

**Linguistic Devices Used to Persuade and Manipulate Audiences of Political  
Discourse in the 2020 Presidential Election**

*Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of Requirements to Obtain Strata One (S1) Degree  
in English Department*



**By:**  
**RIDHATUL FADHLI**  
**NIM 19019107**

**Advisor:**  
**Nur Rosita, S.Pd, M.A.**  
**199007122022032013**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT**  
**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS**  
**UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG**  
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HALAMAN PERSETUJUAN SKRIPSI

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**Nama** : Ridhatul Fadhlil

**NIM** : 19019107

**Program Studi** : Sastra Inggris

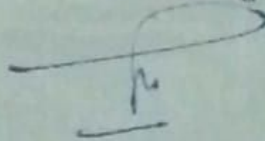
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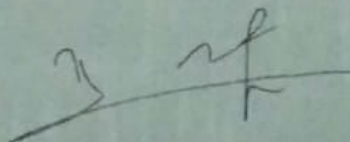


Nur Rosita, S.Pd, M.A.

NIP. 19710525 199802 002

Mengetahui

Kepala Departemen Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris



Dr. Yuli Tiarina, S.Pd, M.Pd

NIP. 199007122022032013

Dinyatakan lulus setelah dipertahankan di depan Tim Penguji Skripsi  
Program Studi Sastra Inggris Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni Universitas Negeri Padang  
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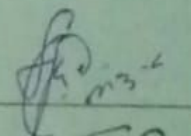
Nama : Ridhatul Fadhli  
NIM : 19019107  
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris  
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, 7 November 2023

Tim Penguji

Tanda Tangan

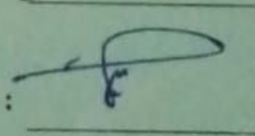
1. Ketua : Lafziah Hilmi, S. Pd., M. Pd

: 

2. Sekretaris : Ainul Addinna, S. Pd, M. Pd

: 

3. Anggota : Nur Rosita, S.Pd., M.A.

: 

## **Linguistic Devices Used to Persuade and Manipulate Audiences of Political Discourse in the 2020 Presidential Election**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study is concerned with the linguistic devices used to persuade and manipulate audiences of political discourse in the 2020 US Presidential election. This study focused on Donald Trump's and Joe Biden's rhetorical and framing strategies in their speech and debate. The study aimed to find the rhetorical and framing strategies of Donald Trump and Joe Biden and to find how they persuade and manipulate audiences in their speech and debate. A qualitative method was used to conduct the study to analyze the data. The findings reveal that the rhetorical strategy, Pathos, or the appeal to emotions, was utilized the most by Donald Trump compared to a more balanced use of all rhetorical strategies by Joe Biden. At the same time, logos were focused more on debates for both candidates. For framing strategies, both candidates utilized emphasis the most to stress the importance of an issue or to concentrate on a message. According to the analysis, Donald Trump mainly used persuasive language, which can be seen by referencing "patriots" several times to evoke a sense of unity, which is different compared to his debates, where he is very manipulative in using statistics and facts that are not fully referenced and an abundance of straight lies. This can be seen when he claimed that he cut "drug prices," which is false. Joe Biden used a persuasive strategy by referencing history and events such as "Charlottesville".

**Key Words:** Political Discourse, Rhetoric, Framing, Linguistic Device

## **Linguistic Devices Used to Persuade and Manipulate Audiences of Political Discourse in the 2020 Presidential Election**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini berkaitan dengan perangkat linguistik yang digunakan untuk membujuk dan memanipulasi khalayak wacana politik pada pemilu Presiden AS tahun 2020. Penelitian ini berfokus pada strategi retorika dan framing Donald Trump dan Joe Biden dalam pidato dan debat mereka. Metode kualitatif digunakan dalam melakukan penelitian untuk menganalisis data. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi retorika dan framing Donald Trump dan Joe Biden serta mengetahui cara mereka membujuk dan memanipulasi khalayak dalam wacana politik. Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa strategi retorik, Pathos, atau seruan emosi, paling banyak dimanfaatkan oleh Donald Trump dibandingkan dengan penggunaan seluruh strategi retorika yang lebih seimbang oleh Joe Biden. Pada saat yang sama, logo lebih fokus pada debat kedua kandidat. Untuk menyusun strategi, kedua kandidat paling banyak menggunakan penekanan untuk menekankan pentingnya suatu isu atau untuk berkonsentrasi pada sebuah pesan. Berdasarkan analisis, Donald Trump lebih banyak menggunakan bahasa persuasif, terlihat dengan beberapa kali menyebut "patriot" untuk membangkitkan rasa persatuan, berbeda dengan debatnya yang sangat manipulatif dalam menggunakan statistik dan fakta yang bersifat persuasif. tidak sepenuhnya direferensikan dan banyak kebohongan langsung. Hal ini terlihat ketika ia menyatakan bahwa ia memotong "harga obat", dan hal ini tidak benar. Joe Biden menggunakan strategi persuasif dengan merujuk pada sejarah dan peristiwa seperti "Charlottesville".

**Kata Kunci:** Wacana Politik, retorika, framing, perangkat linguistic

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Problem

Language was one of the principal mediums for two primary purposes, according to Jakobson (1960), which were the expression of ideas, feelings, and intentions, as well as the promotion of efficient communication between people or organizations. This was based on how humans operated as social creatures. Humans had a higher cognitive, reasoning, and language capacity than animals. It was concluded that cooperation between people would lead to better results than trying to work individually, which thus led to humans working together and establishing a complex society (Wilson, 2012). To achieve this cooperation, language or a way of communication was required so that everyone could accurately convey the meaning, emotions, ideas, and intentions, as Jakobson (1960) stated earlier.

According to Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams (2013), language consisted of words that were produced by human organs, which then manufactured sounds, which (Phonetics and Phonology) then formed and created words that had meaning attached to them (Morphology). The word formations were then structured into meaningful phrases, clauses, and sentences (Syntax). All the combinations of sounds, words, and structures of the phrases or sentences were then analyzed to find the meaning conveyed literally and contextually

(Semantics and Pragmatics). In linguistics, discourse examined language beyond words or phrases. It studied how language was structured to convey meaning in social interactions. Discourse analysis focused on coherence, pragmatics, and context's role in interpreting language. It explored larger communication units like conversations or speeches, improving our understanding of how language conveyed ideas and social relationships within discourse communities.

According to Aristotle in Roberts (2007), three components were vital for effective communication: the person trying to convey the message or the speaker, and then the speech and the listener. However, speech was the instrument that played a big part in persuasion. Persuasive language was a part of speech used to convince another person to understand, manipulate, and change their stance on a topic to suit the speaker. The tool that was used to make a person persuasive was a linguistic device. Linguistic devices were techniques used to create emphasis, evoke emotion, and add flair to intentionally shape how a listener comprehended the message in a way that suited the speaker's intentions. This could be achieved through clever use of phonetics morphologically, syntactically, and semantically.

In a democratic society, the approval of the masses or constituents of a nation was vital for the workings of the nation, and language was used to deal with this. Democratic ideas were ruled by the idea that the nation was "run by the people and for the people," so for any implementation of policy and

changes to be enacted, there was a need for a majority to support a representative. This meant a representative's job was to find a policy that the constituents or the representative liked and then promote it to the constituents. According to Locke's "Two Treatises of Government," in Laslett (1988), this concept was popular sovereignty, where political authority was based on the people's will. This study discussed how candidates trying to represent the people were trying to appeal to the audience through political debates and speeches through arguments. Thus, phrasing an issue could reveal an argument's unstated premises and, in turn, the speaker's ideological position Hirst, Feng, Cochrane, Nona. (2014).

These scopes of studies were selected to provide a more conclusive result since they covered the bases for different contexts and devices. The analysis of these mediums contained linguistic devices such as rhetorical appeals such as ethos, pathos, and logos, as well as framing, which included emphasis, metaphor, analogy, and exclusion or omission. According to Allan, Burridge (2006), linguistic devices were techniques and strategies of languages that were used in specific ways to achieve the goals of manipulation, persuasion, and adequate conveyance of messages there (Hajdinjak and Amos 2019). This thesis aimed to investigate the language of politics by analyzing regularity and the allotment of linguistic devices, what influenced their use, and the interpretation of that language.

The United States of America conducted the 2020 presidential election between two eminent figures: Donald Trump from the Republican Party, the running president at the time, and Joe Biden from the Democratic Party, who served as vice president for two terms before Donald Trump became president. Since both figures had been in the public eye, they had significant public influence and controversy. Donald Trump was considered a conservative while Joe Biden was considered as a liberal in the US political circle, but both used divisive partisan framing and rhetoric from time to time (Moghadam & Samar 2023). Thus, it was interesting to study how they navigated rhetorically and how they framed their speech to make themselves look good and, in turn, make their opponents look bad (Cooney & Newbolt, 2022).

The four sources Mohammad (2022), Veselá (2021), Baby, Afzal, Bashara (2020), and Bataineh (2019) all tried to explain their speeches through the studies of pragmatics and political discourse; however, each chose different parts of persuasion. Mohammad (2022) and Veselá (2021) chose to focus on rhetorical strategies for their subjects, while Baby, Afzal, and Bashara (2020) focused on illocutionary, perlocutionary, and locutionary acts, and Bataineh (2019) focused on the linguistic device to persuade. While all focused on how their subject persuaded the audience in a political setting, the study could be divided into two sections. The first was rhetoric, which was the way to appeal to the audience, and the second was the specific technique or



pattern of persuasion to achieve a particular effect. So combining the two sections, which were the persuasive strategy and the devices used to persuade, created a clearer picture of how linguistic devices were used. Comparing two successful and different politicians in terms of backgrounds, like Joe Biden, a long-time politician, and Donald Trump, a successful businessman and celebrity, we could discover different strategies. While there was a study about Donald Trump and Barack Obama, both subjects never interacted with each other or faced different relevant agendas during their tenure of power.

The specific technique used to persuade Aristotle in Roberts (2007) rhetorical theory and Reese, Gandy, & Grant (2003) framing theory was chosen. The rhetorical theory was used to understand the broader strategy of how the orator tried to achieve their goals, whether that was ethos, pathos, or logos. Framing theory was then used as an additional spice so that specific techniques gave the message more impact. It was imperative to study two highly successful politicians considered opposites to see a broader range of rhetorical strategies and framing techniques regarding backgrounds since Joe Biden had been a lifelong politician most of his life. At the same time, Donald Trump had a business and acting background.

## **1.2 Identification of the Problems**

As mentioned above, several researchers have analyzed persuasive techniques such as rhetorical appeals and specific linguistic devices. There has

yet to be a writer who covers both and compares how two different prominent figures utilize them. Two famous politicians of vastly different backgrounds must be studied to see various persuasive strategies. While there was a study about Donald Trump and Barack Obama, both subjects never had to interact with each other or had different relevant agendas that they faced during their tenure of power.

### **1.3 Limitation of the Problems**

Finding a clear cause-and-effect relationship between the linguistic devices used in political discourse and their impact on the audience will take much work. This is due to the challenges of determining whether the linguistic devices were the sole device to persuade and manipulate the audiences or whether other factors, such as personal belief or media coverage, have played a role. Additionally, the study may be limited to the data's quantity and quality, which may differ for different nations and political figures.

The method used is descriptive-qualitative, which also includes rhetorical and framing analysis. This thesis aims to investigate the language of politics by analyzing regularity and the allotment of linguistic devices, what influences their use, and the interpretation of that language. This thesis provides an exhaustive and wide-ranging analysis of the language used in politics. It offers a comprehension of how linguistic devices are extensively used in various media.

#### **1.4 Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the mentioned limitation, the problem is "What are the differences in rhetorical and framing strategies between the two 2020 USA Presidential candidates?"

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following are the research problems:

1. What are Donald Trump's and Joe Biden's rhetorical strategies?
2. What are Donald Trump's and Joe Biden's framing strategies?
3. What linguistic devices are used to persuade and/or manipulate audiences of political discourse?

#### **1.6 Purposes of the Research**

1. To find out Donald Trump's and Joe Biden's rhetoric strategies
2. To find out Donald Trump's and Joe Biden's framing strategies
3. To find out what linguistic devices are used persuade and/or manipulate audiences of political discourse

## **1.7 Significances of the Research**

### **1. Theoretically**

This study contributes to a more fundamental and complex understanding of how language devices function in political discourse. The results of this study have significant ramifications for democratic societies because they shed light on how politicians use their framing and rhetoric to influence their constituents theoretically. The study emphasizes the need for a more moral and responsible approach to political language. It stresses the significance of an informed and critical public that can successfully traverse the complexity of political communication.

### **2. Practically**

Practically, the research also advances the fields of linguistics, political science, media studies, and communication studies by offering essential insights into how language is used to create and influence society.

## **1.8 Definition of the Key Terms**

### **1. Political discourse**

Political discourse discusses and expresses opinions on political issues, policies, and events. It involves discussions, speeches, social media, and other communication that affect how the general public feels and makes decisions.

### **2. Rhetoric**

Rhetoric is the art of persuasion via communication; it involves using language and strategies to influence and persuade an audience through effective messaging, reasoning, and persuasive techniques.

3. Framing

Framing presents information or situations that may affect perception, attitudes, and decision-making by affecting how they are received and interpreted.

4. Linguistic device

*Linguistic devices* are techniques and strategies used in language to enhance communication.