A Critical Analysis of Persuasive Strategies Used in Political Discourse: A Case Study of Donald Trump and Joe Biden

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Article Detail:	Abstract
Keywords— Political Discourse, Donald Trump, Joe Biden, CDA	The present study aimed to explore the persuasive strategies used by Donald Trump and Joe Biden during their 2020 Presidential campaigns. Persuasion may take various forms and, in this study, we focused on how each candidate positively represent themselves while negatively representing their opponents. A corpus was created from six speeches delivered by each candidate with a total of 8 hours and 55 minutes and 42 682 words. AntConc was used to analyze data quantitatively by counting the occurrences of certain linguistic elements and help extract excerpt from the speeches. Later on, data was analyzed qualitatively using two theoretical frameworks: Van Dijk's (1997) was used to detect the persuasive strategies used by each candidate and then these strategies were classified according to the general scope of Aristotle's persuasive appeals. Results indicated that both candidates relied heavily on strategies which drew on pathos and ethos appeals such as metaphor, irony, victimization, actor description, comparison and categorization, with appeal to logos being less used. Results also showed that Joe Biden was able to persuade people which helped him win the 2020 presidential election and this was attributed to his neutral stance and wise use of strategies to promote justice and equality which his opponent did not focus on.

1. Introduction

Language is a multi-layered mode of communication used to achieve a variety of goals. While poets and writers use language to entertain, politicians often instrumentalize language to manipulate people and persuade them with their ideologies. This is where discourse analysis proves to be crucial as it helps detect hidden meanings which reside with discourse and language. Discourse refers to any form of text, spoken or written, which is beyond the sentence level (Kinneavy, 1969). Political discourse as other various forms of discourse is defied defined by the social domain of their creation.

According to Al-Faki (2014), political discourse is a distinct genre delivered either in spoken or written mode, expressed via various forms including: policy papers, government press conferences, parliamentary discourse and electoral speeches. Political speeches are considered as part political discourse used mainly to persuade the audience with various political agendas such as healthcare, immigration and education policies (Denton & Hahn 1986). Language is used by political figures (presidents, parliament members, members of political parties) in a surgical way to promote their beliefs and ideologies. To do so, various linguistic devices are used to persuade the audience and convince them to accept their political agenda.

For (Kennedy, 2007) persuasion is a constituent part of political speech which entails the excessive use of persuasive strategies to change the beliefs, values or attitudes of the audience for the purpose of the speaker. In order for us to detect how politicians use these various ways to persuade their audience, we need to refer to discourse analysis. This latter emerged as a theoretical framework to analyse actual text and talk in the communicative context and evolved to become an interdisciplinary approach

incorporating both linguistic and social analysis. CDA is one of the most widely used forms of discourse which aims to uncover ideological and power relations and proved efficient in the analysis of political discourse.

Fairclough (1993) refers to CDA as a variant of discourse analysis that studies systematically the opaque relationship between various forms of practices/events and texts. Furthermore, it seeks to highlight how discourse is molded via social and cultural aspects with special attention to the possible influence of power in this context. Such model can be useful in analyzing how such factors influence the use of persuasive strategies in political speeches which is a genre that uses and reflects power to gain public support.

There are various theories which tried to account for persuasive strategies namely Aristotle's persuasive appeals. This latter is among the widely recognized models which comprises of three modes used to convince which are: ethos (speaker's credibility), pathos (appeal to emotions) and logos (arguments). Another way to persuade others is to present oneself as positive and present others (opponents) negatively.

The present research aims to explore the persuasive strategies employed by Donald Trump and Joe Biden during their rallies for the 2020 US presidential elections. Particularly, we will focus on one form of persuasion which positive self-presentation and other negative-presentation Benoit (2003). To this extent, the following question will be answered:

A. What are the main strategies used by each candidate in giving a positive image of themselves and a negative one of their political opponents?

B. Who was most successful in convincing others? And why?

2. Literature Review

Recently, political discourse received considerable attention as great deal of research has been conducted on various dimensions of this topic such as: ideology (Van Dijk, 2020), rhetorical devices (Bainbridge, 2011), discursive strategies (Sharndama, 2016) and persuasive strategies (Khajavi & Rasti, 2020) in debates, presidential campaigns, inauguration speeches …etc.). As far as the U.S. election is concerned, several studies have been carried out regarding various presidential elections held and the campaigns run by the Democrat and Republican candidates.

Lakoff (2004) studied "frame-setting" devices used by Bush and Kerry during their presidential campaigns in 2004. Results showed that Bush's performance was more successful and this was attribute to this latter's team being prepare unlike Kerry's side which reacted to the Bush camp and did not bring their own frame onto the scene. In a similar vein, Wodak (2006) analyzed the same 2004 presidential election campaigns focusing on the notion of values. Results showed that the Bush camp successfully defended values which incorporated notions of religion, nationalism, patriotism, and so forth. The Kerry camp set social welfare, National Healthcare, fighting against poverty as their 'value frame' but they failed to defend them in an effective manner.

In a different context, Morris and Johnson (2011) were interested in studying the use of the clash and debate strategies during the 2008 US presidential elections. The results revealed that Obama and McCain use the two strategies different mainly due to the political climate. Compared to previous elections, the study concluded that the use of non-clash strategies increased notably compared with previous election.

Ebunoluwa (2011) examined the persuasive strategies used in president Obama's inaugural address speech. Using Fairclough's (2003) framework which caims that ideologies reside in texts, results classified the key ideological components of Obama's speech using the following concepts: "pragmatism, liberalism, inclusiveness, acceptance of religious and ethnic diversity, and unity" (p. 37). It can be inferred that Obama touches on the prevalent issues that are being discussed in American society so as to captivate the attention of Americans. It is quite necessary for a candidate to know which issues to focus on in order to be of interest to a large number of addressees. This will increase the degree of acceptability by individuals.

Jalilifar and Alavi-Nia (2012) conduct a contrastive study on the speeches delivered by Obama (USA) and Ahmadinejad (Iran) during their presidential campaigns. Using functional analysis, the researchers focused on how each individual used hedges and boosters. Findings showed that both Obama and Ahmadinejad use hedging and boosting differently especially in terms of frequency and cross-linguistic function. This made the researchers

conclude that there is a cross-linguistic diversity of these devices' functions.

Martínez and González's (2012) examine the role of the audience in Bush's and Obama's victory speeches. Using the elements of Haliday's transitivity structures, the researchers analyzed the relationship between the speaker and the audience and the effects that they mutually had on each other. They concluded that while Obama's speech focused on the audience since he linked his success to the people, Bush's speech was kind of punishment and failure for the audience.

To sum up, the bulk of research discussed above sought to investigate political discourse particularly, presidential elections, from various points of view which entails that this form of discourse encompasses several aspects which should be carefully studied. Thus, the present work aims to add to the already existing literature about persuasive strategies used in political discourse but with focusing on a new form of persuasion which is positive representation of self and negative representation of others.

3. Methodology
3.1. Corpus

The corpus consisted of 6 speeches delivered by Donald Trump and Joe Biden (3 for each) across the states of Florida, Michigan and Pennsylvania. With a total amount that exceeds eight hours and fifty-five minutes of spoken discourse, our corpus comprised of a total of 42 682 words (34277 words for Trump and 8405 words for Biden). The three states are known as 'swing states' because they do not have any political loyalty a particular party (Republican or Democrat party) which makes them battle ground for candidates. The collected data was then analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. AntConc was used to detect the instances where persuasive strategies were used via identifying specific words and phrases in the corpus and then extract the full sentences where such item occurs for a detailed analysis.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

Practitioners with the field of CDA identified a variety of well-established theoretical frameworks useful to analyze different aspect namely: Fairclough (2003), van Dijk (1997), Hodge and Kress (1993) and van Leeuwen (1996). The present study will adhere to van Dijk's (1997) model as it highlights several categories which can be extended to the study of persuasion including: actor description, categorization, comparison, disclaimers, evidentiality, hyperbole, evidentiality, implication, metaphor, euphemism, generalization, irony, polarization, victimization and vagueness. These individual strategies will be first examined across each candidate and then they will be analyzed according to Aristotle's persuasive appeals which were discussed earlier. Using these two theoretical frameworks will help us create a comprehensive understanding of the individual strategies used to persuade the audience and their position within the general aspect proposed by Aristotle (ethos, pathos and logos).

4. Limitations of the study

One of the main limitations of the study is length of the speeches delivered as the data revealed that Trump's speeches were longer than those delivered by Joe Biden. With the rapid spread of the Covid19 pandemic, countries worldwide took severe precautions to contain the spread of the virus namely prohibiting social gatherings. The US elections 2020 took place in this hard situation and the mentality of each candidate influence how they approached the campaign. Trump's policy underestimated the seriousness of the virus and thus he held large rallies and for long periods of time. Joe Biden, on the other hand, seemed very cautious and he held small rallies (in car parks with people having social distancing) with brief gathering times (40 mins max). These approaches influenced the length of the speeches.

5. Results

Strategies Used	Donald Trump	Joe Biden
Actor Description	"**Joe Biden** wants to **surrender your jobs to China**, you know that. [Audience Boos] His son walked out with a lot of money for doing nothing. **He** wants to **surrender your nation to the radical left-wing mob**."	"Now, you have a President who is standing up for America and standing up for the great people of Florida."

	"You know I say that's not working because we are going up and he's dropping like a rock in water." PEN 'I will keep every promise and I will always put America first. You haven't heard that, right?	"**We**'re going to **help people** buy their first home, pay for their healthcare premiums. And for childcare, **we**'re going to **care for the aging** and loved one. **We**'re going to make sure you can **wipe out your college deb**t as well. We give more help to race horses than we do college students."
Authority	"As America saw earlier today in Amy's opening statement in the Senate, **Judge Barrett**, a brilliant scholar who will defend our laws, our rights, our freedom, and our constitution like very few people would have the capability of doing." Fl "While foreign nations are in a free fall, we're creating an economic powerhouse unrivaled anywhere in the world. A recent **Gallup Poll** found that 56% of Americans say they are better off today than they were four years ago under Obama and Biden." MCH	"I'll never forget what **President Kennedy** said when he promised to send us to the moon in his speech. He said, "We're doing it because we refuse to postpone." That's what Americans do, refuse to postpone what is needed" "The director of the CDC, Center for Disease Control, **Dr. Red field** said, and I quote, and he held up a mask. He said, "These face masks are the most important, powerful public health tool we have and that "this face mask is more guaranteed to protect me against COVID than a vaccine." MCH
Categorization	"It's our campaign, not my campaign. **There was spying on our campaign** and illegally trying to take down a very, very straightforward and legally sworn in administration." Fl "We've been hit by **fake, fake investigations, fake scandals, fake impeachments**. We've had so many things that, the witch hunt, I call it the witch hunt. And it turned out to be a phony witch hunt, and they should have known it the first day." MCH "Joe Biden's agenda is **made in China**. My agenda is made in America. [Audience chants "USA"]" PEN	"Look, Trump got the Supreme Court justice passed and he did it for one reason to try to **destroy** the Affordable Care Act." FL
Comparison	"Joe Biden is also owned by the radical globalists, the wealthy donors, the big money special interests who shipped away your jobs, shut down your factories, threw open your borders and ravaged our cities while sacrificing American blood and	"We're learning to die with it and Donald Trump has waved the white flag, abandoned our families and surrendered to the virus. But the American people don't give up" FL "Donald Trump thinks healthcare is a privilege, I think it's a right of every

	treasure in this ridiculous, endless wars." Fl "... Well, you know, then you think sleepy Joe Biden's against guns. That's not good for Texas, right? He's against oil. Oil isn't good. If you're against oil, that's not good politics, right Texas? And he's against god. Right? MCH	American. If you all get out and vote, we'll not only restore Obamacare, we're going to strengthen it and build on it"
isclaimers	"I said it right at the beginning, the cure cannot be worse than the problem itself. The cure cannot be worse, but if you don't feel good about it, if you want to stay, stay, relax, stay. But if you want to get out there, get out." Fl "they don't like to show those crowds, but that is a massive amount. I don't know how many people are here, but you got a lot." Fl	"I'm running as a proud Democrat, but I'll govern as an American president to unite and to heal. I'll work as hard for those who didn't support me as those who do. That's the job of the president."
Euphemism		"We can get this pandemic under control so we can get our economy working again for everyone."
Evidentiality	Not Found	Not Found
Generalization		Donald Trump thinks hoax. Well, then he says we shouldn't
Hyperbole	We've made **tremendous progress ...** it's one of the **largest projects in the history of our country**, because you're talking about a lot of miles, 540 miles." Florida "We're going to have **a red wave**, they call it the great red wave like nobody's ever seen before. Like nobody's ever seen." MCH "it's **a rip off** of our country the so-called Paris Climate Accord. It's a **disaster, a death sentence**. I took it out. I withdrew from that calamity." PEN	
Implication	Not Found	Not Found
Irony	"Our competitor **sleepy Joe**, he had a rally today and practically **nobody showed up**" florida	Trump is the **worst possible standard bearer for democr**acy in places like Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea

	"And then we heard **crooked Hillary** was coming back because they were hearing … Oh, you know, Michigan hadn't been won for a long time, many, many years by a Republican." MCH	"**This guy doesn't understand much of anything**. You've all seen the impact more than most" FL
Polarization	"This was **our** final night prior to a very, very big victory, "We've had such incredible support and here we are. Here **we** are. But we're going to finish. We're going to make this country greater than ever before." Florida "We made history **together** four years ago, and tomorrow we're going to make history once again." Michigan	"**We**'re going to inspire a new wave of justice in America, but true justice is also about economic justice, justice and education, housing, access to capital, good paying jobs." FL "**This country** can't afford to wait four more years of Donald Trump's denial, who thinks the only responsible to the people who voted for him."
Presupposition	"We've been beating China. We've been beating everybody. Until the plague came in, we were teaching China like they've never been taught before and they know it." FL	"Folks, every single day we're seeing race-based disparities in every aspect of this virus. Higher infections rates, lower access to testing, harder time quarantining safely, lower access to quality treatment, higher mortality rates, three times as many African Americans are dying as white Americans"
Vagueness	"Everything I hear, we're winning by a lot. Then you turn on the **fake news**. They say, "The polls are tied in Florida." I don't get it. I don't. **We heard** the same thing last year. Remember? Four years ago, we heard the same thing." FL "We're going to lose Florida," **they** said four years ago, "by five points." They called that thing so early in the evening and we won by a lot. And we're winning by a lot more now than we were four years ago" "I'm sorry, at the time I thought it was. **These people** are crazy. We have to win. Most important we've ever had." FL	"**They say** my plan will create 18.6 million good paying jobs. 7 million more than he's going to be able to create if he got elected and a trillion dollars more in economic growth"
Victimization	"I hate to say to the fake news, we're about to hit another stock market record, 401Ks." FL	

6. Discussion

Results showed that the highlighted strategies identified by Van Dijk (1997) were used in the discourse of the two candidates except for one strategy: implication. In this section the highlighted strategies will discussed in accordance with the general appeals proposed by Aristotle. Aristotelian rhetoric strategies ethos (i.e., ethical appeals), logos (i.e., rational appeals), and pathos (i.e., emotional appeals) are the foundation for the data analyses of this study. Additionally, the recent studies using Aristotelian rhetoric are referred to here as the research approach used for analyzing political discourse (e.g., Samuel-Azran et al., 2015; Brostein, 2013; Erisen & Villalobos, 2014) to construct an analytical framework for the present study. Critical elements of an analytical, rhetorical framework are identified as follows:

6.1. Persuasion using Ethos Appeal

Using this form of persuasion, the speaker tries to create an image of trustworthiness to his audience through an argument which indicate that they are competent, reliable, fair, and honest (Beqiri , 2018). Among the strategies highlighted above, the following can be said to fall within the scope of this appeal:

6.1.1. Actor description

According to Van Dijk (1997), ideologies will determine the way actors are described in discourse. This can be seen in the separation where contenders are seen as outgroup members unlike supporters who are perceived as ingroup members. For instance, Trump tried describe himself as the savior and the sole suitable leader for the USA by delegitimizing the other candidate. In example 1, he declares that Biden is not loyal and accuses him of 'surrendering the nation the China'. Furthermore, tries to capture the attention of the audience by inclusive 'we' and claims that they were 'going up while joe is going down'.

Joe Biden, on the other hand, adopts another strategy where he avoids the description of outgroup (Trump and the democrats). Instead, he extensively uses the inclusive 'we' to show solidarity with the population. He stresses the notion of his reliability by focusing on his agenda and explains how he plans will be beneficial for the helpless such as providing health care, wiping students' debts and caring for the elderly. It is important to mention that in such strategy's personal pronouns such 'I and we' are extensively used. Using the AntConc program, for Donald Trump, we recorded 928 instances of 'inclusive we' and 824 instances of the personal pronoun 'I', while Biden used these two elements less with 193 and 149 instances respectively. The reason for such difference is due to Trump's speech but if we calculate the percentage, we find that the difference is not that huge: 'inclusive we' 2.3% for Biden while it is 2.7% for Trump. For personal 'pronoun I' it was 2.4% for Trump and 1.4% for Biden.

6.1.2. Categorization

Continuing with the notion of ingroup representation, often political speakers tend to categories people into outgroup category mainly to show that they are superior to them. For instance, Trump referred to the media which criticized his acts as president as 'fake news' spreading false accusations about him. This makes his supports question the integrity of media. He classifies Biden as a traitor having a Chinese plan that will ruin the American economy. For Trump, china is stealing their technology and electing Biden means helping the other 'group' gain superiority.

For Joe Biden, it was simple since he focused only on Trump's attempt to halt the healthcare act. Since Biden's focus was to gather as much solidarity as possible, he considered this act as destructive. By doing so, he is detaching trump's actions for the needs of the people and in the later sections of his speech explains how his plans will fix this problem.

6.1.3. Comparison

According to Van Dijk (1997), in this strategy outgroups are compared negatively and ingroups positively. To this extent, Trump almost all the time refers to Biden as radicalist politician with dangerous views that threatens the values of the American society. He says that '*Biden belongs to radical globalist' and that he 'threw the US into wars*'. Unlike Trump's foreign policy which is based on cooperation and peaceful talks, he indicates that Biden caused trouble by make the US enter unnecessary wars during his time as vice president under the Obama administration. He further reminds the people Texas (famous for their patriotism) that voting for Biden will threaten their right in having arms. By doing so, he is classifying him as a danger and as outgroup member.

Joe Biden, once again was systematic in classifying his opponent into untrust worthy. The crucial point was that of the Covid19 and the relatively weak efforts of Trump's administration to contain the spread of the virus when he said: "*We're learning to die with it and Donald Trump has waved the white flag*". For Biden, the aim of the president is to reunite

the nation under one goal which a better life for everyone. This entails that Trump's white supremacy and excessive loyalty to his party will not serve the public interest. Once again, health seems to be among the main points in Biden's plans as he criticizes Trump's decision to halt the healthcare care act.

6.1.4. Disclaimers

They are regarded as the ideological base of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation strategy. Disclaimers are a rhetorical device use to introduce the speaker as non-prejudiced even when saying arguably prejudicial things. This appears valuable among far-right, and arguably racist groups while tackling the issue of immigration for example (Goodman and Speer 2007). In our data, no record of such occurrences was found but disclaimers were found in relation to other topics. In the case of Trump, his policy towards the Covid19 pandemic raised a lot of question since he did not take it seriously. His prejudice about the virus itself and the measurements taken to limit its spread is reflected in this passage where he says that: "*the cure cannot be worse than the problem itself. but if you don't feel good about it, if you want to stay, stay, relax, stay. But if you want to get out there, get out.*" This reflects Trump's ideology about the virus, the vaccine and the efficiency of the security measures. Another instance is when he talks about the gatherings of his supporters where he signals that he has more attendees than his competitor: "*they don't like to show those crowds, but that is a massive amount. I don't know how many people are here, but you got a lot.*"

On the other hand, only one instance was recorded in the speeches of Joe Biden. To strengthen the sense of national unity, he tries to paint a neural image to the American people by covering or limiting the influence of his political party in governing the USA by saying: "*I'm running as a proud Democrat, but I'll govern as an American president to unite and to heal*". Such stance can be traced back to the moderate approach of Biden in reflecting his plans unlike Trump's excessive conservatism and radical point of view.

6.1.5. Hyperbole

Hyperboles are semantic rhetorical devices for enhancing and exaggerating meaning. By using especial metaphors, especially in the strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation, we may expect that good or bad actions or properties of the self or other be expressed in hyperbolic terms. To this extent, one can notice the absence of hyperbolic expression from the part of Biden. Trump on the other hand recorded four instances of hyperbolic expressions. These expressions include expressions like '*tremendous progress*' and '*one of the largest projects in the history of our country*' to reflect a positive image of himself and his supports by saying '*red wave*' to indicate the huge number of supporters wearing red which stands for his political party. While addressing the reason why his administration withdraws from the Paris Climate Accord, he said that it was a "*rip off of our country, disaster, a death sentence*" to make sure that the people relate to his ideology.

6.2. Persuasion using Pathos Appeal

Using this form of persuasion requires to speaker to use emotions to make his/her arguments appealing to the audience and evoke their emotions (e.g., fear, anger, sadness, contempt, satisfaction, sympathy, happiness, and hope) (Beqiri , 2018). There were various strategies which can subtracted under this namely:

6.2.1. Metaphor

This rhetorical device can be used by politicians to achieve various goals. Biden was the only candidate which used this rhetorical device namely: "*we can put an end to a residency that fanned the flames of hate, poured gasoline on every opportunity he had all across this nation.*" In this excerpt, Biden is criticizing the Trump administration and his ideology by denoting them as gasoline being poured into fire. This negative representation of the other was conducted in an artistic way to capture the emotions of the audience who angry at how Trump handled the uprisings following police brutality incidents. Then Biden describes the Americans as being set free from the lies and the misconduct by saying "*The blinders have been taken off*". This is to indicate hope and urge the people to aspire for good change.

6.2.2. Euphemism

To evoke the emotion of compassion among the audience, political figures integrate euphemistic devices to beautify what can be regarded as offensive language. Throughout his speeches about the spread of Covid19, Biden used the word 'pandemic' or 'virus'. These two terms are neutral as they were used extensively by media, however, they can be seen as euphemized if compared to Trump's description 'plague'. This latter can have negative connotation which can invoke fear among the audience unlike the words 'virus and pandemic'.

6.2.3. Generalization

According to Van Dijk (1997), generalization is a powerful move in argumentation. It is used in discourse, to formulate prejudices about generalized negative characteristics of specific group or individuals. Biden used this strategy as he claimed that Trump's way of thinking is 'hoax' meaning irrational and often deceiving. Biden wants Americans to stay away from that and urges them to be as vigilant as possible.

6.2.4. Irony

Accusations are more effective in the forms of irony than when they are stated directly. Both candidates used this strategy as it allows them to criticize their opponents in a funny way which can be both effective and entertaining. Trump, for instance, prefers to create names for his opponents such as "sleepy Joe" and "crooked Hillary". The regular use of this name creates a stereotype and supporters will unconsciously link those names to these people. Another way of irony use by Trump was to make fun of the rallies held by Biden as he constantly compares the numbers: "**sleepy Joe**, *he had a rally today and practically nobody showed up*".

Similarly, Biden used irony to criticize the Trump's foreign policy for instance by saying that: "*Trump is the **worst possible standard bearer** for democracy in places like Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea*". Furthermore, he makes fun of his judgments and describes him as person who "doesn't understand much of anything".

6.2.5. Polarization

This is another form to shorten the distance between political figures and their audience i.e., to show ingroup solidarity. This is generally captured through the use of various linguistic that indicate the candidate's closeness to the audience namely: inclusive we, us, our and together. Another way was used by Biden which is referred to as specialization, which is a form of objectivization in which social actors are represented by means of reference to a place with which they are, in the given context, closely associated (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 46) as in "*This country can't afford to wait four more years*"

6.2.6. Victimization

This is an important strategy to evoke the feeling of sympathy among the audience. This was particularly used by Trump where he defends his ideology and claims that he was mistreated/misrepresented by various authorities namely media. One way was significantly used throughout his speech was to blame the media for

spreading lies and conspiracies about him as in "*I hate to say to the fake news, we're about to hit another stock market record*" which entails that he sees himself as a victim to a dishonest media.

6.2.7. Vagueness

Writers or speakers sometimes use the expressions that are unclear because they do not give enough information or they do not say exactly what they mean. This is used to make the audience feel skeptical about everything. Generally, this is done via introducing inaccurate references such as 'they, someone, people' or by expressing doubt 'I heard, they say …etc."

Plus, this strategy serves to negatively represent the other by criticizing them without citing names. By doing so, the speaker set himself and his supporters from the others in an indirect way.

6.3. Persuasion using Logos Appeal

In this type of appeal, the speaker tries to use rational which emphasizes the notion of reason and logic. In addition, this trait refers to the clarity and integrity of the argument itself (Higgins & Walker, 2012, p. 198). In political persuasion, political elite will often use facts and figures to convince the audience of his or her position (Beqiri , 2018). The strategies which can be included under this appeal are:

6.3.1. Authority

For Van Dijk (1997), this strategy is used in argumentation where people of different ideologies cite different authorities and use numbers and percentages to validate their point of view. For Trump, this strategy was used significantly more than his opponent especially quoting and referring to authorities such as "Amy Barrett" who is supreme court judge. Plus, there was the use of percentages in many instances which were used to report the growth and the enhancement America witnessed during his administration. This will enable convince people because numbers make the claims more valid.

In a similar vein, Biden used this strategy namely by quoting the former President Kennedy and relates his quate to the present scenario "*Kennedy said, "We're doing it because we refuse to postpone.*" That's what Americans do, refuse to postpone what is needed". This way, Biden is somehow bridging the gap between the past and the present to persuade people that he is knowledgeable. Furthermore, he refers to an authority in the medical field to help raise awareness among people about the Covid19 when he said "*The director of the CDC, Center for Disease*

Control, Dr. Red field said "These face masks are the most important, powerful public health tool we have and that "this face mask is more guaranteed to protect me against COVID than a vaccine." This is besides the recurrent use of percentages and numbers used both the highlight the deficiencies in the Trump administration as well as to indicate that his plans will work better based on estimated profitable numbers as in *"And independent analysis actually from Wall Street, Moody's, projected that my plan will create 18.6 million jobs. 7 million more than the administration's economic plan and $1 trillion more in economics growth than the president's plan."* Speech in Michigan.

6.3.2. Presupposition

Presuppositions are mostly used to presuppose the truth when they are not established. To say different, a speaker utters some expressions to pave the way for saying something indirectly. for instance, Trump always accused China of spreading the virus because they could not stop the development of the USA and that is why he said: *"We've been beating China. We've been beating everybody. Until the plague came in, we were teaching China like they've never been taught before and they know it."* Similarly, Biden also presupposed the notion of inequality and related it the discrimination and all the problems minorities are facing during the Trump administration when he said *"Folks, every single day we're seeing race-based disparities in every aspect of this virus. Higher infections rates, lower access to testing, harder time quarantining safely, lower access to quality treatment, higher mortality rates, three times as many African Americans are dying as white Americans"*. This is to show people he is aware and that he will be a better substitute.

To sum up, we notice from the discussion above that both candidates used the three forms of appeals (ethos, pathos and logos) to persuade their audiences. In their quest to positively-represent on self and negatively represent the other (opponent), each candidate used a variety of strategies discussed by Van Dijk (1997). Analysis revealed that appeal to pathos where speakers play on the emotional side of their audience was extensively used by both candidates via 7 strategies including: metaphor, euphemism, generalization, irony, polarization, victimization and vagueness.

In a similar vein, appeal to ethos also was used significantly where a speaker establishes authority or credibility with his or her intended audience was extensively used with 5 strategies namely: actor description, categorization, comparison, disclaimers, evidentiality and hyperbole. It is important to mention that only two strategies were not recorded namely evidentiality and implication. Lastly, appeal to logos ranked third with only two strategies used: authority and presupposition.

The results of the 2020 US presidential elections indicated that Joe Biden won by huge margin and that he broke records of the votes ever gain with more that 40 million votes. This is mainly due to his careful use of the strategies mentioned above. While Trump expressed his individualistic plans, Biden offered a collective plan which focused on sensible points such as healthcare, immigration, racial justice and equality. Instead of focusing on separating the American community between republicans and democrats, Biden pledged for unity that disregards gender, race and religion and focuses on the well-being of all Americans.

Results of the elections showed that Joe Biden was successful as he gained more votes (81 283 495 votes) than Donald Trump (74 223 755). As far as the states discussed in our research, results showed that Biden was able to win the state of Pennsylvania as well the state of Michigan but with small margins (50%) and (50.6%) to (48.8%) and (47.8%) for Trump respectively. Donald Trump was able to win the state of Florida by securing (51.2%) of the votes to (47.9%) for Biden. Among the six swing states, Joe Biden was able to secure the win in four of them (Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin and Georgia) while Donald Trump won the states of Texas and Florida. This can be traced back to the surgical way in the use of persuasive strategies namely being neutral and avoiding offensive comments. Furthermore, the sense of unity played a crucial role especially for minorities and colored groups who saw Trump as unable to establish justice and equality. (numbers were retrieved from https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2020-us-election-results)

7. Conclusion

The present research scrutinized the persuasive strategies used by Donald Trump and Joe Biden during their 2020 presidential campaigns. Persuasive strategies were first identified based on Van Dijk's theoretical framework and later on classified under the Aristoteles's triangular appeals (ethos, pathos and logos). The main scope of the study was to examine one form of persuasion which is positive self-representation and negative representation of others.

Politicians aim to show that they are better than their counter parts and they seek to positively represent themselves and draw a negative picture about the other contenders.

The analysis of the speeches delivered in the key states (Florida, Michigan and Pennsylvania) revealed that both candidates used this form of persuasion. While Donald Trump appeared to use ideologically motivate speech which encouraged white supremacy and somehow neglected other minorities, Joe Biden took a neutral stance which encouraged unity and justice between all Americans. As far as the strategies used, both candidates used 13 strategies ranging from actor description to metaphor and vagueness. When classified according to Aristotle's persuasive appeals, results showed significant preference for appeal to strategies which took into account pathos (7 strategies) and ethos (5 strategies). Using emotions to gain votes has become an important aspect of persuasion especially by tackling critical topics such as: racial inequalities, healthcare and economy. Even though appeal to numbers and percentages was recorded throughout the speeches but it was significantly less than the other two appeals.

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