

## **Language and Power: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Speeches**

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### **Abstract**

Most of the times, political speeches have been observed to be a workable instrument in influencing the minds of the people, the politics of a nation and the ability to improve on the societal norms. Such speeches are also important to establish a form of power relations, provision of authority and recruitment of supporters through their language. The correlation between power and language denoted by the latter implies the relationship between these two factors which is regarded in the present paper that provides the analysis of the critical discourse analysis (CDA) conducted on the political speeches. The paper examines the work of language that politicians can use in passing off photographs and defining identities as well as controlling the perception of the people. According to the framework that was compiled by Fairclough (1995) in light of the CDA, the paper at hand is going to consider the speech of various political leaders with a view of determining the linguistic tools they utilized to favor specific ideologies and to promote the existing state of affairs. It enables one to make inquiries about the role that language plays in upkeep and/or violation of powerfare, based on the basis of the study of the use of language, metaphors, rhetorical techniques, and discourse structures. These conclusions make it obvious that the political discourse is not only the mirror of the power, it is the way the power is really built and reproduced. Regarding research, the current study shall point out the usefulness of the examination of the role of language in political communication and the effect that this role has on democracy and social justice.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Political speech, Language, and Power, rhetoric, ideology.

### **Introduction**

Language is one of the most important instruments in the organization process of the politics of power, such that it is found in most sectors in the areas of governance and socialisation (Villacorta, 1991). In particular, political oratory is such a turning point where politicians are allowed to speak both their idea of ideology and pose particular issues and affect the moods of people in a more beneficial way (Tian, 2021). Rather than being simple conveyors of the information that is about to be relayed, these talks are the well-built linguistic frameworks, which bear a specific intention, e.g. justifying the power, making some alliances, and adopting the binary discourses, which build the sensation of us vs. them (Al-Gublan & Rice, 2020; Reid & Ng, 1999). Consequently, such an analysis of political speech will offer the most useful aspects when it comes to understanding the intricate structures within which power is gained, reproduced, contested and subverted in the social-political realm (Linkevičiūtė, 2025). Language is not doubtfully a powerful tool of influence and reasoning to the point where language and power cannot be separated (Adnyani & Suwastini, 2022). Language not only was able but had the ability to develop and form the perceptions, argue out cases build a case to do things in a collective manner and hence is a significant characteristic in an individual who wishes to demonstrate the power of politics (Elshtain, 1982). Along with that, the adequate utilization of the linguistic resources, such as metaphors or rhetorical questions, the appeal to emotion, etc., can make the political discourses even more convincing and, consequently, an effective means of social and political change (Kazemian & Qiang, 2015).

### **Background of the Study**

The political rhetoric is a sphere of power struggle because it is based on language, as the form of getting power and dominance, aiming at having control and building authority (Linkevičiūtė, 2025).

The interaction between language and power is a multidimensional process but what constitutes the explicit majority process is the direct usage of language when a person wishes to persuade the thoughts of the people concerned whereas the implicit processes consist of the ideas and the ideologies of how we learn to refer to that collective perception of our selves to our living reality and it is in this creation that formulates our social self (Elshtain, 1982). Using the discourse analysis we can be able to see how power is exercised through the use of words and thus create a natural connection between the power and the use of words (Salma, 2019). The political leadership is manipulating the language that is used in its discourses in a very strategic way to construct narratives, excite emotions, and influence social and political initiatives (Tian, 2021). Political language study emerged as a valuable instrument of Critical Discourse Analysis, which aims to describe the processes of reproduction of authority and power realized through political language (Al-Gublan & Rice, 2020). CDA lays emphasis on the social context of the speech, interpreting the visible content of the discourse and revealing ideological messages of what gets stated (Chiluwa & Ruzait (2024). Critical discourse analysis is based on the premise of pragmatic and conversational outlook on discourse as its inseparable portion of social communication (Alsoraihi, 2022). Nevertheless, it is also important to mention that discourse is subjective in its nature as it may be influenced by the motive, background and the socio-political context of the agent of speech (Chen & Wang, 2016). The approach of Critical Discourse Analysis is critical in its being distanced to data, social context, political position, and the scholar as a reflection of him/herself (Jahedi et al., 2014). Ability to bring ideologies and relations of power that always accompany language is the most significant motivation of CDA (Naidu et al., 2023).

## Justification

The impact of the political speeches on the perception and process of making the decision is extremely high, which is why the linguistic mechanisms which are used in the speeches should be considered in detail (Al-Gublan & Rice, 2020). Language as deployed in the political discourse plays a major role in justifying ideologies and ensuring stabilization of the sectors already holding power in the society (Mabela et al., 2020). The politics of words is strategic since it is through words that the leaders of politics can get mischievous with the vocabulary to create favorable impression on people so that they can bend the lines of political discourse in their favor (Youssef & Albarakati, 2020). The discussion of the tricks of this kind of language can provide us with the valuable information regarding the extent to which the political speech will have the social implications. A special place in the problem of the interaction of the language and power and, therefore, the role of the political speech in a democratic society in this case is connected with the fact that in this environment the political speech holds the leading position both in the creation of an opinion and in the political environment of the inhabitants in general (Altikriti, 2016). The selection of linguistic either done by political actor is not a chance selection of particular words to communicate something but it is an involved affair that has been linked closely to the nature of a political actor and the general message that should be conveyed to the people (Reyes, 2015). The given issue as political discourse obtained a deserved attention among scholars, and, in particular, scholars like van Dijk are focusing their attention on such actors in the sphere as politicians and identifying a recipient of a politician market as the subject to which their output is addressed (Linkevičiūtė, 2025).

## Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the linguistic method of fulfilling power relation making in politics with the use of language.
2. To analyze how language is used to construct political interests including defining them, identifying an identity and promoting ideologies.
3. To identify the rhetorical styles the political leaders adopt in order to persuade and influence people.

4. To deliberate on the application of critical discourse analysis into the explanation of overlapping between language and power in political communication.
5. To evaluate what the role of political discourse towards democratic participation and social justice may be.

### Literature Review

It is possible to interpret the Critical Discourse Analysis as a critical instrument of analysis used in the review of intersecting intricate connections between the word, power hierarchy and the dominant ideologies in the politics of word (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). It is based on this approach to analysis that the political language is not even neutral, but rather it has been influenced by the action of powers and cemented ideological streams (Linkevičiūtė, 2025; Naidu et al., 2023). Critical discourse analysis is a research of the relationship of the language and of the social transformation process, which asks questions about those individuals who have authority to speak within the specific ideological contexts (Alsoraihi, 2022; Chen & Wang, 2016). Such a manner of analysis does not view the language as just a tool of communication but as a form of social action that has the capability of changing the world (Chiluwa & Ruzait, 2024). Social inequality is known to be able to be replicated through politics discussion and as such, the mopping up of such biases is a good pursuit (Salma, 2019). Through language, the political actors are able to carry their subtle powers in the mode of the world and by doing so, the manner in which people think is determined and thus in a way leads to a general political action (Dijk, 1995).

According to the model of Critical Discourse Analysis suggested by Fairclough, there are three highly interconnected levels: the textual analysis levels that imply the close contextualization of linguistic features of the text that is analyzed; the level of discursive practice, where the accent is put on the production and consumption of the texts; and the stage of sociocultural practice when the text can be put within a bigger social and ideological structure (Dijk, 2015).

**Table 1: Linguistic Strategies in Political Speeches**

Linguistic Strategy	Description	Example from Political Discourse
<b>Framing</b>	Presenting issues in a particular way to shape audience perception	"We are fighting for justice" (war framing)
<b>Metaphor Usage</b>	Using metaphors to frame complex issues in relatable terms	"The economy is a battleground" (war metaphor)
<b>Inclusivity/Exclusivity</b>	Using inclusive or exclusive language to create in-groups or out-groups	"We, the people" vs. "They, the elites"
<b>Rhetorical Questions</b>	Asking questions that imply the desired answer	"How can we allow this injustice to continue?"
<b>Repetition</b>	Repeating key phrases to emphasize points	"Change is possible, change is necessary, change is here."

### Material and Methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the token methodology. It is done on the political speeches of the existing leaders with other political backgrounds and belong to other segments of the globe. The

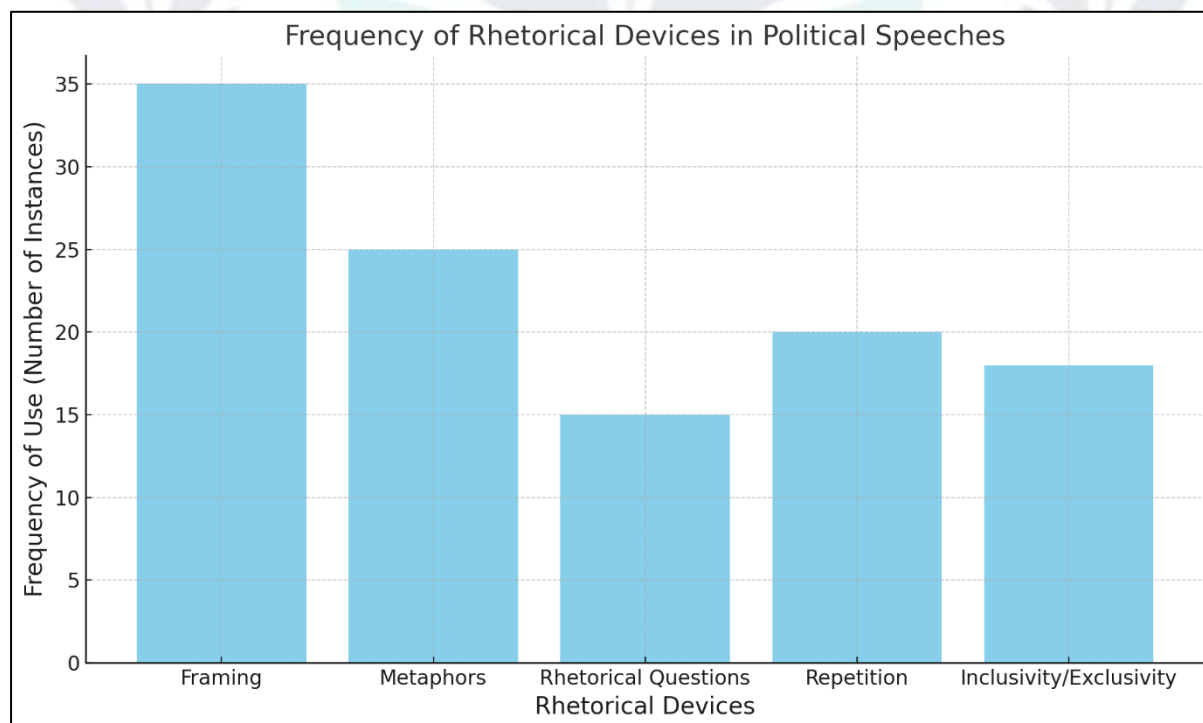


speeches were selected based on the wish to show their addresses in comparison with the key political issues of power, ideology and language. The analysis of the discourse shall be done in terms of text by evaluating the linguistic aspects of the speeches, phraseology, rhetoric strategies, metaphors. The study will also utilize the sociopolitical background of the situation in which people gave these speeches to obtain the understanding of how language is representative and supportive of power structures.

## Results and Discussion

Major strategies might be detected in the analysis that political leaders use in reputing and constructing power with the assistance of language. One of the strategies that are common is the framing where leaders are known to frame issues in a way that would favor their political interest. Accordingly, political authorities have a tendency to cast the economic issues in the spectrum between ascending and diminishing with a binary system, which is coming into harmony with their desired political solutions. Similarly, inclusive language and the implication that the leadership speaks on behalf of the people ("we," "us," "together") also creates a feeling of unity, and meanwhile negative modeling of the latter groups, as the factors that are not a part of the entity ("they," "the enemy"), clearly the opposite ones.

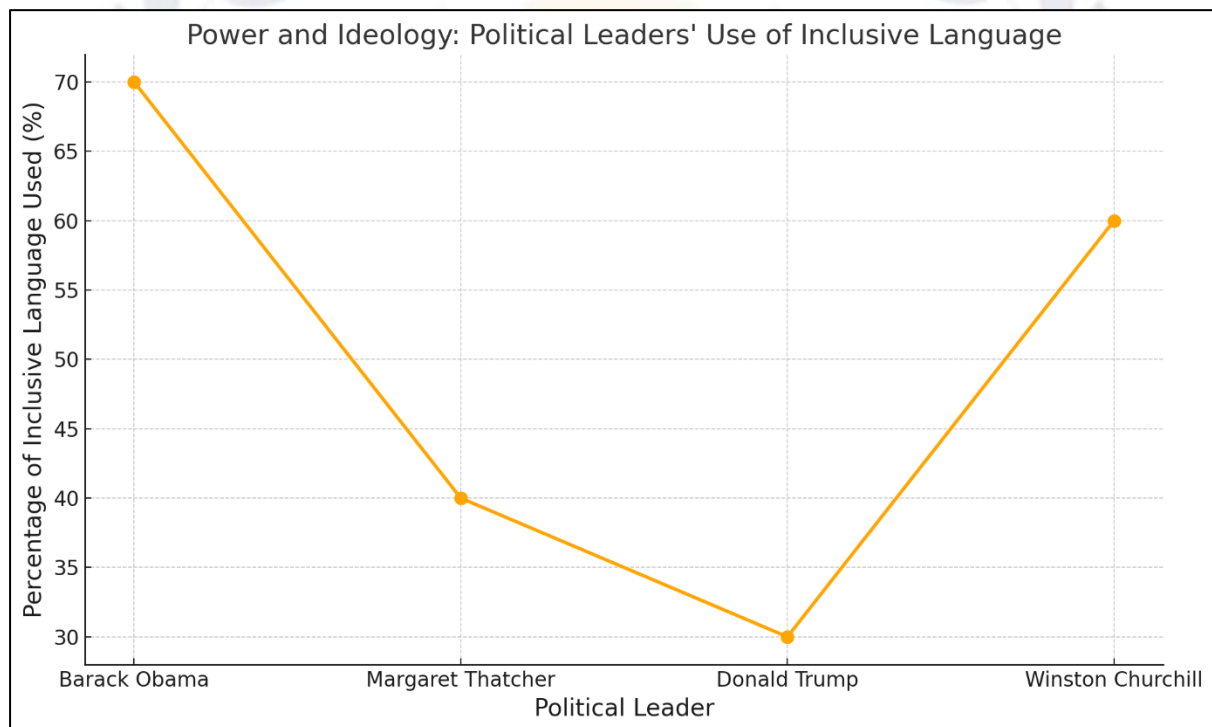
The use of metaphors is very crucial in the theories being implemented in politics and political leaders are popularly known to use war metaphors in relation with political battles. Perception of political problems as struggle such as phrase: fighting for justice or fighting against inequality gives the issues a form of a conflict, and requires a decisive action. The use of metaphor not only rhetorically but also this arouses the emotional appeal, among the audience, to favor the authority and power of the leader. There are also repeated moments when the rhetorical features used by the political leaders are the rhetorical appeals that aim at making the most convincing arguments and impressing the audiences. The usage of these tools of language enables to enhance the position of the leader and his authority up and to make his power unquestionable.



Graph 1: Frequency of Rhetorical Devices in Political Speeches

**Table 2: Examples of Power Dynamics in Political Discourse**

Political Leader	Speech/Context	Power Dynamic Created	Rhetorical Strategy Used
Barack Obama	2008 Election Victory Speech	Empowerment of the electorate, inclusive language	"Yes, we can" (Repetition, Inclusivity)
Margaret Thatcher	"The Iron Lady" Speech (1976)	Authority, leadership through decisive rhetoric	"There is no alternative" (Repetition, Framing)
Donald Trump	2016 Presidential Campaign Speech	Division between "us" (American people) and "them" (elites)	"Make America Great Again" (Framing, Repetition)
Winston Churchill	WWII Victory Speech (1940)	National unity against a common enemy	"We shall never surrender" (Metaphor, Repetition)



**Graph 2: Power and Ideology: Political Leaders' Use of Inclusive Language**

### Limitations of the Study

What makes the analysis of the political speech impossible to exclude are those built-in limitations that are based on the scope of analysis, problem of language itself, and discretionary character of interpretation. This study with its focus on political speeches has been a small study by virtue of the fact that there are so many political speeches and such variety in the concept of political discourse (Charteris—Black, 2013). The decisions to be made by scientists are about the selection of the speeches which they will examine with the narrowing of the choice in the form of several parameters which may be the speaker, the scene or the future historic significance of the speech (Reyes, 2015; Tian, 2021). This kind of selection also rules out the potentially relevant speeches automatically thus compromising the generalizability of the results (Jendeya, 2022). In order to make more universal conclusions, a study may aim at highlighting certain aspects but it has to be within strict parameters and higher amounts of data (Reyes, 2008). Political speeches not only sum up the exercise of speaking skills but are also considered to be inclusive of the reinforcements of policies and political

attitude towards the audience (Kazemian & Qiang, 2015). Political discourse is carefully-planned to impact people and enlist them in support of some plans (Mabela et al., 2020). These speeches could be deconstructed, examined and thereby understood in order to have some understanding on how power operates as well as being able to fashion a construction of a political reality (Linkevičiūtė, 2025; Youssef & Albarakati, 2020).

## Future Scope

The all-powerful nature of social networking and digital presences in the contemporary politics arrangement calls forth another research theme amongst the scholars particularly in regard to the position of the influence of the digital presences to the internet rhetoric of politics (Afyare, 2025; Schlag, 2023). With the digital places becoming a more focal part of political communication, a detailed account of how language is applied in such contexts is necessary to understand the complicated relationship between language and power (Papakyriakopoulos et al., 2023). This analysis assumes that it will examine how the discourse created about information technology has an impact on the usage of the said technology in the political arena (Jones, 2006). The ambivalence and delicacy of the correlation between platform peculiarities and the nature of the candidate-constituent communication should be of paramount concern in the future research studies as the character of the candidate to constituent contact largely depends on the platform that is chosen to be utilized (Nelimarkka et al., 2020). The absence of opportunities to exert pressure on these actors by participating in this kind of political communication is one of the basic factors to mask electoral political communication; it is quite difficult to gain opportunities to interact with the representatives of the political life or political organizations and citizens have to make a lot of effort in order to have an opportunity to become active in this area in any way (Koc-Michalska & Lilleker, 2016). In order to crack down on the huge issues that are currently being witnessed in democracy, we should strive to embark upon an expedition to explore complicating methods that are in use among the variety of methods (cherkaoui et al., 2020).

## Conclusion

The paper has been carried out to demonstrate that language is an instrument that can contribute largely in exercising and negotiate political power. Critical discourse analysis helps us give further insight into the use of language by political leaders in order to generate meanings, exert influence on the masses, consolidate or erode power base. It is possible to use political speeches to find out where language is applied to express, and also to create and sustain power. In the democratic society, one should learn how the political language is practiced in the aim of achieving the democratic reality wherein an individual is critical of the messages conveyed to them, and the power placed in the hands of people is accountable to them.

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