Critical Discourse Analysis of Discursive Strategies Utilized in Donald Trump and Joe Biden's Inaugural Speeches

Saqib Raza

M.Phil Scholar, Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology (KUST) , saqibrazakkhan@gmail.com

Dr. Said Imran

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology (KUST), saidimran@kust.edu.pk

Dr. Syed Azaz Ali Shah

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology (KUST), Azazali@kust.edu.pk

Abstract

This study seeks to investigate the language employed by Joe Biden and President Donald Trump in their inaugural speeches, using Van Dijk's 2005 model to identify discursive techniques that highlight positive self-portrayal and negative portrayal of others. Through a qualitative design and purposive sampling, the research reveals distinct strategies utilized by both leaders. Trump's speech emphasizes themes of unity and collective agency, leveraging topicalization and numerical emphasis to underscore his support base and policy priorities while contrasting his administration with past shortcomings. He employs illustrations and examples to bolster his positive self-presentation and portrays Americans as victims of political elites, utilizing lexicalization to elevate his agenda and critique past policies. Biden's speech, on the other hand, focuses on democratic values, unity, and healing, utilizing similar techniques to highlight the pandemic's impact and economic challenges. His rhetoric addresses extremism and political division while drawing from American history to foster a sense of shared values and unity. Both leaders employ victimization, lexicalization, populism, metaphors, and modality to shape their narratives and reinforce their leadership images and policy agendas.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Discursive Strategies, Inaugural Speeches, Trump, Biden.

Introduction

Language, as a fundamental tool for humans, serves to convey ideas, emotions, and thoughts (Ojha, 2022). However, it's far from neutral, often carrying social, cultural, and political implications (Nigatu & Admassu, 2023), which significantly influence our socio-cognitive development and the construction of our identities (Bayram, 2010). Words not only reflect but also shape our perceived reality (Strauss & Feiz, 2014), serving as a reliable gauge for understanding social environments (Mason & Platt, 2006).

Language is deeply intertwined with ideology, expressing and disseminating beliefs and worldviews (Simpson, 2003). Political discourse, a key form of language, wields power to influence societal dynamics (Lafta et al., 2020), manifested through various platforms like public speeches and legislative processes (Nusrat et al., 2020). Van Dijk (2005) highlights the inherently ideological nature of politics and argues that political ideologies and discourses mutually influence each other.

Inaugural speeches by presidents, such as those in the United States, hold historical and political significance, offering insights into the leader's vision and the nation's future direction (Zirak Ghazani, 2016). These speeches mark the beginning

of a new political era and often employ strategic language to shape public perception and reinforce political agendas (Collins et al., 2011).

To analyze the linguistic and discursive strategies in inaugural addresses, this research adopts a critical discourse analysis approach, focusing on Van Dijk's ideological square model (2005). By scrutinizing the inaugural speeches of Donald Trump and Joe Biden, this study aims to illuminate how language shapes public perception and reinforces political agendas without engaging in partisan speculation. Both Trump and Biden, as recent presidents, are significant subjects for this research. This study is expected to be significant in the fields of discourse analysis, CDA, and applied linguistics. In Discourse analysis is expected to enrich our understanding of political discourse. In CDA, it can be valuable in relating linguistic and discursive strategies to notions like power, hegemony, and ideology. In applied linguistics, it helps formulate how learners/students can understand the Discursive strategies in communication in a variety of social, and academic contexts. This study fills the research gap and adds to the previous literature by examining the discursive strategies of the United States President-elect to show the ideological dichotomy of US-THEM in their inaugural speeches.

Problem Statement

Political elites strategically employ language to advance their interests (Van Dijk, 2006c). This phenomenon has garnered attention from linguists such as Chilton (2004), Fairclough (1998), Glendon (2008), Harris (2001), Schäffner (1997), and Wodak (1989), who investigate how political figures shape public opinion through discourse. Language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a potent tool for promoting ideologies and rallying support. In the United States, presidential speeches, renowned for their eloquence and rhetorical finesse, have attracted scholarly interest in discourse analysis. Various studies have delved into the discourse of U.S. presidents. Ursic (2021) explored contrasting visions in a polarized nation, while Ahmed and Amir (2021) applied Speech Act Theory to inaugural speeches. Comesaña (2021) scrutinized political communication, ideology, intent, discursive style, and rhetoric. Mustafa (2023) conducted critical discourse analysis using Fairclough's model, and AlAfnan (2022) employed systemic functional analysis. These studies predominantly utilized Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Grammar frameworks to analyze the inaugural speeches of Donald Trump and Joe Biden. In contrast, this research focuses on analyzing the inauguration speeches of both Trump and Biden using Van Dijk's (2005) ideological square model.

Research Questions

The present study aims to address the following questions:

- What specific discursive strategies are used by Donald Trump and Joe Biden in their presidential inauguration speeches?
- How do these discursive strategies in presidential inauguration speeches construct in-group legitimacy and challenge out-group legitimacy?

Research Objectives

The current research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To investigate the specific discursive strategies in Donald Trump and Joe Biden's presidential inauguration speeches.
- To examine how presidential inaugural speeches, establish in-group legitimacy and challenge out-group legitimacy.

Literature Review

Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis is not just about examining discourse but also about understanding the various contexts – social, political, and others – in which language operates (Brown & Yule, 1983; Jalali & Sadeghi, 2014; Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015; Van Dijk, 2003).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis is a research approach that aims to reveal the underlying ideologies shaped by language, such as inequality, power imbalance, conflict, and social change (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000); (Darweesh and Muzhir 2016). Through this critical approach, researchers take a clear stance and aim to expose and resist social inequality (Van Dijk, 2011).

Political Discourse Analysis

Political Discourse Analysis stands for critical-political discourse analysis, which involves analyzing speech by political actors via a critical perspective. This study focuses on uncovering hidden ideologies and agendas within the discourse (Van Dijk, 1997). Therefore, Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) with Critical Speech Analysis (CDA) as its foundation helps us

comprehend the nature and function of political discourse. It also offers a critical evaluation of how speech contributes to the creation, preservation, opposition, and misuse of power within a society.

Empirical Studies

In their respective studies, researchers delved into various political speeches employing critical discourse analysis (CDA) to unveil underlying ideological messages and rhetorical strategies. Mahfoud and Khaldaoui (2023) analyzed President Biden's initial speech on the Ukraine conflict, utilizing van Dijk's Ideological Square Model to decipher its ideological nuances. They identified eight discursive strategies aimed at justifying severe sanctions against Russia while framing Biden and his allies as defenders of liberalism, humanitarianism, and democracy, portraying Russia as the aggressor.

Altohami (2024) focused on framing techniques in political discourse, examining a speech from the 75th United Nations General Assembly in 2020. By identifying themes and analyzing explicit and implicit meanings, Altohami revealed how language was strategically used to create contrasting ideological perspectives, emphasizing a divisive 'US/THEM' narrative.

Hasan (2024) investigated the portrayal of China in U.S. media discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic, analyzing tweets from a prominent U.S. figure. Hasan's research uncovered rhetorical strategies aimed at casting China in a negative light while promoting the actions of the U.S. administration positively.

Handayani and Pranoto (2023) examined President Biden's speech tactics regarding the Russian-Ukraine conflict, employing Theo Van Leeuwen's theoretical framework. Their analysis highlighted strategies of inclusion in Biden's speech, emphasizing differentiation as the most prevalent tactic.

Amir (2023) conducted a critical discourse analysis of Joe Biden's inaugural speech, revealing persuasive strategies and covert ideology. Using Norman Fairclough's principles, Amir dissected various speech components, illustrating a return to foundational American values.

Nasih and Abboud (2020) analyzed speeches by Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and President Barham Salih, exploring the influence of political language. Using Van Dijk's ideological square model, they revealed discursive techniques aimed at shaping audience perceptions and maintaining power.

Khan et al. (2019) examined Donald Trump's remarks during the 2016 American Presidential Election, revealing bias against Islam. Employing Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model, they demonstrated Trump's use of language to depict Muslims unfavorably and position himself favorably.

Building on this literature review, the researcher aims to analyze the inaugural addresses of Donald Trump and Joe Biden using Van Dijk's Ideological Square model (2005), aiming to uncover discursive devices employed by the presidents-elect and their influence on political discourse and society.

Research Methodology

The research focuses on investigating the discursive strategies employed in presidential inaugural speeches of Donald Trump and Joe Biden using Critical Discourse Analysis within Van Dijk's square model. The study utilizes purposive sampling to select speeches for analysis, emphasizing recency and relevance to international politics. Data collection involves sourcing speeches from the official White House website, followed by qualitative analysis using Van Dijk's model. Analysis examines both micro and macro levels, identifying specific discursive devices and their contribution to ideological contrasts like positive self-presentation and a negative other presentation.

Results and Discussion

Donald Trump and Joe Biden Speech Analysis
Topicalization

Topicalization, a discursive strategy emphasizing pivotal information, shapes conversations and texts. This can manifest through titles, headings, or abstract themes encapsulating the discourse's essence. The U.S. presidential inaugural speech bears immense significance, marking the commencement of a new president's term. Dating back to George Washington's inaugural address in 1789, it symbolizes the transition of power and sets forth the president's vision and priorities. Donald Trump adeptly utilizes Topicalization in his inaugural speech to present a narrative favoring self-promotion while critiquing previous administrations and the political establishment. Trump consistently emphasizes themes of national rejuvenation, like "returning power to the people" and "America first," positioning his administration as agents of positive change. Concurrently, he addresses issues such as job loss and national security, contrasting past failures with his promises. By engaging directly with the audience, he portrays himself as a leader attentive to the populace. Employing vivid imagery, Trump underscores the nation's dire state due to past negligence, positioning himself as a proactive problem-solver. He contextualizes his presidency historically, marking his inauguration as a transformative moment. This narrative portrays him as a leader dedicated to national prosperity, distinct from previous establishments.

Joe Biden Uses Topicalization, a strategic tool in discourse, highlights crucial information, often through titles, headings, or abstract themes. It's a customary practice for incoming presidents to deliver inauguration speeches, leveraging this strategy. President Joe Biden adeptly utilizes topicalization to shape a narrative that enhances his image while subtly criticizing others. Central to Biden's approach is his emphasis on democracy and unity, positioning himself as a unifier defending democratic values. He acknowledges America's challenges like the pandemic and racial injustice, portraying himself realistically yet optimistically. This also subtly points to past failures without direct blame. Biden's inclusive rhetoric, exemplified in phrases like "President for all Americans," underscores his commitment to bridging divides. Aligning with revered figures like Abraham Lincoln, he portrays continuity with cherished American values, implicitly contrasting himself with those who oppose them. Advocating for truth and respect, Biden indirectly critiques those perceived to compromise these values, subtly casting them in a negative light. Through strategic discourse, Biden reinforces his leadership while subtly critiquing opposing views. This showcases the nuanced use of topicalization in political rhetoric.

Number Game

The *number game* is a discursive strategy that relies on numerical data and statistics to bolster arguments and enhance credibility. In political discourse, it is essential to substantiate claims with relevant statistics (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Donald Trump utilized number games in his Inaugural speech, strategically employing statistics to bolster his arguments and convey his message to the public I.e

Extract I: "We've defended other nation's borders while refusing to defend our own and spent trillions and trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay."
Extract 2: "One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions and millions of American workers that were left behind."

In his inaugural speech, Donald Trump demonstrated his effective use of the "Number Game" strategy, emphasised the unprecedented scale of his support base by citing numbers and criticised previous governments' expenditure of "trillions and trillions of dollars overseas," positioning his administration as domestically focused and financially prudent. Finally, Trump presented himself as empathetic to the American workforce by highlighting the millions of workers affected by factory closures. Overall, Trump's use of the "Number Game" in his speech effectively constructed a narrative that portrayed his administration positively while diminishing the portrayal of past administrations.

Joe Biden deploys number games strategy in his inaugural speech to increase persuasiveness and credibility. He supports his argumentation with relevant facts and research as an effective tool which can be seen in the following excerpts:

Extract-I: "Millions of jobs have been lost; hundreds of thousands of businesses closed."
Extract-2: "I ask you to join me in a moment of silent prayer to remember all those we lost this past year to the pandemic, those 400,000 fellow Americans."

President Joe Biden skillfully employs the "Number Game" discursive strategies in his inauguration address to construct a storyline that emphasises favourable self-representation and implies unfavourable representation of others. Biden's acknowledgement of the substantial economic impact of the epidemic, resulting in the loss of millions of jobs and the closure of hundreds of thousands of enterprises, serves a double objective. It highlights the essential requirement for effective leadership in tackling these difficulties, presenting Biden as the competent leader for this responsibility, but also indirectly criticising the economic governance of the previous administration throughout the epidemic. The speaker's request for a little period of quiet contemplation to honour the 400,000 Americans who have perished due to the epidemic is a deeply moving and significant point in the speech. The portrayal of Biden in the text is characterised by empathy and respect, as he pays tribute to the lives lost and recognises the seriousness of the issue. Additionally, it indirectly criticises the previous administration's management of the epidemic. This tactic enables him to portray himself in a favorable light and subtly convey a poor perception of others without engaging in confrontation, a fundamental element of his rhetorical style in the speech.

Polarisation

Polarisation refers to the classification of individuals into two groups: "us" with positive qualities and "them" with negative qualities (van Dijk, 2006b). Polarisation Trump's inaugural speeches are;

> **Extract 1:** "For too long, a small group in our Nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of Government while the people have borne the cost. Washington flourished, but the people did not share in its wealth. Politicians prospered, but the jobs left, and the factories closed."

> **Extract 2:** "The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country. Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our Nation's Capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land."

In his speech, Donald Trump effectively utilizes the technique of polarisation to create a distinct contrast between his administration and the perceived negative aspects of past governments and foreign entities. Firstly, he positions himself and his administration as the champions of the American people, promising to give power back to the citizens, a theme that is particularly prominent in his assertion that January 20, 2017, would be remembered as the day when the people became the nation's rulers again. This strategy creates a positive self-image, portraying Trump and his administration as the agents of change and empowerment for the common citizen. At the same time, Trump uses negative portrayal to depict previous administrations and the political establishment as entities that have ignored and taken advantage of the American people. His statement emphasizes a small group in the Nation's Capital who have been reaping government rewards while the people have been suffering. Such language suggests that past leaders were selfish and disconnected from the needs and struggles of ordinary citizens.

Joe Biden's inaugural speech discourse is imbued with polarization. Polarization either implicitly or explicitly can be traced in the following excerpts:

> **Extract-I** "The people—the will of the people has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded. We've learned again that democracy is precious, democracy is fragile."

> **Extract-2** "For without unity, there is no peace, only bitterness and fury. No progress, only exhausting outrage. No nation, only a state of chaos."

Joe Biden adeptly employs the approach of polarisation in his speech to establish a narrative that emphasises a clear distinction between his administration's principles and the difficulties presented by the current circumstances. This approach is seen in his consistent focus on the values of democracy and unity, continually highlighting that "the will of the people has been heard" and campaigning for "unity," which is considered the most difficult to achieve in a democratic society. In addition, Biden establishes a context of hardship by recognising and comparing previous challenges with his present endeavours. This juxtaposition suggests that the difficulties America encounters are a consequence of previous acts or the existing state of affairs, which his leadership endeavours to correct. Biden skillfully used polarisation to establish a narrative where his government is seen positively, while the components he intends to challenge and surpass are depicted negatively.

Illustration/Example

An example or illustration usually consist of a short tale or vignette, which clarifies or adds credibility to a more significant point the speaker presents (Van Dijk, 2005). example or illustration in Trump inagural speech;

> **Extract 1:** But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our Nation; an education system, flush with cash, but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge; and the crime and the gangs and the drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country of so much unrealized potential.
>
> **Extract 2:** One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions and millions of American workers that were left behind. The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed all across the world.

Trump discuss th theme by depicting a grim reality for many Americans - inner-city poverty, decaying factories, and an ineffective education system. These illustrations serve a dual purpose: they underscore the perceived failures of previous administrations while positioning Trump as the empathetic leader who recognises and vows to address these issues. This method of contrasting the current dismal scenarios with his proposed solutions amplifies his positive self-presentation. The third extract further solidifies this approach. Trump describes the decline of American industry and the neglect of the American worker, painting a picture of a country needing rescue. This narrative is powerful in its simplicity and emotional appeal, and it reinforces Trump's image as a saviour of the forgotten American worker. By illustrating the past as a period of decline and loss, particularly under the watch of previous administrations, Trump casts these entities in a negative light, setting the stage for his agenda of change and revitalisation. These extracts demonstrate how Trump effectively utilises "Situation Description and Examples/Illustrations" to craft a persuasive and emotionally charged narrative.

Joe Biden's speech is structured to make his points of view more acceptable and real. Using illustrations/examples provides credence to the speaker's perspective.
The following passages demonstrate the use of this strategy.

> **Extract-1** "In another January on New Year's Day in 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. When he put pen to paper, the President said, and I quote, 'If my name ever goes down into history it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it.' My whole soul is in it."
>
> **Extract-2** "Through the Civil War, the Great Depression, World War, 9/11, through struggle, sacrifice, and setbacks, our 'better angels' have always prevailed. In each of these moments, enough of us—enough of us—have come together to carry all of us forward."

Joe Biden effortlessly utilises the Illustration/Example rhetorical technique in his speech to create a story that improves his image while discreetly portraying others in a poor light. Biden strategically associates himself with esteemed historical personalities and significant events, such as Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation. By highlighting the nation's ability to overcome obstacles like the Civil War and the Great Depression, he situates himself within a lineage of achievement and advancement. This alignment presents his presidency in an optimistic and forward-thinking manner, establishing a connection between his leadership and a prestigious American legacy. Biden's speech skillfully employs discursive techniques to promote his self-presentation and politely articulate his perspective on perceived opposition.

Victimisation

Victimization involves employing a dichotomy of 'us versus them' to represent the out-group negatively and depicts members of the in-group as sufferers of unjust behaviour (Van Dijk, 2005). Victimization in Trump inagural speech;

> **Extract I:** "The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer."
>
> **Extract 2:** "The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed all across the world."

Trump employs the emotive phrase 'forgotten men and women,' evoking a feeling of neglect by the out-group. By pledging to remember and prioritise these individuals, the speaker effectively positions himself positively, aligning with those overlooked and underserved by the elite.

Finally, he speaks of the in-group's wealth being 'ripped from their homes' and 'redistributed across the world.' This notion of exploitation and loss due to the actions of the out-group deepens the perception of the in-group as victims wronged by those in power. Overall, these extracts from Donald Trump's speech effectively employ the victimisation strategy to draw a sharp line between 'us' (the American people) and 'them' (the political establishment). This narrative not only serves to criticise and delegitimise the out-group but also elevates the speaker as the empathetic and rightful leader of the victimised in-group. This approach effectively rallies support and fosters a collective identity among the in-group, unified by a shared struggle against the out-group.

The following excerpts demonstrate the use of victimization as a strategy in Joe Biden's inaugural speech:

> **Extract-I** "Through a crucible for the ages America has been tested anew, and America has risen to the challenge."
>
> **Extract-2** "We've learned again that democracy is precious, democracy is fragile. And at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed."

Joe Biden wisely uses victimisation as a rhetorical tactic in his speech to establish a clear distinction between portraying himself positively and portraying others negatively. In this strategy, he highlights the durability, cohesion, and ethical fortitude of his government and the American populace, while also accentuating the external obstacles, dangers, and past failures. When he discusses America being challenged once again and successfully meeting the challenge, he emphasises the nation's ability to endure and conquer hardships. This is a favourable self-portrayal, discreetly insinuating the competence and power of the current government. Simultaneously, the mention of undefined external or historical forces that have challenged America serves as a negative portrayal of an alternative entity, indicating a history marked by difficulties and hardships. Likewise, Biden's focus on the worth and vulnerability of democracy, along with its success, indicates the current administration's dedication to these principles and presents a favourable portrayal of a government that supports democratic ideals. This is juxtaposed with an implied allusion to potential dangers to democracy, whether stemming from prior governance or foreign forces while emphasising their inability to subvert democratic principles. The deliberate use of communication plays a vital function in influencing public opinion and strengthening the legitimacy and ethical power of his administration.

Lexicalization

According to Van Dijk (2006b), lexicalization differs based on the discourse producers' position, role, aims, point of view, or attitude. Lexicalization in Trump speech are;

> **Extract 1:** "We, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and restore its promise for all of our people."
>
> **Extract 2:** "For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry..."

Trump begins by painting his administration as a collective effort with the citizens, using "we" to connect with the audience, signifying a united front in rebuilding the country. This use of inclusive language positions his governance as a populist movement aligned with the people's interests. Similarly, Trump criticise past foreign policies and their impact on American industry and workers, amplifying the dichotomy between his America-centric vision and the globalist approaches of previous administrations.

In his inaugural speech, Joe Biden utilized lexicalization in the following way:

> **Extract-1** "This is democracy's day, a day of history and hope, of renewal and resolve."
>
> **Extract-2** "The people—the will of the people has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded."

Joe Biden artfully utilises the discursive technique of lexicalization in his speech to portray himself in a favourable light and to portray others in a negative one. He used expressions such as "history and hope," "renewal and resolve," and "the will of the people has been heard" to present the occasion as a time of democratic victory and optimism, therefore favourably portraying his government. This approach not only emphasises the democratic principles that he upholds but also presents his presidency as a manifestation of the people's desires, depicting a selfless and honourable intention. Biden aligns his leadership with the nation's resilience and strength, indicating his dedication to maintaining and strengthening these qualities. The deliberate choice of certain words not only strengthens the perception of his leadership but also undermines the credibility of opposing aspects or acts from the previous administration, clearly establishing a narrative of good self against negative others in his presidency.

Populism

Populism is characterized by the deliberate attempt of the speaker to obtain popularity by advocating for the wants and desires of the general public (Shakoury, 2018). Trump uses populism in his inagural speech as;

> **Extract 1:** "This American carnage stops right here and stops right now. We are one Nation, and their pain is our pain, their dreams are our dreams, and their success will be our success."
>
> **Extract 2:** "From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this day forward, it's going to be only America first. America first."

Trump presents himself as a saviour figure, promising to end what he calls the "American carnage." By pledging to bring back jobs, prosperity, and national pride, he positions himself as the solution to the country's woes, starkly contrasting the negative outcomes he attributes to previous administrations. His repeated use of "America first" underscores this commitment and appeals to nationalist sentiments, particularly among those left behind by globalisation. The negative portrayal of others is a key aspect of Trump's populist rhetoric.

In his inaugural speech, Joe Biden utilized populism in the following way:

> **Extract-1** "Today we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy. The people—the will of the people has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded."
>
> **Extract-2** "This is a great Nation; we are good people. Over the centuries, through storm and strife, in peace and war, we've come so far. But we still have far to go."

Joe Biden adeptly utilises populism as a rhetorical tactic in his speech to construct a favourable image of himself while discreetly portraying others in a negative light. This is apparent when he underscores the victory of a democratic objective over individual candidature, depicting his government as in harmony with the collective determination of the people. By adopting this approach, Biden strategically presents himself and his leadership as advocates for democracy, appealing to the broader public rather than specific or privileged groups. In addition, his use of inclusive language, specifically the expression "We the People," aligns with the fundamental principles of the U.S. Constitution, presenting a perception of a president that is inclusive and fosters unity. This inclusive approach indirectly contrasts with prior administrations or organisations that are viewed as divisive or exclusive, so discreetly portraying them in a bad manner without explicitly mentioning them. This strategy not only associates Biden with the wider public's concerns but also quietly separates him from influential or polarising groups, successfully employing populism to establish a contrast between his favourable self-presentation and the unfavourable depiction of others.

Metaphor

A metaphor is comparing two dissimilar items or events to attribute the characteristics of one to the other (Shakoury, 2018) Trump also makes use of metaphoric language in his discourse, as shown in the following excerpts:

Extract I: " Washington flourished, but the people did not share in its wealth" Metaphor: "Washington flourished"
Extract 2: "Politicians prospered, but the jobs left, and the factories closed" Metaphor: "Politicians prospered"

Donald Trump in his Inaugural Speech uses metaphorical language to present himself in a positive light while portraying others, particularly politicians and the Washington establishment, in a negative light. In Extract One Trump portrays himself as a champion of the people, highlighting the disparity between the privileged elite and the rest of the population. "Washington flourished": Here, Trump implies that while the capital city may have prospered, the benefits did not extend to the broader population. By contrasting the flourishing of Washington with the struggles faced by ordinary Americans, Trump positions himself as an outsider fighting against a system that prioritizes the interests of the political elite. The metaphor in Extract Two, suggests that politicians have thrived financially while ordinary workers have suffered job losses and factory closures. Trump uses this contrast to portray himself as a leader who will prioritize the needs of working-class Americans over the self-serving interests of career politicians.

Joe Biden also makes use of metaphoric language in his discourse, as shown in the following excerpts:

Extract-I "Through a crucible for the ages, America has been tested anew, and America has risen to the challenge
Extract-2 "So now, on this hallowed ground where just a few days ago violence sought to shake the Capitol's very foundation..."

Joe Biden skillfully utilises metaphors in his speech as a discursive strategy to establish a clear distinction between presenting himself positively and presenting others negatively. Through the use of the phrase "through a crucible for the ages," Biden establishes a connection between himself, his administration, and the concepts of resilience and victory. This portrayal depicts America as a nation that has been cleansed and strengthened by its challenges. Biden strategically uses analogies to strengthen his principles and plans for the country, while delineating his opposition to those he perceives as posing a threat to the nation's democratic norms and institutions. Biden strategically uses modality in a speech to effectively bolster his favourable image while gently casting others in a negative light. This strategy is crucial in shaping the narrative structure of his discourse.

Modality

Politicians often employ Modality as a persuasive strategy, often involving modal verbs (like can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would) or other linguistic elements that indicate the speaker's attitude towards the likelihood or desirability of an event or action. Modality in Trump Inagural Speech are;

Extract I: "Together, we will determine the course of America and the world for many, many years to come."
Extract 2: "We will face challenges, we will confront hardships, but we will get the job done."

In his speech, Donald Trump strategically employs modality as a discursive technique to foster positive self-presentation while engaging in negative other-presentation. This is evident through his assertive use of the modal verb "will," which conveys a sense of determination and certainty. Trump's use of inclusive language, particularly the pronoun "we," as seen in "Together, we will determine the course" and "We will bring back our jobs," promotes a sense of unity and collective effort. This inclusiveness positions him as a group leader, working in unison with the people, thereby enhancing his positive self-representation. Conversely, Trump effectively employs negative other-presentation, often setting up a stark contrast between his administration and his predecessors.

Modality in Joe Biden Inagural speech are;

> **Extract-I** "Through a crucible for the ages, America has been tested anew, and America has risen to the challenge
>
> **Extract-2** "So now, on this hallowed ground where just a few days ago violence sought to shake the Capitol's very foundation..."

Joe Biden effectively utilises modality in his speech as a rhetorical technique to establish a clear contrast between presenting himself positively and portraying others negatively. Biden exudes an aura of assurance and resolves through the use of potent modal verbs and sentences that communicate unwavering conviction and imperative. His affirmations, such as "we will not fail" and "I will fight as hard," underscore his determination and aptitude for leadership. Furthermore, his utilisation of modality to emphasise potential and opportunity, shown by expressions such as "we can accomplish remarkable feats" or "there is a significant amount to be gained," establishes him and his administration as heralds of constructive transformation. This prospective outlook is also reinforced by his prioritisation of duty and accountability, as seen by remarks such as "we have a considerable amount of work to accomplish" and "each bears an obligation and responsibility." These declarations portray him as a dedicated and accountable leader. On the other hand, when Biden discusses difficulties, opponents, or previous shortcomings, he uses modality in a pessimistic manner to discreetly criticise others.

Evidentiality and Authority

The persuasiveness of arguments significantly increases when speakers substantiate their viewpoints with evidence or proof. Donald Trump adeptly employs the concepts of "evidentiality" and "authority" to enhance his credibility and trustworthiness, as evidenced by the following excerpts.

> **Extract I:** "January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this Nation again. The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. Everyone is listening to you now."
>
> **Extract 2:** "You came by the tens of millions to become part of a historic movement the likes of which the world has never seen before. At the center of this movement is a crucial conviction: that a nation exists to serve its citizens."

In the speech, Donald Trump skillfully employs a combination of evidentiality and authority, enhancing the persuasiveness and impact of their message. The speaker's assertion of this date marking a shift towards people-centric rule not only serves as a powerful democratic declaration but also as an expression of authority coming from the newly inaugurated leader. Trump emphasises the historical nature of the movement that the speaker claims to represent. The mention of massive public support is evidence of the movement's legitimacy, while the speaker's role as the movement's leader adds an authoritative angle to the claim. Further detailing the nation's challenges.

Joe Biden's discourse consists of argumentative structures that make his standpoints more acceptable and authentic. Using substantial evidence along concerning the authority lends reliability and credibility to the opinion of the speaker. The following excerpts exemplify the use of this strategy:

> **Extract-I:** "Through a crucible for the ages America has been tested anew, and America has risen to the challenge." - This statement implies a historical test and challenge, indicating that America's response is based on past experiences and successes.
>
> **Extract 2:** "A once-in-a-century virus that silently stalks the country has taken as many lives in one year as America lost in all of World War II." - This comparison provides a factual basis to underscore the severity of the situation.

President Joe Biden skillfully utilises the discursive technique of Evidentiality and Authority in his address, effectively presenting himself in a good light while also portraying others in a bad one. Biden strategically associates himself with esteemed American historical figures and principles, such as making references to Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation

Proclamation or evoking the legacy of George Washington. This positioning establishes Biden and his administration as successors and guardians of these honourable traditions. This historical affiliation bolsters his reputation and subtly juxtaposes his leadership with any prior administrations that may not have kept these principles. Essentially, Biden strategically employs Evidentiality and Authority to strengthen his position by bolstering his credibility and moral standing, while simultaneously quietly weakening his detractors or predecessors. This dual technique is a refined method of influencing public opinion, enhancing his leadership reputation while discreetly questioning that of his opponents or predecessors.

Findings

In their inaugural addresses, both Donald Trump and Joe Biden employed diverse rhetorical strategies to shape their narratives and public personas. Trump's speech strategically employed topicalization, emphasizing positive self-representation juxtaposed with negative portrayals of others. He effectively utilized the 'Number Game,' bolstering his rhetoric with specific numerical data and timelines. Trump also emphasized polarization, framing his administration as the defender of the American people against a corrupt elite, supported by concrete examples of his proposed solutions to issues such as industrial decline. His speech also evoked a sense of victimization, establishing a dichotomy of 'us versus them.' Through lexicalization, Trump contrasted his administration with established political and global norms, simplifying complex issues with populist rhetoric that resonated with ordinary citizens. Metaphors further reinforced his positive attributes while contrasting them with the perceived negatives of others, projecting determination and certainty in his leadership. Additionally, Trump's modality conveyed a sense of proactive and capable leadership, supported by evidentiality and the authority of his position, setting a tone of change and policy shift.

Conversely, Biden's speech also utilized topicalization to emphasize democracy, unity, and healing, subtly distinguishing his agenda from the divisive era preceding his administration. Employing the 'Number Game,' Biden used numerical data and historical references to underscore the necessity of his leadership. Addressing polarization, his speech stressed the importance of unity in the face of division, with illustrations and examples aligning his presidency with historical movements toward equality. Victimization narratives highlighted the resilience of his administration amidst external challenges. Through lexicalization, Biden presented himself positively while framing his leadership as inclusive and unifying. Utilizing populism, he positioned himself as a champion of the typical American, employing metaphors to contrast positive self-representation with negative portrayals of others. Modality enhanced his image as a positive leader while subtly criticizing others. Evidentiality and authority grounded his claims in real-world examples and his authoritative position.

Despite their differing approaches, both speeches demonstrated the strategic use of discourse in political communication, shaping public perception and reinforcing the speaker's image and policy agenda.

Conclusions

In Donald Trump's inaugural speech analysis, it's clear he utilized topicalization, emphasizing crucial information. His narrative showcased self-presentation positively and critiqued others. He fostered unity, subtly criticizing past administrations, using inclusive language like "we" to imply shared responsibility. Trump also employed the "Number Game," citing specific figures to support his narrative, highlighting his support base's scale and critiquing past policies' impact on American industry and workers. Employing the polarization strategy, he created a dichotomy between his administration and past governments and foreign entities, depicting them as neglectful and exploitative of the American people.

In contrast, Joe Biden's inaugural speech used topicalization to emphasize key themes, aligning his presidency with positive change and resilience. He subtly contrasted his agenda with past misinformation and divisiveness, using the "Number Game" to highlight the severity of the pandemic and economic impact, addressing racial injustice and historical events. While emphasizing unity and democracy, Biden didn't explicitly use polarization. He illustrated his commitment to equality and advancement, implicitly critiquing previous administrations or opponents, employing victimization to contrast his administration's resilience with external challenges.

Both Trump and Biden employed rhetorical strategies to enhance self-presentation and critique others, utilizing topicalization, the Number Game, polarization, and victimization. These strategies bolstered their credibility and appeal while subtly questioning that of opponents or predecessors.

Refrences

Alhumaidi, M. (2013). *A critical discourse analysis of Al-Ahram and Aljazeera's online coverage of Egypt's 2011 revolution*. University of Florida.

Altohami, W. M. (2024). Self-Framing and Other-(Re) framing in Institutional Political Discourse: The Case of Donald Trump's Final Speech Before the UN. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 14*(1), 202-211.

Altenkamp, I., & McManus, P. (2024). Nuclear power in a de-carbonised future? A critical discourse analysis of nuclear energy debates and media framing in Australia. *Australian Geographer, 55*(1), 23-43.

Amir, S. (2023). Critical Discourse Analysis of Jo Biden's Inaugural Speech as the 46th US President. *Periodicals of Social Sciences, 1*(1), 1-13.

Antari, I. (2016). Van Dijk's Discourse Analysis on Barack Obama's speech "Osama bin Laden Dead".

Awawdeh, N. A. D., & Al-Abbas, L. (2023). A Critical Discourse Analysis of President Donald Trump" 's Speeches during the Coronavirus Pandemic Crisis. *World Journal of English Language, 13*(5).

Ayalew Nigatu, B., & Tadesse Admassu, M. (2023). Critical discourse analysis of the second inaugural speech of Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. *Cogent Arts & Humanities, 10*(1), 2172805.

Ghazani, A. Z. (2016). Study of persuasive strategies in selected American presidential speeches. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL, 3*(2).

Handayani, M., & Pranoto, B. E. (2023). Theo van Leeuwen's Exclusion and Inclusion Strategies: An Analysis of President Joe Biden's Political Speech. *Linguistics and Literature Journal, 4*(1), 65-72.

Hasan, A. F. (2024). The Representation of China in US Media Discourse During the Corona Pandemic: CDA Study. *Larq Journal for Philosophy, Linguistics & Social Sciences, 1*(52).

Iqbal, A. (2013). Discourse Analysis of Prominent Politicians' Public Speeches: Pre and Post-Election 2013 Pakistan. *Amna Iqbal (2018). Discourse Analysis of Prominent Politicians' Public Speeches: Pre and Post-Election,* 1-18.

Kenzhekanova, K. K. (2015). Linguistic features of political discourse. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 6*(6), 192-199.

Khan, M. H., Adnan, H. M., Kaur, S., Khuhro, R. A., Asghar, R., & Jabeen, S. (2019). Muslims' representation in Donald Trump's anti-Muslim-Islam statement: A critical discourse analysis. *Religions, 10*(2), 115.

Kreis, R. (2017). The "tweet politics" of President Trump. *Journal of language and politics, 16*(4), 607-618.

Lafta, H. T., Hassan, H., AL JabbarAL Manseer, F. A., & Al Mawla, F. (2020). Power and Ideology in Donald Trump's speech at the United Nations: A Critical Discourse Analysis. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, 24*(5), 5498-5509.

Mahfoud, N., & Khaldaoui, R. (2023). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Biden's First Speech on the War in Ukraine from the Perspective of Ideological Square Model. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation, 6*(3), 132-143.

Ojha, S. R. (2022). *Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Speeches Delivered during Presidential Elections in the USA* (Doctoral dissertation, Department of English Education).

Rachman, A., & Yunianti, S. (2017). Critical discourse analysis in Donald Trump presidential campaign to win American's heart. *TELL, 5*(2), 8-17.

SADEGHI, B., & TABATABAI, S. M. (2015). Metaphor Analysis and Discursive Cycle of Iran's Foreign Policy: "Justice" through the lenses of US-IRAN Presidents. *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Fen Bilimleri Dergisi, 36*(3), 2.338-2358.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2005). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana, 10*(29), 9-36.