Jeremy Corbyn’s Manipulative Tactics in His Manifesto Launch Speech

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Abstract
The present article is directed to explore, find out and interpret the manipulative intentions of Jeremy Corbyn in his pre-election manifesto launch speech in 2019. The aim of the present investigation lies in a careful and extensive study of manipulative techniques and tactics in the said article to be able to understand and interpret Mr. Corbyn’s hidden and covert intentions correctly and precisely. We used different linguistic methods for the analyses of the research, such as discourse analyses, linguo-stylistic, syntactic, and pragmatic methods of analysis. All these helped us to thoroughly analyse the manipulative tactics of Jeremy Corbyn in his manifesto.

Key words: linguistic manipulation; political manipulation; manipulative techniques; politics; political speech.

Introduction
When we communicate through language, it is always done so with a purpose. Language is a code for people to express and share their ideas, thoughts, emotions, and information. Done so verbally and in writing, language is the main tool for communication to take place. Writers use language to express their thoughts on paper, readers use language to read the writers’ works. Teachers use language to teach students different subjects, students use language to understand teachers. Politicians use language to communicate with masses, all in the hope of making their speeches understandable, comprehensible, and intelligible. On the other hand, crowds use language to
comprehend and understand what politicians are trying to convey in their speeches.

When using language, people often express themselves implicitly, covertly, indirectly, not to be either offensive or impolite, or too direct. However, communicating with people indirectly can lead to misunderstandings and result in the spread of wrong information.

Language is also used for manipulating with people’s ideas, thoughts, and emotions. People use manipulation by speaking implicitly communicating and exchanging their ideas and thoughts indirectly without necessarily revealing the whole story or giving out all of the information. This is achieved through the use of different techniques and tactics that manipulators employ to reach their own goals manipulating with others. This is done with the aim of getting away of what they want by abusing others trust in them.

**Manipulative Tactics in Jeremy Corbyn’s Manifesto**

Manipulation can be defined as a means by which manipulators reach their own goals by deceiving others, making them believe things which may not really be true. As Wilkinson (2013:342) said: “To be manipulated can be understood colloquially as being made someone’s ‘puppet on a string’”. Ruth Faden and Tom Beauchamp (1986:354-368) define psychological manipulation as “any intentional act that successfully influences a person to belief or behavior by causing changes in mental processes other than those involved in understanding”.

The following speech under investigation is the speech given by United Kingdom Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, about his party’s manifesto for the then upcoming UK General Election. The Election was held in December 2019, and Mr. Corbyn used this opportunity to showcase his party’s manifesto in order to gain votes and ultimately regain power for the Labour Party from the Conservatives. The Labour Party to this end, his use of many techniques and tactics in his speech, is thus of great interest for analysis.

Jeremy Corbyn starts his speech by introducing the manifesto to the public:
Labour’s manifesto is a manifesto of hope. A manifesto that will bring real change. A manifesto full of popular policies that the political establishment has blocked for a generation.

In this small passage, Mr. Corbyn repeated the word manifesto four times which can be very interesting. The repeated word tends to put the audience attention to what is said, repeated and emphasised, which is the goal Jeremy Corbyn is trying to reach. By repeating the word manifesto, Jeremy Corbyn emphasises the very importance of the Labour Party’s manifesto, bringing hope to the audience. The tactic of repetition2 is meant to hypnotise the listeners by emphasising the vitality and essence of the speech.

He then proceeds to add that the most powerful and richest class in the British society will make people believe that this is all impossible, in fact, nonsense:

Over the next three weeks they are going to tell you that everything in this manifesto is impossible. That it’s too much for you. Because they don’t want real change. Why would they? The system is working just fine for them. It’s rigged in their favour. But it’s not working for you.

In this passage, we can see how Mr. Corbyn is delivering the manifesto to woo the audience. Firstly, he wants to show that the rest of the Parties are planning to convince the citizens that Labour Party’s manifesto cannot realise all the objectives. This is a bit exaggerated considering that neither Conservative’s Party leader Boris Johnson3 nor Liberal Democrats’ Party leader Jo Swinson4 include in their speeches any passage where they discuss the improbability of Jeremy Corbyn’s manifesto. However, Mr. Johnson does mention that no one, including Jeremy Corbyn, believes in that programme by Jeremy Corbyn. Jo Swinson mentioned that Jeremy Corbyn never mentioned the way he was going to campaign, and never did mention it. Thus, taking into consideration the biggest party leaders never mentioned the impossibility of
Jeremy Corbyn’s manifesto, we can conclude that Mr. Corbyn wants to delude the audience by using the tactic of *negative other-presentation*. Mr. Corbyn speaks negatively of his opponents, and how the other two major Parties will condemn the manifesto, attempting to misguide and misdirect citizens. He blames the opposition to make himself look better and fairer to the audience. This is nothing but a pure manipulative technique used by Jeremy Corbyn to lower the status of his opponents and raise the status of his Party.

The grammatical structure of his sentences is also quite unique in a sense that he uses very short and straight-to-the-point sentences, allowing the public to absorb every word uttered by him and letting the sentence go deep into the conscience of the listeners, and to have a greater impact on people’s minds. He is being sarcastic and ironic towards his opposition as through this way, the audience might get to his side and condemn the powerful people.

His use of emphatic sentences full of rhetoric makes him sound quite persuasive and promising. He brings up vital issues such as wages, bills, public services, etc., that most certainly will manage to bring the audience onside:

*If your wages never seem to go up and your bills never seem to go down, if your public services only seem to get worse, despite the heroic efforts of those who work in them, then it’s not working for you.*

Jeremy Corbyn tries hard to convince the public through his rhetoric and emphatic speech that the current system does not work for them. He uses the word *heroic* in a very ironic way to show that those who currently control and manage the system act like ‘heroes’ and ‘saviours’ of the nation but in reality, they do not do anything for the citizens. He uses the rhetorical device *contrast* in this passage, to make it more convincing, more emphatic and to highlight the crucial points for the people to direct their attention onto those matters. He does everything in his power to change people’s minds and show that the current system is not the best option. Taking into close look into the statistics, we see that the minimum wage increased rapidly over the years. Besides this,
we should bring into attention the increase in minimum wage that the Government brought into effect in 2020 during Boris Johnson’s governance^8. These facts testify that Jeremy Corbyn’s efforts of persuading the audience that the wages are not going up as pure misguidance and manipulation.

He then proceeds to answer why people have not only lost hope in the system, but in every politician who gets to power. The following below is an example showing why people have given up in general:

> And that’s why so many people in Britain have given up on politics. That’s why you hear people say about politicians: “they’re all the same.” Well, not any more. Because this party, this movement, this manifesto is different. Labour is on your side. And there could scarcely be a clearer demonstration of that than the furious reaction of the rich and powerful.

In these passages, the previous and the latter, he uses the tactic of reason^9. He shows examples, problems, and issues to give reasons why so many people have lost hope in politicians. Then he adds that they are not like everybody else, in that they are different, they evoke the hope in people, and they bring the ‘light’ to people.

Jeremy Corbyn also uses the technique of repetition here, *this party, this movement, this manifesto*, to emphasize the importance and the change their manifesto will bring to people and to the country. Jeremy Corbyn tends to target the rich in society, because Labour Party represents the working class in the society. Thus, we can conclude from this that Labour Party is not for everyone, it only targets certain people in society and tries to put people against one another. He also explains why it is so, as the powerful and the rich show furious reaction to the Labour Party’s manifesto and promises. What he does not realize is that he does the same towards those people. He uses metonymy^10 in these passages, referring to the Conservative Party as the rich and powerful people in Britain. This can also mean that the debasement^11 tactic is also present
here, as he points out the rich and powerful class of Britain, while at the same time covertly showing his humble nature – his average status in society. He wants to point out that he is one of the working class of the British society, which sounds very persuasive to the listeners. Since he is one of the working class, then he most definitely can solve all of the major and minor issues the working-class people face during their everyday routine. Essentially, he wants to convey a specific message to the listeners and citizens of the United Kingdom – he is one of them. He understands them and is not disconnected like the Conservative Party.

Mr. Corbyn then refers to the US former President Franklin Roosevelt:

The US president who led his country out of the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt, had to take on the rich and powerful in America to do it....

He compares himself with the US President, who took his nation out of the Great Depression. He wants to covertly imply that he is planning to do the same as Franklin Roosevelt did, to get The United Kingdom back on its feet. He also implies that he can be the exact leader for the country to take care of all their needs, take down the corrupt businessmen, make the rich pay taxes, and take down tax-dodgers. Mr. Corbyn implicitly tells the audience that the Conservative Party, together with the rich businessmen, take the country into a depression. We cannot see the proof here taking into consideration that the country was not and is not in depression. The economy grew over the years according to ONS12.

He then adds that he accepts the opposition of the billionaires, the hostility of the bad bosses, the implacable opposition of the dodgy landlords, the hostility of the big polluters, the fierce opposition of the giant healthcare corporations, the hostility of the privatized utilities companies, trying to convince the listeners that he is able to take everyone down, that he is courageous and powerful enough to solve every problem the nation is facing. Here he uses the pronoun I instead of we as politicians usually do, to look more powerful and
authoritative to the public, to present himself as someone ready to lead the citizens to their peak of fortune. Then he continues:

We’ll deliver real change for the many and not the few…
And you really can have this plan for real change… You just need a vote – and your vote can be more powerful than all their wealth… Don’t miss out. This is your chance. If you’re not registered, do it today…

Here, we can see that he puts himself away from the people. When he uses the pronoun we he means his party and him together, but not the public itself. Then he uses the pronoun you which shows that the public is taken separately from their party. He shows that he is superior and powerful. In this passage Mr. Corbyn performs direct order by commanding the listeners to go and vote. The performative can be considered to be true (Hadiati 2019) as Mr. Corbyn has the authority to tell the public to go and vote, the people and circumstances are also appropriate, as the citizens vote for the upcoming elections. Thus, we can say that this speech act at large is an implicit order to the audience and is appropriate considering the circumstances and people involved. It is implicit, because he does not include the word ‘order’, he simply tells them to get registered for voting.

He then continues his indirect and implicit order to the public:

Vote for the young person who can’t go to the youth centre… Vote for the mum falling into debt… Vote for the older person… Vote for the soldier…

He keeps ordering the audience to go and vote, but not for them, instead, for the people in need, for those who are weak, for those who have lost hope. This way, he manipulates with people’s minds to evoke a reaction in their consciousness, leaving the impression that he is concerned with those people, and that they, the listeners and citizens, should be concerned too. He repeats the word vote to bring into attention the responsibility of the action. The
listeners might feel obliged or pressured without even realizing that they are being manipulated and pressed on.

Then he uses charm tactics\textsuperscript{14} implicitly, trying to gain those people’s attention towards him, who he just enumerated for the public to go and vote for. He gains their appreciation, thus covertly manipulating their minds to go and vote for his party. He also uses reason tactic here, giving all of the reasons why it should be done so, but hiding and glossing over Labour’s negative history\textsuperscript{15} which includes its period of power.

In his speech, he continues to use negative other-presentation of the Conservative Party, specifically targeting its leader, Prime Minister Boris Johnson:

\textit{…But Boris Johnson is trying to hijack Brexit to sell out our NHS and sell out working people. The Conservatives want to use Brexit to unleash Thatcherism on steroids, to inflict more pain on the very communities so viciously attacked by Margaret Thatcher’s government in the 1980s… That’s why Johnson is preparing to sell out our NHS for a US trade deal that will drive up the cost of medicines and lead to the runaway privatization of our health service.}

In this passage J. Corbyn attacks the Conservative Party and its leader, PM. Johnson, to enrage the audience against him. He blames the Conservatives of trying to sell the people’s health care system, the NHS (National Health System):

\textit{If you watched the TV debate on Tuesday night, you’ll have seen me hold up the censored, blacked-out reports of secret talks between British and American officials about opening up our health service to US corporations and driving up the cost of medicines. You’ll have seen Johnson lose his cool, because he’s been found out.}
In this passage, it is obvious that Mr. Corbyn does his best to display everything plainly for the public to see that he has defeated PM. Johnson that day by showing everyone the secret talks between the UK and the US. He even uses jargon, lose his cool, to humiliate PM. Johnson in front of the listeners even more. He also uses passive voice construction\textsuperscript{16} he’s been found out to emphasize the actual occurrence and result of Mr. Johnson being revealed, rather than who the agent is. Here, the most important aspect is that Mr. Corbyn has revealed to everybody about PM. Johnson’s deals with the US\textsuperscript{17}. We can understand that Mr. Corbyn tries to humiliate and belittle his opponent to get people on his side, to try to get his hands on the ‘Chair’. Without having a proof, Mr. Corbyn states publicly that Boris Johnson is making deals with the US about their NHS.

\textquote{…You’ll have heard Boris Johnson claim he will have Brexit done, over and over again. That claim is a fraud on the British people.}

He continues in this passage to condemn and criticize Prime Minister Boris Johnson, calling him a liar implicitly.

Collins Dictionary gives the definition of fraud as “crime of gaining money or financial benefits by a trick or by lying. Fraud is something or someone that deceives people in a way that is illegal or dishonest.” As can be seen, Jeremy Corbyn condemns PM. Johnson of deceiving the British citizens, but he does so implicitly, not directly. This is because he does not say that PM. Johnson has lied, but rather he says that the claim itself is a fraud. On the other hand, recent developments show that since winning the 2019 General Election, PM. Johnson has managed to pass his Brexit Deal through parliament, and eventually the Withdrawal Agreement Bill passed through the House of Lords\textsuperscript{18}. Thus, Corbyn’s claims are unnecessary and irrelevant. All this was done to simply gain votes from people.
So, if you want to leave without trashing our economy or selling out our NHS, you'll be able to vote for it. Let's take this out of the hands of politicians and give the British people the final say.

Here, Mr. Corbyn encourages the public to vote for the Labour Party for a better future and economy, but as we mentioned before, when they were last in power, they oversaw a double-recession and severe unemployment levels. The economy shrank, the financial sector was on the verge of collapsing in 2008 when the Labour Party was ruling the country.

Mr. Corbyn encourages everyone to go and vote as he believes it is the right thing for them. However, he has manipulated with the listeners’ minds during his speech, and now tries to show that he is not interfering with their decision.

He goes on, representing the Labour Party's plan of reviving the country and the life, the jobs, the national infrastructures. And all this time, he uses plus facts of what will happen in the future if they are chosen:

Labour will transform our economy so that no one is held back....

Here, Corbyn uses metonymy, using Labour instead of referring to himself, which is another example of avoiding taking all the responsibility himself, and thus making it a more general and collective responsibility.

North Sea oil and gas workers have powered this country for decades... We won't hang them out to dry.

Here, he uses metaphor hang out to dry meaning that he and his party will never abandon those in need. He is always there for everyone. The metaphor makes his speech even more dramatic and emphatic here, leaving the impression of a caring and concerned leader. He then continues:
If you're a patient or a nurse, Labour is on your side… If you're a student, Labour is on your side… If you're reaching old age, Labour is on your side… If you're a tenant, Labour is on your side…

Jeremy Corbyn targets specific groups of people, to gain their vote. He needs those people to get to his side, because they are the majority in the society. He draws everyone’s attention to the fact that he and his Party concentrate on the needs of the weak, poor, and those in need – giving rise to the party’s mantra of “For the many, not the few”. He keeps repeating this slogan to be even more persuasive in the eyes of public. However, we should bring into everyone’s attention the Conservative Party’s manifesto as well, where Boris Johnson promises fifty thousand more nurses, millions of investments in science and schools. This means that J. Corbyn has no valid proof that the Conservative Party is not planning to do anything about hospitals, schools, etc.

He finishes his speech with the famous lines by Pablo Neruda, and a direct order:

You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep Spring from coming.

Vote for this manifesto of hope. It’s time for real change.

He wants to point out here that regardless of how bad a condition the country is in, there is always a hope and a chance to cope with. Then he proceeds to order the listeners to vote for the Labour Party because they will bring hope to people. On the other hand, this hope does not guarantee that it will be as Labour say it will be.

Mr. Corbyn’s sentences are concise and to the point, which makes his speech even more emphatic and persuasive. His speech contains many implicit orders, and implicit ideas. He delivers his speech indirectly. It contains covert ideas and information that is not really available to the public. He targets
mostly people who are weak and in need, at the same time concentrating on students, nurses, the old, the working class. He goes on desperate measures of condemning, and humiliating his opposition to try to get the listeners on his side. Analysing Jeremy Corbyn’s speech, we can come to the conclusion that he has used many manipulative techniques and tactics to persuade and convince the audience that the Labour Party’s manifesto is the best one, full of hopes, promises, and a bright and prosperous future for the nation.

Conclusion

The research attests that manipulation is employed and carried out by politicians at all costs to gain votes and crowd. In the domain of politics, manipulation is meant to fulfill certain political interests and achieve certain political goals. This is done by employing certain manipulative tactics to delude others. The study reveals that politicians strive for meeting unjust political needs through concealing the truth and demagogy.

The article under investigation reveals Jeremy Corbyn’s hidden and covert intentions and ideas in his manifesto launch speech through certain linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of speech.

The analyses of the manifesto launch speech reveal that Jeremy Corbyn employed a number of manipulative techniques and tactics in order to delude the audience, convince them to follow his lead, and vote for his Party. Jeremy Corbyn uses such manipulation techniques in his speech as: metaphor, metonymy, negative other-presentation, repetition, etc. All these techniques help him in misleading and misdirecting the public to assert power. The humiliation and condemnation of the opposition show that Mr. Corbyn has to show his value over others, rather than achieving it by more honest ways.

The analyses of the article is vital while without being able to analyse the political speech in detail, people will blindly accept and follow those political figures who are in great command of rhetoric and manipulative techniques. People should have the ability to interpret, analyse and reveal the untrue information and cunning intentions of the manipulator not to become their “puppet on a string”.

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Notes:

1. The Spectator gives the full transcript of Jeremy Corbyn’s manifesto launch speech in 21st of November 2019. // <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/jeremy-corbyn-s-manifesto-launch-speech-full-transcript?fbclid=IwAR1So9N_hGMpUE77r0_BfkKQb9BMIx-xAkNkJjzuWZAofwGjghUxl1FY4dj0>

2. **Repetition** is a means of stylistic device which is can create the illusion that something is true even though it does not even exist. When people say the same thing over and over again, they start to believe it too (David 2017).

3. Boris Johnson introducing manifesto of the Conservative Party did not discuss the possibility of Jeremy Corbyn’s plan. In the speech, Mr. Johnson confidently states that whatever Mr. Corbyn’s plan is, no one believes in it, not even Jeremy Corbyn himself (<conservatives.com> 2019) // <https://www.conservatives.com/news/my-guarantee-to-get-brexit-done-and-unleash-britains-potential?fbclid=IwAR2idIQQMYrWqksjxtmYLglRfdxFMyLzNyfdPqY0BpaUR1JZz8b5GZVIWyi>

4. Jo Swinson, the head of the Liberal Democratic Party, did not mention the likelihood of Jeremy Corbyn’s plan. Jo Swinson states that Jeremy Corbyn did not unveil how he was planning to campaign in a People’s Vote (<Barryholiday.org> 2019) // <http://www.barryholliday.org.uk/jo-swinson-launches-lib-dem-manifesto/?fbclid=IwAR26GtwMiO5WA6xGZX-clgkBgnQ5RLtnfph0PkQ2L-b5aL_fmUnQrbhKBg0>

5. **Negative other-presentation** is the technique employed by a speaker in which they attempt to degrade and bring down an oppositional speaker (Van Dijk 2006:373).

6. **Contrast** is a persuasive tactic which immediately attracts the audience as two opposite ideas are being interpreted (David 2017).

7. In statista.com the economic history of national minimum wage is given over the years and we can see that it increased over the years, even more so, under Conservative Party leadership. // <https://www.statista.com/sta-
8. “The new rate results in an increase of £930 over the year for a full-time worker on the National Living Wage. The rise means the government is projected to meet its target for the NLW to reach 60% of median earnings by 2020” (<gov.uk>) // <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-minimum-and-living-wage-increases-come-into-effect?fbclid=IwAR2BdB-Ct3sOqwqtoKkknSc9NCsi3NhuSCHg_aLtMCvB0QwvS3603_muM-I>

9. **Reason** tactic is employed when the manipulator needs others to follow, trust and do they are told, then the manipulator reasons why they should do that way (Buss 1987:1222).

10. **Metonymy** is a stylistic device that replaces an idea or phenomenon with a single word (Gibbs cited in Kulo 2009:04-05). Politicians can make use of metonymy to reduce the sense of responsibility or the opposite – undertaking the creation of the desired illusion and idea in front of the audience (Beard cited in Kulo 2009:05).

11. **Debasement** is used when the manipulator humiliates himself or behaves in a very humble way to receive affection from the target and have them do what he/she wants (Buss 1987:1222).

12. According to ONS, we can see the increase of the economy to its peak in January 2020, which states the unreasonable and misleading criticism by Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn (<ons.gov.uk>). // <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/gdp_monthlyestimateuk/june2020?fbclid=IwAR2GtLekQoiHbxngMM2cJqWBD_r6Kl7MTdrOhG51RMs5_2J8uqzMwDxI7fUk#:~:text=Monthly%20GDP%20grew%20by%208.7,by%20a%20total%20of%2011.3%25>

13. **Direct Order** falls under “directives” in pragmatics, which is a type of command. Pragmatically for the utterance to be true, there must be certain conventions for the according to the felicity conditions (Hadiati 2019:701-703).

14. **Charm** tactic is a widely used tactic, in which people behave this way whenever they need or want something from the other (Buss 1987:1222).
15. When Labour Party was ruling, the United Kingdom economy entered a double-recession. During this period, unemployment rose to 2.5 million people and many businesses and companies folded, costing people their jobs and livelihoods (Wearden 2009) // <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2009/oct/23/uk-recession-timeline?fbclid=IwAR0ONB2d51jg3rTQ-xuQER5Jfa32eVrWYeXeZ4TEIprRMkBkdbyQx_0jceQ>

16. **Passive** construction can cause to the distortion of facts while changing the sentence into the passive voice leads to manipulating with the facts and actions presented in the sentence (Nordlund 2003:09).

17. The documents “show the US is interested in discussing drug pricing – mainly, extending patents that stop cheaper generic medicines being used. There is no indication in the documents that the UK team agreed to anything in the talks.” (<BBC News>) // <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-50572454?fbclid=IwAR17b5N54rYn3i3HuVG8XMfAdMdKvCW-EocS600LoYnlibVmnADLSMNz0PM>

18. The United Kingdom is meant to leave EU on January 31 2020, which testifies that Brexid was done (<BBC News> 2020) // <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-51051178?fbclid=IwAR2TFLffjjW-jbySJ__n2V53m6vFL0kVeieKamLsbM1gNZwAH03Z91xUdgkE>


20. **Plus facts**: Andersson and Furberg (Andersson and Furberg cited in Nordlund 2003:07) call those facts “plus facts” or “minus facts” when manipulators skip a chunk of information from their speech to get the desired reaction from the audience, to serve the facts in their own way, and delude people’s minds.

21. **Metaphor** is a persuasive stylistic technique which can be used to mask or conceal the speaker’s underhanded intentions and ideas by representing seemingly innocent ideas or thoughts (David 2017).

References:

Սույն հետևյալ հոդվածը ուսումնասիրում է Ջերեմի Քորբինի 2019թ.նախընտրական մանիֆեստի ելույթում դրված մտաշահարկման դեպքերը։ Հեղինակը նպատակագրվում է ճշգրտելու և մտաշահարկի մեխանիզմների և տակտիկաների մանրակրկիտ ու խորքային ուսումնասիրությամբ, ճշգրտ մասին և Վեր հանել Ջերեմի Քորբինի քողարկված մտադրությունները։ Հետազոտությունը կիրառվում է դիսկուրսվերլուծության, լեզվագործաբանական, լեզվաոճական և շարահյուսական քննության մեթոդներով.

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