

Political Discourse: Features, Functions And Analysis

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Abstract: This article discusses the distinctive features and functional aspects of political discourse, as well as its significance in modern society. Political speech is shown to emerge not only in the oral statements of politicians but also in parliamentary debates, election campaigns, press conferences, and digital communication platforms. Particular attention is paid to issues such as manipulation, ideology, interactivity, and social control as integral components of political discourse.

Keywords: Political discourse, political speech, interactivity, ideology, manipulation, social control.

Introduction: Political discourse is an inseparable part of modern society, playing a crucial role in power, legislation, governance, and social relations. Understanding the essence of political processes requires careful analysis of speech forms, purposes, and strategies of influence. Political discourse can be broadly defined as the communicative expression of political relations and events, employed by political actors to pursue social and economic objectives. It manifests itself not only in official forms such as parliamentary debates, government sessions, and press conferences, but also in less formal contexts such as election campaigns, public speeches, media texts, and digital communication on social networks.

Political discourse thus represents a multifaceted socio-linguistic phenomenon, where communication serves not only as a vehicle for information exchange but also as a mechanism for persuasion, legitimization, and the promotion of ideology. Scholars such as van Dijk, Fairclough, Chilton, and Habermas have emphasized that political discourse is not merely linguistic activity but a process that reflects and reproduces power, inequality, and social control.

The analysis of political speech, first and foremost, requires a clear definition of its research object. At this stage, the main question arises: "What exactly is political speech?" The simplest and, in many respects, the most accurate answer is that political speech is the speech activity produced by politicians and shaped within their participation. In other words, the authors

or subjects of political speech are political figures, heads of state, party leaders, and government officials. However, defining political speech solely through its external form – that is, through its authors – would be a narrow approach. Political speech is not limited to the oral statements of politicians but is also widely formed in institutional contexts (parliamentary sessions, press conferences, international meetings, election campaigns), in the mass media (newspaper articles, radio and television broadcasts, online news, commentaries and analyses), and in digital communication platforms (social networks, official websites, blogs).

Thus, when analyzing political speech, the object of study should include not only the direct statements of politicians but also political views, ideological concepts, and all communicative forms that shape public opinion. This allows political speech to be interpreted as a broad socio-linguistic phenomenon.

The main characteristics of political discourse distinguish it from other types of discourse. First of all, it is characterized by institutionality, as it is directly linked to the activities of state institutions, political parties, leaders, and other socio-political structures. Therefore, political discourse manifests itself within formal norms and legal frameworks.

Another important feature of political discourse is its goal-orientation. Its primary purpose is to gain power, maintain it, or legitimize the existing political system.

For this reason, persuasive devices and rhetorical strategies are widely used in political speech.

Equally significant is its interactivity. Political discourse always has a two-way character: it is formed in the interaction between the messages produced by politicians and the responses of the public.

Political discourse is not only a linguistic object but also a powerful instrument that influences all spheres of social life. It informs society about pressing political decisions and developments, creates communicative bridges between politicians and the public, and serves to promote national, democratic, or ideological values by embedding them into public consciousness. In addition, it legitimizes power and reinforces social order, functioning as an effective mechanism of social control.

The description of political discourse demonstrates its multifaceted and complex nature as a socio-linguistic phenomenon. It is not only the principal tool of political communication but also an effective mechanism for shaping social consciousness, promoting values, and strengthening power. Hence, the analysis of political discourse requires an interdisciplinary approach, integrating linguistic, sociological, and political science perspectives.

In fact, a large portion of research on political speech focuses on the texts and speeches of professional politicians or political institutions. This includes the activities of heads of state, prime ministers, other government members, parliaments, and political parties at local, national, and international levels.

Some studies have applied discourse analysis approaches to political speech (e.g., Carbó, 1984; Dillon et al., 1990; Harris, 1991; Holly, 1990; Maynard, 1994; Seidel, 1988b). In the United States, in particular, there exists extensive research on presidential rhetoric (e.g., Campbell & Jamieson, 1990; Hart, 1984; Snyder & Higgins, 1990; Stuckey, 1989; Thompson, 1987e; Windt, 1983, 1990).

In this sense, politicians constitute a group of individuals who receive remuneration for their (political) activities and who are elected, appointed, or self-appointed as central actors in the political system. Defining political discourse in this way is almost identical to how medical, legal, or educational discourse is defined through their corresponding professionals (doctors, lawyers, teachers).

This is the relatively straightforward aspect of the matter: if we agree on what the term “politics” means, the task becomes simpler. Politicians are indeed central actors in political science and discourse analysis as the primary participants in political discourse and practice.

However, politics is not confined solely to politicians. From the perspective of interaction-based discourse analysis, other participants such as the public, citizens, the people, the masses, and other groups or categories also play roles in political communication. When politics and its discourses are placed in the public sphere, more actors become visible in the communicative process.

This is similar to defining media discourse, where attention must also be paid to listeners and audiences. The same applies to medical, legal, or educational discourse, where not only doctors, lawyers, and teachers but also patients, defendants, and students must be considered. Therefore, limiting political speech to its primary authors is insufficient; all relevant participants must be taken into account, whether they are active contributors to political discourse or receivers in one-way communication.

Another complexity arises when trying to define the boundaries of politics itself. The political system is not restricted to official or professional politics and politicians. Political activities and processes also include the participation of citizens as voters, interest groups, pressure groups, demonstrators, and opposition forces. These groups and individuals, along with their organizations and institutions, engage in the political process, and many of them actively participate in political discourse. Thus, adopting a broader definition of politics — through the practices of all actors involved in the political process — significantly expands the scope of the concept of “political discourse.”

Conclusion

The study of political discourse demonstrates that it is not limited to the statements of professional politicians but involves a wide range of actors, including citizens, voters, pressure groups, and the media. Its primary functions include the dissemination of political information, the construction of relationships between leaders and the public, the promotion of values and ideologies, and the exercise of social control.

Political discourse is characterized by its institutional nature, goal orientation, interactivity, ideological foundation, and diversity of genres. It operates in both official and unofficial contexts, shaping public opinion and legitimizing political systems. In the modern era of mass media and digital platforms, political discourse has become an even more powerful tool for persuasion and influence.

Therefore, the analysis of political discourse requires an interdisciplinary approach, combining linguistics, political science, sociology, and communication studies. Only by integrating these perspectives can we

fully understand the complexity of political communication and its impact on society.

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