
Donald Trump's Aggressive and Offensive Language Before and After His Inauguration Speeches: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Hazim Hakkush Al Dilaimy

Department of English, Al-Maarif University College - Iraq

hazimaldilaimy@uoa.edu.iq

Marwah Firas Abdullah Al-Rawe

Samar Hamad Suleiman

Department of English, Al-Maarif University College - Iraq

marwafiras@uoa.edu.iq

Samar Hamad Suleiman

Department of English, Al-Maarif University College - Iraq

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Abstract

This paper explores selected aggressive and offensive spoken or written discourse material used by the American ex-president Donald Trump at different periods of time during his rule as the United States of America president. The data analysis model will be mainly conducted within the terminology and framework of Van Dijk's model of critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA). The research has adopted ten ideological categories to reveal the extent of power, racism and racial discrimination. The current study has mainly investigated how language is structured to show various meanings that indicate the relation of power used in social contexts. The study also tries to show the role of CDA in analyzing elements of power and hegemony and how language users operate them to achieve the goal of successful communication among participants. The abuse is resulted from the use of power as exercised by language users. The way language is perceived and manipulated can identify ideologies imposed by speakers, resulting in controlling addressees through power dominance. The primary objective of this research is to demonstrate the extent to which social power, abuse, and other unpleasant expressions are used in Trump's political speeches. The research indicates that the majority of Trump's spoken or written speech methods contain aspects of language that violate social norms and convey a sense of authority and superiority over other addressees.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Meaning of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse analysis (CAD) has been viewed differently by many academics such as Norman Fairclough(1995), Roger Fowler, Van Dijk(1995), Ruth Wodak, and Meymer(1995). The most prominent definition of CDA was the one introduced by Van Dijk(2001: 352) as follows:

“CDA is a discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context.... critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose and ultimately challenge social inequality. This is also why CDA may be characterized as a social movement of politically committed discourse analysts”.

Wodak and Meyer(1995) believe that CDA can be viewed in a precise analysis of the structural relationship between text and concepts of power, racial discrimination and inequality, and how they are handled in language. Accordingly, people should always look at the inner meaning of the spoken or written discourse. Hence the role of Critical discourse is to provide language users with additional information that could be missing if they consider only the overt meaning of words.

To summarize the CDA's significant concepts, Fairclough and Wodak(1995) , Wodak and Meyer, 1995) have outlined them as follows: they believe that CDA is concerned with studying social problems. The relations of power are also discursive. Society and culture are studied within the field of discourse. In addition to the tenets mentioned above, they believe that discourse can do historical and ideological work. Since discourse analysis is a manifestation of social action, it is viewed to be interpretive and expository. (Van Dijk, 2015:467). The conceptual frameworks of CDA were established and developed by critical linguists in the 1980s of the twentieth century due to the efforts of the sociolinguist Norman Fairclough(Fairclough, 1995; Ahmed, et al. 2021), whose works in this field have got a very prominent reputation. Norman Fairclough describes CDA as follows:

“By critical discourse analysis I mean discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events, and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony” (Fairclough, 1995: 132-133)

Chilton(2005a: 21) argues that people can explore ideological parameters since they are endowed with the ability to identify ideological processes in a text or speech. Thus, the idea of knowing the principles and functions of CDA and the way it works in the language is not necessary. CDA has been introduced by Fairclough assertion that an analyst tries to find out both the underlying meaning relations between discourse types and the societal social communities. Therefore, it is crucial to analyse how a written text and practice are found and how power ideologically forms them. This phenomenon can be easily traced in presidential political speeches, which typically are manifestations of ideological struggles. Fairclough's view goes on the same track of van Dijk, who suggests that political speeches are viewed differently by various groups with different ideological beliefs.

1.2.VAN DIJK'S APPROACH TO CDA

Otieno(2017: 23) states that Van Dijk, 2001: 352, Van Dijk, 2003) adopt the Socio Cognitive perspective for written discourse analysis. Otieno attempts to view discourse within the philosophy of resistance and dominance. In addition, he looks at the concept of social dominance as a form of institutional power that leads to inequality on various “social, cultural, political, ethnic, class, racial and ethnic levels.” Van Dijk views mental control of discourse that dominates the less influential degree of power via mind control, used to exercise actual dominance. As Van Dijk states, this mental control does not only show the reproaching of

information exercised on the individual being dominated, but on the way in which it is conveyed, involved, or defined.

The reason behind the selection of CDA by researchers, as viewed by Van Dijk(1998: 131) , is its relevance to tackling social and political contexts. Fairclough (1995: 56) asserts that the most important reason is that CDA deals with social problems abuse represented by power and dominance where individuals or groups of people may dominate other people's beliefs or actions. The political discourse can also be used to show elements of inequality and the power practiced in some social contexts. The feature of social discrimination is quite evident when a dominant individual or group exercises power over others in a social community. It has been observed that most of the literature of CDA is targeted to explore areas of social inequality regarding various ideologies such as religion, gender, colour, economy, Politics, etc. Political discourse, however, may focus on linguistic structures to present the concept of power in society. Wodak and Meyer(2001: 6) in expressing the language of CDA state that:

“For CDA, language is not powerful on its own- it gains power by the use powerful people make of it. This explains why CDA often chooses the perspective of those who suffer, and critically analyzes the language use of those in power, who are responsible for the existence of inequalities and who also have the means and the opportunity to improve conditions.”(Wodak and Meyer, 2001: 6)

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Critical Discourse Analysis has a particular type of language and a special type of investigation on the kinds of words used in conveying meaning that is considered odd to the social community. The current study tries to shed light on Trump's language, which is considered aggressive, taboo, arrogant or unusual. An attempt will be made to interpret these words or utterances that can be viewed as superior or harmful to the addressee.

The types of texts are of two kinds; they are either written or spoken texts which can be motivated on social, political, and economic levels. One of the fundamental purposes of individuals is to find out how the underlying meanings should be understood. The questions that can be raised are a) What kind of speech is uttered by Trump, b) What are the social effects they undergo on people, and c) What ideological impacts do they have?

To answer these questions, various kinds of data were studied and analyzed from different perspectives. To achieve this goal, the analytic tools of CDA were mainly used to explore the meanings found in the selected texts.

1.3. Key Concepts of CDA

The current study explores some of the critical concepts of CDA as scholars have proposed them in the literature over history.

Critique Scholars have frequently used this term to allude to critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis (hence CL and CDA). On the other hand, Reisigl and Wodak's (Wodak and Meyer, 2001: 6), in their view of Discourse-Historical approach, consider Critique as an approach that renders the criteria enabling individuals to differentiate between "manipulative and suggestive procedures of persuasion and discursive procedures of convincing argumentation" (ibid).

The term Critique, in an attempt to explain its meaning, has been viewed by Wodak and Meyer (2007: 209) "as having distance to the data, embodying the data in the social, making the perspective political stance explicit, and having a focus on self-reflections scholars undertaking research." (Fairclough, 1995a: 774).

CDA studies critique depending on language's interrelationships with other elements: speech, written discourse and social community. Wodak and Meyer (2014: 19) suggest a helpful link in conducting scientific research between social and political perspectives. Thus, the study of critique should deal with the intrinsic relation of showing these connections to show how they relate to aspects of the procedures used in convincing argumentation.

1.4. Power and Ideology

Power is another fundamental aspect of CDA, representing the core of analysis of language use to indicate inequalities in social, political, and economic levels. Fairclough (1995:1-3) argues that the concept of power is not only viewed as a specific "unbalanced authority" found in particular individuals who practice forms of power in a discursive event. Instead, it is considered a type of control exercised in various forms using different discourses that vary from one person to another.

Fairclough (1995:132-133) believes that CDA is not simply an analytic process. It is vital in the sense that it considers the relationship between language structure and other underlying meaning components in the social community. These components include a. how language shapes the social bonds that represent elements of power and dominance, b. the way language works from an ideological point of view c. how language reveals social and personal identities. In summary, CDA comprises basic concepts interwoven within its primary structure. They are mainly represented by power, ideology, discrimination, struggle resistance, social order, reproduction, etc.

On his part, Van Dijk (1996: 84-85) ascertained that the elements of power exercised by individuals and social groups are alike. Dominated groups take most of the actions with powerful effects. Members of the social group usually show and exercise elements of power on various occasions. These forms of power are reflected by members of social groups in varying degrees. Members of social groups exercise power characteristics since they have the privilege and authority to access the media in all forms. Furthermore, they can have a certain degree of persuasion using different kinds of discourse that minimize the effects of power and inequality.

Ideology refers to the perception of values and attitudes, and the way people comprehend the world as thinking is shaped by ideological hegemony. Power relations usually determine the ideology. Thus, ideology is strongly related to elements of power dominance exercised by an authority in a particular community. Language is used to transmit beliefs and thoughts in the discursive events supported by power distribution. Wodak and Meyer (2001: 6)

assert that language and power are inextricably linked. The power exercised by one group can be related to the power practiced by another.

1.5. Van Dijk(2006) views ideologies as follows:

“Have been defined as foundational beliefs that underlay the shared social representations of specific kinds of social groups. These representations are in turn the basis of discourse and other social practices. It has also been assumed that ideologies are largely expressed and acquired by discourse, that is, by spoken or written communicative interaction.”(Van Dijk, 2006: 120-121).

It has been observed that ideology is related mainly to three basic concepts: Cognition, Society, and Discourse. *Cognition* denotes the general beliefs of individuals of a particular social group. On the other hand, *society* represents the social groups that share the same personal beliefs and opinions at a specific point in time. Whereas *discourse* is a vital component in ideology reflected in the spoken and written texts.

3. METHODOLOGY

The adopted model in this research follows Van Dijk’s Socio Cognitive Approach (henceforth SCA). This approach has three levels of analysis: macrostructure, microstructure, and Schemata (superstructure).

The transcripts of Trump’s inauguration speech in 2017 and Trump’s immigration address in 2019 have been considered for this paper. These two speeches have been selected because they are both highly comprehensive and precise when they pertain to immigration. Furthermore, for the first time, these two speeches disclose a number of plans and policies that Trump would pursue on immigration and how he has considered them before and after becoming the president.

These structural levels are elements of the socio cognitive approach of the CDA. Language use, verbal interaction, and communication all contribute to the microstructure of the social context. Power, dominance, and inequality among various social groupings, on the other hand, are part of the macrostructure of analysis.

The Superstructure or Schemata constitutes are:

- emotional attachment,
- creating enemy images
- mitigating evidence,
- building argument as the miseries of the past,
- glorification,
- mind control, and
- creating enemy images and rhetoric art of speaking,

These components are all aspects of SCA.

It must be mentioned here that the selected speeches do not contain all the SCA elements; only what has been found will be highlighted below. The three-level analysis of SCA of the two speeches is as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Van Dijk’s Critical Discourse Analysis Structure

CDA Structure	Observed Aspect	Features
Macrostructure	Thematic	Topic

Superstructure	Schemata	SCA Approach
	Syntactic	Sentence form Pronoun Persuasion Attribution
Microstructure	Semantic	Background and Detail Presupposition
	Stylistic	Lexical choice figure of speech Hyperbole, Alliteration, Metaphor Repetition
	Rhetoric	

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Macrostructure

The results have all attributed to the main topics of the two speeches. Each element of the two levels has its clarification and portrayal dependent on the point and subject of the speeches. The first topic is found to persuade Americans of their right to protect their land. The subsequent speech passes on remaking the certainty and dependability of the American resident and being mindful of the adversaries.

4.2. Microstructure

The text's thematic structures are included in the macrostructure. Syntactic, semantic, stylistic, and rhetoric structures are all present in the microstructure. It has been determined that there are 68 linguistic phrases in Donald J Trump's two speeches. Based on those results, 41 syntactic structures expression have been frequently uttered by Donald J Trump. These syntactic structures expressions consist of:

- three expressions of persuasion,
- Eleven expressions of simple sentences,
- Eleven expressions of Attribution, and
- Seventeen expressions of pronouns that represent power and unity.

Rhetoric structures are detected in fourteen utterances, five hyperbole utterances, one for alliteration utterance, four Metaphors, and four repetitions of sentence structures.

The stylistic structure, which includes thirteen lexical utterances, is the last part of the linguistics structure. The last element in the stylistic structure, the figure of speech, has not been found in any of the three speeches studied.

The semantic structure relates the topic's background with the three levels of the microstructure, and all indicate that Trump has presupposed his audience know the implication of his choice. The microstructures details of the speeches are illustrated in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Microstructure of the two speeches

Microstructure	Syntactic	41	Simple Sentence	11
			Pronoun	14
			Persuasion	3
			Attribution	11
	Stylistic	13	Lexical choice	13
			figure of speech	0

			Hyperbole,	5
	Rhetoric	14	Alliteration,	1
			Metaphor	4
			Repetition	4

4.3. Schemata of SCA

In the emotional attachment stage, Trump warned about the immigrants’ dark warnings and the risks of illegal immigration at the “lawless” southern border. However, Trump did not mention the national emergency power. He threatened to build a border wall without the permission of Congress. Donald Trump attempts to convey to the recipient that there are many adversaries they should be cautious about. In the schema of the discourse, Donald trump characterizes the enemies as gang members, drug cartels, and radical Islam. Trump also talks about those immigrants who seek America to unify with Muslims and Islam. The final stage of the schemata is Trump’s glorification of America. This stage occurs when he mentalizes the enemy’s negative imagery. The part of the glorification of America primarily discussed the fact that American residents should be aware of. This part is highly emphasized in both speeches. Trump used several positive adjectives to describe America’s strength, such as “strong,” “great,” and “power.” Table 3 shows the Schema of Trump’s inauguration speech in 2017 and Trump’s immigration address in 2019.

Table 3. Schema of Trump’s inauguration speech in 2017 and Trump’s immigration address in 2019.

Speech	Categorization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It strains public resources ... ● More Americans will die from drugs this year than were killed in the entire Vietnam War. ● Americans have been brutally killed by those who illegally entered our country and thousands more lives will be lost if we don’t act right now. ● Spent trillions and trillions of dollars overseas while America’s infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay. ● We’ve made other countries rich, while the wealth, strength and confidence of our country has dissipated over the horizon 	Emotional Attachment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thousands of illegal immigrants were trying to enter our country. ● Our southern border is a pipeline for vast quantities of illegal drugs. ● This is the tragic reality of illegal immigration on our southern border ● We’ve defended other nations’ borders while refusing to defend our own 	Creating Bad Images of Enemies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● America proudly welcomes millions of lawful immigrants who enrich our society and contribute to our nation. ● This is the cycle of human suffering that I am determined to end. ● We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries ● America will start winning again, winning like never before. ● We will follow two simple rules; buy American and hire American. ● We all enjoy the same glorious freedoms and we all salute the same great American flag 	Glorification of America
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries ● We will bring back our jobs. We will bring back our borders. We will bring back our wealth. And we will bring back our dreams. ● We will reinforce old alliances and form new ones and unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate from the face of the Earth. ● The Bible tells us 	Mind Control

5. CONCLUSION

The findings reveal how Trump employs linguistic and semantic characteristics to manage his language to persuade and excite the receiver. This finding is evident in every issue presented by Trump. The first topic has been identified in order to convince Americans of their entitlement to defend their land. The second speech focuses on restoring American citizens' faith and trust and raising awareness of the enemy. The microstructure revealed that Trump utilizes irony to engage the addressee's emotional attachment. Repetition is largely employed to illustrate the late failure of the United States of America, and he seldom applies it. Trump uses logical facts and emotional attachment to get the addressee's attention and persuade them to be engrossed in his speech.

Making positive self-depiction likewise is shown in each argument that he uses. However, the researchers arrive at a sound conclusion that Trump would generally make a pessimistic portrayal of one more gathering or individuals to get to his positive portrayal by utilizing the third-person pronouns.

The manipulation of pronouns is mostly intended to demonstrate the unity represented by the pronouns "us" and "we," but Trump also employs the pronoun "I" to deliver power. The use of Trump's lexical choice indicates that the negative self-representation of others by using direct negative adjectives. The talks have included emotional attachment, mind control, mitigating evidence, glorification, generating opponent images, and the rhetoric art of speaking. This discourse indicates that the object of producing enemy images employed by Trump to urge American citizens to avoid the hopeless future that might befall the United States. In addition to that, the second speech has four schemata: mind control, emotional attachment, argument construction as the Miseries of the past, glorification, and rhetoric art of speaking.

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