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UNCOVERING IDEOLOGY IN INAUGURAL SPEECHES OF TRUMP AND BIDEN BY CONDUCTING A TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF MATERIAL PROCESSES

In this paper we will analyse the inaugural speeches of the two latest presidents of the United States of America, Donald Trump and Joe Biden. The analysis will be based upon the Critical Discourse Analysis model of Norman Fairclough, whereas the methodology used to conduct the research will be based on Systemic Functional Linguistics. We will focus on the material processes because it is through them that concrete action is expressed. This is particularly relevant in inaugural speeches as newly-elected presidents see them as a perfect podium to present what they and their administration plan to do over the course of a four-year mandate. For the sake of the research, we formulated one research question and two hypotheses in order to highlight the ideological differences between the two presidents. In the paper we have answered the research question by establishing that *we* is the most common Actor of material processes. Also, we have proven the two hypotheses proposed. Namely, the difference in policy and ideology of Trump and Biden has been confirmed by an analysis of Goal in material processes, while the *us* vs. *them* dichotomy in Trump's speech has also been proven. We have concluded that these linguistic differences of the two speeches point to a stark difference in ideology of Trump and Biden.

Key words: *Donald Trump, Joe Biden, Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, ideology, power*

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper will deal with the inaugural addresses of the last two presidents of the United States of America. We will deal with them from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is based upon a theory of

language which views language use as a form of social practice. Our methodological analysis will be based upon Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). More specifically, we will examine the material processes within the ideational metafunction of SFL.

Up to this point, there has been no analysis based on the comparison of the two inaugural speeches delivered by Trump and Biden, respectively.

The main motivation behind the decision to write this paper lies in the need to critically analyse the speeches delivered by these two politicians as they in some way impersonate the two conflicting political ideologies in the United States.

Trump's ideology has been analysed by many political scientists in the period between the last two presidential campaigns. Trump is seen as a champion of a white-nationalist America, a populist, and an inspiration for nationalists and racists across the globe. Joe Biden sits on the opposite end of the political spectrum. One of his main themes during the presidential campaign of 2020 was racial equality, particularly in the wake of the murder of George Floyd by a white policeman in Minnesota. Trump, on the other hand, did not place racial equality high on his agenda. He had very few Black Americans as his advisers and White House staff.

Immigration is another sensitive issue where the two presidents differ. During the presidential campaign, Biden advocated for a further influx of immigrants, even during the Covid-19 pandemic, arguing that they help the economy grow and create jobs. Trump, however, significantly reduced immigration and travel into the United States during the still ongoing pandemic. He cited health reasons and rising unemployment rates as the main reasons for such decisions. Trump also terminated the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme, thus allowing for the deportation of immigrants who came to the United States as children. Biden promised during his campaign that he would support legislation that would offer a path to citizenship for these immigrants. He also rescinded the so-called Muslim ban, thus overturning one of the most infamous decisions of Trump's presidency, and promised to halt the construction of the border wall between the United States and Mexico. Biden, though, promised that he would not dismantle the wall and that he would focus on border

enforcement as a measure to improve the screening infrastructure at border crossings.

Biden and Trump differ on many other issues as well. One of those issues is climate change, with Biden considering it one of the most important problems facing humankind, whereas Trump did not even have a climate plan on his campaign website.

We also have to remember that there was a different reality during Biden's inaugural speech than during Trump's. Most importantly, the presidential election of 2020 was held in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, a stark contrast to the election of 2016. However, Biden used the Covid-19 pandemic to call for unity in his speech as he considered it as much of a challenge as any other.

We think that in their speeches there is more than enough evidence to highlight the stark difference in policy between them. Trump's speech was actually authored by Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller just days before the inauguration. These two men have openly shared their nationalistic, white supremacist views over the years. Biden's speech, on the other hand was written by Vinnay Reddy, an Indian-American, and just that fact is enough for us to expect a thoroughly different speech than the one Trump delivered.

One effective tool to prove these differences is Critical Discourse Analysis. As this paper is of limited length, we must select the appropriate segment of Systemic Functional Linguistics that will highlight the most important aspects of selected speeches as part of the text analysis. We will analyse the material processes, which are part of the ideational metafunction of Systemic Functional Linguistics, in the two speeches.

We decided to focus on material processes for one reason. Inaugural speeches are historically known to have been a platform for elected presidents to present their agenda. Presidents often tend to be very specific when it comes to their goals, explaining what they will do during their term in office. That is why material processes matter, because it is with them that we express processes of doing as they involve "doing-words" (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p. 110).

For the sake of our research, we will formulate one research question and two hypotheses:

1. What is the most common Actor in material processes?
2. The difference in policy and ideology will become evident in the analysis of Goal in material processes.
3. There will be a clear *us* vs. *them* dichotomy in Trump's speech, but not in Biden's.

The main goal of our research is to answer the research question and to either confirm or disprove the hypotheses. Elected presidents view inaugural addresses as an opportunity to present to the nation what they plan to do over the course of four years in the White House. We formulated the research question as such in order to establish who will be doing the work. The first hypothesis proposed above rests upon the assumption that the two presidents will specifically say what they plan to deal with through Goal in material processes. We shall try to establish if an analysis of the role of Goal will be enough to point to the differences in policy and ideology between the two presidents. The second hypothesis is based upon Trump's divisive rhetoric during his four years in the White House, which ended with an infamous attack on the U.S. Capitol. The attack was inspired by him. That is why we believe that even in his inaugural address there will be an obvious *us* vs. *them* dichotomy. Biden, on the other hand, during his time as senator regularly called for bipartisan cooperation and generally built an image of a moderate politician (Waldman, 2020).

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

CDA focuses on the relationship between language and power and commits to evaluating and transforming the role of language and language use when it comes to creating and sustaining social relations. Therefore, researchers engaging in CDA do not isolate their analysis to scholarship as they often state their political positions overtly. They see their research as something that can contribute to solving the problems of their society, particularly those related to social inequality. In their research, they attempt to uncover the hidden ideology behind the discourse reproduced by those that wield power in society. In order to do so, the discourse must be analysed

from a linguistic point of view. Only after that is it possible to interpret and explain it through the prism of our political or ideological positions.

The most widely used linguistic theory for CDA analysis is SFL. The best-known proponent of this theory is M.A.K. Halliday. Language in this theory is seen as a resource for making meanings. SFL takes an explicitly functionalist perspective on language, which means that it is mainly concerned with the way language is used. The ways in which we as human beings use language are classified into three metafunctions (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p. 10):

- Ideational (concerned with the way the world is represented through language);
- Interpersonal (deals with the way people communicate, express and perceive feelings and opinions about states and events);
- Textual (concerned with the way text is organized).

Language, as a semiotic system, makes it possible for each text to create the three meanings simultaneously. The ideational metafunction is categorised into two subfunctions – the experiential and the logical. The first one deals with content or ideas, whereas the latter is concerned with the relationship between ideas (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p. 10). Experiential meaning is expressed through the system of transitivity, which refers to the whole system of representational resources that a particular language offers its speakers. We construe the world of experience through the system of transitivity into a manageable set of Process Types. Apart from the process itself, the other two components of all process structures are the participants and the circumstances. There are six process types in the system of transitivity: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural and existential.

With the help of the system of transitivity, researchers engaging in CDA are able to analyse the way speakers or writers represent the reality around us and then examine the way this is related to the ideologies which they serve.

Material processes may have as many as five participants. These are Actor (which is mandatory), Goal, Beneficiary, Scope, and Initiator. In this paper, we shall focus on the first two participants. Actor is the one who performs an action represented by the process, while Goal is "the point of impact" (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p. 111) or an entity to whom or to which an

action is done. The reason why we shall focus on these two participants is to establish who will be the ones performing the actions and what they plan to perform.

Over the last couple of decades, studies in analysing discourse have been derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds (Weiss and Wodak, 2002). Different data have been analysed and different methodological approaches have been used. In our analysis of the two selected speeches, we shall rely upon Norman Fairclough's model of CDA. His model consists of three processes of analysis. These are:

1. Text analysis (description)
2. Processing analysis (interpretation)
3. Social analysis (explanation)

The first aspect of his analysis is purely linguistic. Its main focus is on the contents of the text and the researcher is expected to analyse what is represented in the text. The analysis is largely descriptive as it looks at semantics and grammar (including transitivity) in order to recognise "representations, categories of participant, constructions of participant identity or participant relations" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 58) The second process of analysis is the interpretation of the text through the prism of the discursive practice. The third facet of analysis – the social analysis – requires from us to understand the wider ideological, political, institutional, social and historical context that frames the text and the discourses associated with it. At this stage, the researcher will take into account the power relations which can be recognised and will look at the possibilities of change and resistance.

One of the upsides of Fairclough's approach to CDA is that it allows us relative freedom when it comes to analysing different texts. In fact, the three aspects of analysis are intertwined to the extent that we are not obligated to separate them as long as they are all present in the analysis.

3. ANALYSIS

In this paper we will analyse material processes within Systemic Functional Linguistics, guided by the research question and the hypotheses that we formulated for this research:

1. What is the most common Actor in material processes?
2. The difference in policy and ideology will become evident in the analysis of Goal in material processes.
3. There will be a clear *us* vs. *them* dichotomy in Trump's speech, but not in Biden's.

We will try to uncover the hidden ideology in these two speeches, trying to connect it with the struggle to retain or gain power in the United States. However, prior to examining the issues of power and ideology, we must analyse the text linguistically and interpret it.

3.1. Trump's speech

The dominant Actor of material processes in Trump's inaugural speech can be subsumed under the label *we*. There are, in total, 46 sentences in this speech that contain one or more material process clauses. If we count all material process clauses, there are 68 of them. Trump's first message tells us that by *we* he means the citizens of America. In 28 instances *we* functions as Actor in material clauses. We will highlight the verbs signifying material processes in bold in this paper.

(1) *We the citizens of America are now **joined** in a great national effort to rebuild our country and restore its promise for all our people.* (Trump, 2017)

Trump contrasts *We the citizens of America* with elites in Washington, D.C., which he sees as something diametrically opposed to the people of America. In the following sentence, there are three material process clauses:

(2) *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.* (Trump, 2017)

The main theme of Trump's inaugural speech revolves around the idea that politicians from Washington, D.C., have enjoyed privileges at the cost of the people. What is interesting is that Trump does not side himself with the political establishment, but rather identifies himself as part of the people

– the silent majority of the citizens of America who have been taken advantage of for too long in Trump's opinion.

(3) *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.* (Trump, 2017)

As we can see from examples (2) and (3), Trump establishes a clear *us* vs. *them* dividing line. He says this at the beginning of his speech and with it he opts for a divisive rhetoric that would go on to become one of the most important aspects of his entire presidency. He juxtaposes *the people* (as *us*) versus *them* who had wielded power in the capital. Trump uses various nominal groups to refer to *them*: *Washington, D.C.*, *a small group in our nation's capital*, *Washington*, *politicians*, and *the establishment*.

Also, Trump uses various nominal groups starting with *your*, such as *your voice*, *your hopes*, *your dreams*, and *your courage and goodness and love*. There are two material process clauses associated with these nominal groups that function as Actors in these processes.

(4) *Your voice, your hopes, and your dreams will* **define** *our American destiny. And your courage and goodness and love, will forever* **guide** *us along the way.* (Trump, 2017)

Following a series of clauses where Trump reinforces the sense of unity amongst *the people*, he also introduces the image of new children being born with the same dreams across the country. However, he singles out Detroit and Nebraska in that regard:

(5) *And whether a child is born in the urban sprawl of Detroit or the windswept plains of Nebraska, they look up at the at the same night sky, they* **fill** *their heart with the same dreams and they are* **infused** *with the breath of life by the same almighty creator.* (Trump, 2017)

Detroit is a diminishing industrial hub in the state of Michigan, whereas Nebraska is a reliable Republican stronghold. Trump won the presidential election in part thanks to an upset in the state of Michigan, which had been regarded as part of the so-called Blue Wall along with Wisconsin and

Pennsylvania. Michigan, and Detroit in particular, saw a steep economic decline over the last decades. Many disenchanted workers opted for change and voted for Trump in 2016. That is the main reason why Trump singles it out along with Nebraska. Trump uses the verbs *fill* and *infuse* to refer to the dreams and the breath of life that new-born children experience.

The role of Goal, on the other hand, is realized by various nominal groups. However, some patterns may be recognized. For instance, Trump says at the beginning of his speech:

(6) *Together we will **determine** the course of America, and the world, for many, many years to come.* (Trump, 2017)

Trump does not accidentally mention *America* and *the world* in his speech. He does so because he promised change both in domestic policy as well as a different approach to the rest of the world. After promising changes to the American people, Trump then lists everything that he thinks was detrimental to the American people. Goal as participant plays an important role in this regard. For instance, Trump says that *"the people have **borne** the cost"* and that *"the establishment **protected** itself, but not the citizens of our country"* (Trump, 2017).

He then offers a catalogue of problems that America is facing. He explains all the bad decisions of previous governments that have hurt the American people. One of the main themes in his speech is that America has spent too many resources funding other countries' needs while neglecting its own. He complains that *we've **enriched** foreign industry*, ***subsidized** the armies of other countries*, ***defended** other nations' borders*, ***spent** trillions and trillions of dollars overseas, while America's infrastructure has **fallen** into disrepair and decay, the factories **shuttered** and **left** our shores*, and that *the wealth of our middle class has been **ripped** from their homes and then **redistributed** all across the world* (Trump, 2017).

Trump again mentions these issues, but this time he promises that he – with the help of the people with whom he identifies – will undo previous administrations' decisions:

(7) *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 rail-
ways, all across our wonderful nation.* (Trump, 2017)

The then newly-elected president also vowed that *we will **seek** friendship
and goodwill with the nations of the world*, but he does not say that without
stressing *that it is the right of all nations to put their own interests first*
(Trump, 2017). That implies that Trump and his administration will seek
friendship and goodwill only on the terms that they consider in line with
American interests.

We is also used four times as a Goal in Material processes, and in every
instance the process is realized by the verb *protect*.

(8) *We are **protected**, and we **will** always **be protected**. We will be **prote-
cted** by the great men and women of our military and law enforcement.
And most importantly, we will be **protected** by God.* (Trump, 2017)

Finally, Trump finishes his speech, at least in terms of material processes,
by invoking an image of patriotism which will help Americans make their
country great again.

3.2. Biden's speech

Unlike Trump's speech, Biden's speech is centred around the notion of uni-
ty. We saw that Trump saw *the people* as a multitude opposed to those in
power in Washington, D.C. Biden, however, refers to "*we the people who
seek a more perfect Union*" (Biden, 2021). He does not want to oppose the
people to anyone or anything, but rather calls for a reconciliation. In the
following passages we shall try to establish how he does that by analysing
material processes in his inaugural address.

There are 82 sentences containing one or more material process clauses in
Biden's inaugural speech. The total number of material process clauses is
96. *We* is Actor in 57 of those clauses, which is proportionately more than
in Trump's speech. In (9), the first clause is in passive voice, while the sec-
ond one is in active voice:

(9) *Through a crucible for the ages America **has been tested** anew and
America **has risen** to the challenge.* (Biden, 2021)

Biden here does not specify who has tested America – the Actor has been omitted. He adds that America has risen to the challenge posed by the hidden Actor of the first material process. However, we may conclude who has tested America if we look at the following sentence:

(10) *Today, we **celebrate** the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy.* (Biden, 2021)

This is the point when Biden says that his election victory is actually a win for democracy, implying that Trump's win would have meant a defeat for the cause of democracy. He reinforces his message by stating the following:

(11) *And at this hour, my friends, democracy has **prevailed**.* (Biden, 2021)

The issue of justice, particularly racial justice, is an important one for Biden, as he proclaims that *A cry for racial justice some 400 years in the making **moves** us* ((Biden, 2021), where *racial justice* is the part of Actor in a process signified by *move*, and that *The dream of justice for all will be **deferred** no longer.* (Biden, 2021), where *justice* forms part of a larger constituent functioning as Actor (*the dream of justice for all*).

Biden also promises that *We can **deliver** racial justice* (Biden, 2021), thus implying that it was not delivered during the reign of his predecessor. *Racial justice* functions as Goal, which in this clause signifies something that Biden promises to achieve. Donald Trump, on the other hand, makes no mention of racial justice, or any kind of justice whatsoever.

The most common Actor in Biden's speech, as in Trump's, is *we*. However, they do not mean exactly the same thing when they talk about *we*. They also promise almost entirely different things when using material processes. The things they promise are expressed mainly through Goal:

(12) *With unity we can **do** great things. Important things.*
 *We can **right** wrongs.*
 *We can **put** people to work in good jobs.*
 *We can **teach** our children in safe schools.*
 *We can **overcome** this deadly virus.*
 *We can **reward** work, **rebuild** the middle class, and make health care secure for all.*

*We can **deliver** racial justice.*
On the other hand, Trump promises the following:

(13) *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 prod-
ucts, stealing our companies and destroying our jobs. Protection will **lead**
to great prosperity and 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.*

In Biden's speech, the role of Goal in the material processes is expressed
by *great things*, *important things*, *wrongs*, *people*, *children*, *this deadly
virus*, *work*, *the middle class*, and *racial justice*.

In Trump's address, though, the Goal is realized by the following: *every
decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs*, *our bor-
ders* (twice), *you*, *our jobs*, *our wealth*, *our dreams*, *new roads and high-
ways and bridges and airports and tunnels and railways*, *our people*.

Even a superficial glance at these lexical items testifies to the difference
in approach of the two presidents. Biden clearly puts an emphasis on ra-
cial justice, putting people to work, children, and wrongs that need to be
righted. Trump's policy is obviously different, as he singles out borders
twice, as well as immigration, which points towards his desire to isolate
America to a certain extent. He also mentions the *we* will bring back *our
jobs* and *our wealth*, implying that they were stolen by somebody. In fact,
in his speech he blames the previous governments of the United States for
allowing other countries to take advantage of America in terms of jobs and
money spent elsewhere in the world.

Biden's speech is largely centred on the notion of unity, but he also calls
for reconciliation and alleviation of strained relations between Americans.
This is obvious if we consider the following sentence from his speech:

(14) *History, faith, and reason **show** the way, the way of unity.*

He points out that *we can **treat** each other with dignity and respect, we can **join** forces, **stop** the shouting, and **lower** the temperature* (Biden, 2021).

The implication behind Biden's message is that *we* (i.e. Americans) did not treat each other with dignity and respect, that *we* did not join forces, that *we* were loud, and that someone raised the temperature to a level unseen in recent memory. Trump's message is much more conflicting and does not call for a reconciliation of any sort.

Biden calls for unity once again by asserting that *we must **meet** this moment as the United States of America* (Biden, 2021). He encapsulates all the problems facing America into one and even invokes the very name of the country, the United States of America, which is part of Circumstance in the cited clause.

President Biden then paints a picture of triumph that "we" have achieved by invoking events from the past:

(15) *Here we **stand**, in the shadow of a Capitol dome that was completed amid the Civil War, when the Union itself hung in the balance. Yet we **endured** and we **prevailed**. Here we **stand** looking out to the great Mall where Dr. King spoke of his dream.*

He says, twice, *here we stand*, with *stand* as the process signifying a triumphant pose, reinforced by *we endured* and *we prevailed*. What we need to mention here are the two Circumstantial elements – *when the Union itself hung in the balance* and *looking out to the great Mall where Dr. King spoke of his dream*. These two elements are another proof that Biden sought examples of unity from the American past in order to call for unity now.

(16) *Here we **stand**, where 108 years ago at another inaugural, thousands of protestors tried to block brave women from marching for the right to vote. Here we **stand** across the Potomac from Arlington National Cemetery, where heroes who gave the last full measure of devotion rest in eternal peace. And here we **stand**, just days after a riotous mob thought they could use violence to silence the will of the people, to stop the work of our democracy, and to drive us from this sacred ground. That did not **happen**. It will never **happen**. (Biden, 2021)*

In the three sentences cited above, we can identify three material processes – all of them expressed by *stand*. However, we also need to pay attention to the Circumstances, because they are the means whereby Biden likens his and his party's election victory to sacred moments of American history – such as the Women Suffrage Procession of 1913 and the Civil War (1861-1865). Biden then concludes that *that did not happen* and that *it will never happen*, with both being material clauses.

As we saw in the analysis of Trump's speech, he proclaimed that *This American carnage **stops** right here and stops right now*, with *This American carnage* functioning as Actor. The very word *carnage* is defined by Longman as *when a lot of people are killed and injured, especially in a war*. This word, therefore, paints rather a grim picture of America in Trump's eyes in 2017. Biden, however, sends a completely different message, calling for a reconciliation:

(17) *We must **end** this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal.* (Biden, 2021)

This uncivil war, functioning as Goal, is another thing that Biden plans to deal with. This is in line with our previous conclusion that Goal in material processes often stands for everything that Biden plans to do during his mandate.

He goes on to say that *We can **do** this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts.* (Biden, 2021)

Biden's reconciliatory message is based upon an assumption that Trump and his supporters instigated *this uncivil war* between different groups in America. He appeals to every American to cast aside any of the differences to which he refers (partisanship, residence or political conviction). Trump did not do any of that, but rather opted to create some sort of conflict in his speech between those in power in Washington, D.C., and *the people*. He also, while referring to certain locales in America, chose Nebraska and the urban sprawl of Detroit – which is no coincidence, as we already explained. Biden never singles out any part of America, geographically, demographically, politically, ideologically or in any other manner.

The stark difference between the two speeches, and the two presidents' policies for that matter, can be best summed up if we look at the string of nominal groups functioning as Goal in a material process. Biden says that *We face an attack on democracy and on truth*, and then, in separate sentences, lists *a raging virus*, *growing inequity*, *the sting of systemic racism*, *a climate in crisis*, and *America's role in the world* (Biden, 2021).

As usual, this contrasts with Trump's main message from his speech, although all of these problems, apart from the Covid-19 pandemic, were present at the time of Trump's inauguration. Trump unambiguously says that he wants a different role for America in the world from the one it traditionally had:

(18) *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.*

The second clause in some way overturns the promise seeking *friendship and goodwill with the nations of the world*. Trump is here loyal to his *America first* motto as he threatens what Biden sees as *America's role in the world*. That role has traditionally been epitomised in interventionist policies across the world.

Biden's evaluation of Trump's stint at the helm of the executive branch in the United States government can be inferred from the following sentence:

(19) *They **healed** a broken land.*

This sentence follows up Biden's vision of the future in which *our children and our children's children* reflect upon his mandate and the generation of Americans who faced the challenges Biden mentions in his speech. *A broken land* here functions as Goal of the material process headed by *healed*, thus likening the state of the country to an illness. Biden clearly says that after Trump's reign there existed a broken land, which means that America is in need of repair.

In the final stages of his speech, Biden gives his own promises, distancing himself from *we*:

(20) *I will always **level** with you. I will **defend** the Constitution. I will* ***defend*** *our democracy. I will **defend** America. I will **give** my all in your service thinking not of power, but of possibilities.*

Trump, however, never mentions the Constitution or democracy, not in any context. His dominant theme is America and defending America from the perceived threats of elites in Washington, D.C., and around the world.

The final three material processes in Biden's speech are the following:

(21) *And together, we shall **write** an American story of hope, not fear.*
(22) *We **met** the moment.*
(23) *So, with purpose and resolve we **turn** to the tasks of our time.*

These three sentences sum up the crux of Biden's message. Write, as a process, is used to invoke a sense of historical significance for what lies ahead for America. *American story of hope, not fear*, functioning as Goal, is another indirect critique of Trump's reign, which, in Biden's view, only produced fear. *The moment* and *the tasks of our time*, as the final two Goals in his speech, encapsulate all the challenges that the country faces, about which Biden spoke in more detail earlier in the speech.

4. DISCUSSION

Through an analysis of Trump's and Biden's inaugural addresses, we were able to effectively complete two out of three aspects of analysis in Fairclough's model. In the final stage, however, it is required to offer an explanation by connecting the text analysis with issues of power and ideology in a society.

America saw a dramatic and sudden change in 2016 with the election of Donald Trump, Jr. to the presidency. The best way to uncover the ideology of both Trump and Biden is to compare the two speeches delivered at their respective inaugurations.

First of all, we saw that the two presidents do not mean the same thing when referring to *we*. According to Biden, *we* refers to *we the people who seek a more perfect Union*, while Trump refers to the common people who have been taken advantage of by politicians in Washington, D.C.

Biden's speech is more inclusive, whereas Trump's is more divisive. Biden stresses that *we must set aside the politics and finally face this pandemic as one nation* and that *we will need each other*. This plays into Biden's policy which is based upon unity of all Americans, racial justice and liberalism. He asserts that the uncivil war should end. Such a statement cannot be found in Trump's speech, as he speaks of *American carnage*, thus likening what happened prior to his reign in America to a massacre. Trump, as we explained in some detail, established a clear *us* vs. *them* division in his speech, which means that we can confirm our second hypothesis. Although this division is relatively benign – he contrasts *the people* with the elites in Washington, D.C. – it still sets the tone for a rather bellicose speech aiming to usher in a dramatic change in American politics.

At the centre of Trump's campaign – and policy during his presidency – was a promise that America will no longer spend its resources to offer help and support across the world. In fact, he makes a list of grievances. These are expressed as Goals in material processes, with Trump promising that America would no longer enrich, subsidize or defend foreign industry, the armies of other countries and other nations' borders, respectively. This is in line with his *America first* policy in which American interests should be served first, even at the cost of endangering alliances with nations of the world, particularly in the West. Biden, however, promised to *repair our alliances* and *engage with the world once again*, which is a scathing critique of Trump's policy of isolationism and nationalism. Biden once again reinforces his assessment of Trump's presidency by referring to *America's role in the world* as being under attack and calls for its defence. Therefore, we can confirm the first hypothesis of this paper.

Part of Trump's discourse is also his vocal anti-immigration tone. He delivered on these promises to a certain extent by introducing, among other things, the so-called Muslim ban. Biden, on the other hand, makes no explicit mention of immigrants. However, he promised that America would *engage with the world once again*, which can be interpreted as a sign that immigrants will be welcome in America once again. Biden repealing the Muslim ban testifies to the sincerity of his words.

Biden mentions justice – in particular racial justice – three times, while Trump makes no such mention. Biden also makes a reference to Dr. Martin

Luther King, thus reinforcing his idea to deliver racial justice. Biden also envisions a future in which Americans will say that *they healed a broken land*, which is once again a stern criticism of Donald Trump as he accused him of breaking the country.

5. CONCLUSION

We have conducted research which answered the research question and proved the two hypotheses:

1. What is the most common Actor in material processes?
2. The difference in policy and ideology will become evident in the analysis of Goal in material processes.
3. There will be a clear *us* vs. *them* dichotomy in Trump's speech, but not in Biden's.

We have established that *we* is the most common Actor in material processes in both speeches. However, we have also concluded that *we* in the two presidents' speeches does not have the same meaning. Biden's *we* is inclusive, whereas Trump's *we* is imbued with conflict and negative emotions. That is why there is a clear *us* vs. *them* dichotomy in Trump's speech as he contrasts the people with the political elites in Washington, D.C. There is no such dichotomy in Biden's speech, which is centred upon the notion of unity.

The difference in both rhetoric and ideology between Trump and Biden also became evident in an analysis of Goals in material processes. Trump's focus was on issues that were part of his attempt to isolate America as much from the world as was possible. The things Trump promises to deal with are expressed through Goal. For instance, the role of Goal in Trump's speech is realized, among other things, by *every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs*, *our borders* (twice), *you*, *our jobs*, *our wealth*, *our dreams*, *new roads and highways and bridges and airports and tunnels and railways*, and *our people*. Different things are promised by Biden. There is no mention of borders or "our" (as opposed to someone else's) jobs or wealth. Rather, he focuses on problems that a moderate politician such as him would be expected to tackle, such as *wrongs*, *people*, *children*, *this deadly virus*, *work*, *the middle class*, and *racial justice*. Even

a superficial glance at the role of Goal in Biden's speech give an insight into his ideology. He advocates, among other things, for racial justice, teaching children in safe schools (implying that gun control should be introduced in the United States in order to reduce violence in schools), rebuilding the middle class, and making health care secure for all.

Material processes in both Trump's and Biden's speeches are predominantly related to remedying the perceived injustices beleaguering the American society. In Trump's speech, material processes revolve around the idea of transferring power from one group (*Washington, D.C.*, which is used as a metonym for the political elites in the U.S. capital) to another (*the people*). Trump then promises to annul the decision of previous administrations by bringing back what he thinks was stolen from *the people*. Also, at the cost of *the people*, America has spent its resources around the world according to Trump. The dominant processes used to convey this message are realized by verbs such as *enrich*, *subsidize* and *defend*. All these processes testify to the conservative agenda of Donald Trump in which a more isolated and divided America is his main goal.

On the other hand, Biden's message was reconciliatory. His speech was to a certain extent devoted towards socially sensitive issues. He promised, among other things, to *right wrongs*, *put people to work in good jobs*, *reward work*, *rebuild the middle class*, and *deliver racial justice*. The processes were encoded by verbs that bear positive connotation. Biden's core message is best encapsulated by calling on Americans to *end this uncivil war* that divides the country along different lines. This confirms that Biden's ideology is liberal as his focus is on bridging the differences between Americans and on correcting the various social injustices that America faces.

We can say that the linguistic analysis provided enough evidence for us to conclude that the two presidents' policies and ideologies are distinctly and essentially different. Material processes are action processes and through them the two presidents were able to express their plans about the future. They promised different things and sent diametrically opposite messages. Through a transitivity analysis of material processes at clause level we could see Trump and Biden construct two different realities and two different visions of America – and the world, for that matter. One that is more

isolated, divided, and bellicose, and the other that is more open, liberal, and reconciliatory.

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INAUGURALNI GOVORI TRUMPA I BIDENA: ANALIZA MATERIJALNIH PROCESA

Sažetak

U ovom radu ćemo analizirati inauguralne govore dva zadnja predsjednika Sjedinjenih Američkih Država, Donalda Trumpa i Joea Bidena. Analiza će biti zasnovana na kritičkoj analizi diskursa, i to prema modelu Normana Fairclougha, dok će metodološki okvir istraživanja biti zasnovan na sistemskoj funkcionalnoj lingvistici. Fokusirat ćemo se na materijalne procese zato što se putem njih izražavaju konkretne radnje. Ovo pogotovo dolazi do izražaja u inauguralnim govorima novoizabranih predsjednika koji te govore vide kao priliku da prezentiraju sve ono što oni i njihova administracija planiraju raditi tokom četverogodišnjeg mandata. Za potrebe istraživanja smo formulirali jedno istraživačko pitanje i dvije hipoteze kako bismo ukazali na ideološke razlike između dvaju predsjednika. U radu smo odgovorili na postavljeno istraživačko pitanje tako što smo ustanovili da je *we* najčešći *agens* u materijalnim procesima. Isto tako, dokazali smo dvije predložene hipoteze. Naime, razlika u politici i ideologiji Trumpa i Bidena je dokazana analizom *ciljeva* u materijalnim procesima, dok je dihotomija između *nas* i *njih* u Trumpovom govoru također dokazana. Zaključili smo da ove jezičke razlike u dvama govorima ukazuju na značajnu razliku u ideologiji i politici dvaju posljednjih američkih predsjednika.

Ključne riječi: *Donald Trump, Joe Biden, Kritička analiza diskursa, Sistemska funkcionalna lingvistika, ideologija, moć*