

## CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES UTILIZED IN DONALD TRUMP'S INAUGURAL SPEECH

**Saqib Raza,**

MPhil Scholar, Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology, [saqib.sr99@gmail.com](mailto:saqib.sr99@gmail.com)

**Dr. Said Imran,**

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology, [saidimran@kust.edu.pk](mailto:saidimran@kust.edu.pk), (Co-Author)

**Dr. Syed Sabih Ul Hassan,**

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology, [Syed.hassan@kust.edu.pk](mailto:Syed.hassan@kust.edu.pk)

### Abstract

*This study analyzes the language employed by President Donald Trump in his inaugural speech through the lens of Van Dijk's (2005) model of Critical Discourse Analysis. The research aims to uncover the discursive strategies used for positive self-presentation and the negative portrayal of others, focusing on lexical choices and linguistic elements as outlined by Van Dijk (1998). Using a qualitative design and purposive sampling, the findings reveal that Trump's speech emphasizes unity and collective agency, employing strategies like topicalization and the number game to highlight his policy priorities and support base. Polarization is a key feature, creating a sharp contrast between his administration and the perceived failures of previous governments. The speech portrays Americans as victims of political elites while elevating Trump's agenda through strategic lexicalization. Populist rhetoric is evident in appeals to nationalism, the use of metaphors to articulate his vision, and modality to express certainty and determination. Additionally, evidentiality and appeals to authority lend factual and historical legitimacy to his claims, reinforcing his populist narrative.*

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Discursive Strategies, Inaugural Speech, President Trump

### 1.1 Background of the Research

Presidential inaugural speeches serve as pivotal moments in political communication, encapsulating a leader's vision, values, and rhetorical strategies to address the nation and the world. These speeches not only mark the commencement of a new administration but also set the tone for future policies and governance. Analyzing the discursive strategies employed in such speeches provides valuable insights into the mechanisms leaders use to construct legitimacy, foster unity, and delineate ideological boundaries (Fairclough, 2013). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) emerges as a potent methodological framework for examining the interplay between language, power, and ideology within political texts (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). CDA facilitates the exploration of how discourse shapes and is shaped by social structures, enabling researchers to uncover underlying power dynamics and ideological stances (Van Dijk, 2010). Applying CDA to presidential inaugural speeches allows for a nuanced understanding of how leaders like Donald Trump utilize language to construct in-group legitimacy while challenging out-group legitimacy.

Donald Trump's 2017 inaugural speech marked a departure from traditional presidential rhetoric, characterized by a populist and combative tone that resonated with his base while alienating opponents. His discourse was notable for its emphasis on "America First," a slogan that underscored a nationalist agenda and implicitly delineated between "us" and "them" (Kauffman, 2021). This rhetoric not only aimed to solidify his support among loyalists but also sought to delegitimize political adversaries and marginalized groups. Moreover, the construction of in-group and out-group legitimacy through discourse has implications for social cohesion and political stability. By examining how Trump's speech fosters an in-group identity among his supporters while simultaneously challenging the legitimacy of perceived

out-groups, this research aims to elucidate the broader societal impacts of his rhetorical approach. Such an analysis contributes to the discourse on political polarization and the role of language in shaping public perception and identity.

This study seeks to fill the gap in existing literature by systematically investigating the specific discursive strategies employed in Donald Trump's inaugural speech and examining how these strategies function to construct in-group legitimacy and challenge out-group legitimacy. Through this analysis, the research endeavors to enhance the understanding of political Discourse and Power dynamics in contemporary American politics.

### **1.2 Problem Statement**

In political discourse, inaugural speeches serve as pivotal moments for newly elected President to articulate their vision, establish legitimacy, and delineate the boundaries between in-groups and out-groups (Fairclough, 2013). Despite the abundant discourse surrounding Trump's presidency, there remains a limited understanding of the specific discursive strategies employed in his inaugural Speech and how these strategies function to construct in-group legitimacy while challenging out-group legitimacy. Critical Discourse Analysis provides a framework for examining language, power, and social dynamics within political texts (Van Dijk, 2008). This research sheds light on the mechanisms through which political leaders can influence public perception and reinforce their authority (Fairclough, 2013). It contributes to the broader discourse on populism and its manifestations in contemporary politics, as Trump's rhetoric often aligns with populist themes that emphasize "us versus them" narratives (Mudde, 2004). Lastly, analyzing these strategies can inform future research on political communication and aid in developing strategies to foster more inclusive and constructive political dialogues. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the specific discursive strategies utilized in Donald Trump's presidential inauguration speech and examine how these strategies establish in-group legitimacy while challenging out-group legitimacy. By addressing these objectives, the research seeks to fill the existing gap in the literature and provide a deeper understanding of the linguistic and rhetorical techniques that shape political legitimacy and social cohesion.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

- To investigate the specific discursive strategies in Donald Trump's presidential inauguration speech.
- To examine how Donald Trump's inaugural speech establishes in-group legitimacy and challenges out-group legitimacy.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- What specific discursive strategies are used by Donald Trump in his presidential inaugural speech?
- How do these discursive strategies in Donald Trump's inauguration speech construct in-group legitimacy and challenge out-group legitimacy?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The present study holds significant in political discourse, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics by analyzing the discursive strategies employed in Donald Trump's presidential inaugural speech. By utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis as the methodological framework, this research contributes to understanding of how political leaders construct and convey legitimacy, influence public perception, and delineate social boundaries through language (Fairclough, 2003). The study's focus on in-group and out-group legitimacy is pivotal for understanding the dynamics of social identity and cohesion within political contexts. By examining how Trump's speech establishes in-group solidarity and challenges out-group legitimacy, the research explains the mechanisms through which political leaders foster allegiance among supporters while simultaneously delineating opposition. This aspect

is particularly relevant in the current polarized political climate, where language plays a crucial role in shaping societal divisions and alliances (Van Dijk, 2010). The findings of this study have practical implications for political strategists, communicators, and policymakers. The study provides a framework for critically assessing political rhetoric, thereby empowering citizens and stakeholders to engage more thoughtfully with political discourse (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). This research contributes to the broader academic discourse by bridging theoretical perspectives from CDA with empirical analysis of contemporary political speeches. The study underscores the relevance of discourse analysis in interpreting and evaluating the language of power and authority in modern politics (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This study is significant for its comprehensive analysis of Donald Trump's inaugural speech through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis. It advances scholarly understanding of political rhetoric, enhances awareness of the role of language in constructing social realities, and provides actionable insights for effective political communication. As such, the research not only adds to academic knowledge but also has meaningful implications for political practice and societal discourse.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Discourse

Numerous linguists have provided different general definitions for discourse. The Latin word *discursus*, which means speaking or talking in general, is where the word discourse originates. Discourse, then, can be defined as any spoken or written social conversation. Discourse, however, is more precisely defined as a certain type of writing on a certain subject that is united by a particular objective or set of qualities, such as political, religious, feminist, or racial discourse (Pearson & Lee, 1992; Wodak & Reisigl, 2001). One alternative perspective links discourse to its social effects (Fairclough, 2001; Van Dijk, 2005)

### 2.2 Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis (DA) is recognized as a framework encompassing various methodological approaches for analyzing language in its written and spoken forms. DA finds its roots in ethnomethodology and has evolved from multiple domains, including speech act theory, ethnomethodology, semiology, and the philosophical insights of thinkers like Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Ludwig Wittgenstein (Wiggins, 2009). DA is not just about examining discourse but also about understanding the various contexts – social, political, and others – in which language operates (Jalali & Sadeghi, 2014). Understanding how individuals use language to form, maintain, or end their relationships is crucial to shaping social activities and building cultural and social communities (Wiggins, 2009).

### 2.3 Political Discourse

Political discourse is distinguishing between political and non-political discourses. The term political discourse encompasses a wide range of literary references, including nomological speeches (Wodak & Boukala, 2015), parliamentary debates (Gruber, 2015), diplomatic condolences (Fenton-Smith, 2007), citizen forums (Perrez & Reuchamps, 2012), tweets (Kreis, 2017). In the academic discourse on political communication, Van Dijk (1998) presents a framework: the individuals involved, the communication setting, and the political extent of the discourse. Political discourse is deemed "political" when a political actor, engaging in actions like governing, protesting, legislating, or voting, operates within a politically communicative institutional framework, such as official addresses, public speeches, or parliamentary debates. This perspective, however, has yet to incorporate other

communicative forms like media discourse or citizen discussions on politics. Offering a contrasting view, Fairclough (2006) posits that politics is a social construct. Further enriching this discourse, Okulska and Cap (2010) categorize political discourse as a study field that concentrates on the social dimensions of politics and policies, positioning it at the nexus of political and public discourse and political and social organization. Van Dijk emphasizes:

*"If there is one social field that is ideological, it is that of politics. This is not surprising because it is eminently here that different and opposed groups, power, struggles, and interests are at stake. To be able to compete, political groups need to be ideologically conscious and organized. (Van Dijk (2005 p. 732)."*

#### **2.4 Political Discourse Analysis**

The term "Political Discourse Analysis" may be seen from two perspectives: its conceptual definition and its practical application (Van Dijk, 1998). CDA is a practical analytical approach for revealing discursive manipulations beyond texts (Altenkamp & McManus, 2024). *Political discourse analysis* is a sub-field that points to analyzing discourse practices in specific political contexts, such as parliamentary debates, legislative procedures, or hearings (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). Alternatively, PDA stands for critical-political discourse analysis, which involves analyzing speech created by political actors via a critical perspective. Therefore, given that the latter is more relevant to our objectives, a Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) with Critical Speech Analysis (CDA) helps us comprehend the nature and function of political discourse. It also offers an evaluation of how speech contributes to the creation, preservation, opposition, and misuse of power within a society.

#### **2.5 Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary area (Wodak & Meyer, 2015) that encompasses several techniques, theories, and study topics (Weiss & Wodak, 2003). Critical Discourse Analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing text and voice. This school of thought was created recently within the discipline of Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1998). The concept shares similarities with Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. Both frameworks emphasize the nature of power, which can be wielded by various political or social groups in both positive and negative ways. Power dynamics are linked with discourse and knowledge (Wiggins, 2009).

#### **2.6 Empirical Studies**

Ali and Ibrahim, (2020) applied Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical Model (2004) to undertake a critical discourse analysis of Donald Trump's 2017 inaugural address. Their qualitative study analysed the speech from both descriptive and explanatory perspectives, with data collected via purposive sampling. The research centered on lexical and syntactic features, indicating how power dynamics, historical norms, ideological restrictions, and American ideals shaped the speech. Their research adds to the current body of work on Trump's speeches by contextualizing his speech within historical and power dynamics, effectively satisfying research aims and addressing research questions (Ali and Ibrahim, 2020).

Badmus, et al., (2024) conducted a critical discourse analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech, revealing how language can reflect political ideologies. Utilizing Fairclough's 3D Model of CDA, their study identifies the President's communicated ideologies of optimism, dedication, reliability, tolerance, peace, unity, and development. The research highlights the President's strategic use of language to project his mantra of "Renewed Hope" and his role as a champion of unity and development. This study adds

valuable insights into the role of language in political discourse and suggests that future research could focus on pragmatic analyses of similar speeches (Badmus et al., 2024).

Akachukwu and Chinaza (2024) analysed the possible problems with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe's choice of words in his presidential inaugural address. The study is on Dr. Azikiwe's usage of certain grammatical patterns, such as language devices, rhetorical methods, and themes. Using Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis model, the study demonstrates that Dr. Azikiwe used these language tactics to emphasise notions such as African supremacy, national unity, citizen involvement, and self-promotion. The use of pronouns such as "I" and "we" in his discourse implies egoism and hyperbole, respectively. The researchers conclude that Dr. Azikiwe's language displays his ability to engage Nigerians in his vision for a better Nigeria (Akachukwu & Chinaza, 2024).

Hussein & Kanaan (2019) employed critical discourse analysis to examine Trump's inaugural address, utilizing Halliday's (1985, 1994) systemic functional model to explore its discoursal and linguistic features. The study hypothesizes that Trump uses various rhetorical devices to persuade and influence his audience. The analysis focuses on three metafunctions: the ideational metafunction (including material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential processes), the interpersonal metafunction (comprising mood, pronouns, and modality), and the textual metafunction (covering vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure). The findings indicate that Trump's language is generally simple, with an emphasis on short sentences to convey his ideologies. The results support the hypothesis, demonstrating the use of rhetorical devices such as allusion, euphemism, metaphor, and hyperbole to persuade and engage the audience (Hussein & Kanaan, 2019).

Yousfi & Mouhadjer, (2024) analyzed Donald Trump's 2017 inauguration speech through the lens of CDA. It explores the linguistic features, discourse strategies, and thematic elements within the speech, arguing that Trump's address was a strategic attack on the U.S. political establishment. The study demonstrates how language can influence public opinion and challenge power dynamics. The authors advocate for using CDA to understand the impact of language on power relations and social change (Yousfi & Mouhadjer, 2024)

Zhu (2024) emphasised the need to promote critical language awareness in democracies, especially given the global increase of populism in political and media discourses. Zhu uses Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to critically examine the populist rhetoric of Trump's inaugural address using genre and register analysis. The research emphasises Trump's use of anti-establishment, anti-elitist rhetoric, collectivist speech, pro-nationalist attitudes, and basic, repeated language to foster cohesion among his supporters. By comparing Trump's speech to prior presidential inaugural speeches, Zhu emphasises the significance of language education in preparing voters to critically evaluate political discourse, allowing them to make educated judgements regarding future political leaders (Zhu, 2024).

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative research paradigm (Creswell, 2014) to conduct Critical Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's presidential inaugural speech, to investigate the specific discursive strategies employed to establish in-group legitimacy and challenge out-group legitimacy. Utilizing purposive sampling (Sharp, 2003), the research focuses exclusively on the transcript of Trump's inaugural address. Data analysis is conducted through Van Dijk ideological square model (2005) of CDA framework. Ethical considerations are maintained by objectively interpreting the publicly available speech and

properly attributing all sources. this methodology provides a foundation for exploring how Trump's inaugural speech constructs and challenges legitimacy through strategic discourse.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

##### 4.1. Donald Trump Speech Analysis

Donald Trump delivered his inaugural address on January 20, 2017, at the West Front of the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. An analysis was conducted to examine the discursive strategies employed in the speech at a micro-level, aiming to understand the presentation of positive and negative at a macro-level. The analysis includes tables containing excerpts from the speech along with explanations. While this framework offers insights into the discourses, it's important to note that the findings may not necessarily apply to all of Trump's other speeches.

##### 4.1.1 Topicalization

*Topicalization* is a discursive strategy emphasizing critical information in a conversation or text. This information can take the form of titles or headings or be conveyed through abstract themes that encapsulate the essence of the entire discourse.

The U.S. presidential inaugural speech holds importance as it is delivered by the newly elected president during their inauguration ceremony, marking the beginning of their term in office. This address lays out the president's vision, goals, and priorities for their presidency, as well as their plans to lead the nation. Dating back to George Washington's first inaugural address in 1789, it has become a tradition for incoming presidents to deliver a speech, symbolizing the transition of power and the start of a new era in American leadership. In his inaugural speech, Donald Trump employs the discursive strategy of Topicalization to craft a narrative that favors positive self-presentation while simultaneously casting a negative light on others, particularly previous administrations and the political establishment. By emphasizing themes of national rejuvenation, such as "returning power to the people," "making America great again," and prioritizing "America first," Trump positions himself and his administration as agents of beneficial change. This positive self-presentation is further emphasized through his commitment to address issues like job loss, national security, and the decline of American industry. Conversely, he employs negative other-presentation by contrasting the past's perceived failures with his administration's promises. Statements like "For too long, a small group in our Nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of Government while the people have borne the cost" paint a bleak picture of previous leaderships, suggesting they were self-serving and out of touch with the populace. The direct engagement with the audience deepens this portrayal, as phrases like "This moment is your moment" and "You will never be ignored again" resonate a message of a leader attuned to and considerate of the ordinary people, differentiating him from his predecessors. Furthermore, Trump's use of vivid and emotive imagery, such as "rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones," underscores the state of the nation he attributes to past administrations' negligence. In contrast, his promises of change and improvement position him as a proactive, problem-solving leader. He also places his presidency in a historical context, marking his inauguration as a pivotal moment with statements like "January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this Nation again." This enhances his positive self-image and implies a transformative shift from the past, painting his tenure as a historical watershed. Overall, through the strategic use of Topicalization, Trump crafts a narrative in his inaugural speech that portrays him as a transformative leader dedicated to national rejuvenation and prosperity, distinctly contrasting with the negative depiction of previous political establishments. This discursive approach effectively shapes public perception, aligning it with his envisioned leadership role and political objectives.

#### 4.1.2 Number Game

The *number game* is a discursive strategy that relies on numerical data and statistics to support arguments and enhance credibility. In political discourse, it is essential to substantiate claims with relevant statistics (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Donald Trump utilized number games in his Inaugural speech, employing statistics to support his arguments and convey his message to the public. Number Game in Trump's speech are fellow;

**Extract 1:** "Every 4 years, we gather on these steps to carry out the orderly and peaceful transfer of power."

**Extract 2:** "January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this Nation again."

**Extract 3:** "You came by the tens of millions to become part of a historic movement the likes of which the world has never seen before."

**Extract 4:** "We've defended other nation's borders while refusing to defend our own and spent trillions and trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay."

**Extract 5:** "One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions and millions of American workers that were left behind."

#### *Table 1 Use of Number Game by Donald Trump; Inaugural Speech*

In his inaugural speech, Donald Trump demonstrated his effective use of the "Number Game" strategy, which involved him citing specific numbers and timeframes to support his self-presentation while undermining previous administrations. Trump used this strategy in several instances throughout his speech, such as when he referred to the four-year election cycle to highlight the stability of American democracy and align himself with it. He also used a specific date to mark his inauguration as a turning point, implying that previous administrations were out of touch with the people. Additionally, he emphasized the unprecedented scale of his support base by citing large numbers. He criticized previous governments' expenditure of "trillions and trillions of dollars overseas," positioning his administration as domestically focused and financially prudent. Finally, Trump presented himself as empathetic to the American workforce by highlighting the millions of workers affected by factory closures. Overall, Trump's use of the "Number Game" in his speech effectively constructed a narrative that portrayed his administration positively while diminishing the portrayal of past administrations.

#### 4.1.3 Polarisation

Polarisation refers to the classification of individuals into two groups: "us" with positive qualities and "them" with negative qualities (van Dijk, 2006b).

The following extracts from the speech exhibit elements of polarization, a discursive strategy emphasizing division and opposition between groups

**Extract 1:** "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."

**Extract 2:** "The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country. Their

victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our Nation's Capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land."

**Extract 3:** "What truly matters is not which party controls our Government, but whether our Government is controlled by the people. January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this Nation again."

**Extract 4:** "But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our Nation; an education system, flush with cash, but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge; and the crime and the gangs and the drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country of so much unrealized potential."

**Extract 5:** "We've defended other nation's borders while refusing to defend our own and spent trillions and trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay. We've made other countries rich while the wealth, strength, and confidence of our country has dissipated over the horizon."

**Extract 6:** "From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this day forward, it's going to be only America first. America first."

**Extract 7:** "We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs."

*Table 2 Use of Polarization by Donald Trump; Inaugural Speech*

In his speech, Donald Trump effectively utilizes the technique of polarization to create a contrast between his administration and the perceived negative aspects of past governments and foreign entities. This is evident in several parts of his speech. Firstly, he positions himself and his administration as the champions of the American people, promising to give power back to the citizens, a theme that is particularly prominent in his assertion that January 20, 2017, would be remembered as the day when the people became the nation's rulers again. This strategy creates a positive self-image, portraying Trump and his administration as the agents of change and empowerment for the ordinary citizen. At the same time, Trump uses negative portrayal to depict previous administrations and the political establishment as entities that have ignored and taken advantage of the American people. His statement emphasizes a small group in the Nation's Capital who have been reaping government rewards while the people have been suffering. Such language suggests that past leaders were selfish and disconnected from the needs and struggles of ordinary citizens. Moreover, Trump extends this negative portrayal to foreign countries and global dynamics, which he suggests have been detrimental to American prosperity. He criticizes past policies favouring other nations over American interests, as seen in his comments about defending other nations' borders and outsourcing jobs and wealth. This narrative creates an 'us versus them' scenario, simplifying complicated political and social dynamics into a binary opposition. Trump's use of polarization in his speech is a tool to gather support. By portraying his administration as a transformative force for the welfare of the American people and contrasting this with the negative portrayal of the previous status quo, he simplifies the narrative to make it more understandable and attractive to his audience. This clear distinction between 'us' and 'them' strengthens his position and creates a sense of unity and purpose among his supporters.

#### 4.1.4 Illustration/Example

An example or illustration presents the audience with concrete or hypothetical situations that a speaker uses to support their perspective or make their views more comprehensible. These



instances or illustrations usually consist of a short tale or vignette, which clarifies or adds credibility to the point, the speaker presents (Van Dijk, 2005).

Donald Trump's speech employs examples or illustrations as a discursive strategy to reinforce the speaker's viewpoints, making abstract arguments more concrete to resonate with the audience.

**Extract 1:** "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. Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our Nation's Capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land."

**Extract 2:** "But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our Nation; an education system, flush with cash, but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge; and the crime and the gangs and the drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country of so much unrealized potential."

**Extract 3:** "One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions and millions of American workers that were left behind. The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed all across the world."

***Table 3 Use of Illustration/Example by Donald Trump; Inaugural Speech***

The first extract illustrates the dichotomy between the political establishment in Washington, D.C., and the general populace. Trump presents a scenario where a small, elite group benefits from government rewards while the majority bear the cost. This narrative not only vilifies the establishment but also elevates Trump's position as an outsider poised to rectify this imbalance. By drawing this contrast, he effectively distances himself from the criticized group, aligning his interests with those of the 'common people' and enhancing his image as a populist leader.

In the second extract, Trump continues this theme by depicting a grim reality for many Americans - inner-city poverty, decaying factories, and an ineffective education system. These illustrations serve a dual purpose: They underscore the perceived failures of previous administrations while positioning Trump as the empathetic leader who recognizes and vows to address these issues. This method of contrasting the current dismal scenarios with his proposed solutions amplifies his positive self-presentation. The third extract further solidifies this approach. Trump describes the decline of American industry and the neglect of American workers, painting a picture of a country that needs rescue. This narrative is powerful in its simplicity and emotional appeal, and it reinforces Trump's image as a savior of the forgotten American worker. By illustrating the past as a period of decline and loss, particularly under the watch of previous administrations, Trump casts these entities in a negative light, setting the stage for his agenda of change and revitalization. These extracts demonstrate how Trump utilizes "Situation Description and Examples/Illustrations" to craft a persuasive and emotionally charged narrative. He enhances his positive self-presentation by painting pictures of societal challenges and framing himself as the solution to these issues. Simultaneously, by illustrating the perceived failures and neglect of previous administrations and the political establishment, he engages in negative other-presentation, strengthening his appeal to his audience and solidifying his stance as a change agent. This rhetorical strategy simplifies issues for the audience and profoundly resonates with them, making his arguments more compelling and memorable.

#### 4.1.5 Victimization

Victimization is using a dichotomy of 'us against them' to portray the out-group negatively and in-group members as victims of unfair action (Van Dijk, 2005). It is a means of separating one's group from others in such a manner that the latter is unfairly criticised while the former is portrayed as being unfairly victimised or hurt. The following extracts use victimization as a discursive strategy in Donald Trump's inaugural speech;

<b>Extract 1:</b> "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."
<b>Extract 2:</b> "Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our Nation's Capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land."
<b>Extract 3:</b> "The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer."
<b>Extract 4:</b> "But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our Nation."
<b>Extract 5:</b> "This American carnage stops right here and stops right now."
<b>Extract 6:</b> "We've defended other nation's borders while refusing to defend our own and spent trillions and trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay."
<b>Extract 7:</b> "The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed all across the world."

**Table 4 Use of Victimization by Donald Trump; Inaugural Speech**

In the speech, Donald Trump uses the discursive strategy of victimization, which is employed to establish an apparent dichotomy between the in-group and the general American populace. The out-group is depicted as the political elite and establishment in Washington, D.C. This strategy is evident in various extracts from the speech, each underscoring a different aspect of this division. The first extract sets the stage for this narrative by portraying the in-group as bearing governance's financial and social costs while receiving none of its benefits. This contrast with the out-group, depicted as flourishing and enjoying the rewards of government, creates a sense of injustice and unfairness. Such rhetoric positions the speaker as an advocate for the victimized majority, fostering a sense of solidarity among the in-group. In the second extract, the dichotomy is further intensified. The out-group's victories and triumphs are presented as being at odds with the experiences of the in-group, suggesting a disconnect and lack of empathy from the elite towards the challenges ordinary people face. This deepens the perceived divide and strengthens the speaker's image as a champion of the underrepresented. The third extract employs the emotive phrase 'forgotten men and women,' evoking a feeling of neglect by the out-group. By pledging to remember and prioritize these individuals, the speaker positions himself positively, aligning with those overlooked and underserved by the elite. The fourth extract depicts the suffering of the in-group - poverty in inner cities and industrial decay. This contrast with the implied prosperity and indifference of the out-group further highlights the sense of victimization and neglect by those in power, playing into the overarching narrative of division.

The fifth extract, "**American Carnage**," encapsulates the collective suffering and challenges the in-group faces. By declaring an end to this carnage with his administration, Trump positions himself as the solution to the problems caused or ignored by the out-group, further solidifying his role as the savior of the in-group. The sixth extract criticizes the out-group for

prioritizing international affairs over domestic issues, suggesting negligence towards the in-group's needs. This criticism aims to further amplify the notion of the in-group's neglect at the hands of the out-group, reinforcing the division between them. Finally, the seventh extract speaks of the in-group's wealth being 'ripped from their homes' and 'redistributed across the world.' This notion of exploitation and loss due to the actions of the out-group deepens the perception of the in-group as victims wronged by those in power. Overall, these extracts from Donald Trump's speech employ the victimization strategy to draw a line between 'us' (the American people) and 'them' (the political establishment). This narrative not only criticizes and delegitimizes the out-group but also elevates the speaker as the rightful leader of the victimized in-group. This approach rallies support and fosters a collective identity among the in-group, unified by a shared struggle against the out-group.

#### 4.1.6 Lexicalization

According to Van Dijk (2006b), lexicalization differs based on the discourse producers' position, role, aims, point of view, or attitude. The following extracts from the speech exhibit elements of Lexicalization, a discursive strategy emphasizing division and opposition between groups:

<b>Extract 1:</b> "We, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and restore its promise for all of our people."
<b>Extract 2:</b> "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, DC, and giving it back to you, the people."
<b>Extract 4:</b> "For too long, a small group in our Nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of Government while the people have borne the cost."
<b>Extract 5:</b> "Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our Nation's Capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land."
<b>Extract 6:</b> "What truly matters is not which party controls our Government, but whether our Government is controlled by the people."
<b>Extract 7:</b> "January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this Nation again."
<b>Extract 8:</b> "The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer."
<b>Extract 9:</b> "At the centre of this movement is a crucial conviction: that a nation exists to serve its citizens."
<b>Extract 10:</b> "But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our Nation..."
<b>Extract 11:</b> "This American carnage stops right here and stops right now."
<b>Extract 12:</b> "We are one Nation, and their pain is our pain, their dreams are our dreams, and their success will be our success."
<b>Extract 13:</b> "For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry..."
<b>Extract 14:</b> "One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions and millions of American workers that were left behind."
<b>Extract 15:</b> "From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this day forward, it's going to be only America first. America first."
<b>Extract 16:</b> "Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be

made to benefit American workers and American families."

**Extract 17:** "We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs."

**Extract 18:** "I will fight for you with every breath in my body, and I will never, ever let you down."

***Table 5 Use of Lexicalization by Donald Trump; Inaugural Speech***

In his inauguration speech, Donald Trump employed the strategy of lexicalization. In this method, words' semantic attributes cast entities in either a favorable or unfavorable light, as described by Rashidi & Souzandehfar (2010) and Van Dijk (2005). This approach was evident throughout his address, as he created a dichotomy between his administration (and its supporters) and the existing political and global order. In Extract One, Trump begins by painting his administration as a collective effort with the citizens, using "we" to connect with the audience, signifying a united front in rebuilding the country. This use of inclusive language positions his governance as a populist movement aligned with the people's interests. Similarly, in Extract Two, the transfer of power is depicted not just as a change in administration but as a return of power to the people, reinforcing his image as a champion of the ordinary citizen. Extracts six and seven further this narrative, emphasizing the theme of returning control to the people and marking the inauguration date as a historical turning point where the people became the rulers again, a message designed to resonate with a populace feeling disenfranchised by the political elite. The speech also delineates the 'other', primarily the political establishment and foreign entities, casting them negatively. In Extract Four, Trump speaks of a small group in Washington reaping government rewards while the people bear the cost, painting a picture of a self-serving elite out of touch with the American. This theme is expanded in Extract Five, where he contrasts the victories and triumphs of the establishment with the struggles of ordinary families, thus positioning his administration in opposition to these perceived injustices. Further, Trump uses Extracts 13 and 14 to criticize past foreign policies and their impact on American industry and workers, amplifying the dichotomy between his America-centric vision and the globalist approaches of previous administrations. In Extract 17, the theme of protecting American borders and jobs from foreign ravages continues this narrative, positioning his administration as the defender of American interests against external threats. Throughout the speech, Trump's use of lexicalization elevates his administration and its agenda while delegitimizing and criticizing his perceived opponents. This rhetorical approach not only strengthens the in-group - his supporters and the broader American populace as he defines it - but also distances and discredits the out-group, comprising the political establishment, previous administrations, and foreign competitors. By employing this discursive strategy, Trump rallies support and consolidates his base, establishing a clear 'us versus them' narrative that underpins his political and governance style.

**4.1.7 Populism**

Populism is characterized by the deliberate attempt of the speaker to obtain popularity by advocating for the wants and desires of the general public (Shakoury, 2018).

The following extracts from the speech exhibit elements of populism as a discursive strategy:

**Extract 1:** "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, DC, and giving it back to you, the people."

**Extract 2:** "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."
<b>Extract 3:</b> "That all changes, starting right here and right now because this moment is your moment: It belongs to you."
<b>Extract 4:</b> "What truly matters is not which party controls our Government, but whether our Government is controlled by the people."
<b>Extract 5:</b> "January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this Nation again."
<b>Extract 6:</b> "You came by the tens of millions to become part of a historic movement the likes of which the world has never seen before."
<b>Extract 7:</b> "At the centre of this movement is a crucial conviction: that a nation exists to serve its citizens."
<b>Extract 8:</b> "This American carnage stops right here and stops right now. We are one Nation, and their pain is our pain, their dreams are our dreams, and their success will be our success."
<b>Extract 9:</b> "The oath of office I take today is an oath of allegiance to all Americans."
<b>Extract 10:</b> "From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this day forward, it's going to be only America first. America first."

*Table 6 Use of Populism by Donald Trump; Inaugural Speech*

In his speech, Donald Trump employs populism as a discursive strategy, crafting a narrative emphasizing a contrast between his approach and that of the previous political establishment. This is evident in how he frames his positive self-presentation and the negative portrayal of others. Trump emphasizes the power transfer from the political establishment in Washington, D.C., to the American populace, starting with empowering the people. This is clearly articulated in his assertion that power is being transferred from one administration to another, but "from Washington, DC, and giving it back to you, the people." This statement not only creates a perception of his presidency as more democratic and people-centered but also discredits the previous administrations as elitist and detached from the commoner. Trump's identification with the average American is further highlighted when he speaks directly to the people, using phrases like "your day," "your celebration," and "your country." Such direct addresses include and validate the average citizen, positioning Trump as a leader who genuinely aligns with their interests. Despite his elite status, this strategy distances him from the perceived elite political class. Moreover, Trump presents himself as a savior figure, promising to end what he calls the "American carnage." By pledging to bring back jobs, prosperity, and national pride, he positions himself as the solution to the country's woes, contrasting the adverse outcomes he attributes to previous administrations. His repeated use of "America first" underscores this commitment and appeals to nationalist sentiments, particularly among those left behind by globalization. The negative portrayal of others is crucial to Trump's populist rhetoric. He criticizes the Washington establishment for being self-serving and out of touch with the people, a small group "reaping the rewards of Government while the people have borne the cost." This creates a clear 'us versus them' dichotomy, rallying the populace against a common enemy - the political elite. Trump also attributes various societal issues like job loss, factory closures, and infrastructure decay to the actions of past administrations. This blame game suggests that his predecessors' policies were ineffective and harmful to the American people. The association of opponents with these adverse outcomes further cements the contrast between his approach and previous governments.

Donald Trump uses populist rhetoric in his speech to construct a narrative that positions himself as a champion of the ordinary American, battling against the established political class. His strategy involves simplifying complex issues, making emotional appeals, and employing a direct address to resonate with ordinary citizens' fears, hopes, and frustrations. This approach strengthens his image as a leader aligned with the people's interests and discredits the previous political establishment, painting them as the source of the nation's problems.

#### 4.1.8 Metaphor

A metaphor is comparing two dissimilar items or events to attribute the characteristics of one to the other (Shakoury, 2018). The following are the metaphors in Donald Trump's speech;

<b>Extract 1</b> "A small group in our Nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of Government while the people have borne the cost" Metaphor: "reaped the rewards"
<b>Extract 2</b> "Washington flourished, but the people did not share in its wealth" Metaphor: "Washington flourished"
<b>Extract 3</b> "Politicians prospered, but the jobs left, and the factories closed" Metaphor: "Politicians prospered"
<b>Extract 4</b> "The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country" Metaphor: "The establishment protected itself"
<b>Extract 5</b> "their victories have not been your victories" Metaphor: "victories"
<b>Extract 6</b> "their triumphs have not been your triumphs" Metaphor: "triumphs"
<b>Extract 7</b> "there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land" Metaphor: "little to celebrate"
<b>Extract 8</b> "This American carnage stops right here and stops right now" Metaphor: "American carnage"
<b>Extract 9</b> "The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes" Metaphor: "ripped from their homes"
<b>Extract 10</b> "a new vision will govern our land" Metaphor: "a new vision"
<b>Extract 11</b> "a total allegiance to the United States of America" Metaphor: "total allegiance"
<b>Extract 12</b> "When America is united, America is totally unstoppable" Metaphor: "America is totally unstoppable"
<b>Extract 13</b> "We stand at the birth of a new millennium" Metaphor: "the birth of a new millennium"
<b>Extract 14</b> "a new national pride will stir our souls" Metaphor: "national pride"
<b>Extract 15</b> "heal our divisions"
<b>Extract 16</b> "they are infused with the breath of life by the same almighty Creator" Metaphor: "infused with the breath of life"
<b>Extract 17</b> "Your voice, your hopes, and your dreams will define our American destiny" Metaphor: "define our American destiny"

*Table 7 Use of Metaphors by Donald Trump; Inaugural Speech*

In his inaugural speech, Donald Trump used metaphorical language to present himself positively while portraying others negatively, particularly politicians and the Washington establishment. In Extract one and two, he suggests that a select few in Washington, D.C., have benefited from government actions, implying that they have taken advantage of their positions for personal gain. By using this metaphor, Trump portrays himself as a champion of the people, highlighting the disparity between the privileged elite and the rest of the

population. "Washington flourished": Trump implies that while the capital city may have prospered, the benefits did not extend to the broader population. By contrasting the flourishing of Washington with the struggles faced by ordinary Americans, Trump positions himself as an outsider fighting against a system that prioritizes the interests of the political elite. The metaphor in Extract 3 suggests that politicians have thrived financially while ordinary workers have suffered job losses and factory closures. Trump uses this contrast to portray himself as a leader who will prioritize the needs of working-class Americans over the self-serving interests of career politicians. In Extract 4, By characterizing the political establishment as protective of its interests, Trump implies that it has failed to address the needs of the American people. This metaphor allows Trump to position himself as a disruptor who will challenge the status quo and prioritize the concerns of ordinary citizens. In Extract 5, Trump uses metaphor to suggest that the achievements of the political elite have not translated into tangible benefits for the average American. By framing the successes of others as disconnected from the experiences of ordinary citizens, Trump positions himself as the voice of the people who will deliver real change. In Extract 6, Similar to the previous metaphor, Trump suggests that the political elite's accomplishments have not improved ordinary Americans' lives. By highlighting this disconnect, Trump positions himself as the antidote to a political system that has failed to deliver meaningful results for the people. In Extract 7, "Little to Celebrate", Trump uses this metaphor to suggest that the political elite has presided over economic hardship and stagnation for many Americans. By portraying the achievements of others as insignificant in the face of widespread suffering, Trump positions himself as the leader who will bring about positive change and prosperity for all. In Extract 8, Trump positions himself as the saviour who will end America's perceived chaos and decline—representing Negatively as others. This implies that the previous administrations or political establishments have allowed or even contributed to this "carnage," suggesting incompetence or neglect. In Extract 9, Trump portrays himself as an advocate for the middle class, promising to restore their lost wealth and prosperity. The negative representation of others suggests that the middle class's wealth has been forcefully taken away, implying wrongdoing or negligence by previous administrations or economic policies. In Extract 10, Trump presents himself as a visionary leader with innovative ideas to guide the nation forward, which implies that previous visions or governing philosophies were inadequate or failed to address the nation's needs. In Extract 11, Trump emphasizes his unwavering loyalty to the country, positioning himself as a patriotic leader. This implies that some individuals or groups may lack this total allegiance, suggesting disloyalty or lack of commitment to the nation. In Extract 12, Trump portrays himself as the catalyst for national unity, highlighting the potential for greatness when Americans unite. This implies that divisions within the country have hindered its progress and potential, suggesting fault or shortcomings for those responsible for such divisions.

In Extract 13, Trump suggests that his presidency marks the beginning of a transformative era for the nation, positioning himself as a pivotal historical figure. It also implies that previous administrations should have ushered in this new era or capitalized on the opportunities presented by the new millennium. In Extract 14, Trump invokes a sense of patriotism and pride in the nation, suggesting that his leadership will inspire a renewed national identity, implying that previous leaders may have failed to instil this sense of pride or represent the nation's values and interests. In Extract 15, the metaphor "heal our divisions", Trump presents himself as a unifying force capable of resolving societal divisions and conflicts, implying that previous leaders or administrations may have perpetuated or exacerbated societal divisions, suggesting a need for healing and reconciliation. In Extract 16, Trump acknowledges the divine aspect of human existence, emphasizing the commonality

and shared humanity among all individuals. In Extract 17, Trump empowers individuals by suggesting that their aspirations and contributions will shape the nation's future. This metaphor focuses on the potential of the American people. These metaphors reinforce Trump's image as a populist outsider who will challenge the political establishment's entrenched interests and prioritize ordinary Americans' needs. By contrast, they depict the political elite as self-serving and out of touch with many citizens' struggles.

#### 4.2.9 Modality

Politicians often employ Modality as a persuasive strategy, which refers to the speaker's or writer's attitude toward the proposal. Cameron (2007) suggests that individuals can generate many types of statements, views, hypotheses, and guesses while expressing their commitment to these claims. Modality in discourse often involves modal verbs (like can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would) or other linguistic elements that indicate the speaker's attitude towards the likelihood or desirability of an event or action.

**Extract 1:** "Together, we will determine the course of America and the world for many, many years to come."

**Extract 2:** "We will face challenges, we will confront hardships, but we will get the job done."

**Extract 3:** "Because today we are not merely transferring power from one administration to another... but we are transferring power from Washington, DC, and giving it back to you, the people."

**Extract 4:** "Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our Nation's Capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land."

**Extract 5:** "That all changes, starting right here and right now, because this moment is your moment: It belongs to you."

**Extract 6:** "January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this Nation again."

**Extract 7:** "This American carnage stops right here and stops right now."

**Extract 8:** "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."

**Extract 9:** "We will build new roads and highways and bridges and airports and tunnels and railways all across our wonderful Nation."

**Extract 10:** "We will get our people off of welfare and back to work, rebuilding our country with American hands and American labor."

**Extract 11:** "We will follow two simple rules: Buy American and hire American."

**Extract 12:** "Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families."

**Extract 13:** "We will seek friendship and goodwill with the nations of the world..."

**Extract 14:** "We will reinforce old alliances and form new ones and unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the Earth."

**Extract 15:** "The oath of office I take today is an oath of allegiance to all Americans."

**Extract 16:** "We will no longer accept politicians who are all talk and no action..."

**Extract 17:** "Now arrives the hour of action."

**Extract 18:** "Do not allow anyone to tell you that it cannot be done."

**Extract 19:** "We will not fail. Our country will thrive and prosper again."

**Extract 20:** "It's time to remember that old wisdom our soldiers will never forget: that



whether we are Black or Brown or White, we all bleed the same red blood of patriots..."

**Extract 21:** "Together, we will make America strong again. We will make America wealthy again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again."

**Extract 22:** "And, yes, together, we will make America great again."

***Table 8 Use of Modality by Donald Trump; Inaugural Speech***

In his speech, Donald Trump employs modality as a discursive technique to foster positive self-presentation while engaging in negative other-presentation. This is evident through his assertive use of the modal verb "will," which conveys a sense of determination and certainty. Phrases like "We will face challenges," "This American carnage stops right here and stops right now," and "We will make America great again" not only project confidence and decisiveness but also create an image of proactive leadership. Moreover, Trump's use of inclusive language, particularly the pronoun "we," as seen in "Together, we will determine the course" and "We will bring back our jobs," promotes a sense of unity and collective effort. This inclusiveness positions him as a group leader, working in unison with the people, thereby enhancing his positive self-representation. Conversely, Trump employs negative other-presentation, often setting up a contrast between his administration and his predecessors. Statements such as "Their victories have not been your victories" and "We will no longer accept politicians who are all talk and no action" imply a disconnection and ineffectiveness of previous governments, portraying them negatively. This dichotomy is further accentuated through his critique of the past, where he places blame on others, particularly the establishment. For instance, in his assertion, "For too long, a small group in our Nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of Government while the people have borne the cost," he criticizes the previous state. He suggests a narrative of exploitation and negligence. Additionally, by promising change and improvement, as highlighted in his claim that adverse conditions "all change, starting right here and right now," Trump suggests that the undesirable past is set to transform under his leadership, positioning himself as the catalyst for positive change. Through modality, Trump's rhetorical strategy constructs a narrative where he and his administration are portrayed as agents of positive change and empowerment. This contrasts the portrayal of previous administrations and the establishment, depicted as ineffective and self-serving. Such a dichotomy between positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is a common tactic in political discourse aimed at reinforcing the speaker's credibility and appeal while simultaneously diminishing the perceived competence and integrity of others.

**4.1.10 Evidentiality and Authority**

The persuasiveness of arguments increases when speakers substantiate their viewpoints with evidence or proof. In this regard, speakers often invoke authorities—individuals or institutions perceived as impartial—to lend objectivity, credibility, and reliability to their assertions. Donald Trump employs the concepts of "evidentiality" and "authority" to enhance his credibility and trustworthiness, as evidenced by the following excerpts;

**Extract 1:** "Every 4 years, we gather on these steps to carry out the orderly and peaceful transfer of power, and we are grateful to President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama for their gracious aid throughout this transition. They have been magnificent. Thank you."

**Extract 2:** "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."

**Extract 3:** "January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this Nation again. The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. Everyone is listening to you now."

**Extract 4:** "You came by the tens of millions to become part of a historic movement the likes of which the world has never seen before. At the center of this movement is a crucial conviction: that a nation exists to serve its citizens."

**Extract 5:** "But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our Nation; an education system, flush with cash, but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge; and the crime and the gangs and the drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country of so much unrealized potential."

**Extract 6:** "We've defended other nations' borders while refusing to defend our own and spent trillions and trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay."

**Extract 7:** "One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions and millions of American workers that were left behind."

**Extract 8:** "We, assembled here today, are issuing a new decree to be heard in every city, in every foreign capital, and in every hall of power. From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this day forward, it's going to be only America first. America first."

**Extract 9:** "Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families."

**Extract 10:** "We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, 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."

***Table 9 Use of Evidentiality and Authority by Donald Trump; Inaugural Speech***

In the speech, Donald Trump employs a combination of evidentiality and authority, enhancing the persuasiveness and impact of their message. This blend is evident in how specific examples and the authority of the speaker's position are interwoven throughout the discourse.

The speech commences with gratitude towards President Obama and Michelle Obama for their role in the transition (Extract one). This acknowledgement sets a respectful tone and invokes the authority associated with the presidential transition, a symbol of democratic stability and continuity. The speaker's recognition of this tradition and their predecessors lends an air of legitimacy and gravitas to their position. In Extract Two, the speaker addresses issues of governmental benefit being limited to a small group, juxtaposing it against the broader populace's struggles. By highlighting problems such as job losses and factory closures, the speaker uses evidentiality to substantiate their claims about national challenges. In contrast, their position as a national leader adds an authoritative dimension to these observations. The significance of the date as a turning point for national governance is underscored in Extract Three. The speaker's assertion of this date marking a shift towards people-centric rule not only serves as a democratic declaration but also as an expression of authority coming from the inaugurated leader. In Extract 4, Trump emphasizes the historical nature of the movement that the speaker claims to represent. The mention of public support is evidence of the movement's legitimacy, while the speaker's role as the movement's leader adds an authoritative angle to the claim. Further detailing the nation's challenges, In Extract Five, he paints a picture of domestic issues like poverty, educational failings, and crime. These specific examples are evidential, reinforcing the speaker's claims about the nation's state, while their nature suggests an understanding and concern, adding to the speaker's

authority. The speaker then turns to international relations and economic challenges in Extracts Six and Seven, using specific examples such as military expenditure and factory closures to underscore their arguments about national priorities and economic decline, further establishing their authoritative stance. A declaration of a shift in national policy is evident in Extract Eight, where the speaker asserts a new vision for the nation. This authoritative statement, delivered from the highest office, indicates a change in direction and national policy. Extract nine continues with the speaker outlining future policy decisions to benefit American workers and families, showcasing their authority as they delineate the actions they plan to undertake in their role. Finally, in Extract 10, the speaker commits to protecting national interests, combining references to past challenges (evidentiality) with a commitment to future action (authority). Donald Trump's speech intertwines evidentiality with authority, grounding its claims in specific, real-world examples while leveraging its authoritative position to lend additional weight to these assertions. This approach makes the arguments more compelling and resonates with the audience, enhancing the speech's effectiveness.

#### 4.2 Discussion

The present study undertook a Critical Discourse Analysis of the discursive strategies employed by Donald Trump in his presidential inaugural speech delivered on January 20, 2017. Trump's use of specific discursive techniques not only established in-group legitimacy but also challenged out-group legitimacy. The analysis reveals that Trump's strategic deployment of Topicalization, Number Game, Polarization, Illustration/Example, Victimization, Lexicalization, Populism, Metaphor, Modality, and Evidentiality and Authority collectively constructed a persuasive narrative aimed at mobilizing support and delegitimizing opposing entities. Addressing the first research question, the analysis identified several key discursive strategies in Trump's inaugural speech. Topicalization was evident as Trump emphasized themes such as national rejuvenation and "America first," positioning his administration as agents of positive change while contrasting it with previous administrations. The Number Game strategy involved the use of specific statistics and numerical data to substantiate his claims, enhancing credibility and reinforcing his agenda. Polarization was employed to create a clear dichotomy between "us" (the American people) and "them" (the political establishment and foreign entities), simplifying complex political dynamics into an 'us versus them' narrative. Additionally, Trump used Illustration/Example by providing concrete instances like factory closures and inner-city poverty to make abstract issues tangible and relatable to the audience. The Victimization strategy portrayed the American populace as victims of the political elite's negligence, fostering a sense of injustice and solidarity among listeners. Lexicalization involved strategic word choices that reinforced the positive portrayal of his administration while casting others negatively, solidifying his role as a transformative leader. Populism was a central theme, with Trump's rhetoric advocating for the general public's desires and positioning himself as a champion of the ordinary citizen against the entrenched political class. Metaphorical language, such as "American carnage," evoked strong emotional responses and painted vivid pictures of the nation's challenges. Modality, through the use of modal verbs like "will," conveyed determination and certainty, projecting confidence in his leadership and policies. Finally, Evidentiality and Authority were demonstrated by citing specific examples and acknowledging the transition from previous administrations, lending credibility to his assertions and establishing his authoritative stance. In addressing the second research question, Trump's discursive strategies effectively constructed in-group legitimacy by aligning his narrative with the interests and sentiments of the American populace. Through Populism and Victimization, he positioned himself as a leader who genuinely understands

and represents the struggles of ordinary Americans. Topicalization and Lexicalization further reinforced this by emphasizing themes of national pride and prioritizing American interests. Conversely, these strategies simultaneously challenged out-group legitimacy by Polarization, creating an adversarial relationship between his administration and the political establishment. Metaphors and Illustrations depicting the failures of past administrations and the plight of American workers served to delegitimize the existing political structures. The Number Game provided empirical backing to his criticisms, making his arguments more persuasive and difficult to refute. These findings, align with Van Dijk's (2006) assertion that polarization and lexicalization are pivotal in shaping public perception and fostering group identities. Similarly, Wodak and Meyer's (2009) emphasis on the "Number Game" in political discourse underscores the importance of empirical evidence in legitimizing political claims. Trump's use of Metaphor and Populism resonates with Shakoury's (2018) characterization of populist rhetoric as a means to garner widespread support by appealing to the general public's desires and fears. Moreover, the strategy of Victimization echoes previous research on political discourse where leaders portray their constituencies as oppressed by elite groups, thereby justifying their leadership as necessary for rectifying injustices (Van Dijk, 2005). The integration of Modality in expressing certainty and commitment is consistent on the use of modal verbs to convey the speaker's stance and intentions. Trump's rhetorical strategies in constructing a compelling narrative that resonates with his target audience. By crafting a discourse that emphasizes collective identity, economic grievances, and the promise of change, Trump was able to galvanize support and challenge established political norms. The study underscores the power of language in political communication, demonstrating how specific discursive techniques can influence public perception and legitimize political authority.

## 5. Conclusion

Donald Trump's inaugural speech serves as a prototypical example of effective political discourse, wherein various discursive strategies are employed to construct a narrative of change, empowerment, and national rejuvenation. Through Topicalization, Number Game, Polarization, Illustration/Example, Victimization, Lexicalization, Populism, Metaphor, Modality, and Evidentiality and Authority, Trump successfully established in-group legitimacy by aligning his message with the aspirations and frustrations of the American people. Simultaneously, he challenged out-group legitimacy by delegitimizing the political establishment and previous administrations, creating a clear 'us versus them' dichotomy. The study's findings contribute to the broader understanding of Political Discourse, emphasizing the strategic use of language in shaping public perception and consolidating political support. By dissecting Trump's rhetorical approach, this research illuminates the mechanisms through which political leaders can influence discourse to achieve their objectives. As political landscapes continue to evolve, the insights garnered from this analysis remain pertinent for scholars and practitioners aiming to comprehend and connect the power of discourse in the political arena.

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