and that opposing political camps use different versions of this frame. Charteris-Black [2] combined conceptual metaphor theory with corpus analysis and demonstrated that leaders build recognisable rhetorical identities through the systematic use of particular source domains. Musolff [8] examined how metaphors of building, family and movement structured European political debate, and he emphasised that the same metaphor can be contested and reinterpreted by different actors.

METHODOLOGY

The research uses the combined apparatus of critical discourse analysis, conceptual metaphor theory and legitimation theory. The material consists of political texts in English of several genres, namely parliamentary speeches, campaign addresses, party programmes and broadcast interviews. Textual analysis proceeded in three stages. First, lexical and grammatical markers of evaluation, reference and modality were identified. Second, these markers were grouped into strategies of self-presentation, other-presentation and legitimation following van Dijk [10] and Chilton [3]. Third, the results were interpreted against the institutional context of production and circulation according to the discourse-historical principle of Wodak [12]. Metaphorical expressions were collected and grouped by source domain in the manner proposed by Charteris-Black [2].

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The analysis indicates that political discourse is constituted by its function rather than by its form. Its central purpose is to gain, keep and justify power, and every feature described below can be derived from this purpose. Political discourse therefore borrows freely from other registers. It can adopt the vocabulary of law, of economics, of religion or of everyday conversation, and the choice of register is itself a persuasive move. A leader who speaks in plain colloquial style is making a claim about closeness to ordinary people.

A further constitutive feature is the multiple addressees. A politician who answers a journalist speaks simultaneously to the interviewer, to supporters, to opponents, to foreign governments and to the future archive of quotations. The utterance must satisfy several audiences whose interests do not coincide, and this produces the characteristic vagueness of political formulation. Strategic vagueness is not a failure of expression but a rational response to a communicative situation with conflicting requirements [3].

The opposition between us and them is the most stable semantic structure of the field. Pronominal choice carries much of this work, and the analysis of the pronoun we is especially informative. The inclusive form unites speaker and audience, the institutional form refers to the government or party, and the modest form replaces the singular in the description of personal decisions. The corresponding representation of opponents relies on negative attribution, on generalisation from single cases and on the transfer of

responsibility [9; 10]. The same structure appears in the treatment of social groups, where nomination assigns people to categories before any argument is made.

Evaluative vocabulary and euphemism constitute the lexical layer of political discourse. Contested concepts such as reform, stability, sovereignty and security function as positive labels whose content is left unspecified, so that each audience can fill them with its own expectations. Euphemistic expressions such as collateral damage, restructuring and enhanced measures reduce the emotional force of unwelcome facts and remove the agent from view. The opposite technique intensifies the description of the opponent, and the resulting asymmetry of naming is one of the clearest indicators of ideological positioning [10].

Metaphorical framing shapes the way political problems are understood. The dominant source domains recur across national traditions and include journey, war, construction, family, health and natural force. A reform presented as a journey implies a destination, a leader and the duty of the followers not to turn back. The same reform presented as a struggle implies an enemy and justifies extraordinary measures [2; 8]. Lakoff [7] showed that such framings are not isolated tropes but parts of coherent moral systems, which explains why political opponents so often fail to understand each other while using the same words.

Legitimation is the strategic centre of political discourse, and the analysis distinguishes four regular procedures. Authorisation refers to law, expertise, tradition or the will of the people. Rationalisation presents a decision as the necessary consequence of circumstances, frequently supported by numerical evidence. Moral evaluation grounds the decision in shared values, and narrative legitimation offers an exemplary story in which the proposed course of action succeeds. Delegitimation applies the same procedures in reverse to the opponent [3; 12]. The frequent appeal to numbers deserves separate mention, since statistics function in political speech as a rhetorical guarantee of objectivity rather than as an argument that the audience can verify.

Deictic positioning organises the political text as a space with a centre. The speaker places the own group at the origin of the coordinate system, and events, actors and values are arranged at different distances from that point [3]. Temporal deixis contrasts a difficult past with a promising future and locates the present at the moment of decision. Axiological deixis maps the distance between the values of the own group

and those attributed to others. This mechanism explains the well known effect by which a remote danger is presented as an immediate threat to the audience.

The final feature concerns circulation. A political utterance is produced with the knowledge that it will be quoted, and it is therefore designed in quotable units. Short formulations with parallel structure and lexical repetition survive recontextualisation, which explains their prominence in campaign rhetoric. Once a fragment enters the media it acquires new meanings from its new surroundings, and the original speaker loses control over it [13]. Digital platforms intensify this process, because the technical limits of the format reward condensed and emotionally marked wording. The interpretation of political discourse consequently requires the analysis of the whole chain of transmission and not of the initial text alone.

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that the specificity of political discourse lies in the systematic connection between its persuasive function and its linguistic means. The multiple addressees explains strategic vagueness, the struggle for group support explains the opposition between us and them, the need to justify decisions explains the repertoire of legitimation strategies, and the conditions of media circulation explain the preference for condensed quotable wording. Metaphorical framing links these levels together, since it determines both the definition of the problem and the range of acceptable solutions. The combined framework of critical discourse analysis, cognitive metaphor theory and legitimation theory makes it possible to describe these mechanisms in a verifiable way. Further research may usefully compare the legitimation strategies of English and Uzbek political texts, and may also examine how the digital genres of political communication change the traditional structure of persuasive speech.

REFERENCES

1. Bourdieu P. Language and symbolic power. – Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991. – P. 302.
2. Charteris-Black J. Politicians and rhetoric: The persuasive power of metaphor. – Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. – P. 239.
3. Chilton P. Analysing political discourse: Theory and practice. – London: Routledge, 2004. – P. 226.
4. Fairclough N. Language and power. – London: Longman,

1989. – P. 259.

5. Fairclough N. Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language. – London: Longman, 1995. – P. 265.
6. Hart C. Critical discourse analysis and cognitive science: New perspectives on immigration discourse. – Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. – P. 214.
7. Lakoff G. Moral politics: How liberals and conservatives think. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002. – P. 471.
8. Musolff A. Metaphor and political discourse: Analogical reasoning in debates about Europe. – Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. – P. 210.
9. Reisigl M., Wodak R. Discourse and discrimination: Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism. – London: Routledge, 2001. – P. 298.
10. van Dijk T. A. Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach. – London: Sage, 1998. – P. 365.
11. van Dijk T. A. What is political discourse analysis? // Belgian Journal of Linguistics. – 1997. – Vol. 11. – P. 11-52.
12. Wodak R. The discourse of politics in action: Politics as usual. – Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. – P. 252.
13. Wodak R., Meyer M. Methods of critical discourse analysis. – London: Sage, 2001. – P. 200.