

Article

Linguistic Identity in the Context of Political Discourse

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Abstract: This article examines linguistic identity in the context of political discourse. Linguistic identity refers to the way individuals and groups construct, express, and negotiate their social, cultural, ethnic, national, ideological, and institutional belonging through language. In political discourse, linguistic identity becomes especially important because political actors use language not only to communicate information but also to create images of themselves, define collective groups, legitimize power, and influence public opinion. The article discusses the theoretical foundations of linguistic identity, the role of political discourse in identity construction, and the main linguistic strategies used in political communication. The analysis shows that pronouns, lexical choices, metaphors, narratives, slogans, evaluative language, and code-switching play a central role in shaping political identity. The article concludes that linguistic identity in political discourse is not fixed, but dynamic, strategic, and deeply connected with ideology, power, and social representation.

Keywords: Linguistic identity, political discourse, discourse analysis, ideology, power, political communication, language and identity.

Introduction

Language is one of the main instruments through which people express who they are, where they belong, and how they position themselves in society. Linguistic identity is formed through the use of language varieties, accents, styles, vocabulary, discourse patterns, and communicative choices. It reflects a person's or group's social background, cultural belonging, ideological position, ethnic affiliation, national consciousness, and political orientation [1]. In other words, linguistic identity is not simply a matter of speaking a language. It is a way of presenting the self and identifying with a particular community.

In modern linguistics, identity is understood not as something stable and fully fixed, but as something produced and negotiated in communication. Bucholtz and Hall argue that identity is the product of linguistic and semiotic practices rather than their simple source. This means that people do not only express identity through language; they also construct identity while speaking, writing, arguing, persuading, and interacting with others [2], [3], [4]. So yes, identity is not just "I am this." It is also "I keep performing this until society agrees to pretend it is obvious."

Political discourse is one of the most important contexts in which linguistic identity is constructed. Political discourse includes speeches, debates, interviews, party programs, campaign slogans, parliamentary discussions, diplomatic statements, media appearances, social media posts, and official documents. It is not neutral communication [5]. It is a field where power, ideology, authority, legitimacy, and collective identity are constantly

produced and contested. Critical discourse analysis views language as a social practice that both reflects and shapes power relations [6], [7], [8].

In political communication, linguistic identity is especially significant because politicians must present themselves as representatives of certain values, groups, nations, parties, or ideologies. They create an image of “us” and “them,” define allies and opponents, appeal to national memory, construct moral authority, and persuade audiences to accept their vision of reality. Therefore, the study of linguistic identity in political discourse helps reveal how language participates in the construction of political power and social belonging [9].

The aim of this article is to analyze the concept of linguistic identity in political discourse and explain the main linguistic strategies through which political actors construct individual, collective, national, ideological, and institutional identities [10].

Literature Review

The study of linguistic identity is closely connected with sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, pragmatics, and political linguistics. Scholars emphasize that language is not only a system of grammar and vocabulary, but also a social resource used for positioning the speaker within a community. Bucholtz and Hall propose a sociocultural linguistic approach to identity, according to which identity emerges in interaction and is indexed through labels, stances, styles, implicatures, and linguistic structures [11].

Rajagopalan argues that linguistic identity is largely political because language often functions as a symbol of belonging, loyalty, and collective allegiance [12]. This view is especially important in multilingual and multicultural societies, where language choice may signal national identity, ethnic identity, regional belonging, or political position. For example, the use of a national language in political speeches may strengthen patriotic identity, while the use of minority languages may signal solidarity with specific communities.

Political discourse analysis studies how political meanings are created through language [13]. Chilton explains that political discourse involves the use of language in the struggle for power, representation, legitimacy, and public influence [14]. Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis emphasizes that political language is connected with ideology and social structures [15]. Van Dijk also stresses that political discourse influences social cognition, public opinion, and ideological representation. Apparently, words are not just words. Humanity discovered propaganda and then decided to call it “communication strategy.”

These theoretical approaches show that linguistic identity in political discourse should be studied as a dynamic relation between language, ideology, power, and social context. Political actors do not merely speak as individuals. They speak as representatives of parties, governments, nations, movements, classes, or ideological communities. Their linguistic choices help construct these identities and make them recognizable to audiences.

Methods

This article uses a qualitative discourse-analytical method. The research is based on theoretical analysis of linguistic identity and political discourse. The study applies concepts from critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and political linguistics in order to explain how linguistic identity is created in political communication.

The analysis focuses on several linguistic features that are especially relevant to political identity construction: personal pronouns, lexical choices, metaphors, evaluative language, narratives, slogans, code-switching, and institutional terminology. These elements are examined as tools that help political actors construct images of themselves, their opponents, their audience, and the nation.

The article does not analyze one specific political speech or campaign. Instead, it provides a general theoretical discussion of the main mechanisms of linguistic identity formation in political discourse. This is less dramatic than exposing one politician's speech line by line, but sadly more useful for an academic article.

Results

The analysis shows that linguistic identity in political discourse is constructed through several major linguistic and discursive strategies. These strategies allow political actors to present themselves as legitimate, trustworthy, patriotic, democratic, modern, traditional, reformist, or close to the people.

One of the most important strategies is the use of personal pronouns. Pronouns such as "I," "we," "you," and "they" are powerful tools of political identity construction. The pronoun "I" is often used to express personal responsibility, leadership, confidence, and moral authority. The pronoun "we" is even more important because it creates collective identity. It may refer to the government, the party, the nation, the people, or a specific political movement. Through "we," politicians create a sense of unity and shared destiny. At the same time, "they" is often used to mark opponents, outsiders, enemies, or groups presented as different from the speaker's community [16]. Recent research on political discourse also shows that first-person plural pronouns can construct institutional identity and alignment in political communication.

Another important strategy is lexical choice. Political actors carefully choose words that reflect their ideological position. For example, one political group may use the word "reform," while another may call the same process "instability." One side may speak about "freedom," while another may speak about "security." These lexical choices are not random. They frame reality in a particular way and guide the audience toward a preferred interpretation. Critical discourse analysis pays close attention to such choices because vocabulary can reveal hidden ideological meanings.

Metaphor is also a central device in constructing linguistic identity. Political discourse often uses metaphors of journey, family, war, construction, disease, and struggle. A country may be described as "moving forward," society as "one family," corruption as "a disease," or political opponents as "enemies of progress." Such metaphors simplify complex political realities and make them emotionally powerful. They also help create a shared identity between the speaker and the audience by offering familiar images and values [Chilton, 2004].

Narrative is another key mechanism of linguistic identity. Political actors often tell stories about the past, present, and future. They may speak about national history, collective suffering, heroic ancestors, economic development, social crisis, or future prosperity. These narratives help construct national and ideological identity. They answer basic political questions: Who are we? What have we experienced? Who threatens us? What future should we build? Through narrative, political discourse transforms political programs into emotionally meaningful stories.

Evaluative language plays an important role as well. Political identity is constructed through positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Politicians often describe their own group with positive words such as "responsible," "honest," "patriotic," "democratic," or "progressive." Opponents may be described as "corrupt," "dangerous," "irresponsible," "radical," or "anti-national." Van Dijk notes that ideological discourse often depends on emphasizing positive information about "us" and negative information about "them" [van Dijk, 2015]. Humanity's oldest trick: polish your own statue, throw mud at the other one, call it a debate.

Slogans and repeated phrases are also important in political identity formation. A slogan condenses a political identity into a short, memorable expression. It creates emotional attachment and helps audiences remember the main message of a campaign or movement. Slogans often use simple vocabulary, rhythm, repetition, and inclusive

pronouns. They are effective because they turn complex political ideas into easily repeatable symbols.

Code-switching and language choice are especially important in multilingual societies. A politician may switch between languages or use specific cultural expressions to show closeness to different groups. For example, using a national language may signal patriotism, while using a minority language may express respect and inclusion. In international contexts, the use of English or another global language may signal modernity, diplomacy, or global orientation. Thus, language choice itself becomes a marker of political and linguistic identity [Rajagopalan, 2001].

Institutional language also shapes political identity. Politicians often use official terms, legal formulas, administrative vocabulary, and policy-related expressions to construct an image of competence and authority. However, excessive bureaucratic language may create distance from ordinary citizens. For this reason, many political actors combine institutional language with simple, emotional, and familiar expressions in order to appear both competent and close to the people. A miracle of politics: sound like a manager, but pretend to be everyone's neighbor.

Discussion

The results show that linguistic identity in political discourse is not fixed or natural. It is constructed through repeated linguistic choices and discursive strategies. Political actors shape their identity depending on audience, context, ideology, and communicative goal. A politician may present himself or herself as a national leader in one speech, as a member of the people in another, as a reformer in a campaign, and as a defender of tradition in a public ceremony. This flexibility shows that political identity is strategic and context-dependent.

The construction of collective identity is one of the most important functions of political discourse. By using pronouns, national symbols, historical references, and emotional narratives, politicians create a sense of common belonging. They define who belongs to the group and who is outside it. This process can strengthen unity and solidarity, but it can also create exclusion, polarization, and hostility. Therefore, linguistic identity in political discourse has both constructive and manipulative potential.

Political discourse also connects linguistic identity with ideology. Lexical choices, metaphors, and evaluative expressions do not simply describe reality. They organize reality according to a particular ideological perspective. For example, the same event may be described as "reform," "crisis," "liberation," "interference," or "betrayal," depending on the speaker's political position. This shows that language is never fully neutral in political contexts [Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 2015].

Another important point is that linguistic identity is linked to legitimacy. Politicians use language to show that they have the right to speak for the people, the nation, the state, or a particular community. They construct themselves as responsible representatives and construct their opponents as less legitimate or dangerous. In this sense, linguistic identity becomes a tool of political authority.

The digital age has also changed the construction of linguistic identity in political discourse. Social media platforms have made political communication faster, shorter, more emotional, and more personalized. Politicians now construct identity not only through formal speeches but also through posts, comments, hashtags, short videos, and memes. This has made linguistic identity more visible and more unstable. Political actors must constantly perform identity before online audiences, where every word can be quoted, mocked, remixed, or weaponized within minutes. Civilization is doing fine, obviously.

Conclusion

Linguistic identity in the context of political discourse is a complex and dynamic phenomenon. It is constructed through language choices that express belonging, ideology,

authority, solidarity, opposition, and social positioning. Political actors use pronouns, lexical choices, metaphors, narratives, slogans, code-switching, evaluative language, and institutional terminology to create individual and collective identities.

The study of linguistic identity in political discourse is important because it reveals how language participates in the production of power and public meaning. Political discourse does not only reflect political reality; it shapes how people understand themselves, their leaders, their opponents, their nation, and their future. Therefore, analyzing linguistic identity helps us understand the deeper relationship between language, ideology, power, and society.

In conclusion, linguistic identity in political discourse should be viewed not as a stable personal feature, but as a strategic, socially constructed, and ideologically loaded process. It is one of the key mechanisms through which political actors influence public consciousness and organize collective belonging.

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