

The Figurative Language Found in the U.S Final Presidential
Debate 2020: Donald Trump VS Joe Biden
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This research contains figurative language elements which are used in the final presidential debate 2020: Donald Trump vs Joe Biden. The purpose of this research is to find out what are the types of figurative language used by the both debaters from the debate transcript and to analyze the meaning of those figurative languages found in that debate, the thesis writer uses the theory from Leech and uses descriptive qualitative research design. In this thesis, thirty eight figurative languages are found and six types figurative language are found, those are metaphor, hyperbole, irony, metonymy, personification, simile.

Keywords: Figurative Language, Debate, U.S Presidential Debate.

A. INTRODUCTION

Language is the critical instrument of communication in human life this cannot be divided from the human being. It expresses tens of thousands of signs as the combinations of form and meaning (Eifring and Theil 2005). Eifring and Theil state that language also has several functions such as to get interaction and communication with other human life, for example: to express their feeling or emotion in something or somebody, showing their existence, conveying their ideas or thought in express opinions or criticize. (Kerf 1997:1) says that language is a means of communication between community members in the form of sound. Some might say that there is another tool of communication besides language, for example, the use of tools and symbols but these have weaknesses. Due to these facts, people realize that language is taking the most important role in their life because the human being is a social creature that needs somebody else in their life. That is why language can be used in every aspect.

According to Kreidler (1998:19) language is a system of symbols through which people communicate. The examples of symbols are spoken, written, or sign with the hands. The human being is a social creature that is why they will always need language to communicate with each other. Harmer (2007) says that language is used widely for communication between people

who do not share the same first (or even second) language. It means that language becomes a critical need in human life in making a good relationship with others.

Posner and Meggle in their book *Status and Function of Languages and Language Varieties* state that:

“The function of a language is what people actually do with it. The status of a language depends on what people can do with it. Status therefore is the sum total of what you can do with a language – legally, culturally, economically, politically and, of course, demographically”. (Posner and Meggle, 1989:4)

Based on the quotation above, the thesis writer concludes that language is communicating media to each other that can be easier way to understanding and accepting what are people trying to say and to avoid miscommunication and misinterpretation in communicating and language is taking an important role in human being in every aspect of life, such as technology, education, sciences, politics, economics and art, it means that language can be used and expressed in every aspect. There are two ways to deliver the meaning of language itself. Those are through pragmatics and figurative language.

1. According to (Leech, 1999:7) says that pragmatics can be usefully defined as the study of how utterance has meaning in situations, it means that the message that we get is directly and does not need any more supposition.
2. According to Reaske (1996:33) says that using figurative language is making imaginative description in fresh ways, it means using figurative language is totally needs an imaginative description due to the message that we get. Otherwise use suppositions, we cannot get the real meaning of that's the message.

The use of language in the field of politics can be seen in many patterns one of them is through debate. According to the book of Chilton entitled *Analyzing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice* (2004:17) says that:

“While the debate remains very much open, two clear lines of thought have been established, and both have implications for thinking about the relationship between language and politics.”

Another example of how important debate is in the field of politics, we can see in the book from Hinck entitled *Televised Presidential Debate in Changing Media Environment* [2 volumes] (2019:1) says that:

“Debates are important events in presidential campaign”

Based on the two quotations above the thesis writer concludes that debate is an example of the use of language from a political perspective and the status of the debate itself is very important to be implemented for presidential candidates who become the next president in a country.

The reason why the writer’s taking the final debate of U.S presidential election 2020 between Donald Trump vs Joe Biden is because the thesis writer assumes that the use of figurative language might be used by both debaters.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The thesis writer will apply a qualitative research method in his study. The use of qualitative research method is taken to obtain the data such as sentences, words, clauses in the U.S final presidential debate 2020: Donald Trump VS Joe Biden which are classified as figurative language. The source of data is the text script of the presidential election debate.

C. ANALYSIS

1. The Figurative Language Spoken by Donald Trump

Data 1. I do not think we are going to have a dark winter at all. We are opening up our country. We have learned and studied and understand the disease.

The sentences above are categorized as figurative language Metaphor. It was used by the speaker in order to create an over and convert comparison of two things. In this case is, the situation happened in U.S America with the weather as the comparison.

Data 2. I will say this, if you go and look at what is happened to New York, it is a ghost town. It is a ghost town.

The sentence above is classified as Metaphor. It was used by the debater in order to create an overt and convert comparison of two things. In this case is, one of the cities in U.S America that is New York and Ghost Town which is not real.

Data 3. He is the vice-president of the United States and his son, his brother and his other brother are getting rich. They are like a vacuum cleaner. They are sucking up money.

The sentences above are categorized as figurative language Simile. It was used by the speaker in order to compare two essentially unlike things, the main difference between Simile and Metaphor is that simile uses the words “like” and “as”. The speaker compares human being with non human being.

Data 4. Let’s talk about sitting around the table. Come on, Joe. You could do better.

The sentence above is classified as Metonymy. It was used by the debater in order to substitute the name of one idea to closely associated with it. In this case is “Let’s talk about sitting around the table” it has no meaning in literal perspective but it has hidden meaning in figurative language perspective.

Data 5. So do not give me the stuff about how you are this innocent baby. Joe, that calling you a corrupt politician-.

The sentence above is categorized as figurative language Metaphor. It was used by the speaker in order to create an overt and covert comparison to his opponent. The speaker compares a mature man with a baby.

Data 6. Whether it is four months or a lifetime, nobody’s been able to say that, but I’m immune. More and more people are getting better.

The sentences above are categorized as figurative language Hyperbole. It was used by the speaker in order to make an exaggeration in the terms of number, size, or degree. In this case, the speaker makes an exaggeration in the term of number as we can see in the sentence “More and more people are getting better”.

Data 7. They both want you to lose because there has been nobody tougher to Russia between the sanctions, nobody tougher than me on Russia.

The sentence above is categorized as figurative language Hyperbole. It was used by the speaker in order to make an exaggeration in the terms of number, size, or degree. In this case, the speaker makes an exaggeration in the term of degree as

we can see in the speaker statement “there has been nobody tougher to Russia between the sanctions, nobody tougher than me on Russia”.

Data 8. They want to knock down buildings and build new buildings with little, tiny, small windows and many other things.

The sentence above is stated as figurative language Hyperbole. It was used by the speaker to make an exaggeration in the terms of number, size, or degree. In this case, the speaker makes an exaggeration in the term of size based on the speaker statement “build new buildings with little, tiny, small windows and many other things”.

2. The Figurative Language Spoken by Joe Biden

Data 1. We are in a situation now where the New England Medical Journal, one of the serious, most serious journals in the whole world said for the first time ever that the way this president has responded to this crisis has been absolutely tragic.

The sentence above is stated as figurative language Irony. It was applied by the debater in order to make an expression that postulates double audience. The speaker uses this figurative language to mock and give counter-attack to his debate opponent indirectly.

Data 2. There is not another serious scientist in the world who thinks it is going to be over soon.

The sentence above is stated as figurative language Irony. It was applied by the debater in order to make an expression that postulates double audience. The speaker uses this figurative language to mock and give counter-attack to his debate opponent directly.

Data 3. And to the best of my knowledge, I do not think the President has said anything to Putin about it. I do not think he is talking to them a lot. I do not think he is said a word. I do not know why he has not said a word to Putin about it, and I do not know what he has recently said, if anything, to the Iranians. My guess is he would probably be more outspoken with regard to the Iranians.

The sentences above are categorized as figurative language Irony. It was used by the debater in order to make an expression that postulates double audience. The speaker uses this figurative language to mock and give counter-attack to his debate

opponent directly.

Data 4. His buddy Rudy Guiliani. He is being used as a Russian pawn.

The sentence above is stated as figurative language Simile. It was used by the speaker in order to make a comparison of two essentially unlike things because the speaker used the word “like” or “as” when comparing it. The speaker compares living-object with non-living-object in this case is a person with pawn in the chess.

Data 5. But a Black parent, no matter how wealthy or how poor they are, has to teach their child, “When you are walking down the street, do not have a hoodie on when you go across the street.

The sentence above is categorized as figurative language Irony. It was used by the speaker in order to create an expression that postulates double audience. The speaker tries to show the racist situation that happened in U.S America that felt by the black community.

D. CONCLUSION

After finishing the analysis in chapter 4. The thesis writer will put the answer of the statements of the problem that has been decided, those are: (1) What kinds of figurative language are used by Donald Trump in the U.S final presidential debate 2020? (2) What kinds of figurative language are used by Joe Biden in the U.S final presidential debate 2020?. The answer to the first question is Donald Trump used 6 types of figurative language in the U.S final presidential debate 2020, those are Metaphor, Hyperbole, Metonymy, Personification, and Simile. The answer to the second question is Joe Biden used 3 kinds of figurative language in the U.S final presidential debate 2020, those are Irony, Personification, and Simile. The use of the figurative language for both sides is not only the same as a theory but they use the figurative language to make resistance to his opponent, to give a counter-attack, to motivate the people and some examples obtained by the thesis writer only follow the definition of figurative language.

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