THE ROLE OF SOCIOPRAGMATICS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: UNPACKING MEANING AND INFLUENCE

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Abstract:
In the realm of political discourse, language functions not merely as a means of communication but as a powerful tool that shapes public perception and action. The field of sociopragmatics, which examines how context influences the use and understanding of language, offers valuable insights into how politicians and political actors craft their messages to resonate with diverse audiences. This article explores the role of sociopragmatics in political discourse, highlighting its significance in framing political messages, negotiating power relations, and fostering public engagement.

Key words: political discourse, politicians’ speech, sociopragmatics techniques.

Political discourse is significantly shaped by sociopragmatics, a branch of pragmatics that examines the relationship between language use and social situation. Gaining a better understanding of how sociopragmatics elements impact political communication can help one better understand the tactics politicians use and the public's responses. Drămnescu (2016) defines in his article, the receiver can choose issues based solely on their capacity to have a stronger impact on a specific audience when you discuss any problem to influence their decision and behavior. This allows you to adjust the thematic register at will based on the context, which can lead to increased possibilities and discourse. When you use the instrument to manipulate the audience, you are truly captivated by the otherness of the activity. Additionally, Van Dijk (1993) refers to the relationships between discourse structures and political context structures should be examined in order to find the particular of political discourse analysis. Therefore, although using metaphors in class discussions, political metaphors will serve an educational purpose as well as a political one, such as when attacking political rivals, outlining policies, or defending political authority.

Sociopragmatics is the study of how language meaning and use are influenced by context, including relationships, social norms, and power dynamics. These factors determine the way messages are created, perceived, and received in the context of political discourse. Among the essential components of sociopragmatics are:

1. **Contextual Influence:** How political discourse is interpreted depends on the circumstances surrounding it. For instance, although parliamentary discussions may prefer formal, technical jargon, campaign speeches may use populist rhetoric and emotive appeals.
2. **Speaker's Identity:** Politicians frequently modify their language to fit their own or their audience's perceived identities. Both delivery and reception can be impacted by factors like socioeconomic status, gender, race, and education.
3. **Addressing the Audience**: Planning how to speak to various audiences is a common component of effective political speech. Politicians may utilize jargon to connect with particular groups or embrace inclusive language to appeal to a wider range of people.

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4. **Politeness and Face Theory**: In their discourse, politicians must strike a careful balance between upholding their social position, or face. This entails using civility techniques, which, depending on the situation, can either strengthen authority or promote rapport.

Sociopragmatics in Practice

Sociopragmatic principles are applied in political campaigns and discussions. For example, candidates may change their tone during election seasons in response to polls and audience responses. Shafer (2013) believes that examining the discourse during televised debates can show how politicians employ sociopragmatic techniques like agreement, contradiction, and interruption to establish control or form alliances. Moreover, the importance of sociopolitical discourse which focuses more on how language can affect society and vice versa than it does on the finer points of language. Socio-political discourse analysis examines how language and society interact, including how language and power are related. Critical discourse analysis is the most widely used method of socio-political discourse analysis. The language of promises is another crucial aspect of political language analysis. According to Edelman (1985), political actors' pledges demonstrate the policy goals they hope to accomplish and demonstrates the meaning of linguistic constructions that are comparable to what individuals experience in their own subjective lives. Promises regarding future advantages that will arise from any cause the speaker supports make up the majority of political rhetoric. In order to gain support for policies that depict a better future, promises of peace, prosperity, and other benefits flip anxieties. Furthermore, rhetoric is essential to political conversation. Metaphors, analogies, and euphemisms are examples of figures of speech that can affect how the general public perceives something. For instance, framing tax reform as a "Tax Relief" might put policies in a favorable light and appeal to voters' emotional senses.

Impact on Public Perception and Policy

Public perception is significantly impacted by the junction of political speech and sociopragmatics. Drămnescu (2016) claims that the political landscape is characterized by political language that creates and perpetuates ideas about who is an ally and who is an enemy. Even when scientific terminology implies that particular groups are scapegoats rather than foes, language frequently arouses the perception that they are fundamentally evil. Numerous victims of Discrimination is evidence of the power of language in certain contexts that conjure up a political universe in which persecution is acceptable, even while the same words signify egregious injustice to different individuals in other contexts. Words that justify suffering for those who do no harm are highly relevant to those who are already at a disadvantage. This demonstrates a crucial role in linguistic politics: it contributes to the upholding of disparities brought about by unequal access to resources, position, and power. The subtleties of delivery and the social situations in which messages are presented can influence voter reactions in addition to the messages' content. For example, by comprehending how language creates social realities, analysts can decipher the meanings underlying specific expressions and their possible influence on public opinion. Sociopragmatics also sheds light on how political narratives are constructed and dismantled. While leaders who use divisive language may increase societal tensions, those who use inclusive and engaging language can promote a sense of community.

Conclusion

A crucial framework for examining political discourse is sociopragmatics. We can gain a better understanding of how political communications are produced and received, how they affect public opinion, and ultimately how they affect policy results by taking into account the social dimensions of language. Our knowledge of political communication and the tactics that support successful leadership in many sociocultural contexts can be improved by more research in this field.

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