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## INTERTEXTUALITY IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

ABSTRACT

Intertextuality as a rhetorical device plays a crucial role in political discourse, it helps political leaders to persuade people in the importance and relevance of their ideas and principles by emphasizing common values through references to history, cultural traditions, and religious beliefs. By means of such intertextual devices as quotations, allusions, references, and indirect speech political actors draw on shared background knowledge and cultural memory to strengthen the influence of their messages and ensure their credibility and trustworthiness. Intertextuality is actively used in political discourse to perform such functions as legitimizing power, delegitimizing opponents, constructing collective identity, persuading, shaping political reality, ensuring historical continuity, and maintaining or contesting power relations. At the same time, such forms of intertextuality as conversationalized discursive practices are actively employed, including through social networks, to influence audiences and strengthen the connection between speakers and listeners. It helps build relationships with the audiences, create an impression of proximity and engagement, making political communication more effective.

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***Key words***: political discourse, intertextuality, stylistic devices, Critical Discourse Analysis, social media, conversationalized discursive practices.

## ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ

## ՄԻՋՏԵՔՍՏԱՅՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆ ԽՈՍՈՒՅԹՈՒՄ

Միջտեքստայնությունը որպես հռետորական հնարք կարևոր դեր է խաղում քաղաքական խոսույթում, այն օգնում է քաղաքական առաջնորդներին համոզել մարդկանց իրենց գաղափարների և սկզբունքների կարևորության և արդիականության մեջ՝ ընդգծելով ընդհանուր արժեքները՝ պատմությանը, մշակութային ավանդույթներին և կրոնական համոզմունքներին հղումներ կատարելով: Միջտեքստային այնպիսի հնարքների միջոցով, ինչպիսիք են մեջբերումները, գրական անդրադարձները, ակնարկները, և անուղղակի խոսքը, քաղաքական գործիչները օգտագործում են ընդհանուր հենքային գիտելիքները և մշակութային հիշողությունը՝ իրենց ուղերձների ազդեցությունն ամրապնդելու և իրենց հեղինակությունն ու վստահելիությունը ապահովելու համար: Միջտեքստայնությունն ակտիվորեն օգտագործվում է քաղաքական խոսույթում այնպիսի գործառույթներ կատարելու համար, ինչպիսիք են իշխանության լեգիտիմացումը, հակառակորդների ապալեգիտիմացումը, կոլեկտիվ ինքնության կառուցումը, համոզումը, քաղաքական իրականության ձևավորումը, պատմական շարունակականության ապահովումը և իշխանական հարաբերությունների պահպանումը կամ վիճարկումը: Միևնույն ժամանակ, մարդկանց վրա ազդելու և խոսողի ու լսողի միջև կապը ամրապնդելու համար ակտիվորեն կիրառվում են, այդ թվում՝ սոցիալական ցանցերի միջոցով, միջտեքստայնության այնպիսի ձևեր, ինչպիսիք են խոսակցական դիսկուրսային պրակտիկաները: Դա նպաստում է լսարանի հետ հարաբերությունների կառուցմանը, ստեղծում է մտերմության և ներգրավվածության տպավորություն՝ քաղաքական հաղորդակցությունը դարձնելով ավելի արդյունավետ:

***Բանալի բառեր***՝ քաղաքական խոսույթ, միջտեքստայնություն, ոճական հնարքներ, քննադատական դիսկուրս վերլուծություն, սոցիալական մեդիա, խոսակցական դիսկուրսային պրակտիկաներ:

РЕЗЮМЕ

ИНТЕРТЕКСТУАЛЬНОСТЬ В ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ

Интертекстуальность как риторический прием играет ключевую роль в политическом дискурсе, помогая политическим лидерам убеждать людей в важности и актуальности своих идей и принципов, подчеркивая общие ценности посредством отсылок к истории, культурным традициям и религиозным убеждениям. С помощью таких интертекстуальных приемов, как цитаты, аллюзии, отсылки и косвенная речь, политические деятели опираются на общие фоновые знания и культурную память для усиления влияния своих посланий и обеспечения своего авторитета и доверия. Интертекстуальность активно используется в политическом дискурсе для выполнения таких функций, как легитимизация власти, делигитимизация оппонентов, конструирование коллективной идентичности, убеждение, формирование политической реальности, обеспечение исторической преемственности, а также поддержание или оспаривание властных отношений. В то же время такие формы интертекстуальности, как разговорные дискурсивные практики, активно используются, в том числе посредством социальных сетей, для воздействия на аудиторию и укрепления связи между говорящими и слушающими. Это помогает выстраивать отношения с аудиторией, создавать впечатление близости и вовлеченности, делая политическую коммуникацию более эффективной.

***Ключевые слова***: политический дискурс, интертекстуальность, стилистические приёмы, критический дискурс-анализ, социальные сети, разговорные дискурсивные практики.

Intertextuality is a concept that shows how different texts relate to and influence one another, producing multiple levels of interpretation. The concept was introduced by philosopher and literary critic J, Kristeva (1986) under the influence of the ideas of the philosopher and literary critic M. M. Bakhtin. It proposes that every text is connected to other works rather than

standing alone, enabling readers to interpret it through their prior knowledge and experiences. It means that no text exists in a vacuum; every text is a mosaic of quotations, references, and interactions with previous texts.

The concept of intertextuality resonates with M. Bakhtin's (1981) concept of dialogism, according to which every utterance is shaped by both the speaker and the listener or context. A completely "single-voiced" (monologic) thought is impossible because even people's private thinking is shaped by their social, cultural, and conversational voices they've absorbed over time. Meaning arises through the interaction of these different influences, not from one isolated, authoritative voice.

Intertextuality relates also to the concept of heteroglossia, the coexistence of multiple speech types within a language. Language is not a single, uniform entity. It is continuously fractured into different socio-ideological dialects: generation gaps, professional jargons, regional accents, class registers, and generational slang. This interaction of diverse voices is manifested in literature in polyphony (meaning a "many-voiced" narrative where characters are fully independent, rather than controlled by the author) and carnivalization (refering to the spirit of medieval carnivals, characterized by subverting official norms, hierarchies and the temporary suspension of rules) (Bakhtin, 1984).

Speaking about intertextuality T. A. van Dijk (2009:187) maintains that Bakhtin, who is generally considered to be a forerunner for his "dialogic" approach to language, was interested primarily in literary texts and dealt with intertextuality – the way different "voices" are represented in texts. He

underlines that this is not a property of context (or interaction) but of text, and a question of semantics (how other texts or authors are referred to, cited, etc.) and not of pragmatics.

The aim of this work is to identify the main stylistic devices providing intertextual links in political discourse and how they construct and reconstruct meaning.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, discourse is "a mode of organizing knowledge, ideas, or experience that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts (such as history or institutions)". The forms of discourse can be different, for instance, academic discourse, religious discourse, political discourse. According to the SAGE Encyclopedia of Political Behavior (2017: 612), in its most basic formulation, political discourse "reflects a relationship between language and politics in which language serves as an indispensable tool for political action".

According to Paul Chilton (2004), political discourse is the use of language in political contexts to exercise power, influence public perception, shape public opinion, and manage political relationships. Its main functions include coercion, resistance, legitimization and delegitimization, and the representation or misrepresentation of political realities.

There exists a broad and more narrow characterization of political discourse. According to the former it is conceived as "a subcategory of discourse assessing its functional and thematic elements". The latter one defines it "along such criteria as the means of communication, the language of political actors,

the political institutions involved, and the political themes expressed" (The SAGE Encyclopedia of Political Behavior, 2017: 613).

According to E.I. Sheigal (2004), the broad definition of political discourse includes any communication related to politics, where the speaker, audience, or topic is connected to the political sphere. Narrow definition of political discourse refers only to professional political communication directly connected with gaining, exercising, or maintaining political power.

Regardless of the classification system applied, there is general agreement that no set of criteria can be entirely without limitations due to the intricate and multifaceted nature of political discourse and the challenge of accounting for all its possible forms and interpretations (The SAGE Encyclopedia of Political Behavior, 2017: 613). However, it can be stated that political discourse encompasses the exchange and discussion of political ideas, viewpoints, and arguments not only among politicians but also common citizens and media reporters. It is a key factor in shaping public opinion and influencing political decisions, covering a wide range of communication forms, from everyday discussions to official speeches and media reporting. Understanding political discourse is important for recognizing how public attitudes develop and how political leaders interact with and respond to citizens.

This article is based on the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by N. Fairclough, T.van Dijk, R. Wodak, which considers language not just as a tool for communication as a form of social practice of influencing the addressee, reflecting, reinforcing, and challenging power dynamics,

ideologies, and existing inequalities in society. CDA systematically investigates how systemic power abuse, social inequality, and dominant ideologies are constructed, maintained, reproduced, legitimated and resisted through text and talk in socio-political contexts (van Dijk, 2015: 466).

The framework of CDA tries to combine a theory of power based upon Gramsci's concept of hegemony with a theory of discourse practice based upon the concept of intertextuality (interdiscursivity) (Fairclough, 2010). In relevance with the former, CDA considering the issues of language and power argues that dominant groups maintain control not just through force, but through language. The way they speak about issues shapes how people think about them.

N. Fairclough (1992) discussing intertextuality from a CDA perspective underlines the idea that every text is shaped by other texts, voices, and discourses – a concept derived from J. Kristeva's notion of intertextuality and influenced by M. Bakhtin. Fairclough distinguishes between two main forms of intertextuality. One he calls manifest intertextuality which refers to explicit references to other texts through quotation, reported speech, or citation. The other he calls constitutive intertextuality or interdiscursivity which means the blending of different discourse types, genres, or styles within a text.

As M. Jorgensen and L. Phillips (2002: 7) mention, for critical discourse analysis, the main area of interest is the study of changes in discourse that occur due to intertextuality – that is, how an individual text draws on elements and discourses of other texts. It is by combining elements from

different discourses that concrete language use can change the individual discourses and thereby, also, the social and cultural world.

Thus, intertextuality directly influences discourse and contributes to the transformation of social and cultural practices. By introducing and integrating elements from different discursive contexts intertextuality directly influences and modifies discourse itself and can reshape existing social meanings, identities, power relations and facilitate social and cultural change.

Intertextuality, which denotes the connection between one text and other texts for the purpose of interpreting the original text, includes drawing from other writings to strengthen the text's impact. It is one of the crucial strategic instruments politicians employ in their speeches. It is a persuasive approach to capture the audience's interest and inspire confidence in the speaker's message. Political leaders connect their discourse with other writings to reinforce cultural, social, religious, and historical contexts. With the help of intertextual inclusions from different domains, e.g. history, religion, culture and traditions, they establish links with the audience, find common values and make their massages more convincing. Consequently, intertextuality is crucial in conveying the speaker's communicative message, influencing the listener's cognition and facilitating the construction of meaning through the activation of relevant textual and cultural associations.

In political discourse linguistic means of intertextuality consist of different literary devices which include quotations, allusions, indirect speech, references to precedent texts, genre mixing, repetition of formulaic expressions and slogans.

Allusion is considered as an indirect reference to some fact that is assumed to be known, to some cultural phenomena, statements, symbols, etc. Allusion is understood as an intertext figure consisting of an associative reference in the form of a hidden or explicit hint to a fact of virtual or real reality known to the addressee. The use of allusion contributes to the greatest compression of the transmitted information, but requires certain background knowledge on the part of the recipient, without which the author of the message will not be able to achieve the intended result.

Quotations allow to support the words or ideas with a more authoritative opinion, as well as refer to an opposing point of view as an example. Quotations or retellings are usually used for the purposes of argumentation or explanation, as well as to establish contact with the audience by appealing to examples from life that are close to them.

Genre mixing refers to borrowing linguistic features from another discourse type, for example, a political speech adopting conversational language. Repetition of formulaic expressions and slogans refers to reusing established catchphrases, for example, "Yes We Can" is associated with B. Obama's campaign discourse, MAGA – "Make America Great Again" – is a slogan used by D. Trump in his presidential campaigns. When they are used in speeches, they become forms of intertextuality, for example: "I was saved by God to make America great again".

In political discourse, the most common intertextual inclusion is citation, followed by allusion and indirect speech. This indicates the priority of

citation to create the impression of the reliability of the message, on the one hand, and to exert political influence, on the other.

The most frequent source of citation are statements by historical and modern cultural and artistic figures, politicians, writers, phrases and sayings from the Bible, as well as the use of statistical data to confirm the truth and rightness of the position of the addresser and their argumentation.

For instance, George W. Bush used the Bible in his Address to the Nation he made after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. He ended the speech by quoting from Psalm 23: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me". Bush used this scripture to provide comfort to a grieving nation, reassure the American public of God's guidance, and project resilience and resolve in the face of the tragic terrorist attacks.

However, if we analyse this and other speeches made by Bush on this tragic event from a CDA perspective, we can see the examples of the language use with the aim to shape social reality. For instance, the word "evil", which was used four times in his Address to the Nation, is deeply associated with religious and theological language, especially in Christian traditions, where it suggests a moral struggle between good and evil rather than a purely political conflict. The phrase "axis of evil" (used by Bush in the State of the Union Address (29.01.2002) in relation to the so called "outlaw regimes" that sponsor terror and threaten the United States and the world evoked the language of the Cold War and WWII.

As means of his rhetorical strategy Bush used an allusion and a moral metaphor. The word “axis” deliberately echoed the Axis powers of World War II (Germany, Italy, and Japan). As the textual source of this phrase can be directly mentioned Ronald Reagan’s famous 1983 speech calling the Soviet Union as the "Evil Empire".

Labelling states as “evil” risked framing international politics as a moral crusade, potentially invoking a religiously charged worldview. No wonder that the word “crusade” used by Bush to describe the U.S.-led “war on terrorism” deeply alarmed the world. It evoked historical memories of the medieval Crusades and reinforced fears that the “war on terror” was actually a religious war against Islam. By October 2004, President Bush formally expressed regret over using the word, stating in an ABC News interview that he “probably shouldn’t have used that word”. He emphasized that the “war on terrorism” was not a religious war, but rather a fight against “evil people”.

The word “evil” was also used in the National Security Strategy (2002). The chapter which dealt most with terrorism began with a quotation from Bush in which he says: “Our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil”. Commenting on the NSS, N. Fairclough (2010) wrote: “So we have a national strategy document which provides no analysis or explanation of where the enemy has come from, how it has got to be an enemy, why it is hostile to the USA and its allies. Labelling it as ‘evil’ implies that no explanation is necessary, or indeed possible”.

As to the phrases “war on terrorism” or “war on terror”, they themselves were highly manipulative. They reframed a complex counter-

terrorism effort as a structured and easily understood war against hostile states portrayed as embodiments of universal evil. Because the war was declared not on a specific state or nation but on the abstract concept of terrorism, it established a potentially permanent state of emergency that could justify global military interventions. From a CDA perspective, this language fundamentally altered the parameters of U.S. foreign policy by grouping distinct and unrelated countries into a unified "evil" entity and shifting national discourse from localized counter-terrorism to a broader moral crusade.

In his September 20, 2001 speech, Bush explicitly linked the phrase "war on terror" to a strict moral binary: "With Us or Against Us". In particular, he said: "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime".

Through binary oppositions such as good versus evil, freedom versus fear, and civilization versus barbarism, political opposition was marginalized, geopolitical conflicts were recast under the label of "terror", and military action was presented as a moral obligation rather than a geopolitical choice (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

A lot of instances of manifest intertextuality can be found in Barack Obama's speeches. For instance, at the end of his first inaugural address (2009) he directly quotes American Founding Father Thomas Paine to underline the strong will and determination of the American people to address all the challenges: "At the moment when the outcome of our revolution was most in

doubt, the father of our nation ordered these words to be read to the people: "Let it be told to the future world...that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive...that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet [it]".

Intertextual references can be both explicit and implicit. For instance, in his first inaugural address Obama said: "We remain a young nation. But in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things". In this example the intertextual reference is overt (a reference to the Bible) which is used to reinforce antithesis, a rhetorical device which juxtaposes contrasting or seemingly opposite ideas to create emphasis. Obama employs antithesis in the opposition between "childish things" and political maturity. The effect of this antithesis is reinforced by an explicit intertextual reference to Scripture, which lends moral authority to the call for national renewal and responsibility and helps advance his political message.

Implicit intertextual reference can be found in the following excerpt from Obama's first inaugural address: "For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and non-believers". This passage is intertextually linked to the principles of religious freedom and equal citizenship embedded in the US Constitution, particularly the First Amendment. In this passage a collective identity is constructed: a pluralistic American national identity – the idea that Americans belong to one political community regardless of religion, ethnicity, or background. By drawing on constitutional values, Obama presents diversity as a defining feature of what it means to be American, encouraging

citizens to identify with a shared civic nation rather than a single cultural or religious group.

In the second inaugural address (2013) there are also references to American Constitution. Obama repeats "We, the people", an allusion to the opening words of the United States Constitution, at the beginning of five successive paragraphs using such stylistic device as anaphora. The effect of the latter is reinforced by parallelism, since similarly structured clauses follow the repeated phrase. The repeated opening phrase enhances the central theme of collective national identity and democratic participation and enhances emotional influence on the audience.

Barack Obama's second inaugural address (2013) is rich with historical and literary allusions, used to invoke powerful moments in the American struggle for equality and justice and highlight common values. For instance, in a passage consisting of five lines he used the following intertextual references:

"We, the people", an allusion to the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution which begins with the words "We the People of the United States". This foundational phrase is used to root the speech in the democratic principles of the United States, emphasizing collective civic responsibility.

"All of us are created equal", an allusion to the Declaration of Independence (1776). This phrase recalls the Declaration's claim that "all men are created equal," linking the present to the founding ideals of the country.

"Seneca Falls", an allusion to the Seneca Falls Convention (1848). This was the first women's rights convention in the U.S., seen as the beginning of the organized women's suffrage movement.

"Selma", an allusion to the Selma to Montgomery marches (1965). These were pivotal events in the Civil Rights Movement, leading to the Voting Rights Act. They symbolize the struggle against racial injustice.

"Stonewall", an allusion to the Stonewall Riots (1969). These riots marked the beginning of the modern LGBTQ rights movement in the United States.

"Left footprints along this great Mall", an allusion to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., where many historic protests and gatherings have taken place. It evokes the memory of past marches and demonstrations for justice held on the Mall, such as the 1963 March on Washington.

"To hear a preacher say that we cannot walk alone", an allusion to Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. King said, "And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot walk alone." It emphasizes unity and collective progress in the fight for civil rights.

"To hear a King proclaim that our individual freedom is inextricably bound to the freedom of every soul on Earth", an allusion to Martin Luther King Jr., especially ideas from his broader teachings. It suggests global solidarity in the struggle for freedom and justice, reflecting King's belief that human beings are connected through what he called an "inescapable network of mutuality." It is well expressed in the following quote from his Letter from Birmingham Jail: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".

In the mentioned excerpt Obama alludes to foundational U.S. documents (the Constitution and Declaration of Independence) and to key milestones in the women's rights, civil rights movements. He anchors his

message in the American tradition of striving toward equality and justice for all, invoking both historical events and the moral leadership of figures like Martin Luther King. Intertextuality is used here to highlight the main values and policy directions of his new administration which would support equal rights regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation; continue efforts to protect voting rights and civil liberties; promote inclusion and equal opportunity; recognize that American interests are connected to broader global concerns, implying support for international cooperation and human rights.

Allusions and references are a rhetorical device that involves alluding to real historical, literary, political, or everyday events, as well as other works. It is used to evoke certain associations and emotions in the listener or reader, or to strengthen a logical argument. However, it is obvious that communicative success in political discourse when including precedent phenomena is possible only if the addressee has the appropriate background knowledge.

Trump's second inaugural address (January 20, 2025) also contains several clear examples of intertextuality – both explicit allusions and indirect echoes of earlier American political, religious, and historical texts.

Trump refers to surviving the assassination attempt during the presidential campaign and states that he was "saved by God" for a purpose ("I was saved by God to make America great again"). This statement alludes to divine intervention and a messianic political mission, specifically suggesting that his survival of an assassination attempt was a miracle. He frames his survival not as luck, but as God actively protecting him so he could fulfill his political destiny. This invokes Biblical providence narratives, a long tradition

of American presidential rhetoric portraying national leadership as guided by Providence. The statement of the reason of his survival represents a direct allusion to his famous political slogan – "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) – a phrase tracing back to Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign and elevating a political platform to a holy mission.

Trump opened his address with the declaration: "The golden age of America begins right now". A "Golden Age" is an allusion to the classical idea of a Golden Age, originating in ancient Greek mythology, where it represented an ideal, harmonious state of human existence. In modern interpretation it is a metaphor describing the peak period in the history of a country, art form, or society and is characterized by peace, prosperity, and cultural or technological achievements.

As the date of Trump's second inaugural address coincided with Martin Luther King Day, Trump honoring the famous civil rights leader used a direct allusion to his "I Have a Dream" speech. Trump particularly said: "We will strive together to make his dream a reality. We will make his dream come true". Although Trump does not quote King's famous words verbatim, the repeated reference to "his dream" unmistakably invokes King's vision of racial equality and justice articulated in the "I Have a Dream" speech. The audience is expected to recognize the reference without the speech being named explicitly.

Discussing American expansion, technological achievement, and ambitions such as reaching Mars, Trump made an explicit historical allusion to Manifest Destiny ("And we will pursue our manifest destiny into the stars,

launching American astronauts to plant the Stars and Stripes on the planet Mars". The phrase directly references the nineteenth-century ideology that the United States was destined to expand across the continent.

Referring to William McKinley as "a great president" and a promise to restore his name to Mount McKinley, "where it should be and where it belongs", not only alludes to the long-standing political and cultural debate over the mountain's name (in 2015 under the Obama administration the name of the mountain, which is the highest peak in North America, was changed to Denali) but also invokes his legacy which is associated with one of the most significant periods of U.S. territorial expansion. Here Trump is relying on the audience's familiarity with McKinley's place in U.S. history.

Speaking about foreign relations Trump said the United States as "history's greatest civilization" would build "the strongest military the world has ever seen", and at the same time presented himself as a "peacemaker and unifier". The juxtaposition of two different concepts can be also seen in such sentences as: "We will measure our success not only by the battles we win but also by the wars that we end" and "Our power will stop all wars and bring a new spirit of unity to a world that has been angry, violent, and totally unpredictable". This combination of two different concepts mirrors the classic Reagan formulation: Peace through strength, without calling it verbatim.

To justify this idea Ronald Reagan in his speech at National Association of Evangelicals' annual convention in Orlando, Florida (March 8, 1983) directly quoted George Washington: "A real and secure peace depends on us, on our courage to build it and guard it and pass it on to future

generations. George Washington's words ring just as true today: "To be prepared for war,'' he said, "is one of the most effective means of preserving peace.'' American strength is a sheltering arm for peace and freedom in an often dangerous world. And strength is the most persuasive argument we have to convince our adversaries to give up their hostile intentions, to negotiate seriously, and to stop bullying other nations. In the real world, peace through strength must be our motto" (Reagan, 1983).

Ronald Reagan was widely known as "The Great Communicator". He earned this title due to his unmatched ability to connect with common Americans and articulate complex political ideas into simple, relatable, and optimistic stories. He frequently and effectively used quotations, parables, aphorisms, anecdotes, and folksy humor to connect emotionally with the public.

In Biden's inaugural address (2021) there are several instances of direct quotations. For example, wanting to highlight the importance of national unity he quoted the words of Abraham Lincoln who after signing the Emancipation Proclamation (1863) said: "If my name ever goes down into history it will be for this act and my whole soul is in it". No wonder that the word unity was repeated in Biden's inaugural speech eight times. Promising that the country will get through the deadliest period of the COVID-19 pandemic he cited the Bible: "I promise you this: as the Bible says weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning".

Another frequently used device of intertextuality is indirect speech, that is, when the speaker refers to or paraphrases another person's words or

words from other sources without directly quoting them. For instance, instead of giving a direct quote from the 5th-century Christian theologian and philosopher Saint Augustin, Biden summarized the core concept into his own sentence structure:" Many centuries ago, Saint Augustine, a saint of my church, wrote that a people was a multitude defined by the common objects of their love".

Thus, intertextuality in American presidential discourse refers to the ways presidents draw on earlier texts, speeches, ideas, and cultural references to create meaning, legitimacy, and persuasion. The main intertextual links and resources include:

1. Founding Documents: The United States Constitution. The Declaration of Independence, The Bill of Rights. Presidents frequently quote or allude to these texts to justify policies and connect themselves to foundational American values such as liberty, equality, and democracy.

2. Previous Presidential Speeches: References to speeches by presidents such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy. For example, presidents often echo Lincoln's language from the Gettysburg Address ("government of the people, by the people, for the people") or Kennedy's calls to public service and civic responsibility ("Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country" – a very strong quotation combining in a single phrase antithesis, parallelism, chiasmus, intertextuality and persuasion).

3. Religious Texts and Traditions: quotations from the Bible, Biblical phrases, narratives, and moral themes are common in presidential rhetoric. Such references help frame political issues in ethical or national-purpose terms.

4. National Myths and Historical Events: major events such as the American Revolution, the American Civil War, the Great Depression, and the September 11 attacks. These allusions, which also include references to national heroes, struggles, and victories, situate current challenges within a broader historical narrative.

5. American Cultural Texts: Literature, popular sayings, patriotic songs, and cultural symbols, works by figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Thomas Jefferson. These references resonate with shared cultural memory and identity.

6. Political and Legal Discourse: presidents often engage with existing political texts to support or challenge policy positions. These texts include Supreme Court decisions, the top US doctrines such as the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defense Strategy (NDS), congressional debates and legislation, party platforms and policy documents.

7. Contemporary Media and Public Discourse: news coverage, social media discussions, public opinion, and current political debates. Modern presidents increasingly respond directly to media narratives, creating intertextual links with ongoing public conversations.

Together, these sources allow presidents to present their policies as consistent with American traditions, connect current events to historical precedents, and strengthen their persuasive appeal to audiences.

Intertextuality in political discourse is not merely a rhetorical device, it serves important political and ideological functions. The main functions of intertextuality in political discourse include:

Legitimization of Power and Authority: Politicians often invoke authoritative texts, historical figures, constitutions, laws, or national traditions to justify their actions and strengthen their legitimacy. For instance, a president quoting Abraham Lincoln while discussing issues of racial equality and justice suggests continuity with a respected historical leader.

Construction and Maintenance of Power Relations: Intertextuality helps political actors establish, reinforce, or challenge power structures. For instance, drawing on Lincoln's words while discussing national unity is done to challenge political polarization while reinforcing the authority of democratic institutions, suggesting that current leaders should be guided by the nation's historical democratic values rather than partisan divisions.

Building Collective Identity: Political discourse frequently references shared values, cultural memories, national myths, historical events and constitutional documents. For instance, intertextual reference to constitutional principles of religious freedom helps construct a collective civic American identity, portraying the nation as a unified community founded on shared democratic values rather than common ancestry or religion.

Delegitimization of Opponents: Intertextual references can associate opponents with negative historical events, ideologies, or figures. For examples, comparing a political rival's policies to those of a failed regime. Labelling opponents influences public perception without extensive argumentation.

Persuasion and Rhetorical Enhancement: Quotations, historical analogies, and cultural references make arguments more persuasive. For example, a politician citing Martin Luther King to support a social justice initiative borrows credibility from respected sources, appeals to emotions and values, strengthens rhetorical impact.

Other functions of intertextuality involve emotional and symbolic appeal when references to culturally significant texts, events, or figures evoke strong emotions, generate emotional engagement, strengthen loyalty, enhances persuasive power. Intertextuality helps create historical continuity. Political actors often connect present actions to historical struggles or achievements. For instance, invoking the American Revolution links present policies to historical legitimacy, creates narratives of progress and continuity, strengthens political authority.

Intertextuality contributes to the construction and legitimization of dichotomies in political discourse by drawing upon familiar texts, narratives, and cultural memories that position social actors, values, and events within oppositional frameworks. Through such intertextual references, politicians reinforce distinctions such as “us versus them", “good versus evil”, thereby shaping audience perceptions and ideological interpretations. Intertextuality helps framing political reality, it influences how events are interpreted by linking them to familiar narratives. It shapes public understanding, directs interpretation toward specific conclusions, simplifies complex events through familiar frames.

Intertextuality is not only used by those in power; it can also challenge dominant narratives fulfilling the function of contestation and resistance. It can help expose contradictions, challenges hegemonic discourse and create alternative interpretations.

The use of intertextual inclusions is an important rhetorical device used to attract the attention of the addressee, create the impression of the authenticity of what is being communicated, and thereby enhance the persuasiveness of speech and its impact on the audience.

Fairclough defines intertextuality as the explicit juxtapositions of texts within each other (e.g., embedding in a newspaper article what someone earlier said through the use of quotation marks). Thus, intertextuality (manifest intertextuality) is constrained by and interpreted within the discourse of which it is a part.

The other form of intertextuality, as mentioned above, is interdiscursivity (constitutive intertextuality) which refers both to assumed connections among various discourses (e.g., the discourse of newspapers and the discourse of government, although separate discourses, are often connected ideologically and in other ways) and to connections created across discourses not conventionally assumed (e.g., using the discourse of the marketplace to describe public education) (Bloome D. and Egan-Robertson A., 2004: 21).

Texts reshape existing conversations and narratives in ways that may either uphold or contest power relations. For example, media, political, or institutional language often mixes conversational, bureaucratic, and promotional discourses to shape public perception. What N. Fairclough

underlines is the connection between language and social change. He argues that shifts in discourse practices – such as increasing informality in public communication – can signal transformations in ideology, authority, and institutional power. Hybridity, heterogeneity, intertextuality are salient features of contemporary discourse also because the boundaries between domains and practices are in many cases fluid and open in a context of rapid and intense social change (Fairclough, 2010).

Conversationalization, the blending of public discourse with informal, colloquial, and interpersonal language, is a striking and pervasive feature of modern discourse including political discourse in its contemporary mediatized forms. Speaking about conversationalization of political discourse as a general trend, N. Fairclough notes the evolution of the political discourse of US Presidents towards the highly conversational discourse of Ronald Reagan – effectively creating the impression of an "intimate, face-to-face interaction on the television screen, full of stories and anecdotes, personal and self-revelatory, with the actor's capacity to simulate conversational spontaneity and authenticity" (Fairclough, 1994: 243).

According to Lee Edwards (2018), whose publications include biography of Ronald Reagan, the latter was aware that his political success was due, in part, to his ability to give a good speech based on two things: "to be honest" in what you are saying, and "to be in touch with [your] audience". He believed his success stemmed not from rhetorical sophistication but from expressing ideas that ordinary Americans could easily understand and relate to. "What I said simply made sense to the [man] on the street", he said. He

discovered a basic rule that he followed all his life: "Talk to your audience, not over their heads or through them. Don't try to talk in a special language of broadcasting or even of politics, just use normal everyday words". When a reporter asked Reagan what he thought other Americans saw in him, he replied: "Would you laugh if I told you that I think maybe, they see themselves and that I'm one of them". And he added: "I've never been able to detach myself or think that I, somehow, am apart from them".

Conversationalization is also a peculiar feature of Donald Trump's style of speech. His speaking style is unique, conversational, and populist, characterized by the use of superlatives ("best", "greatest", "strongest", "wealthiest", "most powerful"), extreme adjectives ("huge", "incredible", "tremendous"), abrupt sentences and phrases, and rhythmic slogans. He frequently employs simple language, emotional attacks on opponents, and direct appeal to the crowd, creating the effect of intimate communication. He frequently employs rhetorical devices to influence and impact his audience. At the same time there is much in his speech that defies traditional American political discourse, namely informal and politically incorrect vocabulary, parcellation and repetition. His vocabulary is not very diverse, focusing on monosyllabic, common, and simple words, but also avoiding the typical vocabulary of political discourse. It was precisely these parameters of his speech that attracted attention to him and provided sufficient support for his election as president.

One of the peculiar features of his speeches is that they are full of incoherent statements. He often jumps to an entirely new thought before

finishing his previous one. However, George Lakoff (2016) believes that he is simply using effective discourse mechanisms to communicate what he wants to communicate to his audience. “I have found that he is very careful and very strategic in his use of language”, says Lakoff. He explains that Trump’s speaking style is conversational, perhaps due to his New York roots. In New York, it’s polite to finish your interlocutor’s sentences and it’s a natural part of conversation.

Explaining the use of abrupt phrases and fragmented sentences he says: “It is common and natural in New York discourse for friends to finish one another’s sentences…When this happens in cooperative discourse, it can show empathy and intimacy with a friend, that you know the context of the narrative, and that you understand and accept your friend’s framing of the situation so well that you can even finish what they have started to say”. Trump often starts a sentence and leaves off where his followers can finish in their minds what he has started to say. That is, they commonly feel empathy and intimacy, an acceptance of what is being said, and good feeling toward the speaker. This is an unconscious, automatic reaction, especially when words are flying by quickly. It is a means for Trump to connect with his audience, – concludes Lakoff.

Besides, it should be taken into account that semantic gaps and inconsistencies in spoken communication are often bridged through nonverbal cues – such as body language, facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice – that provide information, regulate interactions, express emotions, and carry other significant meaning.

The other means to connect with the audience is Trump's intensive use of social networking platforms, namely Twitter (now X) and later Truth Social. According to Ruth Wodak (2022), Donald Trump represents an unprecedented case in this regard, as he has used Twitter as a major platform of communication (after Trump's bans from major social networks in 2021, Twitter was replaced by his social media platform Truth Social). Trump's victory on presidential elections, is believed to stem – at least partly – from his unconventional, aggressive, and offensive use of social media, specifically tweets and posts. As Wodak writes, "Trump did not have to rely on mediareporting and serious journalism – he was his own journalist". During his first term in office he fully integrated Twitter into the very fabric of his administration, reshaping the nature of the presidency and presidential power. Touching upon Trump's speech style Wodak notices that Trump's language is conversational, drawing on the vernacular, highly repetitive, frequently incoherent, simple, and direct, thus strategically emphasizing his polarizing messages. This strategy allows to appear closer to the people. In this way, they come across as 'authentic'(Wodak, 2022).

Conversationalized discursive practices include the use of invectives, insulting or abusive language, prejoratives and derogatory terms ("radical war hawk", "lunatic", "corrupt groups of hacks"). Very often derogatory nicknames are used to delegitimize and diminish the rival, to shape public perception, evoke strong emotions, or prejudice the audience against the subject. They attack the person directly rather than addressing their policies or arguments. For example, negatively loaded epithet "crooked" originally was used by Trump

as “crooked Hillary” for Hillary Clinton during the 2016 election to frame her as untrustworthy and corrupt. He later repurposed this as “crooked Joe” for Joe Biden. “Sleepy” was used as “sleepy Joe” for Joe Biden to attack his age, stamina, energy levels, and mental acuity. The nicknames used by Trump for Kamala Haris after Biden withdrew his candidacy from the 2024 presidential election included “Laffin’ Kamala”, “Lyin’ Kamala,” and then “Crazy Kamala”, which he interspersed with mispronouncing and misspellings of her name in his speeches and on his social media platforms (Piper, 2024).

Social media is used as a primary tool for cultivating direct relationships with “the people”. It provides a direct, unfiltered gateway to bypass traditional media and establishes populist leaders as political influencers who speak directly to their electorate. According to R. Wodak, Trump’s Twitter obsession (from June 2015 until January 8, 2021, Donald Trump sent over 34,000 tweets (max/day: 200 tweets on June 5, 2020) is explained by a desire for direct contact with his supporters and potential voters. Therefore, a parallel reality is created on social media, while information from official media is declared fake (Wodak, 2022: 794).

As N. Fairclough argues, conversationalization of public discourse can be seen as part of a democratization of culture and society which suggests that it is linked with a shift in authority relations in favour of the mass of the population, ‘the public’, and at the expense of politicians, bureaucrats, various categories of professionals, the media, and so forth. However, the process is not so straightforward. As he notices, “there are difficulties with this democratic account of conversationalization”. Conversationalized discursive practices are

more typically generated and imposed in a 'top-down' manner than in a 'bottom-up' manner. Another problem is connected with the concept of conversationalization itself. Although conversation as a genre can be characterized in general terms, there are significant differences in conversational language and style across different social classes, strata and groups. What is at issue is the simulation of conversation; it may be that conversationalized practices are not particularly close to anybody's real conversational language. Political discourse often involves strategic, instrumental use of simulated conversational language to achieve institutional objectives – persuasion, governance, and legitimation (Fairclough, 1994: 244).

A key technique in conversationalization is synthetic personalization – "the simulation of private, face-to-face, person-to-person discourse in public mass-audience discourse", i.e. the process of addressing mass audiences as though they were individuals to construct a sense of community and shared identity between speaker and mass audience. It is achieved, for example, through directly addressing the audience, inclusive language usage, the use of plural forms of first person pronouns (we, us, our), etc. From a CDA perspective, conversationalized discursive practices can be considered as a manipulative tool to persuade the audience. That's why, according to N. Fairclough, they might be regarded not as eradicating the power, but as backgrounding and disguising it, and making it more difficult to challenge (Fairclough, 1994: 245).

In sum, intertextuality as a rhetorical device plays a crucial role in political discourse. Through manifest intertextual devices such as quotations,

allusions, references and indirect speech political actors draw on shared knowledge and cultural memory to strengthen their messages and influence the audience. At the same time, the conversationalization of political discourse contributes to the construction of perceived proximity between leaders and citizens, rendering political messages more approachable and potentially more persuasive. All this demonstrates how intertextuality functions as an effective tool for shaping meaning, constructing political identities, and influencing public opinion.

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