

A Stylistic Study of Hyperbolical Patterns in Political Speeches

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Abstract:

Politicians use political speeches as a potent instrument to sway public opinion and deliver their views. Politicians frequently use a variety of stylistic techniques in these speeches to attract the audience and highlight on the important issues. One of such tactic is hyperbole, a figure of speech which is distinguished by exaggeration, overstretching, or statements that are not meant to be taken literally through the usage of certain words under its social and political importance.

The purpose of this study is to analyze and classify hyperbolical patterns in political speeches by exploring their effects and understanding their linguistic impact by finding out its frequency in terms of forms and functions. In order to achieve the aims of the present study, three selected speeches of Donald Trump were analyzed through adopting linguistic model to reach a better understanding of the hyperbole. The study adopts qualitative research of analysis as the design and a descriptive as method.

From these three speeches, the researcher found 7 forms of hyperbole have been used by Trump in order to clarify his ideas. Whereas, 9

functions for hyperbole had found 7 of them only. The study is concluded that there are some patterns of hyperbole are used by Trump in his speeches to capture the attention of audience, emphasize his points, and sway public opinion.

Key Words: Style, Stylistic, Political Discourse , Hyperbole.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a system of signs and the primary means of communication for people. "Humans use language to convey messages and even statements, as well as to express ideas, thoughts, and opinions" (Wardhaugh, 2002: 2). Therefore, speeches—whether written or spoken—can be used to impart these ideas to others. Whereas, style is a primary aspect of any speech so it gives unique recognition to others. In general, style depends on “linguistic levels” and these levels are differentiated from one text to another , (McCarthy & Carter, 2004). It also refers to “the linguistic characteristics of a particular text”,(Kamalu, 2023) , so it could be considered as a variety

Whilst, the word stylistics has derived from style, so it is meant the study of a style. In the same line, Leech and Short (1981:89) state that stylistics is a “linguistic” study of style, so it is a branch of Linguistics that is dealt with various styles. That’s to say the study of appropriate usage of a words or a language in the sentence . The main objective of stylistics is to focus on “how a speaker creates the phenomenon of language and how language is used”. It has plausibly

defined by the system of clauses, words and sounds. From an academic perspective stylistics has defined as “an art of speech, uses as means of persuasion” (Estabraq, 2019).

In linguistic, “stylistic device” (“figure of speech” or “rhetorical device”) is the use of a variety of techniques to convey additional meaning, idea, or feeling by modifying the usual or expected order of words in the grammatical text structure, (McCarthy & Carter, 2004).

Zuck (1996) has proposed that “stylistic devices” refer to the way by which words are used outside of their ordinary meaning, place, or manner to draw attention to their meaning. In addition, 'stylistic devices' are often used to create emphasis or clarity when the speaker wants to make a strong impression on his audience, so these devices are used to increase the effectiveness of any speech (Rubianto, 2018). One of these “stylistic devices” is hyperbole .Since politician needs to create an emphasis or effect on the public so they use it via exaggeration or overstatement. The main reason behind using hyperbole is to influence opinion, and convey emotions. The current study aims at finding out: forms and functions of hyperbole which used in Trump’s speeches and the linguistic intent behind the usage of such device . It is designed to answer the following questions:

1- What are the common hyperbolical patterns used in political speeches?

2- How do hyperbolic patterns contribute to the persuasive impact of political speeches?

3- Is the use of hyperbole as a stylistic strategy adopted by the user for some intentions?

2. LANGUAGE AND POLITICS

Political language, which is diplomatic specific, is often characterized by persuasiveness and ideological bias and sometimes use for jargon, euphemisms and propaganda. The way by which this language is communicated can significantly influence public opinion and political outcomes due to its usage for governmental and social issues. This means that any political activity could not achieve its goals without the use of language .So language is the primary means of communication and therefore it has to do with words, phrases and rhetoric. However, at the level of word choice, it has its own style and politicians are entirely mindful of the connotative meaning of such word choices as they tend to have certain effects on their recipients. Similarly, Chilton and Schäffner (2002: 23) claim that languages are inherently structured for social or political purposes. In short, the language of politics is about power and conflict, involving political debates, arguments, rhetoric , i.e. persuasion, but sometimes also manipulation. Manipulation here means the conscious modification or construction of a new political discourse reality using different linguistic means (Ibid.)

3. POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Political discourse is described by Beard (2000: 25–87) as a cohesive written or oral text that is expressed verbally and nonverbally and that directly depends on the political communication context in addition to pragmatic, sociocultural, psychological, and other elements.

Political discourse generally has selected structures and techniques that are useful for carrying out political actions in political circumstances, but these structures are rarely exclusive. Making public claims is not the only thing that state in political discourse. It is about politics, i.e. doing things with words (Bahrynivska, 2016). Meanwhile, Van Dijk (2001: 33) explains that "political discourse" is determined by who speaks to whom, about what, when, and with what objectives—rather than by a topic or style. To state the matter differently, "political discourse" is specially "political" due to its roles within the political system.

Political speeches are theatrical presentations in which the words and images are carefully chosen to influence the audience's thoughts and feelings in order to elicit agreement and consent. In this context, politicians who are elected or appointed to key positions in politics, their speeches usually serve as declarations of their intentions. They are trying to elicit a response from the audience by employing stylistic device. According to Van Dijk (1997), every speech has a specific role to play, depending on the political activity that is going on at the time.

4. HYPERBOLE:

4.1 DEFINITION OF HYPERBOLE

According to Abrams (2009), forceful overstatement, or the excessive exaggeration of truth or possibility, is known as hyperbole (Greek for "overshooting"). So any expressions or words could consider as hyperbolic pattern when it is expressed overstatement or exaggerated for a particular purpose. However, hyperbole is defined as "an expression that is more extreme than justified given its ontological referent" (Ibid.) To be clear, "Hyperbole" could be used to exaggerate the size, quantity, or degree of something. By using hyperbole , when the speakers say X, they mean something that is more than X (Claridge, 2010).

politicians use exaggeration in order to go beyond what the listeners anticipate .Burgers et al. (2016) state that there are three main elements define what is a hyperbole ,as clarified underneath:

1-EXAGGERATION: it is the first element of hyperbole (Burgers et al, 2016). The speakers are exaggerating a feature or an element, When they speak hyperbolically, (Ibid.). Thus, exaggeration is used to highlight an importance of somewhat ,As explained in the example below :

- "That's the worst thing that could happen!"

In the previous sentence ,the speaker is stressed upon an idea that he conveys which is what is occurred was awful. If it is not, then the listener might seem the utterance is not interesting.

2- PROPOSITIONAL MEANING AND INTENDED MEANING : A shift between propositional meaning and intended meaning is considered the second component that is used to identify hyperbole,(Burgers et al.,2016). As clarified in examples below:

A. It took Ahmed a full day to type three words on the laptop. B. It took Ahmed a minute to type three words on the laptop.

The sentence (A) is communicated propositional meaning which implies that “It took him an awfully long time to sort a number of words”. The actual experience is less extraordinary than the depiction of event . Whereas , the time is stood little as appeared in (B). The intended meaning of it is overstatement which might be “He was amazingly quick in typing”.

3- REFERENT : Having a specific referent in mind is the third element that is utilized to detect hyperbole (Burgers et al., 2016). It is quite challenging to determine whether a statement is hyperbolic if it has been taken out of its context or not. Cano Mora (2006) and McCarthy & Carter (2004) contend that the statements interfere with actual experiences. The following example will clarify the idea:

-The best time of day is these days!

If the previous sentence is taken literally, the listener might infer that the speaker is an elderly man who has experienced financial difficulties. These may have been the best days of his life if he had won a reward that day. It might be hyperbolically intended in a different situation.

4.2 FORMS OF HYPERBOLE

The significant point to realize and analyze hyperboles in speeches is to identify its classifications. In relation to this , Claridge (2010: 49–70) proposes seven forms of hyperbole as explained in the following :

1-SINGLE-WORD HYPERBOLE: This form of hyperbole is involved with a single word that exaggerates for emphasis or effect. It could be a word that amplifies the intensity or magnitude of something. Claridge (2010: 46) states that single words of hyperbole could be nouns ,verbs, adjectives and adverb (Harman & Strine,2023) .As in the following:

"I'm dying of thirst!"

The previous example expresses an emphasizing for an extreme something .

2-PHRASAL HYPERBOLE: This form of hyperbole is dealt with the usage of a combination of words or phrases in order to make an exaggerated effect , (Claridge ,2010:p. 54). It often adds emphasis or

intensifies for the meaning of a statement. Such as: "I have a million things to do!"

3-CLAUSAL HYPERBOLE: This form of hyperbole is included with the using of a clause or a group of words to make a point more vital or to exaggerate a situation. It often involves amplifying the truth for dramatic effect,(Ibid.). For example:

- "I waited for ages!"

The prior example is explained an emphasizing that a long period of time has been consumed for doing something.

4-NUMERICAL HYPERBOLE: This form of hyperbole comprises using numbers such as a hundred, a thousand, millions, and their singular forms a hundred, a thousand, etc. It also included terms that is frequently used metaphorically, like tons, heaps and piles, as well as the words number and amount themselves when they are altered by strong adjectives in an exaggerated way to highlight a point,(Claridge, 2010:p. 64). It might entail inflating amounts or employing big numbers to create impact. As explained in the following :

- "She's said that joke hundreds of times!"

The previous example has comprised an exaggerated quantities for effect or emphasis.

5-THE ROLE OF SUPERLATIVE: This type of form of hyperbole is contained with using extreme language for describing

something by using superlatives in an exaggerated manner for instance: the best and worst , (Wierzbicka, 2003: 277). As in the following example:

- "She's the most beautiful person I've ever seen!"

6-COMPARISON: This form of hyperbole contains the usage of language to focus on the contrast between two things for emphasizing a point, (Ibid.). Like saying :

- "She's as bright as the sun!"

7- REPETITION: Hyperbole could include the usage of repetition by repeating phrases or words. In speech, the speakers emphasize their statement by intensifying or simplifying an idea,(Ibid.). The following examples will illustrate the idea:

- "I've cried and cried until I had no tears left!"

4. 3 FUNCTIONS OF HYPERBOLE

Hyperbole is dealt with various functions, each referring for a specific thing in communication. Mora (2006) identifies nine functions for hyperbole as clarified in the explanations underneath:

1. EMPHASIS: By using hyperbole , a phrase or an idea can be added more emphasis. It attracts attention and emphasizes the significance of the subject matter by exaggerating some parts of it ,(Mora,2006). such as "I've told you a million times to clean your room!"

2. EVALUATION: Hyperbole can be employed to convey strong opinions or assessments. To leave a lasting impression on the reader or listener, it intensifies the assessment or opinion,(Ibid.). As in "That film was the best thing I've ever seen in my life!"

3. EXPRESSION OF SURPRISE: Hyperbole can be used to express shock or astonishment. It is highlighted the unexpected aspect of a situation or event by exaggerating the emotion,(Mora,2006). Such "I was so shocked, my jaw dropped to the floor!"

4. SIMPLIFICATION: Complex ideas or concepts can be made simpler by using hyperbole. It seeks to increase the audience's accessibility or comprehension of the material by exaggerating or oversimplifying it,(Ibid.). For example: "This Maths problem is as easy as pie!"

5. INTEREST INTENSIFICATION: Hyperbole can be employed to intensify curiosity or an interest .By exaggeration the characteristics or qualities of something might draw attention and create intrigue,(Mora,2006). As in: "You won't believe what happened next, it was the most incredible thing!"

6. CONTRAST OF DIFFERENCES: Hyperbole is used to stress the contrast. It gives emphasis to the distinction or creates comparison between two things by exaggerating the differences,(Ibid.). Such as : "He's as tall as a skyscraper, while she's as short as a mouse."

7. HUMOR: Hyperbole can be used to create comedic effect. By exaggerating characteristics or situations ,it produces happiness and enjoyment,(Ibid.). Such as "I'm so hungry, I could eat a whole elephant!"

8. CLARIFICATION: Hyperbole is utilized to clarify a point. The intended meaning could be more memorable or explicit by exaggeration certain aspects,(Ibid.). As in "I've told you a thousand times, don't forget to lock the door!"

9. POLITE DE-EMPHASIS: Hyperbole is applied to de-emphasize a request situation or politely moderate something . By exaggerating the modesty or insignificance, it is softened the impact and maintains politeness,(Ibid.). As in "It's just a small problem, no need to worry about it."

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This study is followed a qualitative research of analysis in analyzing and presenting data and a descriptive method in providing a theoretical framework and understanding for the context.

5.2 DATA FOR ANALYSIS

The data of this study is consisted of three political speeches of Donald Trump's speeches: The Inaugural Address(January20,2017),Campaign Rally Speeches (Presidential

Campaign 2020) and Republican National Convention (his 2020 state of the Union Address) (February 4, 2020).The full transcripts of President Donald Trump’s speech were loaded from the website of CNN.

5.3 MODEL OF ANALYSIS

The model which is taken on in this study is an eclectic one that adapted from Mora (2006) and Claridge (2010). As a whole, the adopted model for the present study is composed of form and function of hyperbole for analysis.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The examination of the various forms and functions of hyperbole in Trump's speech is provided in this section. Trump's usage of hyperbole in his speeches has a big impact on public opinion and political discourse. On the one hand, audiences who value direct, powerful communication may find it appealing. However, it can also affect political discourse and foster an emotional appeal which takes precedence over factual truth. Furthermore, exaggerated speech has the potential to polarize audiences.

6.1 Donald Trump’s speech: The Inaugural Address (January20,2017)

6.1.1 FORMAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This text comprised many hyperbolic patterns .The total number of these patterns are (56). It demonstrated that the number and

frequent rate of single words hyperbole (19), (34%) separately .Whereas, this table referred to phrasal hyperbole as (9), (16%). However, clausal hyperbole recorded (7), (13%). In turn, numerical hyperbole had been (3), (5%) and superlative was (8), (14%).Whilst comparison had been (3), (5%). Finally repetition was (7), (13%). All these findings are illustrated in table (1).

Table (1): Analysis of Forms of Hyperbolic Patterns

Forms of Hyperbole	Frequency	Percentage
Single Word Hyperbole	19	34%
Phrasal Hyperbole	9	16%
Clausal Hyperbole	7	13%
Numerical Hyperbole	3	5%
The Role of Superlative	8	14%
Comparison	3	5%
Repetition	7	13%
Total	100	

The data analysis reveals that the primary form of hyperbole in this speech is single words, which accounts for (34%) of the total (Table 1). However, One plausible explanation is that Trump depends on this form to express his ideas. These words could enhance the description of the objects and provide a visual image. In actuality, the audience can easily understand many of these terms because of their widespread. It's possible that he's trying to create an image of excellence and achievement by using such words.

6.1.2 FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This text had to accomplish six communicative functions. The results combine the effect of emphasis as (19%). Evaluation was (23%) .Whereas expression of surprise had been (12%) to exaggerate the level of surprise and determination However, simplification was(19%) . Interest intensification had been (15%) and clarification was (12%) . On the other hand, the function of contrast of difference, humor and polite de-emphasis didn't have any record in this text as exemplified in table (2) below.

Table (2): Analysis of Functions of Hyperbolic Patterns

Functions	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Emphasis	5	19%
Evaluation	6	23%
Expression of Surprise	3	12%
Simplification	5	19%
Interest Intensification	4	15%
Contrast of Difference	/	/
Humor	/	/
Clarification	3	12%
Polite de-Emphasis	/	/
Total	26	100%

The data analysis reveals that the primary function of hyperbole in this speech is evaluation, which accounts for (23%) of the total (Table 2). However, One probable explanation for using Trump evaluative in this speech is to show support of his policies and, at the same time, to express strong disapproval of his rivals' policy. Hyperbole serves as a tactical component of communicative in this text.

6.2 Donald Trump's speech: Presidential Campaign 2020

6.2.1 FORMAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This text included various hyperbolic patterns which showed that the total number of these patterns are (267). This table had revealed that the single words hyperbole existed (94), (29%). While, it is referred to phrasal hyperbole as (83), (26%) and clausal hyperbole was (55), (17%). In sequence, numerical hyperbole had been (19), (6%) and the role of superlative was (32), (10%). Though comparison had been (13), (4%). As a final point repetition was (26), (8%). As shown in table (3).

Table (3): Analysis of Forms of Hyperbolic patterns

Forms of Hyperbole	Frequent	Percentage
Single Word Hyperbole	94	29%
Phrasal Hyperbole	83	26%
Clausal Hyperbole	55	17%
Numerical Hyperbole	19	6%
The Role of Superlative	32	10%
Comparison	13	4%
Repetition	26	8%
Total	100	

In (Table 3), single word were been the highest rate in this text, which came out to (29%). This point to that Trump depended on such form to persuade his audience and to create a rhetorical effect upon them.

6.2.2 FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Hyperbole had been realized seven communicative functions in this text, as a stylistic device to make information that seem more noticeable to the audience. The results seem to combine effects of emphasis as (32%). Evaluation was (23%). Though, expression of surprise had been (11%) , simplification was(12%) , interest intensification had been (9%), contrast of difference was (5%) and clarification was (8%). On the other hand, humor and polite de-emphasis have not been found in this text, as clarified in Table (4) below.

Table (4): Analysis of Functions of Hyperbolic patterns

Functions	Number	Percentage
Emphasis	21	32%
Evaluation	15	23%
Expression of Surprise	7	11%
Simplification	8	12%
Interest Intensification	6	9%
Contrast of Difference	3	5%
Humor	/	/
Clarification	5	8%
Polite de-Emphasis	/	/
Total	65	100%

The most notable function of hyperbole in this speech, is emphasis, which came out to (32%) as illuminated in (Table 4). This could be clarified that Trump is trying to display his key elements of his inner and foreign policy in order to draw attention to them and make them seem as forceful and assertive as possible by using the important features of hyperbole.

6.3 Donald Trump's speech: State of the Union Address (February 4, 2020)

6.3.1 FORMAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This text encompassed various hyperbolic patterns which was exposed that the total number of these patterns were (263). It displayed that the single words hyperbole were (65), (25%). Whereas, it contended on phrasal hyperbole as (56), (21%) and clausal hyperbole were (39), (15%). However, numerical hyperbole had been (39), (15%) and the role of superlative was (18), (7%) relatively. Whilst, comparison was (5), (2%) and repetition was (40), (15%). These results were clarified in table (5).

Table (5): Analysis of Forms of Hyperbolic patterns

Forms of Hyperbole	Frequent	Percentage
Single Word Hyperbole	65	25%
Phrasal Hyperbole	56	21%
Clausal Hyperbole	39	15%
Numerical Hyperbole	39	15%
The Role of Superlative	18	7%
Comparison	5	2%
Repetition	40	15%
Total	100	

In (Table 5), single word were been the highest rate in this text, which were (25%). This indicated that Trump depended on them to express his ideas and to make a strong impression and capture the attention of his audience.

6.3.2 FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Hyperbole had been realized five functions in this text. The results seem to combine the effects of emphasis as (30%) . Evaluation was (28%).Whereas expression of surprise had (5%) and simplification was(16%).Finally, interest intensification had been (4%).Conversely, contrast of difference , clarification, humor and polite de-emphasis, there is no explicit example of hyperbole used for them in this text ,as clarified in Table (6).

Table (6): Analysis of Functions of Hyperbolic patterns

Functions	Number	Percentage
Emphasis	18	30%
Evaluation	17	28%
Expression of Surprise	5	8%
Simplification	16	27%
Interest Intensification	4	7%
Contrast of Difference	/	/
Humor	/	/
Clarification	/	/
Polite De-Emphasis	/	/
Total	60	100%

The most remarkable function of hyperbole in this speech, is emphasis, which had been (30%) as illustrated in (Table 6). This could explain that Trump is trying to create a vivid and memorable image. By exaggerating in descriptions or comparisons, he paints a vivid picture in the audience's mind and makes the speech more appealing.

7.CONCLUSION

Politicians are effectively able to persuade their audience to approve their political opinion by using of hyperbolic patterns. To light on the research questions the analysis of form and function in Trump's speeches has been taken place.

In terms of formal analysis, the frequent rate is exposed that the single words stand for the maximum recognition of hyperbole patterns in Trump's speeches due to their easily understanding by the audience and providing a visual image. He tries to create an image of his accomplishment and exceptionality by portraying his thoughts and deeds as unmatched.

In terms of functional analysis, hyperbole patterns are set up to realize seven communicative functions, to be exact, Emphasis ,evaluation and simplification appear to be the most protuberant functions for hyperbole in the data which observed. Proportionately, the hyperbolic patterns are used as a persuasion technique, proved their effectiveness in displaying Trump's foreign and interior policy to correspond with his objectives and subsequently attract and grasp public attention.

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