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Techniques of Satire in Political Speeches

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Abstract

This paper deals with the techniques of satire which are followed in satire in American political discourse in general and in Trump's in particular. where these techniques are: irony, paradox, antithesis, enlargement, anti-climax, Exaggeration, and parody. This paper depends on Simpson (2003) model and it picks seven texts to analysis as an example for each techniques of Trump's political discourse. Also, it gets some results. The satiric speech implies such techniques in order to convey some messages that a speaker would like to be comprehended by the listener. Trump uses all technique in his political discourse.

1. Introduction

Communication is an interactive process by means of language delivering messages among interlocutors (Al-Ebadi, 2012, p.2). Different approaches emphasize the functions that interactants intend to exchange (Al-Hindawi, F. and Al-Ebadi, H., 2019, p. 1). Satire could have a good or bad effect on the listener, or the reader, according to his/ her background. If the speaker managed to control satire words; he could have a vital influence on his audience. However, in most cases, satire is difficult to be understood unless the audiences are of a high level of knowledge of these techniques of satire. Yet, there is a clear gap in studying

satire in American political discourse in general and in Trump`s in particular. Trump`s political discourse does not lack the use of satire as a humorous tactic which leads to minimize the opponent. The process of persuading, influencing and conciliating people stands for the core task of argumentation (Al-Ebadi, H., Yousifb, G. & Kubashi, H., 2020,p.602). As a result, This paper attempts to shed light on the techniques forms used by Donald Trump's speeches because he has his specific and unusual manner in using this phenomenon.

2. Irony

Satire is the use of irony, sarcasm, ridicule, or the like, in exposing, denouncing, or deriding vice, folly, etc. Satire refers to speech forms in which vices or follies are ridiculed. Satire emphasizes on the weakness more than the weak person (Singh,2012, p. 65). Generally speaking, a group of contextual factors are seen as sociological variables found in various cultures and reflected in discourses (Al-Ebadi, H. & Hassan, F., 2020, p.855).

There is a variety in using ironic expressions in situations according to what a speaker intends to make the listener understands. An example of a satire situation can be seen in Haverkate (1990, p. 95):

(1) “Stop doing yourself harm!”

So, in this example, here a father does not want his kid to hurt himself if the kid is going to understand the utterance properly. Talking in speech-act theoretic terms, this means that his father breaks the sincerity condition of his (directive) speech act. The kid knows that he had been doing harm to himself, his father would like to stop it. In this case that is precisely what, according to Haverkate, would be the content of the ironic utterance. The speech-act theory treatment of irony seems to be a generalization from Grice's treatment of assertives to utterances with other illocutionar points. So, it inherits Grice's problems of pointlessness.

As a matter of fact, Donald Trump uses irony as a tool of satire in most of his speeches to the public, to do his best to show humor to draw the attention of the audience (Graham,2018, p.29). Humor is a form and a tool of irony, like characterization or dialogue. Thus, it is foolhardy for any writer to rise to the impossible task of communicating the unspeakable with less than all available tools at their disposal. Humor is seen as a necessary element of fiction. From another angle, humor isn't a tool but a sense (Graham, 2018, p.67).

3. Paradox

A Paradox is regarded also as one of the techniques used to present a satiric effect. Generally, as (Al-Ebadi, H, et al., 2020, p.1448), point out that texts require professional put in order to make it distinguished in addition to attaining its communicative message. Abrams and Harpham (2015, p. 267) clarify that a paradox is a statement that seems on its face to be logically opposing or silly, yet turns out to be interpretable in a way that makes sense. A paradox is a self-contradictory statement that seeks to present two fully different things in order to produce a certain message. Paradox has an idea in the apparent sense that is not acceptable or logical, as well as depends on

the contradiction in linguistic terms attacking topics is one of the characteristics of a good satire and presenting paradoxical things achieve such attacking, for instance :

- (4) War is peace.
- (5) Freedom is slavery.
- (6) My weakness is my strength.

In these three examples (4, 5, and 6) the speaker says something but here the listener is going to understand the intended meaning behind the ideas meant. So war is obsolete not peace but it is something unpeaceful at all. Freedom is the opposite of slavery, and my weakness is not going to reflect my strength.

4. Antithesis

Leech (1969, p. 67) shows that antithesis as " literary device in which formal parallelism is combined with an implication of contrast". In contrary to paradox, two similar things are highlighted to be different. Such structure is prominent in satire as it attacks audience who believe in the similarity of what is presented as dissimilar. The idea in antithesis is acceptable, correct, wisdom or advice. The linguistic context of antithesis has two different parts of describing characteristics and contrast in meaning. For instance:

(7) John Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, says: "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."

The contrasting ideas of reign/serve and Hell/Heaven are placed in this sentence to achieve an antithetical effect where readers can.

(8)" Man proposes, God disposes."

(9)"Love is an ideal thing, marriage is a real thing." - Goethe.

(10) "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." - Neil Armstrong.

(11)"To err is human; to forgive divine." - Alexander Pope

(12)"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way..." Charles Dickens.

5. Anticlimax

In the case of anticlimax, the satirist intends to reduce the value of a particular subject in a way that strips it of all of its important and useful potentials to make it insignificant and weak(i.e. to reduce its importance). Colleta (2003, p. 105) considers the use of anticlimax as to set up the audience one reaction to the depressing emptiness of the character (or a topic) and to present a

surprisingly unrelated or comically underplayed response. e.g. when a boss finds that his workers didn't accomplish the required work, then he might say:

(13) "You are nothing!"

Here the boss tried to reduce the value of the worker in order to punish them as a reaction to the situation.

Another example about anticlimax can be seen in Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* uses anticlimax liberally, as follows:

(14) "Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey, Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes tea."

(15) In moments of crisis, I size up the situation in a flash, set my teeth, contract my muscles, take a firm grip on myself, and without tremor, always do the wrong thing." George Bernard Shaw

(16) "He has seen the ravages of war, he has known natural catastrophes, he has been to singles bars." Woody Allen.

6. Exaggeration

Abrams and Harpham (2015, p. 28) define hyperbole as "a kind of text that enables and encourages the reader to branch off into other texts at will, making the experience of reading nonlinear, open, and variable".

Making an exaggerated comparison is a satirical technique that aims at one of two things: either the two comparative things share the same quality, and, therefore, the comparison aims to highlight them in an exaggerated manner, particularly when a characteristic is negative. Or they are completely different, and therefore imparting a positive characteristic to the party that does not have strengthen the negative state within it. With hyperbole, the literal meaning is not the intended meaning. For instance:

(16) You can always count on them to do the right thing - after they've tried everything else. (Winston Churchill)

(17) He could eat a horse.

Here example (16) describes the higher and excessive ability of eating, and in a satiric way to mean 'he could even eat a horse, that he eats everything'.

In addition to this, Simpson (2003, p. 144) believes that exaggeration is neutralized over time and needs to be refreshed or revitalized by increasing the distortion a little to achieve the desired goal of it as a satirical technique. Yet, Davis (2017, p. 117) believes that sometimes it is necessary to retreat from exaggeration towards understatement withdraws clear markers of humour". The following examples reflect the idea of satire:

(18) My mother worked her fingers to the bone trying to provide for me and my brother(US soccer player Tim Howard).

Here the speaker tries to explain how hard his/her mother worked in order to supply them with anything they need.

(19) Give a girl the right shoes, and she can conquer the world. (Actress Marilyn Monroe).

(20) If the weather is hot, one can say “it is boiling ”

(21) If someone is happy, he/she may say “today is the best day of my life!”

7. Enlargement

There is a great difference between exaggeration and enlargement. Exaggeration, as a satirical technique, aims to add more information and attributes that are not primarily present in the character or the topic in question, while enlargement is to make the characteristics of this character or topic longer than usual through the extensive mention of facts that are mainly present in him/ it. Usually, these facts or negative characteristics bring satire and laughter.

Francus (1994, p. 120) states that enlargement mustn't be expanded at the expense of language. He means that enlargement mustn't use antiquated and exploded words that the society disapproves, For instance:

(22) - I have been working all the day, but no one value my work.

(23) -It is a huge building like a mountain.

In example (21) he/she was working for some hours only, but here the speaker tries to extend the action as a matter of giving more importance to the situation.

8. Parody

Mey (2009, p. 308) says "gesture and speech characteristically occur together, combining with still other expressive resources to coordinate interlocutors in the communicative process". Thus, parody can be activated in speech, as well as gestures, and perhaps the mimicry of gestures in a satirical manner is closer to the recipient than the imitation of speech itself.

Parody is to imitate the techniques and/or style of some person, place, or thing in order to ridicule the original. For parody to be successful, the addressee must know the original topic (or personality) that is being ridiculed. Abrams and Harpham (2015:41) focus on applying the imitation to a "lowly or comically" inappropriateness.

(24) “*Your little sister puts on your father’s big shoes and stomps around in them, saying, “I need to make a business call. I am a very busy, very important businessman!”*”

In this example, the girl is parodying her own father who works as a businessman. She makes the comment that the shape many businessmen appear in, is excessively serious and more organized.

(25) “Your friend Kelly is known for chewing gum all the time. Looking at her, you begin stuffing gum in your mouth and chewing very loudly, saying, “Hi! I’m Kelly! Do you have any extra gum? I could really use some more.”

Here in this example, Kelly is joking with a friend, she is parodying her gum-chewing habit by imitating and hyperbolizing it in a comedic way, say that she can use more gums.

To Sumup all or some the informational techniques of satire are expected to be used in Trump's speech. Thus, they represent a part of model of our study to analyze the selected data.

2. Data Analysis and Collection

2.1 Data Analysis

This section deals with the texts which to be analyzed according to Simpson's model. The aspects to be analyzed are techniques of satire in Trump's political speeches in media. Media represents one of the effective means during the struggle; it conveys what happens in a way that supports the position of the proponents, shows their legal actions and so on (Al-Duleimi, A. & Al-Ebadi, H., 2016, p. 53). With the numerousness of political events and the competition among news media channels, news manufacturing becomes highly weighty to attract audience's attention aiming at changing their minds (Al-Hindawi, F. and Al-Ebadi, H., 2018, p.113).

2.2 Data Collection

The collected data are exemplified by different texts selected randomly from different speeches and different occasions. The chosen texts are 7, which reflect the technique of satire of satire used by Trump’s speeches for many purposes.

The context of situation is the first step before proceeding to the analysis of the text. In this stage, the speaker is identified and then the recipient. Subsequently, the subject of the speech ought to be determined and what the satire that happened in this speech is. After that, the researchers determine technique used in the political discourse.

2.3 Data Analysis

Text (1)

The Green New Deal, right?

Darling, is the wind blowing today? I'd like to watch television, darling.

The speaker is the President of the United States of America Trump. The audience is the crowd at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). The topic is the Green New Deal to produce electrical energy. The satire is that wind farms or the green energy and climate change

agreements is just a waste of time and pointless. Donald Trump's speech took place in 2019 at (CPCR). This text can be reviewed through the following website link.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5HHZI_pe3w

Technique of Satire

Concerning to Simpson's model (See 1.2) , the analysis shows that Donald Trump's satire is expressed within the text above by the irony Technique of Satire. He said in his first sentence sarcastically mocking the green energy from the wind farm. Donald Trump mentions that a man talking to his wife if the wind is blowing in order to be able to watch television. Donald Trump wants to say if the wind is the source of energy, what do we do if it stops. He does not Bear in mind that the wind farm can have storage batteries.

Text (2)

“He's a war hero. He's a war hero but he was captured. I like people that weren't captured.”

The sentence above is part of Trump's speech presented to a T.V presenter. The audience is the recipients on CBS Network. The candidate Trump speaks about John McCain to satirize him. Trump uses " Smash Mouth" which is a politically so forceful and so direct style in conference of religious conservatives. The topic is Donald Trump's sparred, with CBS pollster, Frank Luntz over Senator, John McCain. The Satire here John McCain will be an unqualified leader. He means John McCain is unsuccessful as a warrior so he could not be a successful leader. This text can be retrieved from the following website link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KA5ybXu78cc>

Technique of Satire

According Simpson's model (See 1.3) , the analysis shows that the satire used by Trump is expressed within the sentence above through the Paradox Technique of Satire. He uses two different ideas (being a hero and being captured) to describe John McCain so as to form a satiric meaning. Here Trump uses positive and negative images where he said “he is a hero but he is captured”. So Trump makes contrast meaning although he is a hero and has great achievements but captured to reduce his valuable history.

Text (3)

“Hello, Cleveland! Thank you. Thank you. This land is your land; this land is my land. But mostly it is my land. I'm king of the world! Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!

As I was telling my beautiful daughter, Ivanka look at her, folks: just look at her—the other day: It is the best of times! It is the worst of times! It is the age of wisdom! It is the age of foolishness! It is the epoch of belief! It is the epoch of incredulity! It is the season of Light! It is the season of Darkness! It is the spring of hope! It is the winter of despair! Come with me if you want to live! You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one! Anything less than the best is a felony!"

The speaker is the Republican candidate of the American United States Donald Trump. The audience is the citizens who support him in his election campaign of Cleveland. The topic is the American presidential election in 2016. Trump satirizes the Democrats and their politics for two reasons. The first reason is that Trump is a candidate for the republican Party, which is in contrast to the politics of the Democratic Party. The second reason is that he is in an election race with the Democratic Party candidate Hillary Clinton, who is the main competitor for him. The satire is a try to convince democrats not to vote to the benefit of his the Democratic opponent in the election. Also, he tries to encourage the American voter to elect him. It is published by Megan Garber. This text belongs to Trump's speech on July 19, 2016. The text can be retrieved from the website link:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/exclusive-text-of-donald-j-trumps-upcoming-acceptance-speech/491933/>

Technique of Satire

Regarding Simpson's model (see 1.4). The analysis shows that Trump's satire is expressed by the antithesis Technique of satire to present a stark difference between the two main parties. Trump here Puts pictures for comparison when he uses the antithesis Technique of Satire in his speech. He uses 'best times' and 'worst times' then he compares two ages by referring to his age as 'age of wisdom' and the previous age of Obama 'foolishness age'. Thus he claims that his age is a better age for the USA and for all over the world.

Text (4)

OK, General Raisin Kane, how fast can ...

"Sir, we can have it totally finished in one week."

I said: "One week?"

And yet I see senators that are there for 20 years, white hair ...

See I don't have white hair. [Laughter]

The speaker is Trump. The audience is an annual gathering of conservative politicians and pundits (CPAC). The topic is Military spending and the length of war time in the Middle East. At the last part of the same speech, Trump said: We spent \$7 trillion in the Middle East and we can't land

with the lights on. 20 years later. How bad is it? The satire is false success that never took place. Trump's speech took place in 2019. This text can be retrieved through the following website link.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5hhzi_pe3w

Technique of Satire

Concerning to Simpson's model (See 1.4) , the analysis shows that Donald Trump's satire is expressed within the text above by the Anticlimax Technique of Satire. Trump satires previous administrations and their lack of success in the Middle East Despite the money and time that consumed. Trump torpedoed all their accomplishments.

Text (5)

“And your father was never considered smart, he was never considered a good Senator. He was only a good vice president because he understood how to kiss Barack Obama's ass.”

The speaker is outgoing president Trump. The audience is the public at a campaign rally in Minneapolis, Minnesota. the speech takes place 26th -July 2020. President Trump attacked Vice President Joe Biden as well as Hunter Biden. The topic is The campaign of President Donald Trump in the American elections. The satire is Joe Biden is a sycophant and a hypocrite who does not have any qualifications to be president of the United States.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4dauQTci-w>

Technique of Satire

Concerning to Simpson's model (See 1.5) , the analysis shows that Donald Trump's satire is expressed within the text above by the Exaggeration Technique of Satire. Trump decreases the status of the vice president at the time of Barak Obama. He means here that the vice president got this position because he is fawning to Obama.

Text (6)

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un just stated that the "Nuclear Button is on his desk at all times." will someone from his depleted and food starved regime please inform him that I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger and more powerful one than his, and my Button works.

Trump writes a message on Twitter. The audience is the followers of the tweeter media. The topic is Trump's response to the Korean leader's threat. The satire here is Donald Trump mocks the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un by using the comparison between the American and the Korean nuclear program. Trump's intention You are Neither the size and strength of the American

military nor with the power of its economy. This text can be reviewed through the following website link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sqK9QAxkT0>

Technique of Satire

Concerning to Simpson's (See 1.6) , the analysis shows that Donald Trump's satire is expressed within the text above by the Enlargement Technique of Satire. Especially by using the expressions "food starved regime, it is a much bigger more powerful one than his, and my Button works". Here Donald Trump tries to extend the action as a matter of giving more importance to the American Nuclear program. Trump aims to create a huge picture and puts extra description for his Nuclear Button. He mocks to reduce the effect of the threat of North Korean leader's statement.

Text (7)

“I have more Indian blood than her and I have none”.

The speaker is President Trump. The audience is the crowd at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). The topic is Michael Bloomberg's support for Hillary Clinton in his anti-Trump comments. Trump called Hilary Pocahontas. Pocahontas is a symbolic figure from American history who embraced the invading white man and got married to with one then converted to Christianity. The satire is that Trump is from American origin in his words and actions while Hillary Clinton isn't. This text can be retrieved through the following website link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfl13QyQZKc>

Technique of Satire

Concerning to Simpson's model (See 1.8). The analysis shows that Trump's satire is expressed within the text above by the Parody Technique of Satire. Trump uses the mimicry of gestures in a satirical manner which is closer to the recipient than the imitation of speech itself. Here is based on the previous knowledge of the audience for character or situation.

Conclusions

This paper concludes that the techniques that are followed, generally, in American political discourse, specifically, in trump's speech where All these techniques are used. Which are irony, paradox, antithesis, enlargement, anticlimax, Exaggeration, and parody. The satiric speech implies such techniques in order to convey some messages that a speaker would like to be comprehended by the listener.

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