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Irina Vrabie

University of Galatzi, Romania

THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A MIRROR REFLECTING A LEADER'S HIDDEN SELF

DYSKURS POLITYCZNY: LUSTRO ODZWIERCIEDLAJĄCE
UKRYTĄ JAŻŃ LIDERA

Abstract

Social, cultural and political power can be attained through such small gestures, words and simply through one's way of being. Great world leaders use words and political discourse as a calculated and deliberate tool in their political plans, as a way of sharing their valuable experience, or only what they intend to reveal to the world, with the hope that every gesture and thought will make a difference. Nevertheless, the ideas that they display and want to put into practice may not be as selfless and benevolent as they let their people believe, their discourses may be just a way of obtaining a strategic position in order to manifest their personal or institutional interests. This paper will try to shed some light on the characteristics of some strategic political discourse, belonging to Nelson Mandela and Donald Trump, in order

Abstrakt

Władza społeczna, kulturowa i polityczna może zostać osiągnięta dzięki drobnym gestom, słowom i po prostu poprzez sposób bycia. Przywódcy wielkiego świata używają słów i dyskursu politycznego jako wyrachowanego i przemyślanego narzędzia w swoich planach politycznych, jako sposobu dzielenia się cennym doświadczeniem lub tylko tym, co zamierzają ujawnić światu, z nadzieją, że każdy gest i myśl uczynią różnicę. Niemniej jednak idee, które pokazują i chcą wprowadzić w życie, nie mogą być tak bezinteresowne i życzliwe, jak pozwalają wierzyć swoim ludziom, ich dyskursy mogą być tylko sposobem na uzyskanie strategicznej pozycji w celu manifestowania osobistych lub instytucjonalnych interesów. Ten artykuł spróbuje rzucić nieco światła na charakterystykę strategicznego

to reveal some of the most frequently used persuasion strategies through the use of language. It shall be revealed how words can provide people with a raptured vision of the future and the society they live in, or how they can represent an instrument of mass persuasion.

Key-words

political power, discourse, persuasion strategies, instrument, mass persuasion.

dyskursu politycznego, należącego do Nelsona Mandeli i Donalda Trumpa, aby ujawnić niektóre z najczęściej stosowanych strategii perswazji poprzez użycie języka. Ujawni on również, w jaki sposób słowa mogą zapewnić ludziom zachwycającą wizję przyszłości i społeczeństwa, w którym żyją, lub jak mogą stanowić instrument masowej perswazji.

Słowa kluczowe

władza polityczna, dyskurs, strategie perswazji, instrument, masowa perswazja

Introduction

One can achieve so much through the power of words, gestures, and most importantly through their presence and way of being. Great world leaders master the art of rhetoric and they are aware of the fact that the main purpose and function of a given political discourse is to persuade people to believe in their future plans – plans that concern the whole society, which can be implemented in a social, cultural and political environment.

Words are a calculated instrument used in order to minimize the gap between the appearance and the reality itself. A leader's discourse is more often used for persuasive purposes than for bringing new information within a certain domain, or simply to maintain an oral connection with the population. In order to do that, that person uses various linguistic and discursive strategies, so that the people who listen to him/her have the overall impression that the leader understands them, their needs, dreams and hopes for the future and, most importantly, that he can help put them in practice. The leader shows people that he or she feels a strong connection with their plans and their dreams – thus, the leader makes the decision of revealing himself/herself, but not too much, for he/she must keep a certain emotional distance from them, so that the person can deliver their personal ideas and the vision of the world problems and how they can be solved, according to what people want to hear and to see being put in practice.

Donald Trump and Nelson Mandela are two of the world's great leaders, who have been aware that, in order to gain political success and to be allowed to do extraordinary things and implement radical changes in society, one has to know the psychological mechanisms behind human behaviour in general, to establish an emotional connection with the population which he/she addresses, and to "hear" the inner voice of the human being and of the community as a whole.

1. Characteristics of the political discourse

In the attempt to please every single member of the society, leaders may diminish the power of the message they are sending, so that everybody could feel integrated and targeted by their utterances. The objective in changing the beliefs of a human being is to get close to their thoughts and feelings, rather than winning the “fight”. The emotional component is a calculated, indispensable tool used in changing the thoughts, convictions, beliefs and sometimes the whole principle system of the entire population, so that people could be more easily influenced by a certain leader if they do not have a deeply-rooted values system, which would keep them anchored in a resistance process towards change and the implementation of rules that in the leader’s opinion help improve society’s course over the time [Dontcheva-Navratilova, n.y.].

The political discourse is a very efficient tool of exerting influence on people driven by fear and their alleged incapability of seeing and wanting better things so as to trigger a significant change in society. A well-documented leader knows which buttons to push in order to get a positive emotional reaction from the people who are listening to him. The promise that it will all get better, reinforced by some successful actions undertaken in the past, increases the chances of people believing in the competent opinions of a great leader.

In reference to the key statements made by great political speakers, most of them are made during campaigns and elections in order to convince and influence the public, assuring people of the tangible value of their plans and intentions in the future. Making a public political speech involves using the art of persuasion and rhetoric, at the same time leaving the hearers with the impression that they are able to make an important choice which can change society whose part they are. The strategy, which can bring the speakers various benefits, can be used in many situations and it supposes the use of certain psychological strategies in order to be persuasive for the public.

These communication strategies can be divided into strategies which are speech-act oriented, and strategies which focus on a mass gathering. Speakers can use indirect or direct strategies in their speeches, the first ones (e.g. as part of social visits) representing actions which prove the speaker’s sincere interest in the hearers’ problems and everyday struggles – these strategies are not rehearsed or recorded, but they imply a persuasive behavior towards a certain result. The indirect strategies can be drawn upon their consistence and authority – they can be reciprocal, preferred, rare or serve as social evidence to others. All of these strategies denote that the speaker must express his thoughts seemingly honestly, maintaining the quality of his statements and an authoritative attitude so that he could convince his audience of his aptitudes, competences and intentions. His supporters should be able to rely on him, due to his prior experience in solving problems [Samiaty, Nurkamto, 2014, p. 196–197].

Significant promises are made during a political speech: a better health system, improvements in the educational system, higher salaries, a better life in one’s own

country for the citizens, but also for the immigrants, and so on so forth. It is always about making great promises, which are likely to be accomplished only if the actions are undertaken in a short period of time.

Speakers manifest their popularity through meeting the needs of the public, due to their support and proof that they supported their cause for a long time. The support comes from the establishment of a special connection between them and the public, by trying to show them that they are special, superior and they have better ideas and ideals than the others for their own country. The feeling that the public gets from their political speech is one of safety, hope and trust.

John Rogers Searle, a renowned contemporary American philosopher and professor, developed the theory of speech-acts in 1969, as a part of the theory of the constitutive rules used to perform illocutionary acts, focusing on what principles should be observed during a speaker's performance of an illocutionary act. Searle intended to develop Austin's theory of speech acts by building a framework, where theoretically the components of the speech acts (utterance, meaning and action) could be seen and function as a unity. J.R. Searle stated that there were various types of utterances used in an individual speech, which could also apply to political speeches, such as the assertive, the expressive, the declarative, the commissive and the directive one [Samiaty, Nurkamto, 2014, p. 196–197].

The statements addressed during the campaigns, or other politically-oriented events, help to convince the audience of the selfless purposes of that eventual future leader, of their vision of a better world that they all live in. After exposing his or her ideas, the leader asks their public to imagine his vision, he or she demands them to "go with him/her in this imaginary trip, where nothing could go wrong", because he or she is there for them, making all the right decisions.

2. Analysis of Donald Trump's inaugural speech

The 45th U.S. President's inaugural speech was not only a very touching one but also an expression of happiness and sadness at the same time. As he was very surprised to find out that he won the election, his emotions at that moment ranged from contempt through sadness to surprise, happiness, anger and even disgust. Donald Trump is a rhetoric genius, his persuasive strategies being based on various linguistic discourse techniques which proved to be useful and compelling.

First of all, it all begins with the slogan that represented his campaign: 'Let's make America great again'. Unlike the other candidates' slogans, Hillary Clinton's 'Hillary for America' Ben Carson's 'Heal. Inspire. Revive', Rand Paul's 'Defeat The Washington Machine. Unleash The American Dream.', Donald Trump's slogan planned to bring people together due to their common goals and dreams, which are larger and more important than they could understand separately.

Hillary Clinton's slogan puts her in the center of attention and of all good actions to be taken in America, while Ben Carson's does not necessarily refer to the progress and future reforms that he plans to undertake in order to unite America and offer a better life to its citizens – the slogan could be used in any other appropriate situation, not referring to the world of politics. Rand Paul's slogan promises a lot of political, social and cultural changes, but this motto refers rather than anything else to the effort of the intellectuals to make the changes, and they represent, however, a small minority in the democratic space [Rajaram, 2017].

One of Trump's characteristic discursive strategies is that he does not try to please everyone, by giving vague and inefficient future solutions to the immigration crisis and citizens' financial problems. He does not try to standardize the power of his messages and measures to be taken, so that every citizen would find in him a promising speaker and future leader. The cost of this possible strategy is the discreditation of his own political public image, and the vagueness of his sayings, and worse, of his actions and measures as the president of America.

In his inaugural speech, Donald Trump speaks about “making America strong again, making America wealthy again, making America proud again, making America safe again.” It is a huge promise that he makes to the American people, along with “Buy American and hire American”. He highlights the importance of bringing ordinary American citizens into the spotlight, by making them a part of the contemporary American history, while he is only a delegate who represents all the desires, dreams of the population.

He is only the executive power representing the people, all the progress America is going to see and “feel” will be due to and for the people, because they are the only ones that matter. The emphasis is placed on the power and desires of the people, rather than his, proving that he is not self-centered, eager for fame or power, but that he reveals himself as a “guide” for citizens who still have hope and want to see their country in full financial, cultural, social and political bloom [Cao, 2017].

Another characteristic feature of the president's speech is that he makes his public visualize the changes he is going to help make in the society. He does not ask people if they want a certain change or not, he is already engaged in the process of making that happen, which demonstrates the psychological factor in electing a certain leader. People will certainly choose the one they “see” implementing all the changes they want in society, who does not need a lot of talking in order to do something, or take measures if needed.

Donald Trump has managed to get people to visualize having a wall built between the United States and Mexico by directly asking who was going to pay for it, rather than if it was necessary or what they thought about the idea. By doing that, he also appeals to people's emotions, and to their non-rational thinking mechanisms.

Moreover, the president invokes the community spirit which gets people to make more extreme decisions when they are put together and asked to deliberate on

a certain matter. After people who are able to make decisions and vote participate in group speech sessions, or discussion groups, they tend to make riskier decisions than those individuals who have not been involved in such a process. People who are subjected to this kind of decision-making process are being subconsciously exposed to the polarization phenomenon [Rajaram, 2017].

It is a widely known and constantly observed fact that the current U.S. President appeals mostly to emotions, rather than to a rational judgement. By doing so, he makes people think the same way about their future in America in view of the changes undertaken in their society. Trump knows and consciously ignores the fact that people can be completely irrational about their decisions – that is why he urges them to seek further than logical facts, and to get inspired from what could be.

By appealing to people's irrational, emotional side, Trump has managed to become the number one election possibility, that they would see "good to go" at the White House. In order to be elected, the president must first of all understand the motivations behind people's actions and dreams, and Trump certainly does it very well as he is a fine psychologist, largely due to experience within the business world he has been in for a long time, respecting and improving its rules all the way. The persuasive strategies used in motivating people involve a lot of psychological tricks, and, given the fact that the business domain and the political domain have a lot in common due to the emotional motivation phenomenon and the ability to make other people visualize and understand one's plans, it can be easily observed that Donald Trump makes has turned his rhetorical speeches into an art.

Political leaders in the entire world should be concerned with the impact that their speeches have over the mentality and behaviour of their supporters, but Donald Trump gives them all they want in abundance. Each change should start with the person that is proposing it, and Donald Trump is willing to give to the American citizens all they want, "with each and every breath in his body", until he dies.

Donald Trump used some particular phrases in his inaugural speech, for example: "The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. Everyone is listening to you now.", which indicates that the power is given to the people and for the people, while he is just a messenger in this political game whose purpose is to unite all the citizens under the umbrella of similar principles, moral values, desires, goals and dreams. He intends to "give a voice" to whom may need it and the emphasis is put on the necessities normal citizens have in their everyday life – it is about America's power to make its citizens satisfied with their own jobs, decisions, possibilities, together with their everyday life.

Another significant excerpt from his speech is: "America will start winning again, winning like never before. 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." It strongly demonstrates the president's will and ambition to do his job right by taking every decision very seriously. He does not take into consideration losing in any given

area, be it political, be it social or cultural. The term “win” / “winning” is widely used in his speech, proving the nature of his purposes and abilities. There is also a strong correlation between the terms “wealth” and “dreams”, because they blend very well together, the process and results of dreaming big having a lot to do with gaining social recognition and wealth.

A citizen’s financial power depends on the efficiency of the social security system, on his degree of adaptability to the society’s demands as well as on the way people with certain jobs are considered. Therefore, all society’s demands and offerings are in a strict and powerful connection with one another, and that is what Donald Trump understands as a well-functioning network, with its main components – social, financial, cultural, political, historical and others.

3. Analysis of Nelson Mandela’s 1990 speech, after he was released from prison in Cape Town (his first public speech – “Address in Capetown”)

Nelson Mandela was a great political leader, a revolutionary and a philanthropist, who believed in the idea of freedom and equality between people of all races. He fought against institutionalized racism, known as the apartheid, and strongly believed in racial reconciliation. In 1990, after he had just been released from prison, he made his first public speech, at the Parade, in Cape Town.

His battle for freedom and racial equality will remain an integral part of the history of South Africa, as it shall represent an example for the generations to come to fight for their rights and, most importantly, for peace. The speech ends with the same words used at the end of his speech in 1964, denoting the fact that he is still prepared to die for what he believes in, for his ideal: a world without racism. The speech evokes the long quest for freedom, and the intensity of his struggle, along with that of other people who understood and supported him. He thinks about the benefits that the struggle against racism will bring to the future generations, and that now is the time for each South African citizen to fight for his or her descendants.

The discourse itself is very short, concise and intense, the main ideas are straight to the point, not embellished or stilted, which is not a typical characteristic of the political discourse. Compared to Donald Trump’s discourse, it has a more natural form and a simpler message, based on an ideal of a simple man, trying to do the right thing in a corrupted society. The Cape Town speech was intended to help people connect with an ideal and many resulting ideas – the equality between all people in the South African society and the fight against any type of domination.

The speech begins with “We have waited too long for our freedom. We can no longer wait. Now is the time to intensify the struggle on all fronts. To relax our efforts now would be a mistake which generations to come will not be able to forgive.” The

strategy of the leader is to involve all the citizens who listen to him in the transformation of the society – it makes everyone feel important, generating a feeling that they could make a difference. And what's the point in being a world leader if the people do not feel the connection between your ideals and theirs?

It appears that Nelson Mandela's discourse speaks directly into the hearts of his people – he carefully listened to everybody's grievances before forging a forever changing positive political ideal. It shows a good *psychology of the listener*, because he knows it is one the important pillars in establishing a strong connection with his public. The leader uses a speech which does not cover up his purposes, but allows him to represent a new construction of the reality where, with his control over the situation, a safer, healthier world, which can overcome inequalities of any kind, could be created.

The political discourse from both the world leaders is strongly marked by the understanding of people's struggles, their social, cultural or life problems as well as of the changes they want to see made society – the speakers empathize with the ordinary men who choose the reality that the leaders are willing to show and give them. The political discourse is intended to follow the truth and relate to it, by all means, assuming that it regards a public interest, that is reflects true social problems. The speaker must have a really combative persuasion strategy, which reserves at the same time a slight possibility for the people in order to think and act otherwise than explained.

The leader presents the positive side of changing society by hiding the more uncomfortable aspects of these transformations, so that his public would be willing to accept them, no matter at what costs. Nelson Mandela appeals to the ancestors' efforts to live in a society where everybody is equal and has the same rights and responsibilities, talking about the fact that, despite the fear that may govern their actions, South-African people should stand all together towards the eradication of apartheid. The leader invites his public to dream and act on behalf of a noble cause, a common ideal that should belong to everyone, as the “only way to peace and racial harmony”.

4. COCLUSION

The political discourse involves a series of discursive strategies, a certain tone and regard for one's people, as well as the transmission of the conviction that various social, cultural and political measures can be taken in order to reestablish an order in the society that a leader and his or her people live in. Donald Trump does not try to standardize his words and the power of his messages, which allows every citizen to find in him a promising speaker and a future leader. The cost of this possible strategy is the discreditation of his own political public image and the vagueness of his messages, and worse, of his actions and measures as the president of America. He seems to know precisely which persuasive strategies he has used recurrently in his political speeches, in connection with his methods, bear fruit throughout the country.

He also makes his supporters visualize the changes he is going to help make in society – he is already engaged in the process of making that happen, which demonstrates the psychological factor in electing a certain leader. People will certainly choose the one they “see” implementing all the changes they want in society, one that does not need a lot of talking in order to do something, or take measures if needed.

The president invokes the community spirit, which makes people make more extreme decisions when they are put together and asked to deliberate on a certain matter. The persuasive strategies used in convincing people involve various psychological tricks, and given the fact that the business domain and the political domain have a lot in common due to the emotional motivation phenomenon and the ability to make other people visualize and understand one’s plans, it can be easily observed that Donald Trump has turned his rhetorical speeches into an art.

Nelson Mandela, another great leader, believed in the idea of freedom and equality between people of all races. His political speeches are strongly marked by empathizing with people’s struggles, their problems and the changes they want to see in society – the speaker tries to “connect” with ordinary men who choose a better reality that the leader is willing to show and give them. The South-African leader has a very combative persuasion strategy, which keeps people “dreaming” in order to think and act differently than it had been previously explained. Nelson Mandela states that South-African people should stand all together towards the eradication of apartheid. The leader invites his public to dream and act on behalf of a noble cause, a common ideal that should belong to everyone, as the “only way to peace and racial harmony”.

The persuasive strategies used by the two great world leaders are very different, yet in both cases they involve numerous psychological abilities related to the knowledge of the human nature, stemming from the assumption that they ought to be in complete harmony with people’s needs, but also to speak about concrete changes that need to be made. Therefore, a current or future leader can be seen as a temporary self-proclaimed “parent” to his people, claiming to be doing his best in order to achieve great things and to put into practice and exploit all the dreams that people have about making a difference as well as all the possibilities that come along the way.

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