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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## A Critical Stylistic Study of National Self-Glorification in American Politicians Tweets

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### | ABSTRACT

Language is the primary means by which people comprehend the outside environment. It functions as an instrument for power and communication. Politicians use language in political communication to alter public opinion, attitudes, and behavior toward politics, as well as to alter national and state policy in general. Various forms of national self-glorification can be used frequently to execute good self-presentation, particularly in parliamentary statements on immigration: praise or positive allusions to one's own nation, its values, customs, and history. Thus, racist and nationalist ideas can coexist. Political leaders always try to glorify their countries in order to highlight and show the audience their interests and concerns in raising the status of their countries. American politicians are the ones who employ this strategy the most, using various devices. This study attempts to investigate this strategy within the field of critical stylistic analysis. The study adopts the Jeffries (2010) as an analytical model. The study concludes that both American political leaders Trump and Biden employ the strategies of hypothesizing, contrasting, presenting action, presenting time, presenting state, assuming, and describing with different percentages in order to achieve their personal and political purposes.

### | KEYWORDS

Stylistics, critical stylistics, critical discourse analysis, national self-glorification, loyalty, and good self-presentation.

### | ARTICLE INFORMATION

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### 1. Introduction

Politician elites usually use different strategies in their speeches to convince the audiences that they work for the interests of their countries. Political leaders always try to glorify their countries in order to highlight and show the audience their interest and concern in raising the status of their countries, particularly in their election campaigns. This study tries to shed light on this strategy employed by American politicians. For this purpose, the study asks the following questions and tries to answer them through analysis, results, and discussions.

1. What are the devices used in employing national self-glorification?
2. What are the aims of employing national self-glorification?
3. What are the most and the least devices used in employing national self-glorification?

The study aims at the following points:

1. Identifying the devices used in employing national self-glorification.
2. Exploring the aims of employing national self-glorification.
3. Discovering the most and the least devices used in employing national self-glorification.

The study hypothesizes the following:

1. All devices mentioned in Jeffries' (2010) model of critical stylistics are used in employing national self-glorification.
2. Employing national self-glorification aims to show the audience's loyalty to the country.
3. Describing is the most used device, and presenting the speech and thoughts of others is the least used device in employing national self-glorification.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.1 Stylistics**

Style is in bad shape. Its peak has faded to little more than a distant memory, and it is currently in decline. Even more concerning is the fact that fewer college students are "willing to declare an intention to do research in stylistics." According to this perspective, stylistics had reached its conclusion, and it appeared that the inevitable demise of that waning, dying discipline would coincide with the end of the twentieth century. And nobody seemed to be mourning its death. In the early 21st century, stylistics is still very much in use.

All around the world, it is taught and studied in linguistics, literature, and language departments of universities. The quantity of specialized book-length publications, research journals, international conferences and symposia, and scholarly associations that stylistics enjoys is indicative of its high academic prominence. Modern stylistics is positively thriving, as seen by the growth of numerous sub-disciplines where theories of discourse, culture, and society enrich and empower stylistic methodologies (Simpson, 2004: 2).

The purpose of stylistics is to find language—more precisely, to expose inventiveness in language usage. Thus, possessing stylistics enhances our perspectives on language, and as such, studying language has a significant impact on how we comprehend (literary) texts. Using all of the language models at our disposal allows for an analytical inquiry process that is intrinsically revealing. This kind of research has a great deal of reflexivity since it can illuminate the language system from which it originates. It can also shed light on the 'rules' of language because it frequently identifies texts in which the rules are twisted, stretched, or bent beyond recognition. Language is always at the forefront of contemporary stylistic analysis, which is why you should never undertake to do stylistics unless you are interested in language (Simpson, 2004:3).

### **2.2 Critical Stylistics**

It is a stylistic approach to linguistic study that looks at the social meanings that language transmits. The term "Critical Stylistics" was coined and developed by Jeffries in 2007 in an effort to investigate two things: (a) the dominant discourses in society surrounding the female body and (b) the extent to which feminist ideology has been effectively integrated into these discourses. Based on the idea that "there is a level at which texts organize the world we experience and that this is demonstrable in the words and structures of the texts themselves," critical stylistics aims to compile the primary general roles that texts have in representing reality (Jeffries, 2010).

According to Jeffries (2010), "Language is essentially a finely balanced combination of rules and broken rules, where the fact that there isn't a one-to-one form-function relationship is the key to many of the more negative aspects of language, like lying and manipulation, as well as many of the more positive aspects, like poetry writing and metaphor use in daily life."

By utilizing and expanding upon the Critical Linguistics method of text analysis, Critical Stylistics fills the gap between CDA and stylistics. The main contribution of Critical Stylistics is the more thorough and organized collection of analytical instruments it offers. Therefore, as both Critical Stylistics and CDA attempt to expose ideologies and power dynamics in discourse, it should be viewed as an additional approach to CDA and categorized under Critical Language Studies.

Critical stylistics is unrelated to any particular political viewpoint. It makes the case that all writings have an ideological foundation, regardless of how consciously or unconsciously these ideas are formed. It seeks to expose

and unearth hidden ideologies in discourse and writings. Critical stylistics uses a set of analytical methods to reveal the ideologies concealed in the text, sparing the analyst from having to subjectively search for them in an effort to validate predetermined notions. The tools of Critical Stylistics include the following: (a) Naming and Describing, (b) Representing Actions/Events/States, (c) Equating and Contrasting, (d) Exemplifying and Enumerating, (e) Prioritizing, (f) Implying and Assuming, (g) Negating, (h) Hypothesizing, (i) Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants, and (j) Representing Time, Space and Society (Olatuwoye, 2015:88).

### **2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical theory predates World War II, and the Frankfurt school is where critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) originated (Agger, 1992; Rasmussen, 1996 cited in Van Dijk, 2001a: 352). The "critical linguistics" movement that emerged in the UK and Australia towards the end of 1970 is credited for sparking the current focus of CDA on language and discourse (Fowler et al., 1979, cited in Van Dijk 2001a: 352).

According to Wodak (1995:24–25), CDA is the study of ambiguous and seeming constructional relations of power, segregation, and hegemony as they are expressed in language. Discourse is socially conditioned and constitutive, according to CDA. In contemporary civilizations, discourse is an instrument of power that is becoming more and more important, yet it is typically hard to understand. Consequently, by increasing the visibility and apparentness of discourse, CDA aims to facilitate this challenge. Calds-Coulthard and Coulthard (1996: xi) contend that the fundamental political nature of CDA stems from its practitioners' desire to change the world and help establish an inclusive society free from discrimination on the basis of gender, color, age, and socioeconomic class.

Furthermore, critical analysis of discourse is a type of research that examines how discourse in a political and social context legitimizes, reproduces, and confronts issues like power, hegemony, and inequality through speaking and text. Critical discourse analysts have a distinct perspective on comprehending, exposing, and ultimately opposing social inequality (Van Dijk, 2001, cited in Widdowson, 2004:89). Blommaert (2005:27) draws attention to the fact that CDA views discourse as a social phenomenon and works to create the theoretical frameworks necessary for society in order to analyze discourse and situate it within it.

Additionally, CDA plans to produce and transfer critical understanding, which enables people to release themselves through self-reflection from forms of dominance (Wodak & Meyer 2009:7). Therefore, CDA contributes to eliminating delusion on the one hand and increases awareness on the other hand. CDA intends to plan what is said and can be said in a certain society at a specific time, taking into consideration its qualitative spectrum, and discover the procedures through which restrictions of discourse are expanded or narrowed down (ibid, 36).

### **2.4 National self-Glorification**

Van Dijk (2004:78) argues that, especially in parliamentary speeches on immigration, positive self-presentation may routinely be implemented by various forms of national self-glorification: Positive references to or praise for the own country, its principles, history, and traditions. Racist ideologies may thus be combined with nationalist ideologies, as we have seen above. This kind of nationalist rhetoric is not the same in all countries. It is unabashed in the USA, quite common in France (especially on the right), and not uncommon in Germany. In the Netherlands and the UK, such self-glorification is less explicit. See, however, the following standard example -- probably even a topos:

Britain has always honoured the Geneva Convention and has given sanctuary to people with a well-founded fear of persecution in the country from which they are fleeing and whose first safe country landing is in the United Kingdom (Wardle, C).

## **3. Methodology**

The study collected five tweets from Biden and five tweets from Trump's Twitter archives. The study adopts Jeffries (2010) model of critical stylistics to analyze the data qualitatively and quantitatively. The study is limited to analyzing ten tweets of American Presidents Trump and Biden, five for each.

### **3.1. Adopted Model**

#### **Jeffries's Critical Stylistic Model (2010)**

Jeffries (2010) has tried to present a set of devices within the critical stylistics (CS) to compensate for the fuzziness of CDA. Text methods of literary and non-literary discourse depict the world using linguistic forms, leading to the generalization "that all texts are ideological (Jeffries, 2010:6). Thus, "all texts producers produce hidden ideologies to influence or manipulate"(Jeffries, 2010:7).

All members of the daily communicative context have access to the collection of tools for embedding ideologies. She has included in her model (2010: 14) the essential roles that texts play in providing reality. Despite the fact that CDA develops text-based analysis techniques, the world we experience can still be organized at the level of words and other textual creations. These are always ideologically charged and operated terms (Jeffries, 2010:3).

Jeffries ( 2010: 17-146) proposes that this set is more inclusive than those adopted with CDA. She ensures that there could be other devices that can be added to her list. In planning her set of devices for CS, she is motivated by the vagueness and the lack of tools for analysis of literary studies (Jeffries, 2010: 1). These devices are explained as follows:

#### **1. Naming and Describing**

It involves how language is employed in an ideological fashion to name referents. This textual function is linguistically realized by picking a certain ideological nominal reference from a list of options, enclosing a specific ideological idea inside the noun phrase, and changing the constituents of a proposition into a nominal.

#### **2. Representing Actions/Events/States**

The clause's ability to convey the textual (ideal) meaning is the main subject of the analysis. The meaning is connected to what is being done (actions), what is happening (events), and what is only the case (states). The verb that is used to characterize the circumstance as an act, an event, or a state is the main constituent of this function. Each of these choices could have an ideological effect depending on how the recipients perceive them.

#### **3. Equating and Contrasting**

Involves how correspondence and opposition are used in textual structure to represent the world in writing. According to Jeffries (2010), the ideological impact of the usage of particular synonyms or antonyms while constructing a text.

#### **4. Exemplifying and Enumerating**

Consider the potential ideological effects of the text's usage of list structures for the purposes of exemplifying and enumerating. They consider any potential ideological implications of the text's usage of the linguistic functions of exemplifying and enumerating.

#### **5. Prioritizing**

Prioritizing is the study of the ways in which ideological effects can be performed by moving the emphasis information to a different position inside a phrase using different syntactic prioritization techniques, such as information structure, transformation, and subordination.

#### **6. Assuming and Implying**

Using assumptions and implications to create naturalized ideologies that cannot be asked as they are represented as shared knowledge. The ideological effect of the implicit meaning is related to two notions, presupposition, and implicature, which have their theoretical origins in semantics and pragmatics.

**7. Negating**

This textual practice originated on ‘the pragmatic force of negating,’ which makes the reader/hearer conscious of scenarios that are not taking place but presumably might have done so in other circumstances. In other words, it creates an alternative reality that is considered unreal.

**8. Hypothesizing**

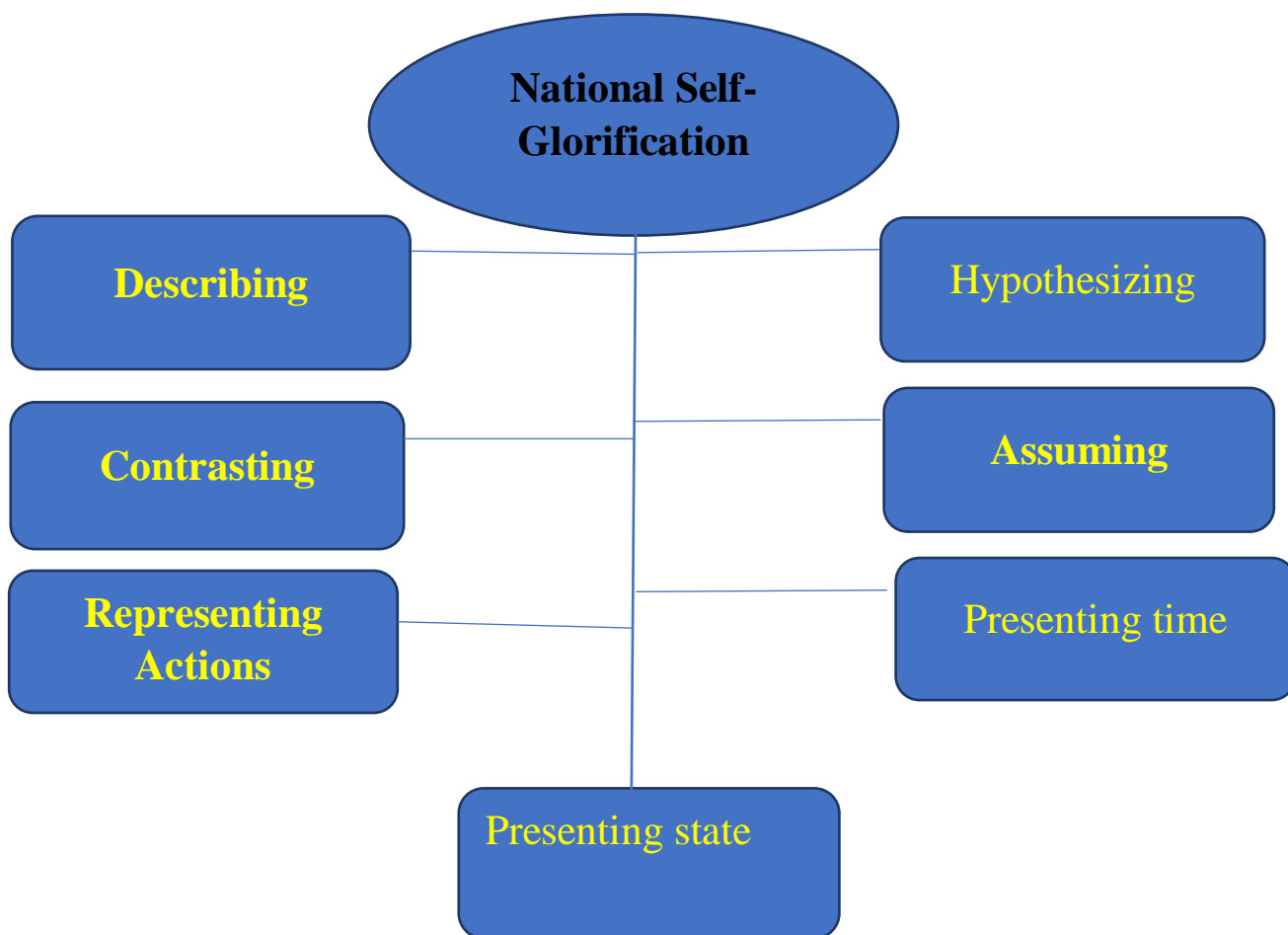
This is how a hypothetical situation can be produced through modality, which reflects explicitly the text producer’s point of view. A device refers to the process through which the text makers do not always provide the view of the world as it is.

**9. Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants**

This textual conceptual function gives consideration to how the speaker/ writer employs the power of language as Jeffries describes it as ‘potentially very manipulative of their ideologies as well as those of the reader.

**10. Representing Time, Space and Society.**

This device of analysis deals with how the text producers construct the world in space, time, and society dimensions. To access such dimensions, Jeffries depends on the deixis model. The significance of deixis lies in the information that it produces a particular interpretation of a particular utterance in particular contexts of a situation; on the contrary, the lack of this information yields misinterpretation.



**Figure of Adopted Model**

### **3.2 Data analysis**

#### **Trump's Tweet One**

*The migrant 'caravan' that is openly defying our border shows how weak & ineffective U.S. immigration laws are. Yet Democrats like Jon Tester continue to support the open borders agenda – Tester even voted to protect Sanctuary Cities. We need lawmakers who will put America First.*

Apr 30th 2018

In this tweet, Trump tries to describe his opponent, Jon Tester, as a supporter of open borders, describing him as the lawmaker who makes immigration laws ineffective and weak. He finally contrasts between Jon Tester and the lawmakers who will put America first. Through these descriptions and contrasts, Trump tries to make a comparison between the Democrats and Republicans, hinting that Republicans as lawmakers can only restore America's glory.

#### **Trump's Tweet Two**

*We are here on this beautiful spring day to unveil our plan to create a fair, modern & LAWFUL system of immigration for the U.S. If adopted, our plan will transform America's immigration system into the pride of our Nation and the envy of the modern world.*

May 16th 2019

Trump, in this tweet, describes his new immigration plan as fair, modern, and lawful. He, in turn, uses the modal verb **will** to hypothesize that America's immigration system will be transformed into the pride of the Nation and the envy of the modern world, glorifying America by these devices.

#### **Trump's Tweet Three**

*Thank you to the great Republican Senators who showed up to our mtg on immigration reform. We must BUILD THE WALL, stop illegal immigration, end chain migration & cancel the visa lottery. The current system is unsafe & unfair to the great people of our country - time for change!*

Jan 4th 2018

In this tweet, Trump makes a contrast between the Republicans' plan for immigration and, on the other hand, the Democrats' plan by using the modal verb **must** to hypothesize about building the wall, stopping illegal immigration, and ending chain migration. He describes the Republicans and the people of the country as great and, on the contrary, the system of the Democrats as unfair and unsafe. He glorifies the Republicans and considers them as competent to the great people of the country.

#### **Trump's Tweet Four**

*Jobs are returning, illegal immigration is plummeting, law, order and justice are being restored. We are truly making America great again!*

Apr 12th 2017

Trump here uses presenting positive action such as **Jobs are returning, illegal immigration is plummeting, law, order and justice are being restored** to achieve the macro-semantic strategy of positive self-representation as an introduction to achieve national self-glorification by the expression **We are truly making America great again**.

**Trump's Tweet Five**

*Do you believe that Hillary Clinton now wants Obamacare for illegal immigrants? She should spend more time taking care of our great Vets!*

Mar 18th 2016

Here, Trump tries to name and describe his opponent, Hillary Clinton, regarding her as careless about the great Vets. He glorifies his vets and, at the same time, undermines his opponent. He hypothesizes taking care of the great vets by using the modal verb **should**.

**Biden's Tweet One**

*Donald Trump sees the world from Park Avenue. I see it from where I came from: Scranton, Pennsylvania. It's why I'll fight every day as president to make this country work for middle class and low-income Americans — not just the wealthy and well-connected. — PolitiTweet.org*

Posted Nov. 2, 2020

In this tweet, Biden first names Donald Trump and tries to glorify his country and its citizens by making a contrast between what Trump does and what he does. He presents two state verbs, **see** for Trump and the action verb **fight** for himself, to make the contrast clearer.

**Biden's Tweet Two**

*I'm running to offer our country a different path. Not back to a past that never was, but to a future that lives up to our founding ideals and fulfills our true promise as a country. If you're with me, join our campaign today: <https://t.co/gnaFCACYrW> — PolitiTweet.org*

Posted May 26, 2019

Biden here tries to glorify his country by making a distance between the past and the future in which he presents the founding ideals and fulfills our true promise as a country. He employs two action verbs, running and offer, to achieve this purpose.

**Biden's Tweet Three**

*President Trump is once again welcoming foreign interference in our elections. This isn't about politics. It is a threat to our national security. An American President should not seek their aid and abet those who seek to undermine democracy. — PolitiTweet.org*

Posted June 13, 2019

Biden, in this tweet, first names Trump and attempts to glorify the country and, at the same time, presents America as a victim of foreign interference. He makes a comparison between Trump and himself, focusing on presenting the action verb **welcoming** and the state of **threat**. He assumes that the welcoming foreign interference is a threat to the national security.

**Biden's Tweet Four**

*America was founded on the ideals of equality, equity, & fairness—but has failed to live up to that promise for all people. In 2019, the unemployment rate for black people is almost twice that of white people. Children born poor are twice as likely to stay poor if they're black. — PolitiTweet.org*

Posted June 19, 2019

Here, Biden glorifies America by describing its ideals as qualities such as *equality, equity, & fairness*. He presents action verbs such as **was founded** and **has failed** to achieve this purpose, and at the same time, he presents time to focus on the contrasting qualities.

**Biden's Tweet Five**

*Trump continues to undermine our standing in the world. Our core values of inclusivity, diversity, respect for the rule of law, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion are under attack here at home and abroad. — PolitiTweet.org*

Posted June 19, 2019

Biden, in this tweet, tries to glorify America by viewing some of its positive values, and at the same time, he regards them as under attack by Trump, describing him as undermining the country's standing in the world, showing negative representation of Trump. He uses two state verbs, **continues** and **undermine**, to support his argument.

**Statistical Table**

The table below shows the frequencies of micro-semantic strategies:

<b>Trump</b>	
Micro strategy	Frequency
Describing	4
Hypothesizing	3
Contrasting	2
Presenting action	1
<b>Biden</b>	
Micro strategy	Frequency
Presenting action	4
Contrasting	3
Describing	2
Presenting time	1
Presenting state	1
Assuming	1

**4. Results**

Due to the statistical analysis, the study reaches the following results:

1. In employing national self-representation, Trump uses a describing device four times, hypothesizing three times, contrasting two times, and presenting action once.
2. Biden uses presenting action four times, contrasting three times, describing two times, presenting time once, presenting state once, and assuming once.
3. Exemplifying and enumerating, prioritizing, and negating are not employed in the tweets of both politicians. This is what does not verify the first hypothesis.
4. Both Trump and Biden employ the strategy of national self-glorification in order to show their interest and concern with America and the people of America and, at the same time, to prove their loyalty to the country. This is what proves the second hypothesis.
5. Describing devices are employed the most in Trump's tweets. Presenting action devices is the most employed in Biden's tweets. This is what proves the third hypothesis.
6. Presenting action device is the least employed in Trump's tweets while presenting time, presenting state, and assuming are the least employed devices in Biden's tweets. This is what does not prove the third hypothesis.

## 5. Discussions

The study discusses the following issues:

Trump employs the strategies of describing, hypothesizing, contrasting, and presenting action simultaneously in two ways. Firstly, to undermine his political opponents and to show his loyalty to the country by glorifying it. Biden employs the strategies of presenting action, contrasting, describing and presenting time, presenting state, and assuming different percentages from that of Trump in order to glorify America on the one hand and to undermine his opponents. Exemplifying and enumerating, prioritizing, and negating are not employed in the tweets of both politicians. These strategies seem less powerful or less effective than others; therefore, they are not used. American politicians Trump and Biden use the macro strategies of positive self-representation and negative other-representation to be a base to achieve national self-glorification. Both Trump and Biden employ the strategy of national self-glorification to serve their private interests by convincing their audiences of their loyalty to America. For Trump, describing strategy is the most powerful and effective strategy, and presenting action is the most powerful and effective strategy for Biden. For Trump, presenting action is the less powerful strategy. Assuming strategy is less powerful for Biden.

## 6. Conclusion

National self-glorification is a strategy that is employed frequently by American politicians. They use this strategy to present themselves as those who are concerned and interested in raising the status of their country. The study concludes that American politicians Trump and Biden use the macro strategies of positive self-representation and negative other-representation to be a base to achieve national self-glorification. In achieving these macro-strategies, several micro-strategies are employed, such as contrasting, presenting action, describing, presenting time and state, and hypothesizing. Positive self-presentation may regularly be applied by various forms of national self-glorification: Positive references to or praise for the own country, its principles, history, and traditions.

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