

Trumpian populism: A discourse analysis of politeness strategies in Trump's campaign

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Abstract—The use of politeness strategies is one of the speaking styles which are usually used by people in order to make the communication process between speaker and hearer go smoothly. This research article focuses on a pragmatic analysis of Donald Trump's speeches to find out the politeness in Trump's speeches through face-threatening act (FTA) theory and face-saving act (FSA) theory. The goal of this study is to show the relation between Donald Trump and the political power and the influence of Trump and the political power on each other and examine politeness in Trump's speeches through the pragmatic analysis. Moreover, this research article reveals how Donald Trump is aggressive against politicians who were against him in his decisions and how Donald Trump tried to be a kind and polite person to the audience.

Keywords: *Politeness, Face-saving act, Face-threatening act, Trump, discourse analysis, politics*

I. INTRODUCTION

Political science is so large that it is today the subject of interdisciplinary research due to the special importance of political situations in the modern world, and because of this, we can see that the study of political discourse has become very important as it belongs to a new trend of linguistics - political linguistics. Political linguistics arose because of the increasing interest in the study of political discourse.

Political discourse research is now considered a social order, in which, the language of media especially the language of politicians detects all ongoing processes and changes of life. One of the issues politicians are concerned by is their image in public, that's called "face". The term was first introduced by Goffman (1959) who wrote about-face in conjunction with how people interact in daily life. The theory was later deepened by the linguists Stephen Levinson and Penelope Brown (1987) who introduced two types of theories FTA theory and FSA theory. In this research, I will show you how the terms (FTA, FSA) can be used by politicians, through pragmatic analysis for Donald Trump's speeches and I will show you the relation between Trump and the political power, however, I have chosen this topic (a pragmatic analysis in Trump's speeches) because it's an interesting topic and it will be good to be researched because there are a lot of resources about this topic.

The aims of this research are; 1- To analyze Trump's speeches through discourse features and linguistic analysis, 2- To show the influence of Trump and the political power on each other.

There are questions that I am going to answer in this research, such as what are FTA and FSA? Or what is the relation between Trump and political power?

The tool that I will use in this research, to conduct the research, is the critical discourse analysis because it's the most suitable tool to be used in this research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The area of this research is in computational linguistics, so what is computational linguistics? Computational linguistics is an interdisciplinary field concerned with the statistical or rule-based modelling of natural language from a computational perspective, as well as the study of appropriate computational approaches to linguistic questions. Traditionally, computational linguistics was performed by computer scientists who had specialized in the application of computers to the processing of a natural language. Today, computational linguists often work as members of interdisciplinary teams, which can include regular linguists, experts in the target language, and computer scientists.

We know that politics is the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations between individuals, such as the distribution of resources or status. In this research, I will do a pragmatic analysis for the discourse of an important political man Donald Trump to show politeness in Trump's speeches, but first, we should know who is Donald Trump? Donald John Trump (born June 14, 1946) is the 45th and current President of the United States. Before becoming president, he was a businessman and television personality. Trump was also the chairman and president of The Trump Organization. Much of his money was made in real estate in New York City, Las Vegas, and Atlantic City. He used to own the Miss Universe pageant. He was the star in his own reality show (The Apprentice). In October 2019, Trump changed his official residency state from New York to Florida.

In June 2015, Trump announced that he would run for President of the United States in the 2016 presidential election. Starting mid-July, polls showed that Trump was the front-runner in the Republican field. This was true even after much criticism from his party due to his comments on illegal immigration,

Muslims, and ISIS. His campaign has gained support from mostly middle-class families. It has gained opposition from Democrats, some Republicans, business people, some world leaders and the pope.

On May 4, 2016, Trump became the presumptive nominee after his only remaining challengers, Texas United States senator Ted Cruz and Ohio Governor John Kasich, dropped out. He became the president-elect November 9, 2016, after a close race with former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Each of them needed 270 electoral votes to win. Trump had 304 while Clinton had 227. He was inaugurated as the 45th president on January 20, 2017. At 70 years old, Trump became the oldest person ever to become President of the United States.

On September 24, 2019, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi announced that the House of Representatives would begin an impeachment inquiry into Trump. On October 31, 2019, the House voted 232–196 to establish procedures for public hearings. On December 16, the House Judiciary Committee released a report specifying criminal bribery and wire fraud charges as part of the abuse of power charge. The house voted to impeach Trump in December 2019, making him the third president in American history to be impeached. He was acquitted by the Senate in February 2020.

Trump began his career at his father's real estate company, Elizabeth Trump & Son. He later renamed the company The Trump Organization, which has its headquarters at 40 Wall Street. The company focused on middle-class rental housing in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. One of Trump's first projects, while he was still in college, was the revitalization of the foreclosed Swifton Village apartment complex in Cincinnati, Ohio. His father had purchased it for \$5.7 million in 1962. Trump became closely involved in the project. With a \$500,000 investment, he turned the 1200-unit complex with a 66 percent vacancy rate to 100 percent occupancy within two years. In 1972, the Trump Organization sold Swifton Village for \$6 million. Trump has developed many real estate projects. They include Trump International Hotel and Tower in Honolulu, Trump International Hotel and Tower in Chicago, Trump International Hotel and Tower in Toronto, and Trump Tower in Tampa. In Fort Lauderdale, Florida, one Trump construction project was put on hold in favor of another (Trump International Hotel and Tower in Fort Lauderdale). Trump Towers in Atlanta was being developed in the housing market, however the project fell after the 2008 recession and instead buildings that didn't belong to Trump were built. Forbes valued Trump's wealth at \$3 billion. Since 2011, his net worth has been estimated from \$2 billion to \$7 billion. Forbes estimated his net worth at \$3.1 billion in 2019.

Trump married his first wife, Czech model Ivana, on April 7, 1977, at the Marble Collegiate Church in Manhattan. They had three children: son Donald Trump Jr. (born December 31, 1977), daughter Ivanka (born October 30, 1981), and son Eric (born January 6, 1984). Ivana became a naturalized United States citizen in 1988. By early 1990, Trump's troubled

marriage to Ivana and affair with actress Marla Maples had been reported in the tabloid press. They were divorced in 1992.

Trump married his second wife, actress Marla Maples in 1993. They had one daughter together, Tiffany (born October 13, 1993). The couple were separated in 1997 and later divorced in 1999. In 1998, Trump began a relationship with Slovene model Melania Knauss, who became his third wife. They were engaged in April 2004 and were married on January 22, 2005, at Bethesda-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, in Palm Beach, Florida. In 2006, Melania became a naturalized United States citizen. On March 20, 2006, she gave birth to their son, whom they named Barron Trump

III. METHODOLOGY

When I decided to start writing a research article about Trump's speeches, one of the most important things that came up in my mind is the data. The data has an important role in any research article, so I have decided to choose the data that I will use carefully. My data in this research article contains two main parts, in which, I will mention them and the reason behind choosing these data in my research article.

The first part of the data is about the electoral and the campaign speeches of Donald Trump. In 2016, the United States (U.S.) underwent a presidential campaign that left the world stunned as the last ballots were counted. This was due to the rise of Donald Trump, the showman/pundit/billionaire real estate mogul whose popularity derived from a penchant for "straight talk" and bucking the establishment. Trump raised eyebrows at home and abroad when he spoke of ripping up trade deals, criticized allies, and praised enemies, rhetoric that rarely pierces mainstream political discourse in the U.S. Moreover, he criticized opponents, religious groups, the disabled, women, and so on in ways for which any other politician would have been pilloried. Yet, despite his rhetoric, or perhaps because of it, his popularity grew, however, the campaign and the electoral speeches may now represent a small glimpse into a fundamental shift in the way political discourse is created in the U.S.

And as we know Since the 1970s, critical discourse analysis (CDA) has drawn from linguistic and social theory in an attempt to reveal the power structures that imbue all language, so I have chosen these data (electoral and campaign speeches of Trump) because it will be suitable to be analyzed in (CDA) tool and also it would be really interesting for me to analyze these speeches.

The second part of the data that I have chosen for my research article is about Donald Trump's Inaugural Speech. We know that the inauguration of the President of the United States is a ceremony that marks the commencement of a new four-year term of the President of the United States. This ceremony takes place for each new presidential term, even if the president is going to continue in office for a second

term. During his inaugural speech, the 45th US President Donald Trump appeared in a special ceremony accompanied by the First Lady Melania Trump. During his speech, Trump addressed the American people promising them to put America First. He said that the ceremony had a special meaning because it was not a transfer of power from one party or administration to another but a ceremony that belongs to the American people themselves.

My reason behind choosing this speech (Inaugural Speech) because it consists of more than 1450 words that would be good to be analyzed, however, to find out the politeness in Trump's speeches and to discover the way that he used both FTA and FSA theories, in which, I will do that through the pragmatic analysis of his speeches.

In this research, I will do a pragmatic analysis for the discourse of Donald Trump to show politeness in Trump's speeches, so an important term that we must explain here is called face, what is face?

Face is the public self-image that every person tries to protect. There are two terms used to define a person's image in public and they are positive and negative. Brown and Levinson defined positive face two ways: as "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others executors" (p. 62), or alternatively, "the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants" (p. 61) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Negative face was defined as "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others", or "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction—i.e. the freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (ibid). In other words, positive face shows the desire to be liked by others, to make others feel she/he is one of them. As for negative face, it shows the speaker's desire to have independence and maintain his/her autonomy. These two types of face are primary needs every person wants to have in public.

Also, we have two theories (FTA theory, and FSA theory) that I will explain them in the following:

3.1 Face-threatening act (FTA): is an act that indicates the threat a person's face might encounter while interacting with other people. It can be verbal or non-verbal. FTA can threaten the hearer's or the speaker's self-image in public. Also, FTAs threatening the hearer's positive self-image include (i) expressions negatively evaluating the hearer's positive face, e.g. disapproval, criticism, etc., as well as (ii) expressions which show that the speaker does not care about H's positive face, e.g. expressions of violent, bad news, emotional topics, etc.

Negative FTAs restricting the hearer's personal freedom include (i) acts predicating a future act of the hearer, e.g. requests, reminding, threats, (ii) acts predicating a future act of the speaker towards the hearer, e.g. offers/promises, and (iii) acts expressing

a desire of the speaker towards the hearer or his/her goods, e.g. compliments.

3.2 Face-saving act (FSA): in getting the purpose of communication, people possibly give a threat to another person. If FTAs happens, the person will get an embarrassing moment which is called as losing face. Alternatively, people can say something to lessen the possible threat appearing, and it is called Face Saving Acts (FSAs). For example, someone asks his friend to do something by saying an indirect speech act "Could you pass me the paper?". The indirect speech in which a question sentence is functioned as a request can lessen the possible threat to his friend. Also, according to Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987), politeness strategies are used to keep the hearer's face. Keeping the hearer's face means the speaker should respect the other person when the conversation is going on through maintaining self-esteem.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A. Data Analysis

The analysis of the corpus has shown that President Donald Trump tried to let the American people like him. He employs negative FTA as well as positive FTA by using different strategies. He shows strong interest towards people (five times in his inauguration speech, two times in his campaign speech, and one time in his electoral speech) and emphasizes the membership of a common social group, showing familiarity with a help of being talkative and using a listener's language, however, the pragmatic analysis of political speeches has shown that most politicians often face threat to their image in public because the people think that a lot of the politicians are corrupted people.

The politicians (in this study Trump) usually try to maintain good self-image in public. Trump realizes that he is chosen based on the popularity of his views or based on his personal popularity (he was a businessman from a rich family and his net worth \$3.7bn and a lot of people know him), however, we choose those who we like or whose wishes match our desires and they have to do their best to make us like them and believe in them.

1- "We will no longer accept politicians who are all talk and no action, constantly complaining but never doing anything about it. The time for empty talk is over"

The analysis of example 1 showed that President Donald Trump disapproved and criticized those lazy politicians in his inauguration speech as he said "We will no longer accept politicians who are all talk and no action" because they were complaining and doing nothing as he said "constantly complaining but never doing anything about it", however, they were wasting the time for empty talk (which means they were only talking without doing anything for the benefit of the people). Donald Trump will not accept this type of politicians for the benefit of the audience (people of America) because those lazy politicians are useless and they are inactive (they only get their salary from the government and doing nothing), in which, the

audience will definitely agree with him because they want better politicians that work for the benefit of the people and do their jobs in a way that makes them deserve their salary. The actions of disapproval and criticism have been done by the speaker (Donald Trump) to indicate that he doesn't like/want one or more of those politicians wants, in which, he doesn't want inactive and lazy politicians in his government. Trump threatened the face of those politicians and this falls within the FTA.

2- A different example in Trump's campaign speech is the following:

"Some have suggested a barrier is immoral. Then why do wealthy politicians build walls, fences, and gates around their homes? They don't build walls because they hate the people on the outside, but because they love the people on the inside. The only thing that is immoral is the politicians to do nothing and continue to allow more innocent people to be so horribly victimized"

The analysis of example 2 showed that President Donald Trump reminded the audience of the importance of building the wall as he said "They don't build walls because they hate the people on the outside, but because they love the people on the inside", in which, to protect them and to keep them safe (by preventing people from crossing over it illegally). Also, he mentioned that those politicians did nothing as he said "The only thing that is immoral is the politicians to do nothing", but only they allowed more people to be victims and that's obvious because they didn't do their jobs well and they were corrupted as he said "allow more innocent people to be so horribly victimized". Donald Trump wanted to build a physical barrier (wall) along the border between Mexico and the US to for the benefit of the people of America to prevent the illegal immigrants and crimes, and he struggled to build that wall because of the politicians because they think that this wall "is the most expensive and least effective way to do border security" (BBC News, 2019). The action of reminding has been done by the speaker (Trump) to indicate that the audience should remember something (building the wall to secure the borders). Trump threatened the face of politicians who were against him by bringing bad news about them "The only thing that is immoral is the politicians to do nothing and continue to allow more innocent people to be so horribly victimized" and this falls within the FTA.

3- A different example in Trump's election victory speech is the following:

"Sorry to keep you waiting. Complicated business. I've just received a call from Secretary Clinton. She congratulated us, it's about us, on our victory and I congratulated her and her family on a very very hard fought campaign. I mean, she fought very hard"

The analysis of example 3 showed that President Donald Trump apologized from the audience to keep them waiting for him because of a "complicated business", also, the president of the United States received a compliment from Secretary Clinton and she congratulated him because of that victory as he said

"I've just received a call from Secretary Clinton. She congratulated us, it's about us, on our victory". Donald Trump's apology indicates that he regretted to keep the audience waiting for him as he said "Sorry to keep you waiting", thereby he damaged his own face and that threatens the face of Trump "apologies directly damage S's face" (Brown & Levinson, 1987), while the compliment that he received indicates that he likes or would like something from Clinton as he said "I congratulated her and her family on a very very hard fought campaign". Both of these situations (apology, compliment) fall within the FTA.

4- A different example in Trump's election victory speech is the following:

"To all Republicans and Democrats and Independents across this nation, I say it is time for us to come together as one united people. It's time. I pledge to every citizen of our land that I will be President for all Americans and this is so important to me"

The analysis of example 4 showed that President Donald Trump promised the audience that he will be the president for all the Americans as he said "I pledge to every citizen of our land that I will be President for all Americans", and that means he will deal with all the people as they are equal, no matter black people or white people, no matter rich people or poor people, they are all the same because Trump wanted the people to be "as one united people" as he said. Donald Trump promised the people to be the president for all Americans for the benefit of the people and the whole country, and this is really important for the people, in which, they were glad to hear that. This promise is in the favor of the audience (people of America) and it affects the people, in which, they will get a better and equal life. This promise threatens the face of the audience, in which, Trump committed himself for a future act for the people and this falls within the FTA.

5- A different example in Trump's inauguration speech is the following:

"We will shine for everyone to follow. We will reinforce old alliances and form new ones, and you unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the Earth"

The analysis of example 5 showed that President Donald Trump brought bad news for the "radical Islamic terrorism", in which, Trump will unite the civilized world against "radical Islamic terrorism" as he said, and then he will eradicate it from the face of the earth because Trump thinks that the Islamic religion is a threat for him and for America. Donald Trump brought those bad news for the "radical Islamic terrorism" for his own benefit and for the benefit of his people, and those bad news threaten the face of the "radical Islamic terrorism", in which, Trump indicates that he will cause distress to the "radical Islamic terrorism" and this falls within the FTA.

6- A different example in Trump's inauguration speech is the following:

“We will seek friendship and good will with the nations of the world, we do not seek to impose our ways of life on anyone”

The analysis of example 6 showed that President Donald Trump's declaration of his government's ability to partner with other nations underscores his knowledge of international cooperation in achieving America's progress. Donald Trump sought an alliance for the benefit of his government and for the benefit of the people of America and this falls within the FSA.

7- A different example in Trump's election victory speech is the following:

“It's an honour. It's been an amazing evening, it's been an amazing period, and I love this country. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you to Mike Pence. Thank you everybody”

The analysis of 7 showed that President Donald Trump expressed thanks to the audience and then he finished his speech. This act threatens the speaker's face, in which, Donald Trump humbled his own face to the audience and this falls within the FTA.

B. Discussion

Through the analyzing of the political speeches of US President Donald Trump, I found that Trump used FSA when he sought for an alliance for the benefit of his government and his country, while Trump used FTA to threatening many politicians, in which, he disapproved and criticized lazy politicians and he reminded the audience of the importance of building a wall to secure the borders of Mexico and he tried to be a humble person through apologizing to the audience when he was late and thanking them at the end of his speeches, and he promised the people to fight the racist and to be the president of all Americans.

This means that the speaker Donald Trump was using both negative politeness and positive politeness, and he tried to be a kind and polite person to the audience, also Trump tried to keep the people satisfied with his presidency, on the other hand, Donald Trump was aggressive against the politicians who were against him.

Those FTA and FSA theories, that have been used by Donald Trump, showed the influence of Trump and the political power on each other, in which, when Trump won to be the President of US he changed from a businessman to a President that runs the country and makes huge decisions that could decide the fate of US. Also, Trump used the political power to threatening “radical Islamic terrorism” and he said that he will eradicate it from the face of the earth, moreover, he used the political power to stand in the public in front of the media and threatening the politicians directly and saying that they are the reason of many crimes and many victims, he said all that with no fear and he was confident about what he said because he has a huge political power that makes nearly no one can harm him. Donald Trump wasn't able to do all those actions without political power.

V. CONCLUSION

Donald Trump became the 45th president of the US on January 20, 2017. By analyzing Donald Trump's inaugural, election, campaign speeches, this research showed that President Donald Trump used both FTA and FSA theories through his speeches. Donald Trump was aggressive against the politicians who were against him in his decisions and he threatened their faces in many ways, meanwhile, he tried to be a kind and good president for all the Americans by seeking the benefit for his country and his government. Also, Trump advised Americans to set aside struggles and help him re-form the fabric of the country to prevent the crimes and victims and to secure their borders against illegal immigrants and to make sure that the people get jobs, salaries, and live with their full rights. There was a powerful relation between Donald Trump and the political power, in which, Trump used the political power to do many actions with no fear of others.

Donald Trump's speeches consist of different points where he blamed, criticized, disapproved, accused politicians, and then he thanked the citizens and promised them for a better life. Finally, with all the negativity that is dominant in the country, President Donald Trump promises a better future for the Americans where they all work together since there is power in unity. He believes that all the country lives under the same American flag, and thus they have all to work together for a better future for America and the AmericansPM.

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