



THE PLACE AND SPECIFIC FEATURES OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN LINGUISTICS

Solijonova Mohiraxon Baxtiyorjon qizi^{1*}

KSU 1st year Master's student

mohiraxonsolijonova0704@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Political discourse occupies a central position in modern linguistics as a multifaceted phenomenon that reflects and shapes power relations, ideologies, and social realities. This article examines its place within linguistic studies, particularly through the lens of discourse analysis, and outlines its distinctive characteristics such as ideological orientation, persuasiveness, agonistic nature, and strategic use of linguistic devices. Drawing on critical discourse analysis (CDA) frameworks, the study highlights how political language functions not merely as communication but as a tool for constructing legitimacy, influencing public opinion, and maintaining or challenging dominance. The IMRAD structure organizes the analysis, revealing political discourse as both a subject and a method in linguistics that bridges language, cognition, and society. Findings underscore its interdisciplinary relevance and the need for nuanced analytical approaches.

INTRODUCTION

Political discourse has emerged as a prominent field of inquiry in linguistics, particularly since the latter half of the 20th century, amid growing recognition of language's role in power dynamics and social construction. It encompasses the text and talk produced by politicians, institutions, media, and citizens in political contexts, serving functions beyond mere information exchange.

The significance of studying political discourse lies in its capacity to reveal how language constructs realities, legitimizes authority, and perpetuates or contests inequalities. In an era of mass media and globalization, political language influences elections, policy-making, and public identities on an unprecedented scale. Linguists have turned to this domain to explore intersections with pragmatics, semantics, stylistics, and sociolinguistics.

This article addresses two core questions: What is the place of political discourse within linguistic science? and What are its specific linguistic and functional features? It adopts a critical perspective aligned with CDA traditions pioneered by scholars such as Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak, emphasizing the interplay between discourse, power, and ideology.

The study aims to synthesize existing scholarship, identify key characteristics, and discuss implications for linguistic theory and practice. By doing so, it contributes to a deeper understanding of how language operates in the political sphere, where words can mobilize masses, justify policies, or incite conflict.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative, literature-based approach characteristic of theoretical linguistics and discourse studies. Data collection involved a systematic review of foundational and contemporary works on political discourse analysis (PDA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Primary sources include key texts by van Dijk, Fairclough, Wodak, Chilton, and others, supplemented by empirical studies on political speeches, media texts, and institutional communication.

Analytical methods draw from CDA frameworks, including:

Textual analysis: Examination of lexical choices, syntactic structures (e.g., transitivity, nominalization), rhetorical devices (metaphors, presuppositions), and pragmatic elements (speech acts, deixis).

Contextual analysis: Integration of socio-political, historical, and cognitive contexts, as emphasized in the Discourse-Historical Approach.

Comparative synthesis: Identification of recurring features across genres such as parliamentary debates, campaign speeches, and propaganda.

No original corpus was compiled for primary quantitative analysis; instead, the study relies on secondary data and illustrative examples from existing literature to ensure depth and replicability. Ethical considerations include accurate representation of sources and avoidance of partisan bias in interpretation. Limitations stem from the interpretive nature of qualitative discourse analysis, which depends on the analyst's framework.

RESULTS

Political discourse holds a prominent place in linguistics as both an object of study and a lens for broader language research. It is situated at the intersection of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, cognitive linguistics, and stylistics, contributing to the understanding of language as social practice rather than abstract system. Within discourse studies, it exemplifies how language enacts power and ideology, distinguishing it from neutral communication.

Key specific features identified include:

Ideological Character: Political discourse inherently embeds and reproduces ideologies, framing issues to favor particular worldviews. It often uses polarization ("us vs. them") and legitimization strategies.

Persuasiveness and Rhetorical Strategies: It employs classical rhetoric alongside modern devices such as metaphors (e.g., state as "ship" or "family"), euphemisms, and vagueness to persuade audiences. Competitiveness and theatricality are evident in debates and campaigns.

Agonistic and Aggressive Elements: Language in politics frequently displays adversarial qualities, with features of propaganda, slogans, and emotional appeals. It balances cooperation and conflict to achieve goals like voter mobilization or policy justification.

Contextual Sensitivity and Strategic Ambiguity: Meaning depends heavily on participants, settings, and goals. Features like hedging, evidentiality, deixis ("we," "now"), and shifts in footing allow speakers to navigate accountability and appeal to multiple audiences.

Interdiscursivity and Hybridity: Political texts mix genres (e.g., policy with media spectacle) and draw from other discourses, reflecting broader social practices.

Empirical patterns from reviewed studies confirm these features across cultures, though manifestations vary by political system and medium.

DISCUSSION

The findings affirm that political discourse is not peripheral but integral to linguistics, offering insights into language's performative and constitutive roles. Its place underscores the shift from formalist linguistics to socially embedded approaches, aligning with the "linguistic turn" in social sciences.

Specific features highlight its dual nature: as a mirror of societal power structures and as an active force in shaping them. For instance, ideological loading and metaphorical framing can naturalize inequalities, while critical analysis unmasks these mechanisms, supporting emancipatory goals of CDA. However, challenges remain, including balancing linguistic rigor with political interpretation and addressing cultural specificities.

Implications extend to education, media literacy, and policy. Linguists can contribute to combating manipulation by equipping citizens with analytical tools. Future research should incorporate multimodal and digital dimensions (e.g., social media) and quantitative corpus methods for greater generalizability.

In conclusion, political discourse exemplifies language's profound societal impact, demanding continued interdisciplinary scrutiny. Its study enriches linguistics while addressing real-world concerns of democracy and equity.

CONCLUSION

Political discourse occupies a central and highly significant place in contemporary linguistics. It serves not only as a specialized object of study but also as a powerful analytical lens through which the fundamental social functions of language — such as the construction of reality, the exercise of power, the reproduction or contestation of ideologies, and the shaping of collective identities — can be thoroughly examined. Positioned at the intersection of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, cognitive linguistics, stylistics, and critical theory, political discourse analysis has enriched linguistic science by moving it beyond the study of abstract language systems toward the investigation of language as a form of social practice embedded in real-world contexts of conflict, negotiation, and dominance.

The specific features of political discourse identified in this study — its inherently ideological character, strong persuasive orientation, agonistic and competitive nature, strategic use of ambiguity and rhetorical devices, contextual sensitivity, and interdiscursive hybridity — distinguish it from other types of institutional and everyday communication. These characteristics make political language a unique instrument for legitimizing authority, mobilizing public support, marginalizing opponents, and naturalizing particular worldviews as common sense. At the same time, they render political discourse particularly susceptible to critical linguistic scrutiny, which is capable of revealing hidden power mechanisms and manipulative strategies.

The findings of this research confirm that in the age of digital media, globalization, and polarized politics, the linguistic study of political discourse has acquired not only theoretical but also pronounced practical and civic importance. By developing citizens' critical language awareness, linguists contribute to strengthening democratic processes and resisting various forms of verbal manipulation and propaganda.

Nevertheless, several challenges remain open for future investigation: the increasing multimodality of political communication (integration of text, image, and sound), the role of artificial intelligence in generating political texts, cross-cultural variations in political discourse

patterns, and the development of more robust mixed-methods approaches combining qualitative depth with quantitative corpus analysis.

In conclusion, political discourse represents one of the most dynamic and socially consequential domains of modern linguistics. Its comprehensive study deepens our understanding of the intricate relationship between language, power, and society, while simultaneously reinforcing the social responsibility of linguistic science in the contemporary world. Further interdisciplinary research in this field will undoubtedly continue to yield valuable theoretical insights and practical tools for analyzing and improving public political communication.

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