

**POLITICS, POWER AND IDEOLOGY IN AMERICAN COMEDY
LATE NIGHT TALK SHOWS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE
ANALYSIS**

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LATE NIGHT TALK SHOWS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE
ANALYSIS**

By
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Abstrak

Terdapat trend baru dalam rancangan temubual lewat malam (LNTSs) yang mengupas isu-isu politik. Presiden Amerika Syarikat, Barack Obama, mempamerkan pelbagai jenis hubungan kuasa dan ideologi politik dalam sesi wawancara beliau di rancangan temubual lewat malam meskipun LNTSs tersebut bersifat komedi. Walaupun banyak kajian telah dijalankan tentang hubungan antara LNTSs dengan wacana politik, namun kajian berhubung pemaparan kuasa dalam LNTSs agak terbatasi. Kajian ini menyelidik asaskuasa Obama, hubungan kuasa serta ideologi politik beliau yang diperlihatkan dalam dua LNTSs, iaitu *The Late Show with David Letterman* dan *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Kajian ini memberitumpuan terhadap cara Obama mempamerkan kuasanya menerusi wacana politik beliau dengan menggunakan pendekatan analisis wacana kritis yang merangkumi aspek multimodal. Kajian ini menganalisis penggunaan bahasa dan gerak-tangan Obama menerusi transkrip yang diperolehi daripada sesi wawancara dalam kedua-dua rancangan tersebut. Pendekatan linguistik sistem fungsional (SFL) digunakan untuk menganalisis penggunaan bahasa, manakala analisis gerak-tangan dilakukan berdasarkan model eklektik perlakuan bukan lisan (*eclectic models of non-verbal behaviors*). Kajian menunjukkan bahawa Obama telah mengupayakan asaskuasa yang berbeza-beza dalam wacana politik beliau. Selain itu, beliau turut menggunakan taktik mempengaruhi dan berbagai jenis hubungan kuasa dalam interaksi beliau dengan kedua-dua pengacara rancangan tersebut, iaitu David Letterman dan Jay Leno. Kajian ini turut mengenalpasti ideksi peribadi, masadan ruang yang digunakan oleh Obama untuk menentang ideologi domestik dan politik antarabangsa beliau. Kajian ini turut membina kerangka konsep yang memadankan kuasa dan ideologi dengan wacana politik dalam konteks bukan tradisional, seperti LNTSs untuk menyampaikan maklumat politik kepada khalayak yang lebih besar.

Kata kunci: Asaskuasa, Analisis wacana kritis, Taktik mempengaruhi, Wacana politik, Ideologi politik, Hubungan kuasa

Abstract

There appears to be a new trend in transferring political issues through late night talk shows (LNTSs). The President of the United States, Barack Obama, displayed different types of power relations and political ideologies during the interviews despite the comedic nature of LNTSs. Although studies have been done on the relation between LNTSs and political discourse, only a limited number of studies have looked at the portrayal of power in LNTSs. The purpose of this study is to investigate Obama's bases of power, his power relations and his use of deixis to present his political ideologies in the two American LNTSs; *The Late Show with David Letterman* and *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. This study focuses on Obama's portrayal of power in his political discourse (PD) using critical discourse analyses (CDA) approach that incorporates multimodal aspects. The study analyzes Obama's linguistic and gestural variables in the transcripts collected through interviews in the two shows. The analysis of the linguistic data applies the systemic functional linguistics approach (SFL) while the analysis of the gestural ones is done in association with eclectic models of non-verbal behaviors. This study has revealed the different bases of power which Obama used in his PD, the influence tactics and the types of power relations which he employed in relation to the shows' hosts; David Letterman and Jay Leno. The study has also identified the personal, temporal and spatial deixis which Obama used to present his ideologies on domestic and international politics. The study conceptualizes frameworks in which power and ideology in PD can fit into a non-traditional context such as LNTSs in order to transfer political information to a much wider audience.

Keywords: Bases of power, Critical discourse analysis, Influence tactics, Political discourse, Political ideology, Power relations

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Table of Contents

Permission to use	i
Abstrak	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi
List of Abbreviations	xii

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background of the Study	1
1.2	Problem Statement	5
1.3	Research Objectives	10
1.4	Research Questions	10
1.5	Significance of the Study	11
1.6	Scope of the Study	13
1.7	Researcher's Interest in the Study	17
1.8	Definition of Terms	19
1.9	Organization of the Study	21
1.10	Chapter Summary	21

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction	23
2.2	Mass Media and Society	23
2.3	Politics in Entertainment Television	26

2.4	American Television Talk Shows: An Overview	30
2.5	Late Night Talk Shows and the New Political Orientation	34
2.6	The Tonight Show with Jay Leno	39
2.7	The Late Show with David Letterman	41
2.8	Barack Obama: Personality and Career	43
2.9	Identity Meaning and Types	45
2.10	Institutional Roles and their Types in Television Talk Shows	49
2.11	Discursive Practices, Identity and Role Identifications	54
2.12	Questions in Late Night Talk Shows	57
2.13	The Concept of Face in Interaction	61
2.14	Turn-taking in Relation to Power Identification	68
2.15	Political Discourse and Ideology	72
2.16	Bases of Power and their Influence Tactics	79
2.17	Types of Power Relations in Interaction	88
2.18	Discourse, Politics and Critical Discourse Analysis	91
2.19	Approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis	95
	2.19.1 Michel Foucault's Governmentality Approach	96
	2.19.2 Norman Fairclough's Discourse as Social Practice Approach	97
	2.19.3 Teun van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Approach	103
	2.19.4 Ruth Wodak's Historical Approach	105
2.20	Halliday's Systematic Functional Linguistics	108
2.21	Deixes Types and Context of Situation	114
2.22	Multimodality: Linguistic and Gestural Aspects	121
	2.22.1 Facial Expressions	123

2.22.2	Gestures and Postures	127
2.23	Earlier Studies in the Related Areas	132
2.24	Chapter Summary	140

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	141
3.2	Research Design	141
3.3	Sample of the Study	145
3.4	Data collection	147
3.5	Data Analysis	151
3.6	Analytical Framework	154
3.7	Reliability and Validity	157
3.8	Ethical and Legal Considerations	160
3.9	Chapter Summary	161

CHAPTER FOUR ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1	Introduction	162
4.2	Analysis of the Interviews	163
4.3	A Critical Discourse Analysis of Obama's Bases of Power	164
4.3.1	David Letterman 2007 Interview	165
4.3.2	David Letterman 2008 Interview	168
4.3.3	David Letterman 2009 Interview	170
4.3.4	Jay Leno 2007 Interview	174
4.3.5	Jay Leno 2009 Interview	178

4.3.6	Jay Leno 2011 Interview	181
4.4	Discussion of Question One	184
4.5	A Critical Discourse Analysis of Power Relationships	191
4.5.1	David Letterman 2007 Interview	193
4.5.2	David Letterman 2008 Interview	204
4.5.3	David Letterman 2009 Interview	211
4.5.4	Jay Leno 2007 Interview	218
4.5.5	Jay Leno 2009 Interview	224
4.5.6	Jay Leno 2011 Interview	230
4.6	Discussion of Question Two	237
4.7	A Critical Discourse Analysis of Obama's use of Deixis	247
4.7.1	David Letterman 2007 Interview	248
4.7.2	David Letterman 2008 Interview	252
4.7.3	David Letterman 2009 Interview	257
4.7.4	Jay Leno 2007 Interview	260
4.7.5	Jay Leno 2009 Interview	264
4.7.6	Jay Leno 2011 Interview	267
4.8	Discussion of Question Three	270
4.9	Common Themes in Obama's Political Discourse	276
4.9.1	Obama's Themes at the Foreign Affairs Level	277
4.9.2	Obama's Themes at the Domestic Level	283
4.10	Chapter Summary	289

CHAPTER FIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1	Introduction	291
5.2	Findings and Conclusions	292
5.3	Significant Contributions	305
5.4	Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies	307
5.5	Chapter Summary	309
	References	310

List of Tables

Table 1:	Kinds of Discursive Practices	56
Table 2:	Political Fields and their Types	77
Table 3:	Power Taxonomy	82
Table 4:	Behavioral Influence Tactics, their Forms, Uses and Directions	85
Table 5:	Facial Expressions and their Non-verbal Cues	126
Table 6:	Gestures and Postures and their Inferences	131
Table 7:	Late Night Talk Shows and the Interviews Selected for the Study	147
Table 8:	Transcription Annotation Conventions	150
Table 9:	Common Themes in Obama's Political Discourse	277
Table 10:	Obama's Body Language in American Late Night Talk Shows	304

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Strategies of Face-Threatening Acts	66
Figure 5.1: A Conceptual Framework of the Bases of Power and Influence Tactics in Political Discourse.....	293
Figure 5.2: Power Relations Hierarchy of Political Discourse in Late Night Talk Shows	297
Figure 5.3: Processes in Association to Speech Acts	300
Figure 5.4: Interruptions Types in Late Night Talk Shows	302

List of Abbreviations

PD	Political Discourse
LNTS(s)	Late Night Talk Shows
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
FTA(s)	Face-Threatening Acts

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Recently, studying political behaviour and examining the exercise of power in a world of changing political ideologies, has received more attention in order to understand how power is exercised in relation to politics. Accordingly, many researchers believe that power, ideology and dominance can be best identified through political discourse (henceforth, PD) (Allan & Garrett, 1998; Bayram, 2010; Chilvers & Burgess, 2008; Howarth, 1999; Karlberg, 2005; Mayr, 2008; McGregor, 2003; Muralikrishnan, 2011; Newman & Clarke, 2009; Stoddart, 2007; van Dijk, 2006, 2008; Wareing, 2004; Wilson, 1990; Wodak, 1988; Woolard, 2010).

Schaffner (1996) classified PD according to two criteria including functional and thematic. As far as the functional aspect is concerned, PD is formulated through politics to fulfil different functions according to the different political activities performed by the politicians. It is thematic because it deals with political issues, relations and ideas. PD is identified as being limited to formal political contexts and political actors and this includes politicians, political institutions, governments, and political media (Abdul-Jabbar, 2005; Chilton, 2004; Hart, 2005; Schaffner, 1996; Wilson, 2004; Wodak, 2009). Nowadays, politics tries to go beyond the theories that limit the PD's context. In Muralikrishnan's (2011) own words,

Political discourse comprises all forms of communication in and by political institutions or actors and all communication with reference to political matters. Political public relations, both internal and external,

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