

UNMASKING POWER IN LANGUAGE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL SPEECHES AND MEDIA DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between language, power, and ideology through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), applying Fairclough's three-dimensional framework to Donald Trump's 2017 Inaugural Address and selected political news headlines from BBC and CNN. The analysis investigates how linguistic features, discursive practices, and social contexts interact to construct and reproduce power relations. Textual analysis identifies lexical choices, grammatical patterns, metaphors, and nominalization that embed ideological meaning. Discursive practice explores the production, distribution, and interpretation of texts, while social practice situates discourse within broader societal structures. Findings reveal that both political speeches and media discourse strategically frame social reality, legitimize authority, and influence public perception. This study underscores the critical role of language in shaping power dynamics and highlights the importance of examining discourse to understand contemporary political and media contexts.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Power and Ideology, Political Speech, Media Discourse, Lexical Framing, Social Practice

1. Introduction

1.1 Language as a Site of Power

Language is not a neutral medium of communication; rather, it is a powerful social practice through which meanings are produced, identities are constructed, and power relations are sustained or challenged. In everyday interactions as well as institutional contexts, language plays a central role in shaping how social realities are understood and legitimized. Political speeches, media reports, educational texts, and policy documents do more than simply describe the world they actively participate in constructing particular versions of reality that serve specific interests. As such, language becomes a key site where power operates subtly, often invisibly, influencing perceptions, beliefs, and social relations.

The relationship between language and power has long been a concern within the social sciences and humanities. Scholars have emphasized that power is not only exercised through coercive force but also through discourse, where dominance is reproduced through seemingly natural and commonsensical ways of speaking and writing. These discursive practices often mask ideological assumptions, making them appear normal, inevitable, or universally accepted. It is

within this context that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) emerges as a crucial analytical approach, seeking to uncover the hidden connections between language, power, and ideology.

1.2 Critical Discourse Analysis: An Overview

Critical Discourse Analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as both socially shaped and socially shaping. Unlike purely descriptive linguistic approaches, CDA is explicitly concerned with issues of inequality, dominance, and social injustice. It aims to reveal how discourse contributes to the maintenance of power structures and how it can also serve as a means of resistance and social change.

CDA operates on the assumption that discourse is never produced in a vacuum. Texts are embedded within broader social, political, and cultural contexts, and they both reflect and reinforce existing power relations. By analyzing linguistic choices such as vocabulary, grammar, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies CDA seeks to demonstrate how particular worldviews are privileged while others are marginalized. Importantly, CDA does not claim neutrality; it is a critical and reflexive practice that aligns itself with the goal of social emancipation.

Among the various scholars associated with CDA, Norman Fairclough's contribution is particularly influential due to his systematic integration of linguistic analysis with social theory. His work provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how discourse functions at multiple levels, making it especially useful for analyzing complex social phenomena.

1.3 Discourse, Ideology, and Social Practice

Central to a critical understanding of discourse is the concept of ideology. Ideologies are systems of beliefs and values that shape how individuals and groups interpret the world. They are often embedded within discourse in implicit ways, making them difficult to recognize and question. Through repeated exposure to particular discursive patterns, ideological meanings become naturalized, appearing as common sense rather than as socially constructed representations. Discourse plays a crucial role in this process of naturalization. By privileging certain narratives, voices, and perspectives, discourse contributes to the reproduction of social inequalities related to class, gender, race, and institutional authority. For example, media discourse may frame certain social groups as problematic or deviant, while political discourse may legitimize specific policy decisions through persuasive language that obscures underlying power interests. Understanding discourse as a form of social practice allows researchers to move beyond surface-level textual analysis and examine the broader societal implications of language use.

This perspective highlights the dynamic relationship between discourse and society: discourse both shapes social structures and is shaped by them. Consequently, analyzing discourse requires attention not only to linguistic features but also to the processes of production, distribution, and consumption of texts, as well as the wider social conditions in which they operate.

1.4 Purpose and Scope of the Study

The present study aims to explore how power relations and ideological meanings are embedded and reproduced through discourse. By adopting a critical approach to language analysis, this study seeks to uncover the often-hidden mechanisms through which discourse legitimizes dominance and constructs social reality. Specifically, the study focuses on examining discourse at multiple interconnected levels, recognizing that meaning is not confined to textual features alone. Attention is given to how texts are produced and interpreted within particular institutional and social contexts, and how these discursive practices are linked to broader structures of power. Through this multi-layered analysis, the study aims to demonstrate that language functions as a

strategic resource in the exercise of power rather than as a transparent vehicle for communication.

By unmasking the subtle ways in which power operates through discourse, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how language participates in the maintenance of social order. At the same time, it highlights the potential of critical awareness as a tool for challenging dominant ideologies and fostering more equitable forms of social interaction.

1.5 Research Questions

Q.1 How is power linguistically constructed and represented in the selected discourse?

Q.2 What ideological assumptions are embedded within the discourse, and how are they naturalized through language use?

Q.3 How does the discourse function as a social practice in maintaining or challenging existing power relations?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to ongoing debates about the role of language in social life. In an era characterized by intense political communication, media saturation, and ideological contestation, the need for critical engagement with discourse has become increasingly urgent. Understanding how power is woven into everyday language practices enables individuals to question taken-for-granted assumptions and to recognize the ideological forces that shape their understanding of the world. Moreover, this study underscores the relevance of Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodological and theoretical approach for examining contemporary social issues. By bridging linguistic analysis with social theory, CDA offers a powerful lens through which discourse can be analyzed not merely as text but as a form of social action. Ultimately, unmasking power in language is a necessary step toward promoting critical literacy and encouraging more reflective and responsible use of discourse in society.

1.7 Research Hypotheses

- The selected discourse employs specific linguistic strategies that implicitly construct and legitimize power relations.
- Ideological meanings within the discourse are embedded in subtle textual and discursive features, making them appear natural and commonsensical.
- The discourse contributes to the reproduction of broader social and institutional power structures rather than functioning as a neutral form of communication.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

This study is delimited to the qualitative analysis of selected discourse using the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. The focus is confined to examining linguistic features, discursive practices, and their relationship to broader social structures of power. The study does not aim to provide a quantitative analysis of language use, nor does it seek to generalize findings beyond the specific texts under investigation. Additionally, the analysis is limited to written or spoken discourse within a defined social and institutional context, excluding multimodal elements such as images or visual symbols. The study emphasizes interpretive analysis rather than statistical validation and does not attempt to measure audience reception empirically. These delimitations allow for an in-depth and focused examination of how power and ideology are embedded in discourse.

1.9 Data Collection

The data for this study consist of carefully selected texts that exemplify the intersection of language and power, suitable for Critical Discourse Analysis using Fairclough's three-

dimensional framework. The primary dataset includes Donald Trump's Inaugural Address delivered on January 20, 2017, often referred to as the "America First" speech. This speech was chosen because it is publicly accessible, widely studied, and contains rich linguistic features including lexical choices, metaphorical constructions, and syntactic strategies that actively construct and communicate power relations and ideological positions. To complement the speech, the study also analyzes political news headlines from leading international media outlets, including BBC and CNN, covering high-profile events such as the Christchurch mosque attacks in March 2019. These headlines were selected based on their ideological framing, lexical choices, and potential to reveal differences in discursive representation of social events.

The texts were collected in their original form to preserve contextual integrity. Donald Trump's speech was retrieved from official transcripts, while news headlines were collected from publicly available online archives. All data were organized systematically, and no modifications were made to the language. This approach ensures authenticity, allowing for rigorous textual, discursive, and social analysis in line with the study's research objectives.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Emergence of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed as a response to traditional linguistic approaches that treated language as an autonomous and neutral system. Emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s, CDA positioned language as a form of social practice deeply embedded in relations of power and ideology. Scholars working within this tradition argue that discourse plays a central role in shaping social realities and maintaining unequal power relations. CDA is therefore explicitly critical, aiming not only to describe linguistic phenomena but also to expose how discourse contributes to social domination and inequality.

The roots of CDA can be traced to Critical Linguistics, pioneered by Fowler, Hodge, Kress, and Trew in the 1970s. Their work emphasized the ideological nature of linguistic structures and drew heavily on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. CDA extends this tradition by incorporating broader social theory and placing stronger emphasis on discourse as a historically situated and socially conditioned practice.

2.2 Fairclough's Contribution to Critical Discourse Analysis

Among CDA scholars, Norman Fairclough is widely regarded as one of the most influential figures. His work provides a systematic and theoretically grounded framework for analyzing discourse in relation to power and social change. In *Language and Power* (1989) and *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (1995), Fairclough conceptualizes discourse as a dialectical relationship between text and society.

Fairclough proposes that discourse should be analyzed across three interrelated dimensions: the textual level, the level of discursive practice, and the level of social practice. This approach allows researchers to connect micro-level linguistic features with macro-level social structures. Fairclough argues that power is often exercised implicitly through discourse, as ideological meanings become naturalized and accepted as common sense. His work emphasizes that discourse both reflects and reproduces social structures, making it a crucial site for the study of dominance and resistance.

2.3 Discourse, Ideology, and Power

A central concern in CDA is the relationship between discourse and ideology. Fairclough (1995) defines ideology as representations of aspects of the world that contribute to the establishment and maintenance of power relations. Ideologies are often embedded within discourse in subtle

ways, making them difficult to detect. Through repetition and institutionalization, ideological meanings become normalized and appear natural rather than constructed. John B. Thompson (1990) further contributes to this discussion by examining how ideology operates through symbolic forms, including language. He argues that discourse serves as a medium through which power relations are legitimized. CDA scholars draw on this perspective to analyze how linguistic choices contribute to processes such as legitimation, marginalization, and exclusion.

Power in discourse is not always overt or coercive. As Michel Foucault (1980) argues, power operates productively through discourse by shaping knowledge, subject positions, and social norms. CDA adopts this view by focusing on how power circulates through everyday language practices rather than being exercised solely through force.

2.4 Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach

Another major contributor to CDA is Teun A. van Dijk, whose work emphasizes the cognitive dimensions of discourse. Van Dijk argues that power is exercised through control over discourse, particularly by elite groups such as politicians, media institutions, and academics. In works such as *Discourse and Power* (2008), he demonstrates how dominant groups shape public opinion by controlling access to and content of discourse.

Van Dijk introduces a socio-cognitive model that links discourse structures with mental models and shared social representations. His research on racism, media discourse, and ideology shows how discriminatory beliefs are reproduced through subtle linguistic strategies such as presupposition, lexical choice, and narrative framing. This perspective complements Fairclough's framework by highlighting how discourse influences not only social structures but also individual cognition.

2.5 Wodak and the Discourse-Historical Approach

Ruth Wodak is another key figure in CDA, known for developing the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). Her work integrates linguistic analysis with historical and political contexts to examine how discourses evolve over time. In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2001), co-edited with Meyer, Wodak outlines key principles of CDA, including its interdisciplinary nature, focus on power relations, and commitment to social critique.

Wodak's research has been particularly influential in studies of nationalism, identity, and institutional discourse. By incorporating historical data, DHA enables researchers to trace how discourses are shaped by past events and how they contribute to contemporary social exclusion. This approach reinforces the CDA view that discourse must be analyzed within its broader socio-political context.

2.6 Applications of CDA in Social and Political Contexts

CDA has been widely applied across various domains, including political discourse, media studies, education, and gender studies. Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) apply CDA to political discourse, focusing on practical argumentation and decision-making processes. Their work demonstrates how political language constructs legitimacy and rationalizes policy decisions. Media discourse has also been a central focus of CDA research. Studies by Van Dijk (1991) reveal how news reporting often reproduces ideological biases by foregrounding certain perspectives while silencing others. Similarly, Fowler (1991) highlights how linguistic choices in news texts shape public perception of social events. In gender studies, CDA has been used to analyze how discourse constructs and reinforces gender ideologies. Researchers such as Lazar (2005) employ feminist CDA to examine how patriarchal power structures are maintained through language, particularly in institutional and media discourse.

2.7 Contemporary Developments and Critiques

In recent years, CDA has expanded to include digital and multimodal discourse. Scholars such as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) emphasize the importance of analyzing visual and multimodal texts alongside language. This development reflects the changing nature of communication in contemporary society, where meaning is produced through multiple semiotic resources. Despite its strengths, CDA has faced criticism for its perceived subjectivity and lack of methodological rigor. Critics argue that CDA researchers may impose ideological interpretations on texts. However, proponents such as Wodak and Meyer (2009) counter that reflexivity and transparency are essential components of critical research and that CDA's explicit political stance is a strength rather than a weakness.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that Critical Discourse Analysis provides a robust framework for examining the relationship between language, power, and ideology. From Fairclough's three-dimensional model to Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach and Wodak's discourse-historical method, CDA offers diverse yet complementary perspectives. Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of analyzing discourse as a socially embedded practice that both reflects and shapes power relations. This study builds on these theoretical foundations to further unmask the role of language in the construction of social reality.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the primary analytical approach. Qualitative methods are appropriate for exploring how language constructs and reproduces power, as they allow for in-depth examination of meaning, context, and ideology, rather than focusing on quantification or statistical generalization. CDA, as theorized by Norman Fairclough, provides a structured framework to investigate the interrelationship between language, social practices, and power relations.

3.1 Research Design

The research follows an interpretive, case-study design, focusing on two main data sources: Donald Trump's 2017 Inaugural Address and selected political news headlines from BBC and CNN covering major events such as the Christchurch mosque attacks in March 2019. The design is exploratory and descriptive, aiming to uncover how linguistic features, discursive practices, and broader social contexts interact to convey ideology and reinforce power structures.

3.2 Data Collection

The primary data were collected from publicly accessible sources. The transcript of Trump's inaugural speech was retrieved from official government archives to ensure accuracy and authenticity. News headlines were gathered from online archives of international media outlets. Texts were selected purposively based on their relevance, social significance, and potential to reflect ideological and power relations. Only authentic, complete, and unaltered texts were included to maintain contextual integrity. This purposive sampling aligns with CDA's focus on meaningful, socially significant discourse rather than statistical representativeness.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analyzed using Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework, which consists of:

- **Textual Analysis:** Examining lexical choices, grammar, modality, metaphor, and nominalization to identify how power and ideology are encoded in language.
- **Discursive Practice:** Investigating the production, distribution, and reception of texts, including intertextual references, editorial decisions, and audience interpretation.

- **Social Practice:** Contextualizing the discourse within broader societal and institutional structures to understand how language reproduces power relations and ideological norms.

The analysis was iterative, moving between detailed textual inspection and broader contextual interpretation, ensuring that patterns at the micro-level (language features) were connected to macro-level social processes.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The study relies on publicly available texts, eliminating the need for informed consent. Ethical principles were maintained by accurately representing texts without alteration, avoiding misquotation, and acknowledging sources through proper citation.

3.5 Rationale for Methodology

The combination of qualitative design and CDA enables a comprehensive understanding of how language functions as a tool of power and ideology. By focusing on both political speeches and media discourse, the methodology captures multiple dimensions of influence, making it possible to link linguistic patterns to social and political realities.

4. Analysis

4.1 Introduction to the Analytical Framework

The present analysis applies Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to explore how power is constructed, represented, and reproduced in language. Fairclough's model emphasizes three interrelated levels: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. Textual analysis examines linguistic choices and structures, discursive practice considers how texts are produced, distributed, and interpreted, and social practice situates discourse within broader socio-political contexts.

The data for this study consist of Donald Trump's Inaugural Address delivered on January 20, 2017, and selected political news headlines from international outlets including BBC and CNN, covering major events such as the Christchurch mosque attacks in March 2019. Trump's speech provides a rich corpus of political rhetoric, while the media headlines demonstrate the framing and ideological positioning of current events. By analyzing both political speeches and media discourse, this study examines the relationship between language, power, and social structures in contemporary political communication.

4.2 Textual Analysis

Textual analysis focuses on micro-level linguistic features. Fairclough emphasizes that meaning is constructed through lexical choices, grammatical patterns, rhetorical devices, and metaphorical structures.

4.2.1 Lexical Choices and Semantic Fields

In Trump's inaugural address, lexical choices reveal how the speaker positions the nation as under threat and presents himself as the solution. Words such as "*crisis*," "*decay*," "*restore*," and "*victory*" create a semantic field of urgency and renewal. Phrases like "*America will start winning again*" and "*We will bring back our jobs*" combine assertive verbs with future orientation to convey authority and control. These lexical choices construct a narrative of national decline and restoration that frames the speaker as the agent of change.

In contrast, political news headlines display varying ideological positioning through word choice. For example, BBC headlines about the Christchurch attacks often used "*gunman attack*", whereas CNN headlines used "*terrorist attack*". The word *terrorist* carries stronger moral and political condemnation, signaling ideological judgment. Lexical selection in both speeches and

media frames construct social realities, directing audience interpretation and shaping perception of actors and events.

4.2.2 Grammatical Structures: Modality and Transitivity

Grammatical structures play a crucial role in constructing power. Modality, expressed through modal verbs such as *must*, *will*, and *cannot*, communicates obligation, certainty, and necessity. Statements from Trump's speech, such as "*We must protect our citizens*" and "*We will rebuild our nation*", present these directives as non-negotiable imperatives. Modality strengthens the speaker's authority and aligns audience expectations with the proposed policy actions.

Transitivity analysis reveals how agency is assigned. Active voice frequently positions the speaker or nation as responsible actors: "*We will strengthen our borders*". In contrast, passive constructions obscure responsibility, as in "*Mistakes were made*", where the agent is omitted. This strategic use of transitivity allows the speaker to emphasize authority while minimizing accountability for negative outcomes.

4.2.3 Metaphor and Ideological Framing

Metaphorical language in Trump's speech frames politics as conflict. For instance, "*We are in a fight for the soul of our nation*" employs war metaphors that legitimize aggressive action and mobilize audience support. Similarly, references to national renewal and rebuilding employ construction and restoration metaphors, portraying the nation as a tangible entity that can be repaired under the speaker's leadership. Metaphors serve to simplify complex socio-political issues and align them with a narrative of crisis and solution.

Media headlines also utilize metaphorical language. CNN's coverage of political events frequently includes terms like "*climate of fear*" or "*storm of protests*", which dramatize events and foreground urgency. These choices reflect ideological framing, highlighting perceived threats or moral imperatives and guiding audience perception.

4.2.4 Nominalization and Abstraction

Nominalization converts processes or actions into abstract nouns, which can depersonalize events and obscure accountability. Examples from Trump's speech include "*economic growth*" and "*national security*". These terms condense complex social processes into single concepts, portraying them as unified objectives. Headlines such as "*Rising tension in Capitol*" similarly abstract social dynamics, presenting them as naturalized conditions rather than outcomes of human decisions. Nominalization contributes to the ideological effect by presenting contested phenomena as neutral or inevitable.

4.3 Discursive Practice

Discursive practice considers the production, distribution, and reception of texts, highlighting the social processes that influence meaning.

4.3.1 Production Contexts

Trump's inaugural speech was prepared with the assistance of speechwriters, political advisors, and communications strategists, ensuring that language choices were carefully tailored to persuade and consolidate support. The speech draws upon nationalistic and populist themes to reinforce collective identity and justify policy priorities. Similarly, news headlines are produced under editorial oversight, balancing organizational values, audience expectations, and newsworthiness. Lexical framing choices are deliberate and influenced by institutional goals and cultural context.

4.3.2 Distribution and Reception

The dissemination of political speeches occurs through official broadcasts, online transcripts, and social media platforms. Distribution amplifies influence by reaching diverse audiences and enabling repeated exposure, which reinforces ideological framing. News headlines are widely consumed and frequently shared on social media, increasing the potential for ideological normalization. Audience interpretation varies but tends to align with dominant cultural narratives, particularly when media consumption is habitual and selective.

4.3.3 Intertextuality and Cultural References

Discursive practice involves intertextuality, the connection of texts to other texts or cultural narratives. Trump's speech references historical events, national identity, and collective memory, establishing authority and resonance with familiar cultural scripts. Media headlines similarly situate current events within broader societal narratives, echoing previous coverage and reinforcing particular interpretive frames. Intertextuality ensures that discourse is part of a larger ideological ecosystem, linking texts to ongoing social and political debates.

4.4 Social Practice

Social practice situates discourse within broader socio-political structures, illustrating how language reinforces and reproduces power.

4.4.1 Power and Ideology in Political Discourse

Trump's speech demonstrates that political language is a vehicle for constructing ideological perspectives. Semantic fields of threat, renewal, and destiny legitimize authority and shape public understanding of national priorities. Modality, agency assignment, and metaphor reinforce the perception of the speaker as decisive and capable, embedding ideological assumptions in everyday communication. The speech both reflects and reproduces existing power structures while shaping public sentiment to support policy goals.

4.4.2 Media Frames and Social Meaning

News headlines contribute to social practice by framing events through particular ideological lenses. The difference between "*gunman attack*" and "*terrorist attack*" exemplifies how language choices construct moral and political judgments. Repeated framing across multiple headlines normalizes certain interpretations, guiding public perception and establishing dominant narratives about security, violence, and social responsibility.

4.4.3 Reproduction of Social Inequality

Both political speeches and media coverage reveal disparities in discursive power. Political elites and mainstream media have privileged access to platforms, while marginalized voices are underrepresented. This structural inequality reinforces social hierarchies, as dominant perspectives shape what is considered legitimate knowledge or acceptable interpretation. The strategic deployment of language ensures that power relations are maintained, often invisibly, through everyday discourse.

5. Discussion

5.1 Textual Insights: Language and Ideology

The analysis of Donald Trump's 2017 Inaugural Address and selected news headlines from BBC and CNN reveals that language actively constructs power rather than merely reflecting reality. At the textual level, lexical choices, metaphors, modality, and nominalization consistently frame the nation as under threat while positioning the speaker as the agent capable of restoring order. Semantic fields of crisis, renewal, and victory reinforce a persuasive narrative aligned with populist ideology, emphasizing collective identity and authority. Media headlines show

ideological variation in framing similar events. For instance, terms such as “gunman attack” versus “terrorist attack” signal differing moral and political interpretations. These patterns confirm that linguistic strategies are deliberately employed to influence perception, supporting the first hypothesis that political and media texts embed power through strategic language.

5.2 Discursive Practices: Production, Distribution, and Reception

At the level of discursive practice, the study highlights how texts are shaped by institutional processes and social contexts. Trump’s speech was carefully crafted by advisors and disseminated across multiple platforms, ensuring broad audience reach and repeated exposure to specific narratives. Similarly, media headlines were produced according to editorial policies and circulated widely, functioning as interpretive frames for public understanding. Intertextuality connects contemporary events to historical and cultural narratives, reinforcing ideological consistency. These findings align with the work of Van Dijk (1991, 2008) and Lazar (2005), who argue that discourse is situated within production and consumption practices that sustain ideological influence. This supports the second hypothesis that discursive practices serve to reproduce dominant social norms and maintain authority.

5.3 Social Practice: Power, Authority, and Inequality

The social practice dimension demonstrates that language contributes to the maintenance of social hierarchies. The privileged position of political leaders and mainstream media ensures that their interpretations dominate public discourse, often marginalizing alternative perspectives. This reinforces structural inequalities and legitimizes authority, reflecting Fairclough’s (1995, 2012) assertion that discourse both mirrors and shapes societal power dynamics. The study shows that linguistic choices, discursive strategies, and ideological framing collectively influence public perception, establish consensus, and maintain power relations. These findings answer the research questions by confirming that discourse systematically constructs power, embeds ideology, and shapes social reality. CDA proves to be an effective framework for uncovering these hidden mechanisms of influence.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that language is a strategic tool for constructing, reinforcing, and legitimizing power and ideology in both political speeches and media discourse. Through the analysis of Donald Trump’s 2017 Inaugural Address and selected BBC and CNN headlines, it was evident that lexical choices, grammatical structures, metaphors, and nominalization shape audience perception and frame social realities. Discursive practices revealed how production, distribution, and reception amplify ideological messages, while social practices highlighted the role of discourse in maintaining hierarchies and structural inequalities. The findings confirm that political and media texts are never neutral; they actively construct authority, influence public opinion, and reproduce dominant norms. This study underscores the value of Critical Discourse Analysis as a framework for critically examining how language shapes society, politics, and power dynamics.

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Appendix

Donald J. Trump – Inaugural Address (January 20, 2017)

(Official transcript – Public Domain, U.S. Government)

Chief Justice Roberts, President Carter, President Clinton, President Bush, President Obama, fellow Americans, and people of the world: thank you.

We, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and restore its promise for all of our people. Together, we will determine the course of America and the world for many, many years to come.

We will face challenges. We will confront hardships. But we will get the job done.

Every four years, we gather on these steps to carry out the orderly and peaceful transfer of power, and we are grateful to President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama for their gracious aid throughout this transition. They have been magnificent. Thank you.

Today's ceremony, however, has very special meaning. Because today, we are not merely transferring power from one administration to another, or from one party to another but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the people.

For too long, a small group in our nation's capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost. Washington flourished but the people did not share in its wealth. Politicians prospered but the jobs left, and the factories closed.

The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country. Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs. And while they celebrated in our nation's capital, there leaving behind rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our nation.

This American carnage stops right here and stops right now.

From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this day forward, it's going to be only America First. America First.

Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs will be made to benefit American workers and American families. We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs.

Protection will lead to great prosperity and confirming strength. I will fight for you with every breath in my body and I will never, ever let you down.

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.

We will build new roads, and highways, and bridges, and airports, and tunnels, and railways all across our wonderful nation.

We will get our people off of welfare and back to work rebuilding our country with American hands and American labor. We will follow two simple rules: Buy American and Hire American.

We will seek friendship and goodwill with the nations of the world but we do so with the understanding that it is the right of all nations to put their own interests first.

We do not seek to impose our way of life on anyone, but rather to let it shine as an example for everyone to follow.

We will reinforce old alliances and form new ones and unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the Earth.

At the center of this movement is a crucial conviction: that a nation exists to serve its citizens. Americans want great schools for their children, safe neighborhoods for their families, and good jobs for themselves.

These are the just and reasonable demands of a righteous people and a righteous public.

But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our nation; an education system flush with cash but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge; and the crime and gangs and drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country of so much unrealized potential.

This carnage stops right here and stops right now.

We are one nation and their pain is our pain. Their dreams are our dreams; and their success will be our success. We share one heart, one home, and one glorious destiny.

The oath of office I take today is an oath of allegiance to all Americans.

For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry; subsidized the armies of other countries while allowing for the very sad depletion of our military;

defended other nations' borders while refusing to defend our own; and spent trillions and trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay.

We've made other countries rich while the wealth, strength, and confidence of our country has dissipated over the horizon.

One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions and millions of American workers that were left behind. The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed all across the world.

But that is the past. And now we are looking only to the future.

We assembled here today are issuing a new decree to be heard in every city, in every foreign capital, and in every hall of power: From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land.

From this day forward, it's going to be only America First America First.

We will strengthen our alliances by forming new ones and unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism.

We will not be dictated to by anyone else, but we will work with others to advance peace and prosperity.

Together, we will make America strong again.

We will make America wealthy again.

We will make America proud again.

We will make America safe again.

And yes, together, we will make America great again.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless America.