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Linguistic Techniques of Persuasion in British Party Slogans and Posters

Graduation Research Project

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Abstract

This research deals with the linguistic techniques of persuasion in British party slogans and posters. It aims at examining the linguistic techniques politicians use in their political campaigns. Politicians in their political campaigns try hard to persuade people to vote for them. Language is a vital part of this process of persuasion. In UK, Conservative Party and Labour Party are two major political parties. In British political campaigns, party slogans and posters have been used to convey these persuasive messages. These slogans and posters are carefully made to affect the emotions of voters and to encourage them to support a particular party or candidate. They use different linguistic techniques such as personal pronouns, repetition, the rule of three, rhetorical question, connotation etc. After giving a general background about Modern English poetry, the research explores the most important linguistic techniques employed in British party slogans and posters. The research ends with conclusion where the most important points discussed are displayed in addition to a list of the references cited.

1.0 Introduction

This section provides a general background about slogans, posters, language of persuasion, British political parties, and linguistic techniques used in British party slogans and posters.

1.1 What are Slogans?

The term "slogan" comes from a Scottish Gaelic phrase, "sluagh-ghairm," which means "army shout" or "battle cry." (Abdi and Irandoust, 2013, p. 62).

Slogans have indeed become an essential part of people's social structure, especially in modern societies where they are widely used in communication, advertising, politics, and activism. (Inghaish, 2016, p. 694). They will likely continue to play an important role in shaping public opinion and driving social change in the years to come. (Abdi and Irandoust, 2013, p. 62).

“A slogan is described as "a short and striking or memorable phrase used in advertising" by the Oxford Dictionary of English. Most of the time, a slogan has the qualities of being easy to remember, brief, and affecting to the target audience. Or it can be defined as “A slogan is a repeated declaration of an idea or goal that is used in a clan, political, commercial, religious, or other setting with the aim of influencing the general public or

a more focused target audience”. (Ashima, Sony, and Kumar, 2022, p. 1200)

The linguist, William Safire in his political Dictionary gives an introductory definition of slogan as "a rallying cry; catch phrase; a brief message that make clear an idea, defines an issue, the best of which thrill, exhort, and inspire." Here Safire declares that exhort and inspire are the most two important points to thrill and persuade audiences in a political campaign. Here is another definition of political slogan from Barry "a catchword or rallying motto distinctly associated with a political party or other group." (Newsome, 2002, p. 22).

The effectiveness of a political slogan depends on several factors, including its relevance, its clarity, and its consistency with the broader. A good political slogan should be simple, catchy, and memorable, and it should echo with the target audience. The main purpose of political slogans is to excite and believe people, to persuade them to take action, to vote, to support a particular candidate or cause, or to identify with a particular political party or ideology (Ashima, Sony, and Kumar, 2022. p. 1021).

1.2 What are Posters?

Posters are usually a photograph or image which contains a text, phrase or slogan which are produced and nicely designed on papers or advertising billboards to make an impact on the readers. (Beard, 2000, pp.57-63).

Posters have been used for centuries to communicate information and ideas. They offer a vivid insight into historical as well as modern political culture and communication and their potential effects on audiences. In the modern era, they continue to be a popular and effective tool for advertising, politics, promoting events, and sharing information. (Bacha and Johansson, 2017, p.13).

Posters have a unique role and value in politics and has been the most durable form of political campaigns (Bacha and Johansson, 2017, p. 339). Political parties during elections use one of the most visually striking ways to sell themselves which is by using posters. (Beard, 2000, Pp. 63)

Political posters are an important tool for political campaigns to convey their message to a large audience. Political posters also must do certain things. They must catch our attention and they should use clear and short language that makes a strong impact on the reader in order to be remembered in their minds. This means that the design of posters plays a crucial role in their effectiveness as they must be visually attractive, easy

to read, and communicate their message clearly especially as many are placed strategically along busy roads and high places on billboards. (Beard, 1998, P. 63).

The primary purpose of political campaign poster is to engage and persuade the public to support a particular political agenda, candidate, or party because political posters often feature striking visuals, concise and memorable slogans that are designed to capture people's attention and communicate a political message quickly and effectively. (Burgess, 2014, p. 17).

1.3 Language of Persuasion

The term 'Persuasion' means an act of persuading or convincing someone and it is also an intellectual and formal process which someone used to influence another. (Sallomi and Nayel, 2017, Pp. 10).

Persuasion is very beneficial for different purposes. Thus, successful persuaders can achieve their goals easier, faster and better than others. (Rashid and Yassen, 2022, p. 5693).

According to Aristotle in Edlund, there are three strategies used to persuade the listeners which are ethos, logos and pathos. Ethos means the speaker's character or image (personality), logos means logical argument,

whereas pathos means the emotions of the audience. (Malabar, 2020, p. 77).

The ultimate goal of persuasive language is to persuade and influence the attitudes, perspectives and behaviors of the people because nowadays persuasive language is used in many fields such as in advertisements and political. In advertisements, the persuasive language is used by the producers to persuade the customers to buy their products. (Malabar, 2020, P. 76). But in political field, particularly in democratic nation to gain power political parties must win elections, and persuasion is an important part of it, so the persuasive language is used to persuade and believe the society to vote and choose their sides. (Beard, 2000, p. 57).

While persuasive language is a crucial part in both advertisements and political, but it is not the only one because television and social media platforms have become popular and also seen as the most important part of the political battleground and advertisements(Beard, 2000, P. 57).

1.4 British Political Parties

The Conservative Party and The Labour Party are the two major political parties in the United Kingdom and have dominated British politics for long time .They are both have different ideologies, policies, and priorities. Other parties also exist but none of them have not possessed as much power and

influence in British politics as the Conservative and Labour parties. The Conservative Party (sometime referred to as the Tory party) is a centre-right political party in the United Kingdom and founded in the 1830s and has been one of the two major parties in British politics for most of its history, alongside the Labour Party. The Conservative Party is generally associated with the interests of conservatism, free-market economics, business and the low taxes, and also associated with issues such as law and order and national defense. while the Labour Party appeared in 1900 and formed in 1906 as a 'new party for a new century'. The Party is generally associated with social democracy, equality, a focus on workers' rights (trade union) and social justice issues. (StudySmarter US, n.d.).

1.5 Linguistic Techniques

Linguistic Techniques are methods and strategies used by writers and speakers to influence language elements and convey their message effectively, such as personal pronouns, rhetorical question, connotation and repetition.... etc. And these parties (Conservative and Labour) both have used various linguistic techniques in their posters and slogans over the years to express their political messages effectively. (BBC Bitesize, n.d.)

2. Linguistic Techniques in Labour party Slogans and Posters.

2.1 Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns are powerful linguistic techniques of persuasion that can be used to persuade an audience in various ways. It is important to use them strategically and effectively to have an impact on the listeners. Personal pronouns such as “I” “We”, “us” and “you” can create a sense of unity and community, emphasizing the idea that individuals are part of a larger collective with shared values and goals (Beard, 2000, pp. 44-45).

pronouns are also essential in sending persuasive messages by political leaders during elections (Rashid and Yassen, 2022, p. 5693). Politicians use of worth pronouns in their speeches because they make a significant contribution to the overall effect. (Beard 2000, p. 44)

Labour Party often use personal pronouns in their posters and slogans to connect with voters and promote their party platform. This slogan “for the many, not the few”. was used by Labour in the 2017 and 2019 UK general elections. The slogan uses the pronoun "many" to create a sense of unity and common purpose between the Labour Party and the working-class voters they are targeting. By contrasting "many" with "few," they are also

framing the election as a battle between the interests of the many versus the privileged few.

2.2 Repetition

Repetition is a linguistic technique that can be used to persuade and influence people by reinforcing a particular message or idea. Repeating words or phrases can help to emphasize a point and make it more memorable and catchier, and also can therefore have a greater impact on the listener or reader. (Beard, 2000, p. 85).

Repetition can be created at the level of a word, a phrase or even a sentence (Rashid and Yassen, 2022, p. 5693). An example for this is that slogan “New Labour, New Britain” or “Britain will be better with new Labour” “New Labour, New Danger” by the Labour’s leader ‘Tony Blair’ in 1997 election. The repetition of the word "new" emphasizes the idea of change and innovation that the Labour Party was trying to convey. It also gives a strong sense and helps to reinforce the message of the slogan. (Beard, 2000, pp. 84-85).

2.3 The Rhetorical Question

Rhetorical question is another technique of persuasion which is a kind of question that is not required to be answered because it is asked for effect only. (Beard, 2000, p. 52).

Most political parties and their candidates use rhetorical question in their slogans and speeches as a weapon to control and affect the audience's mind as they are the correct side and make them doubtful about the opponent's position. They also can attract the audience and create a sense of togetherness by asking a question that the audience can answer or relate to. (Al-Jumaily & Al-Azzawi, 2009, p. 18).

The Labour's slogan during 2005 election is an example of rhetorical question "are you thinking what we are thinking?". Instead of expecting a direct response to the question, it is meant to get the audience to think about the party's program and objectives. The slogan is intended to encourage a sense of shared values between the party and the voters and to persuade people to support Labour by discovering that they share the party's viewpoints.

2.4 The Rule of Three or The Importance of Three

The "rule of three" is a well-known technique and one the most common persuasive strategies which combines identities that are equal in importance. Lists of three are usually essential for persuading because they are simple, repeatable and easy to remember. (Rashid and Yassen, 2022, p. 5693).

According to Atkinson's analysis of speeches, using a list “of the three” is one of the most popular techniques for winning audience acceptance whether the speech act is political speech or informal conversation. The three-part list does not only have to be repetition. It can have different words, but with a similar general meaning. Such as in a race this phrase used ‘get, set, go’. (Beard, 2000, pp. 38-39).

This slogan “Education, education, education” was given in a speech by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair’ in a Labour Party’s conference in 1996. ‘Education’ repeated three times by Blair which signifies Blair’s priority for education in UK. (Beard, 2000, p. 38).

3.0 Linguistic Techniques in Conservative Party

Slogans and Posters

3.1 Connotation

Connotation refers to the level of meaning (emotional or cultural) based on the associations we give to words. Connotation can be used as a linguistic technique in political slogans to create positive or negative associations with certain words or phrases as it allows candidates to tap the voters mind because every term which used in an effort to classify politicians and their

opinions has a meaning and this meaning carry either positive or negative meaning. (Beard, 2000, P. 3-6).

The UK Conservative Party used this slogan “Strong and Steady” during the 2017 general election campaign, when Theresa May served as both party leader and prime minister. The words "strong" and "stable" have positive meanings that suggest reliability, security, and trustworthiness.

3.2 Modality

Modality is the level of certainty or possibility that a statement expresses. A sense of persuading, urgency, or optimism can be conveyed by modality in political slogans. (Beard, 2000, p. 118).

Different modals have different meaning depending on the context of situation. The modal "can" expresses probability or ability and 'must' express obligation.....etc. (Rashid and Yassen, 2022, p. 5693).

The modal 'will' in all cases can be read in two ways: without emphasis it can signify the future; or with emphasis it can suggest something certainly that is going to happen (Beard, 2000, p. 65).

"Britain Can Deliver" is a Conservative slogan which was used in 2017. The slogan used the modal verb "can" to express a sense of possibility and

potential. The message is that the Conservative Party believes in the ability of the British people to achieve great things.

3.3 Contrastive Pairs or Contrast

Contrastive pairs are a language persuasion method that includes putting two opposing or contrasting ideas or concepts side by side to emphasize the advantages or disadvantages of each one in different ways. Advertising, politics, and other types of persuasive communication frequently employ this strategy. (Rashid and Yassen, 2022, p. 5693).

Contrastive pairs are another common feature of political speeches according to Atkinson, and classical Greek and Roman writers called this ‘antithesis’ which means opposite or contrast. ‘The rule of three’ contains three parts which generally complement each other but ‘Contrastive pair’ contains only two parts which in some ways they are opposite but in other ways they use repetition to make the overall effect. (Beard, 2000, pp. 39-40).

“Labour is not working, Britain's better off with the Conservatives” is an example for this technique. It was a product of a relationship between Conservative party and advertisement Saatchi & Saatchi in 1978. The slogan was successful in helping the Conservatives win the 1979 general election and bring Margaret Thatcher to power as Prime Minister, and also

became one of the most famous political slogans in British history. The poster contrasts the long line of people waiting in front of the job center of unemployment with the statement "Britain needs Conservative government." Each part contains opposition, for example "Conservative vs Labour", one of the sentences has a negative meaning and the other one has a positive meaning and Britain mentioned in both sentences (directly and indirectly) in order to create a sense of believing that only Conservative can solve the problems for British people. (Burgess, 2014, p. 7).

4. Conclusion

A slogan was considered that typically possesses the traits of being simple to remember, short, clear and appealing to the target audience and it also should be catchy and easy to understand because the aim of it is to influence and stick in the audience's mind. As mentioned, Slogans have been used in protests for hundreds of years and they will continue to play a significant role in the interaction between governments and its citizens in the future, too.

Poster was defined as a photo or image which contains a text or motto which are created and well designed to be eye-catching, persuasive and using powerful slogans to convey a message. Posters have played an

important role in politics throughout history. Political posters are used to communicate ideas, messages, and propaganda to the public.

The paper discussed that political parties during elections must use a persuasive language in their speech and posters in order to achieve the audiences trust and believe the voters to vote for them due to persuasion is an important point in the process. It also talked about Conservative Party and Labour party which they are the two main political parties in United Kingdom and they have different ideologies and strategies. linguistic techniques of persuasion have been widely used in British party slogans and posters to believe and affect the society. These techniques included the use of personal pronouns, repetition, rhetorical question, the rule of three etc. British political parties have used these techniques to create memorable and impactful slogans and posters that not only communicate their message but also persuade voters to support their policies and ideologies.

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