

National Self-Glorification: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Joe Biden's Inauguration Speech

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Abstract:

The current paper is acritical discourse analysis of national self-glorification in Biden's inaugural speech. Due to shortages of such studies, the study tries to bridge such a gap .Thus, it aims to discover strategies of national self- glorification as well as showing their most and least employed ones .It hypothesizes that Biden employs various strategies where the most are hyperbole and categorization(by appraisalment)and the least strategy is functional categorization.To achieve is aims, the study employs amalgam of Van Dijke's(1995,2002,2006)models. Finally, asserting the hypotheses,it concludes that Biden implemented hyperbole and appraisalment to depict national self-glorification so as to gain people's support.

Keywords: National Self-Glorification,A Critical Discourse Analysis, Van Dijke's models ,sociocognitive approach,Biden's inauguration speech

التمجيد الوطني الذاتي:

تحليل نقدي لخطاب تنصيب جو بايدن

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الملخص:

إنّ هذه الورقة البحثية هي تحليل نقدي للخطاب في التمجيد الوطني الذاتي في كلام بايدن الافتتاحي ونظرا للفجوة البحثية الحاصلة في هذه الدراسات تحاول الورقة الحالية سد تلك الفجوة ولذا فهي تسعى لاكتشاف استراتيجيات التمجيد الوطني الذاتي ومعرفة أكثرها وأقلها توظيفا في كلام بايدن . وافترضت الدراسة ان بايدن وظف عدة استراتيجيات كان أكثرها المبالغة وتصنيف الامة بالتقييم . ولتحقيق اهدافها فقد وظفت الدراسة نموذجا مزيجا من نماذج فان دايك (١٩٩٥ و٢٠٠٢ و٢٠٠٦)، وأخيرا اثبتت الدراسة كل فرضياتها مستنتجة ان بايدن وظف المبالغة وتصنيف الامة بالتقييم ليكسب دعم الناس.

الكلمات المفتاحية : التمجيد الوطني، تحليل نقدي، جو بايدن

1.Preliminaries

Defining oneself in terms of membership in a group that is important to the self (group-based self-definition).Of relevance for the scopes of the present research, research shows that in-group glorification, rather than attachment, drives the adverse effects of group identification on intergroup hostility and violence (Golec, et al, 2009 :498).

Actually, there is rarity of studies, in CDA , have been conducted on national self-glorification .Consequently, the problem of the current study can be shown in the following main questions: First, what are the strategies of national self-glorification in Biden’s inauguration speech? Second, what are the most and the least strategies of national self-glorification in the speech in question. Accordingly, the paper aims to identify the strategies of national self-glorification in Biden’s inauguration speech, and pinpointing the most and the least strategies of national self-glorification in the speech in question. Thus, the study hypothesizes that hyperbole is the most while functionalization is the least utilized strategy .Finally, the paper is hopefully done with the aim of being valuable for researches , CDA analyst, politicians , and above all linguists who are interested in the topic tackled here.

2.Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse , as interrelated complex combinations of linguistic acts that co-occur sequentially,happens within the social spheres of action which are meaningfully correlated(Wodak,2001:66).Whether semiotic, oral or written, they are usually texts, that are pertinent to social spheres. As such, Critical Discourse Analysis(henceforth CDA)springs from a critical theory of language that views the use of such a language as being part of social practice (Janks , 1997:329).

One of the most influential approaches to CDA is the Socio-Cognitive model of Van Dijk (Bukhari and Xiaoyang, 2013:12) , wherein the focal point is the analysis of macro-structuresi.e., the analysis of thematic structure. Specifically, Van Dijk (1995) thinks that discourse analysis is ideology analysis. van Dijk’s ideological square model involves both “emphasize Our good things and Their bad things (van Dijk, 2006,

p.49). Yet, in the current paper only positive self-representation is to be tackled since it is the main structure for the topic of analysis national self-glorification.

3. National Self-Glorification

According to *Cambridge Dictionary* (webservice 1), the word “glorify” has two sides of meanings: First, it means “to praise and honour God or a person e.g., “There are 99 prayer beads - one for each way Allah can be glorified in the Koran”. Second, “to describe or represent something in a way that makes it seem better or more important than it really is e.g., I didn't like the way the film glorified war. To specify, the second sense is pertinent to the current study. As for Ross (as cited in Ironside, 1944) he supports this view showing that surely sometimes, the word glorification is used to mean “boastfulness”. He adds “We are warned against vain glory, against glorying in our own strength, or in our own fancied wisdom”.

For Van Dijk (2002) National Self-glorification is a strategy used by a speaker when trying to praise or glorify his own country's values, like human rights, democracy, norms and hospitality, in order to present a positive self-representation, whereas, for ideological orientations, negative information about their own country or nation are to be avoided ignored or mitigated. Hence, such strategy can be delivered in many situations, like positive representations to praise one's own country, its history, values and customs (Van Dijk, 2006:738). In sum, national self-glorification is a way of positive Self-representation throughout glorifying or praising one's country, nation or group.

As for Roccas, et al. (2006:701) group identification involves both the glorification of the group and attachment to it. Those two tendencies are partially overlapping. Consequently, they consider in-group glorification as seeing one's group as being superior to the outgroups.

To exemplify, in parliamentary speeches on immigration, positive self-representation may routinely be performed by many forms of national self-glorification like positive references to or praise for one's own nation, its values, principles, history, traditions, and norms. In addition, Racist ideologies, for example, may collaborate with nationalist

ideologies. This may vary from one country to another nationalist rhetoric is not the same in all countries. It is quite common in France (especially on the right), and not uncommon in Germany .

4.Methodology

Following the socio-cognitive approach, and due to rarity of models specifically made for such a topic ,the current paper seeks to analyze national self-glorification employing an eclectic model composed from various models of van Dijk's (1995, 2002,2006)works. Thus, the following strategies are involved :

1-Norm expressions: Stating something as an explicit norm statements about what people should or should not do(van Dijk, 2006: 738).

2- Hyperbole: To amplify or exaggerate, and supersede a specific point, such strategy is followed in order to magnify the impact or attract others' attention(Van Dijk, 2006).Hyperbole is part of a larger strategy to portray oneself in a positively .

3-Categorization: This strategy occurs when a speaker categorizes people.Hence, for van Dijk(2006:735-9) this means assigning individuals as belonging to certain groups. To elaborate,it involves:

a- Lexical categorization:It occurs when a speaker's,a society's, a text's worldview is mediated(King and Anderson, 2006:120). In addition , categorization may show actors in terms of identities and functions they share with others. Thus, categorization also includes :

b-Functionalization: referring to them in terms of the acts, activity, or something they do(Van Leeuwen,1996,42)e.g., terrorist, protestor .

c-Identification: here, social actors are identified in terms of age gender, provenance, class, wealth, ethnicity, religion and so on (p.45)

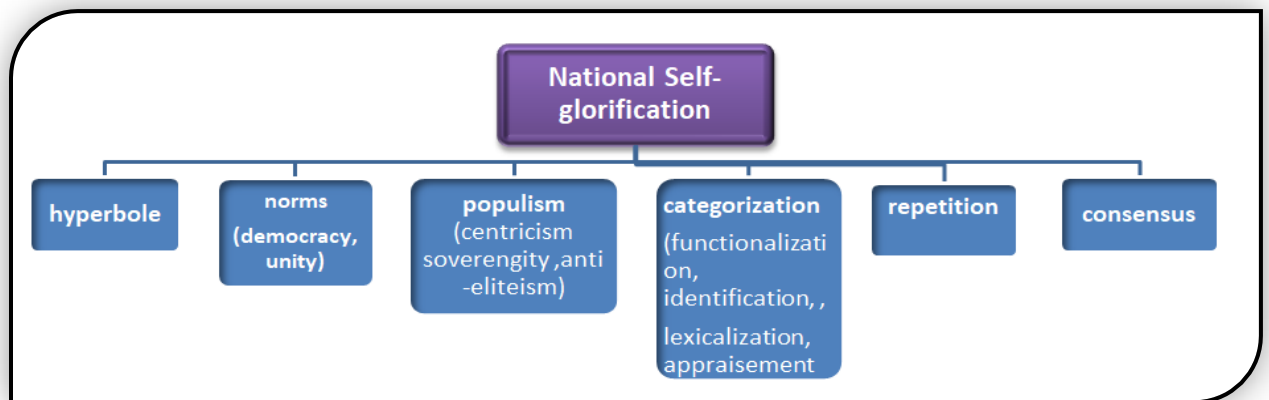
d- Appraisal : Social actors are described or pointed to by evaluation such as calling them good or bad, loved or hated, or admired .

4-Consensus:It means making consent, solidarity or agreement(van Dijk, 2006:736).This may show that the nation's unity and interests are prior to any internal, political divisions among groups(van Dijk,2006a: 66).

5- Populism: This strategy is to claim that people or everybody does or does not agree with a specific idea(van Dijk , 2006:738) or something is done for their benefit. Populism emphasizes separation between two opposing groups, "the pure people" against "the corrupt elite(Mudde ,2004 : 543). Populism style may take one of three main forms : **Anti-elitism** i.e. discrediting, Blame and Excluding the elite(Wirth, et al.,2014: 52).2)Or **restoring Sovereignty** i.e.,denying power to elite. Finally, **people Centrism** i.e.,emphasizing people's virtues and closeness to them.

6- Repetition: For Van Dijk (1998:89)this may increase the focus on semantic properties of the discourse. See Figure(1)below.

Figure(1)The framework of Analysis



5.Data Analysis

Pursuing its aims ,the paper in this section inroduces data analysis both the qualitative and the quantative ones.

Data collection :data are selected from the websourse one wherein it is available and authentic (see websource2).They are collected on the bases that they contain national self-glorification.

Data description :Data in this study encompass Biden's inauguration speech . They are five pages in length . The president , being newly elected tried to glorify America and enhance public's support .

Contextual factors:Biden talks to the Americans in the Whitehouse . In his speech the key is serious, genre is political speech, the end is to convince American people that the new era is promising, the Act sequence is composed of paragraphs as parts of speech.The channel is

oral, the norms are the rules of communication between a president and his fellow citizens.

I-Qualitative analysis

Seeking to achieve the first aim, the study starts with the qualitative analysis which runs as follows : First , choosing representative extracts on the bases that they contain national self-glorification .Second , explaining the meaning of each extract before determining the micro strategies.Third, pinpointing the strategies involved..

Extract 1

This is America's day. This is democracy's day. A day of history and hope, of renewal and resolve. Through a crucible for the ages, America has been tested anew and America has risen to the challenge.

To enhance the positivity of speech which glorifies America, President Biden employs various strategies in few words .Thus,national self-glorification in his speech is done throughout the strategy of appraisal. where the description of America's day, has been portrayed as a day of a bright side, modern things ,and determination. Additionally, the strategy of functionalization is also utilized in saying “America has risen to the challenge” in which it is categorized by its activity of being the one that takes its full responsibility of living up to great standards of the uneasy tasks that are assigned to it since it “has risen to the challenge”

Extract 2

Today we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate but of a cause, a cause of democracy. ...the will of the people- has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded.

Considering winning the election as a victory, Biden in the above mentioned extract calls the occasion as celebration and “triumph of democracy” . For politicians democracy is a location where people live with hopeful expectations of governmental promises of limitless assurances. The fulfilment of the promises of peace, security, unity and

progress is what makes democracy an effective vehicle for nation-building. The president's strategy of populism is evident when he says "the will of people" repeating –using the strategy of repetition- words that assure people's power and determination won the election. As such , the wording involved glorifying America's commitment to democracy taking into account the public's resolution.

Extract 3

This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge. And unity is the path forward. And we must meet this moment as the United States of America.

Opening a new era in the American history of political government , Biden tries to consider the "historic moment" that is full of uneasy disasters and hard difficulties.As a president, he thinks that "unity" is the best solution due to the fact that the sense of oneness entails a sense of interconnectedness with others.Such oneness has been perceived as a factor with the potential importance to foster willingness to build a great country,. In some cases , glorifying is not done by describing rather by showing the name or the title . Biden says "as the United States of America" to show that it is the nation that is different from all other nations . As such he utilizes the categorization strategy of depicting the social actors by their own identities .Such identification has the effect of glorifying the country and its people as being unprecedented, unexampled or unparalleled.

Extract 4

As we look ahead in our uniquely American way, restless, bold, optimistic, and set our sights on a nation we know we can be and must be,... And I know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength, the strength of our nation,

Looking at America as exceptional or extraordinary , the USA president utilizes the word "uniquely" to describe the way of their and their country's thinking. He sees that way of thinking as very active, daring, and looking forward for a good future . As such, categorization

strategy is made to enhance the public's trust in the new leader .Then, glorifying the nation is additionally done by admitting the stability the constitution due to its being the ruler . Furthermore , America is which has been referred to repeatedly as strong(repetition).To conclude, both strategies categorization and repetition cooperate together to to enhance America's glorification.

Extract 5

...the American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us. On we the people who seek a more perfect union. This is a great nation, we are good people.And over the centuries through storm and strife in peace and in war we've come so far. But we still have far to go.

Employing the strategy of consensus, Biden shows the unity and solidarity of his nation using words like “us” and “ all” when he says the American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us” rejecting the word “some” .When he says “On we the people who seek a more perfect union” he suggests the use of populism strategy that encompasses depicting the people as the active rulers . Additionally, praising their achievement, demonstrating closeness to them by using the word “we”. Furthermore, the two descriptions of America as “great” and its people as “good” show his employment of the strategy of categorization, namely appraisal, to glorify.Populism, is also apparent when Biden utilizes the attributes relating them to “people” .

Extract 6

If you still disagree, so be it. That's democracy. That's America. The right to dissent peacefully. And the guardrail of our democracy is perhaps our nation's greatest strength. If you hear me clearly, disagreement must not lead to disunion.

Glorifying the norms of democracy in America ,Biden says that it is ok to have different opinion and “disagree” since “democracy” should be like that .Equating America with democracy, he repeats the word

“that’s”. He assures that the protective thing from derailment is the greatest power “greatest strength”. This involves glorifying America as having the utmost power. Rephrasing what he says before, Biden mentions that different opinions do not entail separation, rather they portray freedom of expression which is one of America’s traits according to his words. To sum up, categorization, and repetition help the speaker achieve the required aim. Furthermore, the strategy of categorization, namely lexical categorization wherein America’s worldview is mediated, assists the needed clarification i.e., positive self-representation of the country’s glorification.

Extract 7

What are the common objects we as Americans love, that define us as Americans?Opportunity, security, liberty, dignity, respect, honour, and yes, the truth.

Employing the strategy of norm expressions encompasses portraying something as the explicit norm statements about what people should or should not do. This is what the president tries to do in the above-mentioned extract. Obviously, he endeavours to show the Americans as one nation that agrees on certain norms like hope of new expectations, peace, freedom, honesty, self-worthiness, faithfulness, and reality. Consequently, his attempt to glorify America is made throughout depicting it as a country with great principles that very few nations may have together. Categorization by appraisal is utilized not through the employing the adjectives but the nouns that carry the attributes of their holders.

Extract 8

We face an attack on our democracy, and on truth, a raging virus, a stinging inequity, systemic racism, a climate in crisis, America's role in the world. Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways. But the fact is we face them all at once, presenting this nation with one of the greatest responsibilities we've had.

Depicting the nation as overcoming the various sorts of challenges is the one ways to glorify it and its people. Biden mentions different sorts of crises that were fought by his nation.To magnify the endurance, he illustrated that America “face them all at once” yet, such a nation considers them as one “one of the greatest responsibilities” . Categorization through appraisalment of the nation’s tasks, is done by the use of the word “greatest” which is in the uttermost level .Additionally, hyperbole is employed here since, many other nations face the same crises not only America.This magnifies Americas glorification.

Extract 9

In each of our moments enough of us have come together to carry all of us forward and we can do that now. History, faith and reason show the way.. the way of unity.

Expressly, this extract carries the president’s view of characterizing his people as totally unified and entirely consolidated . Hyperbole is made through using words like “each”, enough”, and “all” to exaggerate oneness among the American people .Moreover, Biden mentions the norms that they follow to make this unity with the justification for what he says. He illustrates that they encompass resorting to “History, faith and reason” which are the main rationales beyond such unprecedentedly unified nation.Hence, according to him, , past events, honesty and rationality are the key factors for this .

6.Quantitative analysis

Aiding the qualitative analysis, in this section . the quantitative analysis of all the strategies is tackled .The frequencies and percentages are shown in Table(1) below.

Obviously,Table(1)above depicts the variation in the implementation of various strategies .Accordingly, Hyperbole is the most utilized strategy that achieves 6frequencies with the percentage of 21%. Next, categorization by appraisalment scores 5frquencies which means 18%. As for repetition it occurs 4 times which means it has the percentage of 14%. Regarding norms(democracy and unity), categorization by

identification, consensus, and populism (restoring Sovereignty, and people centrism), they all score 2 frequencies which achieves 7%. Concerning functional categorization, it occurs once and this means it has the percentage of 4. However, lexical and categorization, and anti-elitism are not utilized.

No.	Strategy	Sub strategy	Frq.	%
1-Norms		Democracy	2	7
		Unity	2	7
2-Hyperbole			6	21
3-Categorization		Lexical	0	0
		Functional	1	4
		Identification	2	7
		Appraisalment	5	18
4-Consensus			2	7
5-Populism		Anti -Elitism	0	0
		Restoring Sovereignty	2	7
		People Centrism	2	7
6-Repetition			4	14
Total			28	

7.Results

Reading Biden's speech one may discover that though some substrategies are not implemented, all the strategies are utilized and in various percentages. To provide national self-glorification, Biden utilizes both hyperbole and categorization by appraisalment. It appears that these two strategies assist glorifying the nation and its people which is the main aim of gaining public's support. Additionally, repetition has been implemented to emphasize the focal point after presenting the speech.

8. Conclusions

The paper concludes the following:

1- National self –glorification is describe or represent something in a way that makes it seem better or more important than it really is .

2- Expressly, Biden uses the following strategies in his speech: Norms, hyperbole, categorization, consensus, populism and repetition. This asserts the first hypothesis.

3- In terms of the most employed strategies , they are hyperbole and appraisalment (within categorization), while the least is lexicalization. This asserts the second hypothesis .

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