A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Language of Persuasion in Political Discourse

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Abstract:

   This paper tackles critical discourse analysis henceforth (CDA) of the language of persuasion in political discourse. CDA studies the relationships between the social power abuse, dominance, and inequality whether in the political discourse or in the social domains. Therefore, the researcher tries to investigate the persuasive strategies in political discourse with special reference to the second debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the US presidential elections campaign (2016). The present study aims at finding out the persuasive strategies that are used by the two candidates in the debate. For the analysis of the data, the researcher adopted Aristotle the traditional rhetorical strategies as a model. The current study is based on the following hypotheses: Both candidates use the Aristotle's persuasive strategies in their speeches in order to persuade the audience. There is a strong relationship between the linguistic choices (lexical, syntactic or rhetoric choices) and persuasion. The study looks forward to locate the considerable features of political discourse in terms of persuasive strategies.

Keywords*: Critical discourse analysis, persuasion, political discourse, vocative*

1.Introduction:

   This article explores the language of persuasion in political discourse, focusing on the debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the US presidential elections campaign (2016). It examines the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used to express persuasive language for ideological orientations, highlighting the importance of understanding the relationship between language and persuasion.

   Persuasion is an integral part of argumentation, it includes a sender or senders implementing strategies in order to persuade the receiver or receivers of the validity of what is said. So, persuasion then includes efforts to encourage the nation towards changing people's attitudes, observations, ideas and the world in broad-spectrum. Vocatives, appealing to authorities and personal pronouns are some strategies that used as strategies for the purpose of persuasion. These guidelines and strategies make connection between the conclusion or claims to the argument.

(Dedaić 2006) states that "primarily persuasion rather than information or entertainment" That is to say, the firm connection and interaction between the sender and the listeners make communicative aim for the sender to influence the receivers to take the sender's ideas or believes. The sender uses some certain strategies of persuasion such as legitimizing, modulating power relations and claiming solidarity with the audience in order to reach his\her goal.

2. Literature Review:

This section is concerned with reviewing the literature related to persuasion. It provides a theoretical background about the definition of this. It sheds light on the persuasion and political discourse. It pays attention to the Aristotle's Persuasive Strategies, then it deals with the psychology of persuasion. They are all summarized below.

1. 1 Critical Discourse Analysis:

Critical Linguistics (CL) is a linguistically oriented critical approach to discourse analysis, originating from Fowler et al.'s 1979 work. CL investigates the relations between sense, symbols, and social orientations which manage the structure of discourse by means of a precise analysis of the language.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a research method that examines inequality, dominance, social power abuse, ideology in political and social contexts. It is a critical device used to analyze written and spoken texts, as described by McKenna (2004). Fairclough (1993) defines CDA as:

> "Relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony."

Critical discourse analysts study the relationship between language form and function, focusing on grammar, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. They aim to explain why certain patterns are privileged over others, highlighting the importance of understanding language's form and function (Hlail, 2023).

2.2 Persuasion:

(Miller 1980) states that " persuasion refers generally to the use of language by one party to encourage another to accept a point of view. It is the skill of using words to change the way others think, feel, and behave. All language use can in a sense be regarded as persuasive." However, in this respect, the definition of persuasion to all linguistic performance can be either by changing thought, or changing ideas of the receivers, or to make their opinions stronger. Yet, the audiences whether they are observable and undistinguishable, implicit or real, and spectators add to the persuasion implementation.

The context of situation has a big influence on the process persuasion, in other words, context is very important way in the process of persuasion whether in terms of situational context or in socio-cultural context.

2.3 Persuasion and Political Discourse:

In political discourse, the addressers or the speakers want to get a clear point with the audience or hearers by using some certain strategies of the language (Fairclough: 2001). One of those strategies followed by the political speakers is the strategy of persuasion. (Diamond and Cobb:1999) affirms that "act of conversion convincing others, changing their views, shifting their ideal points along the imagined line". This means that persuasion has the vital aim of manipulating people and leading people hold ideas and behaviors for the sake of the political speaker's aims and intentions, as the addresser presented. (Poggi: 2005).

(Mutz et al: 1999) state that "Although persuasion is an inherited form of human interaction, it is ubiquitous in the political process since it is socially acceptable to have different views about politics, there is always an attempt to attract people to one side or another". It means that political speakers tend to attract the attention of the audience or the addressees by a strategy of persuasion.   Thus, the attempt to persuade people or make them changing their opinions to be in the speaker's side becomes a authentic feature of discourse especially of political discourse (ibid). From a pragmatic point of view, speech acts of Austin (Austin: 1962) might unmask the unseen motives of persuading the audience by the speeches of politicians. (Lohrey:1981) focuses that "Political thinking has been a vast and fruitful area of contemporary research, particularly among politicians who have studied it from different angles, as well as linguists, because politics relies upon language as its tool of trade".

2.4 Aristotle's Persuasive Strategies:

Aristotle (1967) gives three different persuasive strategies in his vital work that is to say The Art of Rhetoric. They are as follows: logos, ethos and pathos. logos which means the rational argumentation, ethos which mainly means the speaker's credibility of the and finally pathos that is the appeal for the sake of emotion. Those persuasive strategies which are proposed by Aristotle aim at convincing the addressee or the audience to reach "out of free choice" and this is the main goal of the speaker or the political addresser (Poggi: 2005). This is achieved by convincing the audience of the high importance of the observed goal through the manipulation of addressee's opinions.

The Greek Philosopher Aristotle studied writings of rhetoric in the fourth century these writings were the most important writings in the field of persuasion. Aristotle called that work as "Rhetorica". He affirmed that the rhetoric strategy was the "art of persuasion". Hence persuasion strategy is an art followed by the addressers in order to convince the addressee, thus "the ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion. Michel Meyer states that "rhetoric is the analyses of connection of means and goals by help of discourse" (Meyer: 1996). As a result it can be said that discourse is pleased in human's activities, especially when they contract with making decisions, beliefs, ideas or even the acceptance.

2.4.1 Logos:

Logos is one of the very important argumentative judgments and it is as one of the dimensions of persuasion. In other words, it means persuading the audience or the addressee via the use of determined behavior, significant memory, serious cognition and skills of analysis, For Aristotle Logos is rationale, logical and argumentative discourse.

2.4.2 Ethos:

Ethos means convincing by the character of an orator (addresser), which leads to persuasive process. Ethos is the speaker's style of getting the audience into his\her side when he wants to attract their attention in order to get their confidence. So, this type of persuasive strategy depends on the addresser rather than the addressee. Ethos in other words indicates the sender's credibility. It is not necessarily the speaker only can use the ethos strategy, but even the writer can use such a persuasive strategy in his/her writings. If the sender is convincing the receivers, they will follow him\ her because of his/her message. Aristotle claims that Ethos the addresser may effect on the audience by the words or the speeches in general, that is to say, ethos is a "face created by the discourse. This is conditioned by the fact that the orator earns the credibility only in case if his or her arguments are competent, reliable, fair and frank" (Amossy: 2000).

Ethos is achieved if the speaker appeals to the authority or honesty in order to convince the addressee. Ethos can be done in one of the following ways:

1- By being a distinguished person, such as a manager of a company or a professor in the college.
2- By having a devolved attention in the subject matter, for example when a man being connected to the subject.
3- By showing the audience that the speaker is knowledgeable on the subject matter when he\she uses impressive logos.
4- By attracting ethics of a character or a person.

The confidence which might be credited to the speaker governed by mostly on two important features. These features are benevolence and competence. Benevolent means that when the sender and the receive share the same interests and aims, and the sender does not want to make negative impacts on the audience or the receivers (Poggi 2005).

On the other hand, competent means that the speakers have the authority to chase the people's aims or goals which are being claimed by the audience. The core meaning of ethos is the action of "self-representation" (ibid: 2005). It means that when the speaker desires to put and use their characters to the place of the audience. Cockcroft (2004) claims that "ethos is the strongest appeal, since it expresses values shared by the persuader and the persuadee and is used to establish a rapport with the audience."

2.4.3 Pathos:

Pathos is the third and the final persuasive strategy used by Aristotle, it is connected with the audience in a direct way. In other words, audience is a group of subjects in which the persuader tries to influence argumentation. Therefore, being with the audience is one of the necessary features for communication and communication by persuasion. Pathos is the power or the authority with which the writer's or the speaker's message makes the audience move to his or her emotional action or to bring the addressees in to his/ her side. Thus a good speaker should ensure which emotion and desire would effect on audience effectively paying attention to their social life, age and gender. It is worth mentioning that the speaker should know how the speaker can help the audience by some causes satisfactory emotions through the discourse, like anger, insult, empathy, fear, confusion, etc. (Amossy: 2000).

There are some certain ways in which the emotional appeals can be achieved:

1- When the persuader uses stories or uses a metaphors through the written or spoken discourse.

2- When the speaker delivered a common passion to the audience in the discourse whether it is written or spoken.

Pathos can be used in different forms, for example metaphor and even simile. It is worth mentioning that if pathos are used well in the written or spoken discourse, it may be considered as a powerful tool. On the contrarily some speakers do not depend on pathos, because they consider it effective when the sender connects it speech with the hearer's implicit value and emotion . (ibid).

These are three classic Aristotelian types of persuasive strategies. Ethos "the voice of the persuader". Pathos "the emotional appeal to the audience" and logos "the appeal to the rationality of the audience."
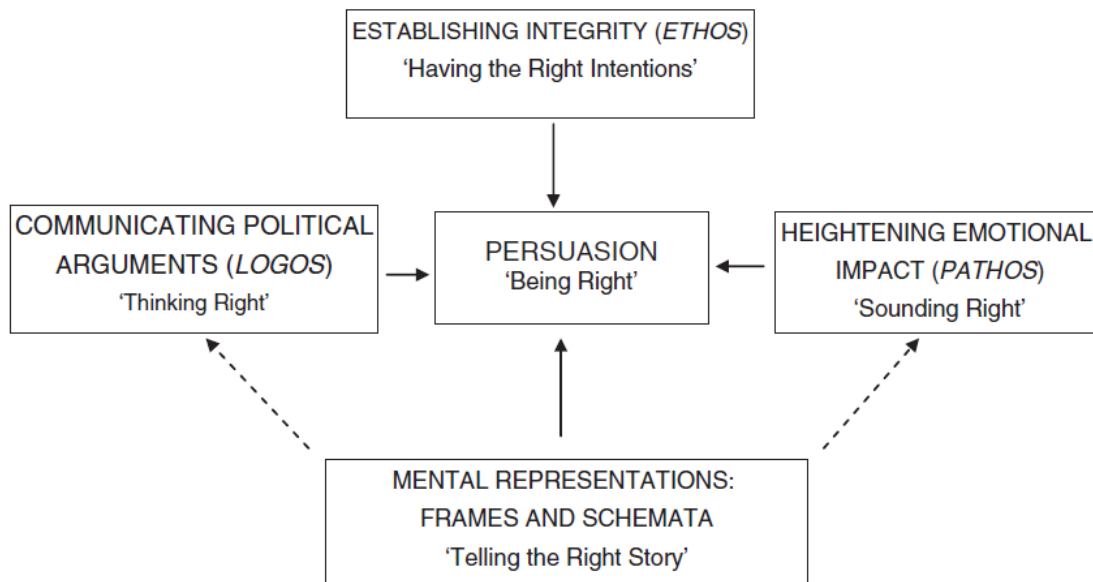
Figure (1): Aristotle's Persuasive Strategies

2.5 The Psychology of Persuasion

Jowett and O'Donnell (1992) state that the persuader can seek a persuasive message and can effect on the receiver of whether it is spoken or written by three ways; these three ways are "response shaping, response reinforcing and response changing". In the ways above, the message of persuasion has to come about the audience's opinions or beliefs, when the people (audience) rise their needs, values, needs, attitudes and emotions instead of presenting totally new:

"People are reluctant to change; thus, in order to convince them to do   so, the persuader has to relate change to something in which the persuade already believes. This is called an 'anchor' because it is already accepted by the persuadee and will be used to tie down new attitudes or behaviors. An anchor is a starting point for a change because it represents something that is already widely accepted by the potential persuadees." (Jowett and O'Donnell 1992)

This is particularly true in political speeches where the common of political speeches is often hesitant to the comprehensive gratified of policy. Politicians reply to the messages more efficiently that elucidate planned activities with mentioning acquainted experiences. This means that talented politicians or successful speakers can advance their persuasive messages with indication occupied from needs or opinions about the audience surround them. (Jonathan Charteris: 2011).

3. Model of the Study:

According to Aristotle the traditional rhetorical strategies are: rhetorical questions, appeals to authority, appeals to logic, superlatives and favorable numerical data, poetic devices such as alliteration. Vocatives, humor and the use of personal pronouns are examples of Direct audience-engaging strategies. There strategies will be explained respectively.

3.1 Rhetorical questions:

Spurgin (1994) points out that "The hallmark of a rhetorical question is that it is used to create an effect by engaging listeners and making them think, and it is not intended to elicit a reply. The rhetorical question, because it invites assent, can provide a persuasive conclusion to the argument." Rhetorical questions means that when a speaker or a writer "does not expect a reply" but he\she uses the type of question to "emphasize a point" (ibid).

3.2 Appeal to logic:

"For Aristotle, rhetoric, the art of public speaking is the art of logical discussion. As opposed to syllogisms, rhetorical arguments (Aristotle's enthymemes) are the substance of rhetorical persuasion " (Aristotle: 1984).

3.3 Nice Numbers:

Helena Halmari (2005) says that superlatives may exaggerate especially when the package of the superlatives around convincing factual information, in this case superlatives can be considered as on strategy of persuasive strategies. It is worth mentioning that nice numbers means involving the use of numerical data or information by numbers for the sake of attracting the attention of the audience.

3.4 Poetic Aspects of Persuasion:

Campbell et al. (1997) affirm that "rhetorical discourse is frequently poetic; it has ritualistic, aesthetic, dramatic, and emotive qualities." The poetic aspect of persuasion is the use of alliteration. The use of alliteration in the written or spoken discourse can be considered as part of ethical appeal. Alliteration is uncertain way of delivering the message whether it is written or spoken to the audience. In this way the addresser is a skillful speaker and, thus, a man "of a sound understanding." In this respect, alliteration is a persuasive device or strategy used by the skillful speakers.

3.5 Vocatives:

Helena Halmari (2005) affirms that using vocatives directly by the addresses to address the audience make them feel as if they are participating in a dialogue between audience and the persuader. Taking the crowd to the side of the persuader is the core aim or goal of persuasion and this achieved by one of the persuasive devices or strategies followed by the speaker. Vocative is one of these devices. Using vocatives in the discourse help this aim or goal when telling the crowd that the persuader is appealing their desires and emotions.

3.6 Personal Pronoun Use:

The choice of personal pronouns as a persuasive strategy or one of the persuasive strategies used by the addresser , is an intelligent and smart way to navigate the desire, needs and opinions of the lisners (Helena Halmari 2005).

3.7 Evoking history:

One common of persuasive strategy is to evoke historical references, from one hand, and likening themselves or disliking others to historical figures on the other. (ibid)

4. Data Analysis and Discussion:

The present study investigates the second debate between Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump during US presidential elections campaign in (2016). It finds that there are a lot of persuasive devices within this debate, as shown in the following sections.

4.1 Rhetorical questions:

There are a lot of rhetorical questions in the investigated data. For example:

1- **TRUMP**: "You know, it's amazing. I'm watching Hillary go over facts. And she's going after fact after fact, and she's lying again, because she said she — you know, what she did with the e-mail was fine. **You think it was fine to delete 33,000 e-mails?** I don't think so."

2- **TRUMP**: "You don't. Just like when you ran the State Department, **$6 billion was missing. How do you miss $6 billion?** You ran the State Department, $6 billion was either stolen. They don't know. It's gone, $6 billion. If you become president, this country is going to be in some mess. Believe me."

In the example above Donald Trump asks the question not seeking for answer but in order to make the listeners to think and focus on the weak points of Hilary Clinton.

3- **CLINTON: "Will Donald Trump admit and condemn that the Russians are doing this and make it clear that he will not have the help of Putin in in this election, that he rejects Russian espionage against Americans, which he actually encouraged in the past?** We've never had anything like this happen in any of our elections before."

In the above example Hilary Clinton asks these questions not for the sake of the answer, but for in order to waken the conscious of the listeners and to think of the support of Russia for Donald Trump.

4.2 Appeal to logic:

4- **CLINTON**: "Well, **first**, **let me start** by saying that so much of what he's just said is not right, but he gets to run his campaign any way he chooses. He gets to decide what he wants to talk about. Instead of answering people's questions, talking about our agenda, laying out the plans that we have that we think can make a better life and a better country, that's his choice."

5- **CLINTON: "Number one**, insurance companies can't deny you coverage because of a pre-existing condition. **Number two**, no lifetime limits, which is a big deal if you have serious health problems. **Number three,** women can't be charged more than men for our health insurance, which is the way it used to be before the Affordable Care Act. **Number four**, if you're under 26, and your parents have a policy, you can be on that policy until the age of 26, something that didn't happen before."

In the examples (4, 5), we can see in Clinton's speech a pure, logical, rational and systematic transition of ideas. It means that she uses a strong appeal to logos. She followed Aristotle's model to appeal emotions. Clinton is arousing the logical thinking of the audience when she started making an appeal to the power and authority "our agenda, laying out the plans that we have"

4.3 Superlatives or "nice numbers:

6- **TRUMP**: "I have great respect for women. Nobody has **more respect for women than I do."**

7- **CLINTON**: "Right now, we are at 90 percent health insurance coverage. **That's the highest** we've ever been in our country (…)You will have the **finest** health care plan."

8- **TRUMP**: "And a lot of it has to do with the fact that our taxes are so high, just about the **highest** in the world. And I'm bringing them down to one of the lower in the world. And I think it's so important — one of **the most important** things we can do. But she is raising everybody's taxes massively."

According to the investigated data, in the three example above both parties in the debate, that is to say CLINTON and TRUMP use superlatives (**finest**, **highest**, **more respect**) for the sake of persuasion.

4.4 Poetic aspects of persuasion:

Within this section, there are two types of poetic aspects of persuasion: reference to America and simile.

4.4.1 Reference to America:

Both presidents used some range of frequencies for the word America/American. For America(n) is the most commonly used word in their speeches. Moreover, both presidents used the same concept to indicate or to refer to America as nation, or our country, for instance:

9- CLINTON: "One of my first jobs in politics was down in south Texas registering Latino citizens to be able to vote (…) , to making sure that an every American feels like he or she has a place in **our country."**

10- **CLINTON**: "Democrats, Republicans, independents, people across **our country**. If you don't vote for me, I still want to be your president."

11- **CLINTON**: "And we would then have to put them on trains, on buses to get them out of our country. I think that is an idea that is not in keeping with who **we are as a nation**."

In Clinton's three examples above, she uses "our country " and " nation " to refer to America, and this is one technique in the strategies of persuasion in political discourse or in discourse in general.

4.4.2 Simile:

12- **TRUMP**: "And my whole concept was to make America great again. When I watch the deals being made, when I watch what's happening with some horrible **like** Obamacare."

13- **TRUMP**: "Excuse me. Because she has been a disaster **as** a senator. A disaster."

14- **CLINTON**: "I started off **as** a young lawyer working against discrimination against African-American children in schools and in the criminal justice system."

Both parties of the debate were using simile (**horrible like Obamacare, a disaster as a senator, I started off as a young lawyer**) as poetic device for persuasive devices.

4.5 Vocatives:

15- **CLINTON:** "My vision of America is an America where everyone has a place, if you're willing to work hard, you do your part, you contribute to the community. That's what America is. **That's what we want America to be for our children and our grandchildren**."

16- **TRUMP:** "**We've** got to remain energy-independent. It gives **us** much more power and freedom than to be worried about what goes on in the Middle East. We have enough worries over there without having to worry about that."

17- **TRUMP:** "Well, I think when the middle class thrives, America thrives. And so my plan is based on growing the economy, giving middle class families many more opportunities. I want **us to have the biggest** jobs program since World War II."

18- "I'm not proud of it. I apologize to my family…"

According to the investigated data, there are many uses of vocative pronouns. By the phrase I want **us to have the biggest** in (17), Trump implies to the crowd that he is on a task. Both parties in the debate vocatives to attract the attention of the audience. This type of speech appeals to the crowd, and this Trump's style of speech.

4.6 Personal Pronouns:

One of the most used set of pronouns noticed when listening to the investigated data (debate) Clinton and Trump's speeches. In particular third person plural, **we** and **us**. By using **we** and **us** throughout their speech, they creates an atmosphere where the listener is welcomed into the speech. The listener is not only drawn in but is connected to the speaker through these inclusive pronouns. In addition both parties claim an equality with their audience. Thus creating a sense of speaker-listener combination towards common goals. For instance:

19- **CLITON**: "Right now, **we** are at 90 percent health insurance coverage. That's the highest **we've** ever been in **our** country."

20- **TRUMP**: "Obamacare will never work. It's very bad, very bad health insurance. Far too expensive. And not only expensive for the person that has it (…) **We** have to repeal it and replace it with something absolutely much less expensive and something that works."

In the two examples above, both parties use personal pronouns as strategies of persuasion, when they choose some specific certain pronouns in a smart way in order to direct the audience's thinking. For example when they use the pronoun (we) as an exclusive pronoun or as an inclusive pronoun. In (19, 20) the pronoun WE which is used by the two parties is inclusive. It means to include both the speakers and the audience for the sake of persuasion.

The pronoun (I) in some contexts or in some discourses whether they are written or spoken can be used as a persuasive strategies such as I believe, I challenge, I think, I hope, I ask, I propose or I urge). For example:

21- **TRUMP**: "**I believe** we have to get ISIS. We have to worry about ISIS before we can get too much more involved. She had a chance to do something with Syria. They had a chance. And that was the line. And she didn't."

22- **CLINTON**: "**I hope** by the time I am president that we will have pushed ISIS out of Iraq. I do think that there is a good chance that we can take Mosul. And, you know, Donald says he knows more about ISIS than the generals. No, he doesn't."

23- **TRUMP**: "**I ask** Hillary, why doesn't — she made $250 million by being in office. She used the power of her office to make a lot of money."

Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump use private verbs and public verbs as shown in the three examples above as persuasive techniques, and to make the audience believe in their speech, and to be in their side because of their use of persuasive strategies.

4.7 Evoking History:

Clinton and Trump both of them use a common strategy of persuasion in order to evoke historical references especially when they use some words that indicate or express like himself\herself or disliking others to important figures in the history of America. For instance:

24- **TRUMP**: "If you look at **Bill Clinton**, far worse. Mine are words, and his was action. His was what he's done to women. There's never been anybody in the history politics in this nation that's been so abusive to women."

25- **CLINTON**: "And I have worked and I admire **President Obama**. He inherited the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. That was a terrible time for our country."

In (24, 25) the parties both used evoking history as a persuasive device, but from different views. In (24) Trump use the former president Bill Clinton as disliking or negative evoking for the history in order to persuade the audience and to be in his side when he presents such a negative evoking. But in (25) Clinton evokes history of president Obama but from positive side.

5. Conclusions:

The results of the analysis have come out with the following conclusions: According to the analysis of the data, both candidates (Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump) use all the persuasive strategies which are proposed by Aristotle. According to the investigated data, both candidates in the debate try to bring the audience in his/her side by means of persuasive devices. Every candidate in the debate tries to show his/her positive points and tries to show his/her countpart's negative aspects. Both candidates use all the persuasive strategies which are proposed by Aristotle. According to data analysis, persuasion is achieved by language use whether in terms of written or spoken. What is important is that all the persuasive strategies achieved by linguistic means.

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