CRITICAL STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN POLITICAL LANGUAGE

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Article history:		Abstract:
		The present study investigates American political language critical stylistically. This study is an attempt to show the way that American politicians utilizing stylistic choices which shape the ideological meanings in the written or spoken texts. Thus, the study aims at: (1) how the category of 'Naming and Describing' can create ideological meanings in American political language. (2) how these ideologies are not evident in the texts. To achieve the main aims of the study the following procedures are adopted: (1) presenting a theoretical framework about language in general and language of politics and language and ideology in particular with indication to the model of the analysis. (2) analyzing sex speeches of American politicians from different parties according to the selected model of the analysis. The collection of the texts was taken from various reliable websites.

INTRODUCTION

Political language is a reflection of the manifestations and attitudes of the state. Politicians express ideologies via language structure in implicit way. American Politicians make use of stylistic choices to fulfill their aims in political contexts. Pelinka (2007) confirms that "language must be seen (and analyzed) as a political phenomenon and that politics must be conceived and studied as a discursive phenomenon" (129). Thus, the present study investigates American political language critical stylistically. It is an attempt to show the way that American politicians utilizing stylistic choices which shape the ideological meanings in the written or spoken texts. Thus, the study aims at: (1) how the category of 'Naming and Describing' can create ideological meanings in American political language. (2) how these ideologies are not evident in the texts. To achieve the main aims of the study we selected critical stylistics (Jeffries, 2010) as a model of analysis. The data analysis is a collection of texts of American politicians were taken from reliable websites.

1. Defining Language

The most distinctive feature that characteristics human beings is language. Feelings, desires, emotions, ideas and ideologies are expressed by language. Human beings transmit ideas and ideologies via language explicitly and implicitly. However, the definition of language is controversial topic because linguists presented different views. Edward Sapir (1921) observed : "Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols". Another definition presented by Gardiner (1932) Who defined "Language, in its widest sense, means the sum total of such signs of our thoughts and feelings as are capable of external perception and as could be produced and repeated at will". Henry Sweet in his book "The History of Language" argued "Language may be defined as the expression of thought by means of speech-sounds"(Sweet,1900). According to this definition language speakers can express thoughts and feelings by "speech-sound". That means every sentence or word has definite meaning by its own. Nevertheless, the function of language is not only as a tool of communication, but as an instrument of power specially in the political Field as it will be discussed in the next section.

2. The Language of Politics

In order to provide theoretical framework for 'The language of Politics' it is important to elaborate the relationship between language and politics. Chilton and Schaffner (1997) for instance observe that "It is surely the case that politics cannot be conducted without language, and it is probably the case that the use of language in the constitution of social groups leads to what we call 'politics' in a broad sense" (206). Pelinka (2007) confirms that

"language must be seen (and analyzed)as apolitical phenomenon and that politics must be conceived and studied as a discursive phenomenon" (129). Thus, the study of language includes literary and non-literary works (academic, Newspapers and political.. etc.). Many scholars and linguists disagree with the notion that "politics is all talk" because it implies " all talk and no action" while they consider "language as a paradigm of political action and offers a perspective for theoretical inquiry into social and political life" (Corcoran, 1979; Dallmayr, 1984a, 19484b, 1987; Habermas, 1984, 1987). Whereas, several scholars argue that "All language is political" because every speech contains 'power relations', 'social roles' and 'ideological meaning'. It means that the phrase "politics is all talk" is identical with "all talk is politics" (Corcoran 1979:53). Corcoran (ibid.) confirmed that language and politics are inseparable field due to it is difficult to distinguish between language and politics but they "overlap". Corcoran(1979) presented several reasons to study political language:

1. "Political communication is not potentially but actually a powerful factor in society"
2. "Political language is important to study simply because it is politically important"
3. "Professional consultants value, and want to enhance, the expertise associated with a knowledge of political communication as instrument of power, for winning office, influencing policy, or selling it to those who have such aims".
4. "Others seek a means of exposure and criticism, wanting to "understand", "explain" and "deconstruct" the hidden forces of political language"(53).

in broad sense Adrian Beard in his book "The Language of Politics" presents a concise definition of the word "politician". He remarks that the term politician is only one of a few terms that has negative connotations. "A denotative definition of the word 'politician' might be something like 'a person who is practically engaged in running a country, district or town 'but the connotations surrounding the word 'politician' are nearly always negative, often strongly so"(Beard, 2000: p3). The political process takes place at both the 'micro' and 'macro' levels of society. Micro politics   occurs   between   individuals,   genders,   and   social   groups and is enacted through acts of persuasion and argumentation, threat, bribes and so on. At the macro level, politics involves conflicts between and within political institutions and manifests in legal codes, precedent practices, and democratic constitutions (Chilton 2004: 3-4). Thus, in order to analyze the language of politics it is important to identify the implicit content (ideology) of the texts in a political contexts.

3. Language and Ideology

The term *"Ideology"* is derived from the French word *idéologie*, a combination of *idéo-* (Greek, idea), and *-logie* (Greek, logia). Destutt de Tracy in 1801 in his Traite de l'ideologie argued that the term Ideology refers to "a science of ideas" (Seliger, 1977; Hawkes, 2003). Ideology can be studied from different perspectives, our concentration on linguistic view. Fowler & Kress (1979) argue that "linguistic meaning is inseparable from ideology, and both depend on social structure" and that linguistic structure carries specific meaning in a specific context which emphasizes the need for a linguistic analysis of power relations embedded in texts. Such an analysis must concern *critically interpreting* real texts presented in society (Fowler & Kress, 1979). Hodge & Kress (1979) define ideology as "a systematic body of ideas" (cited in Wunderlich, 1980, p. 1059) and it "involves a systematically organized presentation of reality" (Hodge & Kress, 1979, p. 15). Language for Hodge & Kress (1979) is the "medium of consciousness for a society, its forms of consciousness externalized", and linguistics is "the instrument of analysis of consciousness and its ideological bases" (p. 1059). Jefffries (2010) in her book 'Critical Stylistics: The Power of English' indicates that "language carries ideologies either explicitly or implicitly"(p,8). She(ibid.) focuses on the implicit ideologies in the texts which are "insidious". Thus, the ideologies of the text must be examined and interpreted from critical point of view. According to critical linguists as Fowler & Kress (1979) who defined the term "critical" as "an activity of unveiling (…) an activity of demystification" that is unfolding any hidden or implicit meanings in texts (p. 196). 'Critical' also means that is it "is aware of the assumptions on which it is based and prepared to reflect critically about the underlying causes of the phenomena it studies, and the nature of the society whose language it is" (p. 186). While interpretation is "the process of recovering the social meanings expressed in discourse by analyzing the linguistic structures in the light of their interactional and wider social contexts" (p. 196).

4. The Model of the Analysis

The analysis of American political language is carried out by critical stylistic model (Jeffries, 2010) . critical stylistics offers a set of conceptual tools to discover the ideological content of the text. Critical stylistics is integrated programme in stylistics and critical linguistic analysis. In this model, American political language analyzed critically. Hence, the ideological contents of the selected texts (condemnation, exposure, criticism and accusation) are investigated.

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Table1.Linguistic Model of Naming and Describing (Jeffries, 2010: p 17)

Conceptual category/ Textual function	Analytical tool / Formal realization
Naming and describing	The choice of a noun to indicate a referent; The construction of noun phrases with modifiers (in pre- and post-positions) to further determine the nature of the referent. Nominalization; The decision to use a 'name' rather than express as a (verbal) process.

5. Data Analysis

The data analysis is a collection of texts of American politicians were taken from reliable websites.

Text No.1 Donald Trump

"… China's cover-up of the Wuhan virus allowed the disease to spread all over the world …"

The head noun is "China" and it is qualified (post modified) by a prepositional clause *(of the Wuhan Virus).* The noun group and the choice of the nouns *(Wuhan instead of COVID 19)* imply ideological content. Trump aims to accuse and condemn the government of china for spreading Corona virus over the world.

Text No.2 Donald Trump

"… *The destruction of innocent life and the spilling of innocent blood is an offense to humanity and a crime against God. America needs creation not destruction cooperation not contempt security not anarchy healing not hatred justice not chaos …".*
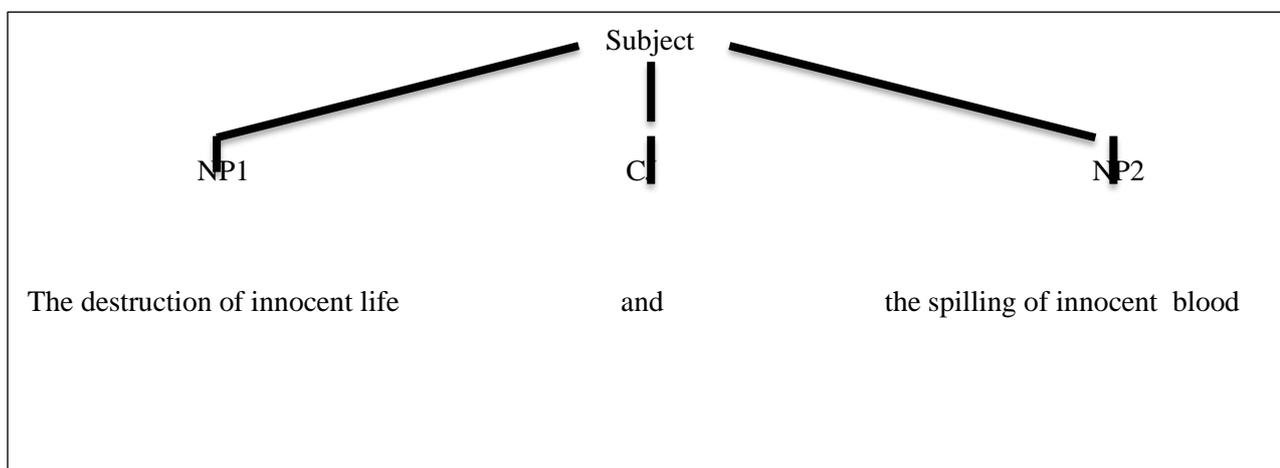
the first part of the text is a subject-predicate-compliment (SPC) clause, with the main verb (is) connected between two NP structures. The subject here is taking for granted the existence of destruction and spelling of innocent lives. The first NP has the head noun (the destruction) modified by prepositional which implies that there are a guiltiest people. The second NP assumes that there will be a crimes following the destruction. These two coordinated NPs are equated, *by the copula is* with NP as a complement, This NP packages up two ideas (ideologies) in the same way in the subject, by being named rather than proposed.

Text No.3 Barack Obama

" *… Now, there have always been those who've said no to such protections; no to such investments. There were accusations that Social Security would lead to socialism, and that Medicare was a government takeover. There were bankers who claimed the creation of federal deposit insurance would destroy the industry. And there were automakers who argued that installing seatbelts was unnecessary and unaffordable …".*

What is noticeable about this text, it has many of nominalization structures:

- *Protections and Investments*
- *Accusations and Socialism*
- *the creation of federal deposit insurance*
- *Insurance and installing*

They have number of assumptions and implications. What is Implied by these nominalization structures, using the negator "*no"* (no to such protections, no to such investments) and qualified by determiner "*such"* that there are reforms and growth in financial institutions and health insurance. Though the whole text does not mention any of these reforms, but it names "things" implicitly (economic sector). Furthermore, Obama criticizes Republican Party members for their disapproving.

Text No.4 Barack Obama

"… Over the last several weeks, the world has watched events unfold in Libya with hope and alarm. Last month, protesters took to the streets across the country to demand their universal rights, and a government that is accountable to them and responsive to their aspirations. But they were met with an iron fist Within days, whole parts of the country declared their independence from a brutal regime, and members of the government serving in Libya and abroad chose to align themselves with the forces of change …".

- "Over the last several weeks, the world has watched events unfold in Libya with hope and alarm".

This sentence has SPO structure, preceded by adverbial clause and modifier adverbial phrase(in Libya with hope and alarm). The relation between Subject, predicator and the Adverb is assuming that there is a certain danger (terrorism)in Libya and the situation is not stable.

- "But they were met with an iron fist"

The choice that Obama makes *iron fist* implicitly has an ideological content. It describes the violent policy of the government against citizens. metaphorically This choice shows the speaker's opinion about the regime in Libya.

Text No.5 Nancy Pelosi

"… Enablers. That's what those who support the president's actions are. Enablers of undermining the constitution of the United States …".

The Nominalization structures "Enablers, undermining" make the text more tangible. The word "Enablers" refers to the protesters who attack the Capitol. These structures has an implicit ideological criticism. Pelosi attacks and accuses Trump that he has motivated and supported the breach of the Capitol.

Text No.6 Nancy Pelosi

"… Trumpcare is a billionaire's tax cut disguised as a health care bill. It's robin hood- in reverse. One of the largest transfers wealth from working families to the rich in our country …"

- "Trumpcare is a billionaire's tax cut disguised as a health care bill"

The choice between "Trumpcare" and "American Health Care Act" has a negative evaluation to describe the bill (AHCA). According to the choice of the nouns in the text, it assumes the corruption of the Health Care.

- It's robin hood- in reverse.

The subject complement of the sentence "robin hood " with the adverbial phrase emphases the corruption in the health system. Metaphorically, the use of the noun "robin hood " taking for granted that the bill (AHCA) made by Trump is a rubbery.

CONCLUSION

The present study is undertaken to provide a critical stylistics analysis of American political language and demonstrate the possibility of utilizing the tool of Naming and Describing for the selected material. Thus, the analysis of American political language critically demonstrates that politicians make use of a stylistic choices in their speech to express ideologies to make the text or the speech more tangible. These ideologies are (1) Condemnation: American politicians condemn the acts of other parties, politicians or the policy of a specific regime. (2) Criticism; criticizing the rulers, presidents or a policy of a party to make people more savvy in the policy process. (3) Exposure; this ideology is effective in the political language since it enables text's producer to reveal the failure of other politicians in management of the country.

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