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Constructing the Golden Age: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Trump's 2025 Inaugural Address

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ABSTRACT

This paper critically analyzed the second inaugural speech by Donald Trump on January 20, 2025, to understand how his rhetoric creates power, mobilization, and support. The aim of the research was to examine linguistic, discursive, and sociopolitical aspects of Trump golden-age vision to identify the latent ideological, political, and social aspects. The qualitative research design was utilized. Foucault theory of discourse and power alongside a model of three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Fairclough were used as the theoretical frameworks of the study. The data was gathered form of publicly available transcripts and recordings. This study used thematic code and textual, discursive and contextual analysis to discuss the interplay of power, ideology and language. Linguistic analysis shows that Trump utilized emotionally charged language, metaphors, and rhetorical repetition that he used to build a story about national renewal and to position himself as a transformative leader. His agenda is justified through intertextual allusions to past accomplishments like Manifest Destiny and the policies of William McKinley, which helps to build in-group solidarity. Trump discursively replicates nationalist and populist ideologies by using the radical and corrupt establishment as the central hurdle to the rise of America. The results concluded to larger sociopolitical trends, such as right-wing populism, political polarization, and anti-globalist ideas, as they emphasize the way in which the rhetoric of Trump escalates crises to solidify power and provide support to exclusionary policies. This research contributes to the study of the functioning of political discourse as a means of power structure, nation building, and resistance mobilization.

Introduction

Political rhetoric is a potent means with the help of which leaders develop images of national identity, legitimize power, and determine the priorities of the policy. The second term of Donald Trump as the 47th President of the United States, which started January 20, 2025, was a continuation of his divisive rhetoric based on national renewal and opposition to institutional decay. His first speech this time made his presidency sound like a crusade to bring about a golden age to America and make the establishment that was radical and corrupt as being the components of the stagnation of the American society. This paper critically assesses the discursive creation of this vision of a golden age by Trump and examines the way language is used to consolidate authority, create a response and create division in an already divided country.

The paper is based on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach by Fairclough (2013), which is used to examine the connection between language, ideology, and power in the rhetoric of Trump. Discourse is often employed by political figures to position themselves as agents of change and project themselves as key in bringing change to the country in a way that places their leadership as essential (Chilton, 2004). The rhetoric approach used by Trump can be regarded as a typical instance of populist communication, where dichotomies, including us versus them, and nostalgia can be used to appeal to the masses. Through a critical exploration of the linguistic, discursive, and contextual aspects of the speech made by Trump, this paper aims to find out how his rhetoric fits or distorts the current social-political relationships.

Populist foundations, nationalist overtures, and a steady focus on reversing perceived national decline have been broadly typified of the political rhetoric of Donald Trump. In the first term, the rhetoric of Trump focused on such slogans as Make America Great Again, developing the problems of the country as the outcome of the elite policy that was destroying the traditional American values (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017). His reelection in 2024 and further inauguration in 2025 was a new attempt to be considered a savior, able to restore prosperity in America and destroy the apparatuses of a radical and corrupt establishment.

The idea of a golden age by Trump has its basis on the populist approach of creating a sense of nostalgia to forge a national identity based on historical ideals (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). This rhetorical technique is especially popular during times of political/economic instability, when leaders position themselves as bringers of renewal in opposition to threats to national sovereignty and cultural identity (Moffitt, 2016). The inaugural address of Trump in 2025 builds upon these themes by mixing anti-globalist, protectionist, and anti-elitist stories to create a vision of the renewal that his political base can easily relate to. His presentation of the so-called golden age as a contrast to institutionalized corruption is not an isolated case in terms of the right-wing populism discourse, in which the opposition to politics is presented as an existential threat to national development (Wodak, 2015).

The importance of Trump rhetoric is not limited to its immediate political consequences, but should be viewed within the context of the major global tendencies in the development of populism and the polarization of the political discourse. Research in political communication has proven that such rhetoric tends to deepen partisanship, discredit conflicting opinions, and redefine people's confidence in democratic organizations (Ekström & Morton, 2021).

Scope of the Study

This paper provides a critical analysis of the second speech of Donald Trump through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to how he applies rhetoric to establish power, create opposition, and support the ideological accounts of disenfranchising. The field of analysis will involve the close analysis of the linguistic devices, such as the lexicon choice, metaphors, and rhetoric devices that will describe the story of the golden age and render the leadership of Trump to sound transformative. It also contains a discursive explanation of how the speech is founded on intertextual references to American history and cultural ideals, imitating the thinking of nationalist and populist. Furthermore, the paper narrows down the rhetoric of Trump to the broader sociopolitical context of contemporary problems, such as the rise of right-wing populism, political polarization, and anti-globalism in order to present its implications on the national identity and the system of governance. Although it is only one speech that is analyzed, its results give important information about the processes of political discourse formation of the power relations in the society and political ideologies. The combination of Foucault theory of discourse and power with three-dimensional CDA model by Fairclough, the given study will provide an in-depth insight into understanding the way language functions as a means of authorization legitimizing, creating rifts in society, and forming opinion among people to add to the overall body of political communication and discourse analysis.

Problem Statement

Political speaking is central to creating the perception of the masses, defining the relations of power, and supporting the ideological discourse, and it is most prominent at the moments of nation importance like in the inaugural speech. The second inaugural address of Donald Trump (2025), which will take place on January 20, 2025, shows a sophisticated game of language, ideology, and power, creating a narrative of the golden age and delegitimizing the opposition of the institutions. Nevertheless, the mechanisms through which the rhetoric of Trump reproduces exclusionary discourses, populist and nationalist discourses, and shares certain sociopolitical tendencies, including political polarization and anti-globalist sentiments, are still under-investigated. Most of the literature on political discourse does not adequately consider how linguistic strategies and sociopolitical context can be integrated to understand populism or it tends to study linguistic strategies independently of sociopolitical contexts and historical ideologies. The given gap further reflects the necessity of a thorough study of the Trump speech that would explore the effect of his words on building authoritative power, promoting in-group unity, and excluding other possible views. This paper aims to reveal the linguistic, discursive, and sociopolitical aspects of Trump rhetoric with the help of Foucault theory of discourse and power and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model by Fairclough to understand how political leaders employ discourse to legitimize power and redefine society identities and interests and reinforce ideological dominance in polarized societies.

Research Questions

1) How do the linguistic features and rhetorical strategies in Trump's second inaugural address construct the "golden age" narrative and legitimize his authority while delegitimizing the "corrupt establishment"?
2) In what ways does Trump's inaugural address draw on and reproduce existing populist and nationalist discourses to resonate with his supporters and mobilize resistance against institutional opposition?

3) How does Trump's "golden age" vision reflect and reinforce broader sociopolitical trends, such as the rise of right-wing populism, political polarization, and anti-globalist ideologies in the United States?

Literature Review

Analysis of political discourse is one of the most important fields of inquiry especially in the study of how leaders can use language to build power, influence people and affirm ideologies. Political speeches are important occasions that enable a leader to define his vision, cement the idea of power, and appeal to the societal interests. The second inaugural speech of Donald Trump is an abundant subject to study; the speech incorporates the elements of populism, nationalism, and exclusionary rhetoric to create a national renewal story. To critically analyze this speech, it is of critical importance to place it in the larger context of discourse, power, and ideology (with particular attention of the rhetoric of populism, nationalist discourse, and critical discourse analysis, CDA).

This literature review will examine some of the important theoretical and empirical works that furnish insights into language and power interrelation in the political arena. It starts with an analysis of the role of populist rhetoric in establishing binary oppositions, i.e. the people versus the elite as defined by Laclau (2005) and other theorists. It proceeds, in turn, to the use of historical and cultural narratives to justify authority based on research on the discourse of nationalism (Bonikowski, 2017; Wodak, 2015). It also includes the frameworks of critical discourse analysis, specifically Foucault (1980) and Fairclough (2013) to point out the interplay of language within the text, practices of discourse, and social situations.

Ashraf et al. (2024) analyzed the rhetoric of Trump on the conclusion of Afghanistan war and defeat of ISIS and found the ways in which the strategic language establishes narratives of victorious outcomes and justifies interventionist policies with moral and nationalistic calls. Corresponding to these views, Ashraf et al. (2024) used Fairclough three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis framework on the 2024 U.S. presidential debate and found out how the ideological framing and interdiscursive strategies are used to maintain authority and construct political consensus. All these studies put together demonstrate that the Trump discourse in all contexts, whether it is inaugurations, war, or debates, uses cohesive, metaphorical and ideological processes to project dominance, moral authority and a vision of national revival, a critical point of departure in the analysis of the Trump 2025 inaugural address in constructing the Golden Age. Through the synthesis of these views, the literature review provides the background to analyzing the Trump speech, showing that his rhetoric concurs with larger sociopolitical processes and helps to build the power and identity in the modern political communication.

Theoretical Framework

The theory applied to this research is based on the theory of discourse and power as developed by Michel Foucault and three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model presented by Norman Fairclough that offers a wide range of perspectives to analyze the way the second inaugural address of Donald Trump builds power, organizes opposition and shapes ideological discourses.

Foucault's Theory of Discourse and Power

The conception of the discourse by Foucault (1980) considers language as an instrument that creates and maintains power relations in the society. Power, in the view of Foucault is not only repressive but also productive in the sense that it defines knowledge, norms and practices in the form of discursive constructions. This paper uses the concepts provided by Foucault to examine the ways the rhetoric of Trump can be considered a control mechanism as it frames the challenges of the nation and the interpretation of the golden age discourse. The most important to Foucault theory is the relational aspect of power where those in power make power to be perpetuated by the discourse that establishes the truth of some and relegates other people. In his speech, Trump, e.g., illegitimizes the corrupted and radical establishment and places his leadership in the role of the moral and political savior of the nation. The mechanisms of exclusion in limiting the voicelessness of dissenting voices is a concept introduced by Foucault that is especially applicable in interpreting how the discourse of Trump elicits in-group and out-group identities.

Foucault Discourse and Power

The research paper uses the theory of discourse and power by Michel Foucault as the theoretical basis of critiquing the second inaugural speech of Donald Trump. The concept of power formulated by Foucault is especially appropriate to the discovery of the functioning of language as not only a means of communication but of structuring and upholding social formations and ideology. According to Foucault (1980), power in his seminal works is diffuse, relational and encoded in discourse, a tool by which knowledge, norms and orders of social stratification are created and strengthened. This model offers a critical perspective within the scrutiny of the ways in which the Trump dreams of a golden age take over the power and inspires a rebellion against the corrupted establishment.

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of CDA

The three-dimensional model proposed by Fairclough (2013) is a complement to the theory by Foucault as it offers a logical means of examining discourse on three levels: the textual, the discursive, and the social. The textual aspect concentrates the linguistic aspects of the speech that Trump delivers, including the use of words, metaphors, and rhetoric to build authority and recruit the support. The dimension of discursive practice considers how the rhetoric of Trump appeals to and recreates the discourses of nationalism and populism, which makes the agenda of Trump connect with the culture and history absolutely to appeal to his audience. The social practice dimension puts the speech of Trump in its wider sociopolitical environment, examining how it is reproduced or how it influences power structures of the society, including the emergence of right-wing populism or political polarization.

This structure allows conducting an in-depth analysis of how the discourse of Trump builds power, legitimizes power, and reinforces exclusionary ideologies by combining the Foucault focus on the productive nature of the discourse with that offered by Fairclough on the multi-level analytical model. The concept of power and exclusion presented by Foucault contributes to the understanding of binary framing created by Trump (e.g., us vs. them), whereas the model by Fairclough gives a methodological framework to consider not only the micro-level aspect of the text but also its macro-level sociopolitical context.

Power as Relational and Discursive

According to Foucault (1980), power is not centralized and held by individuals but it is relational and exercised in the form of networks of discourse. With the correct use of language, power is created within the rhetoric of Trump in a way that the corrupt establishment is portrayed as an illegitimate institution and the Trump administration is the only agent of change that can turn around the decline of America. This is a relational dimension of power that can be observed in the binaries that Trump applies (us against them) and which are useful in the process of forming social identities and justification of actions. Foucault thinks that discourse does not only mirror but also constitutes knowledge systems, which maintain power relations, so the speech delivered by Trump became a place where ideological dominance is produced.

Discourse as a Site of Control and Resistance

According to Foucault (1972), discourse is a place of counteraction and control. The rhetorical expressions used by Trump such as the golden age and the radical and corrupt establishment is an example of how political leaders utilize discourse to establish the societal norm and ostracize those who would challenge this norm. This is congruent to the Foucault rationale of the discursive formations that define what is thinkable in a particular situation. By framing his adversaries as having been corrupt and radical, Trump not only whitewashes their viewpoints but also centralizes his power, and at the same time, he builds a narrative of resistance that makes his leadership indispensable in returning the country to national values.

The Role of Knowledge and Truth

Foucault (1980) focuses on the connections between power, knowledge and truth and states that the truth is not an objective reality but is created through knowledge discourses that are reproduced and reproduce power structures. According to Trump, the golden age is one of the manufactured truths that enables him to tap into shared nostalgia and justify his policy agenda. Trump creates a discourse appealing to the values of his political base by appealing to a vision of renewal based on old ideals, and excluding other possible understandings of the problems of America.

Critical Application to Trump's 'Golden Age' Vision

Applying Foucault theory to the first speech of Trump, it is possible to observe that the rhetoric is the field of power production and struggle. The vision of the golden age constitutes a historical narrative, which justifies the validity of the Trump policy and invalidity of the opposing forces, which concurs with the opinion of Foucault on discourse as a tool of creation of social reality. In addition, binaries, nostalgia, moral framing used strategically in the speech justifies how political leaders use discourse to exert control besides masking the relationship of power behind the veil that keeps power intact.

Populist Rhetoric and Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a common discursive resource that populist leaders use to build a community identity and mobilize the masses. The appeal to the golden age adopted by Trump fits the theory of populism by Laclau (2005) that focuses on creating an adversarial relationship between the people and the elite. Nostalgia is also used to construct a perceived golden past, as a contrast to a rotten present, generating a moral imperative of the leader to the concept of renewal (Mudde, 2017). Applying this strategy, Trump appeals to the so-called nostalgic nationalism defined by

Bonikowski (2017) as a situation when leaders are using the appeal to cultural identity and promising economic and political sovereignty.

Framing Power and Resistance

Framing techniques can be the foundation of political speech, which builds power relations and pulls out a protest. According to Entman (1993), framing refers to the personal process of presenting reality in a specific manner to allow a particular understanding to prevail. The rhetoric of Trump is focused on the radical and corrupt establishment as the main hindrance to the renewal of the nation, and it, in effect, establishes an out-group in order to legitimize his political agenda. This is in line with Reisigl and Wodak (2001) findings that such rhetorical strategies as predication (assigning negative characteristics to the opponents) and argumentation (justification of their actions) are used by political leaders to consolidate power.

The Role of Ideology in Political Discourse

Discourse is ideological in nature and it helps to either reinforce or undermine the current power structures. According to Fairclough (2013), political speeches are one of the most important locations where ideologies are manifested, disputed, and normalized. The example of this process is the depiction of the establishment as corrupt by Trump and his administration as the generator of a golden age. Trump builds the narrative that justifies his leadership and undermines institutional Critique by integrating his rhetoric with an overarching populist and nationalist theory.

Trump's Political Discourse and Rhetorical Strategies

The influence of the Trump rhetoric cannot be perceived outside of the context of the media in which it is practiced. Happer and Philo (2013) note how the media plays a central role in intensifying the political discourse, making people think in a certain way, and maintaining ideological factions. Most of the speeches by Trump are crafted with the media in mind and targeted at simple wording and provocative remarks to guarantee his message is widely covered and appeals to the masses (Kreis, 2017).

The analysis of the Donald Trump political discourse has rendered the complexity of the connection between language, ideology and power obvious. The article by Khan et al. (n.d.) is an in-depth linguistic examination of the inaugural speech of Trump in 2017 by using the model of cohesion of Halliday and Hasan (1976). In their analysis, they discovered that the talk of Trump relies heavily on the cohesive devices such as repetition, reference, and conjunctions to generate a unity and emphasize on collective identity. These are the words that are employed to frame him as a leader who was restoring national unity and spirit. Continuing on this question, Ashraf et al. (2025) analyzed the Oval Office communication between Trump, Zelenskyy, and Vance in the context of Political Discourse Analysis that was developed by Chilton (1996). Their findings revealed that Trump and Vance used the deictic framing and war metaphors to advance the heightened U.S superiority, discredit the other discourses and gain symbolic control on the discourse that had high stakes in diplomacy.

Though there are a number of researches discussing the language of Donald Trump in the light of linguistics, rhetoric and ideology, there is still an important gap in comprehending how the language changes in response to varying political situations and historical events. His 2017 inaugural address (Khan et al., 2019) and his strategic language use in the context of international

diplomacy and war coverage (Ashraf et al., 2025) as well as ideological framing on presidential debates and war discourse (Ashraf et al., 2024) have been investigated in previous studies. Nevertheless, in these studies, much attention was paid to the earlier periods in the presidency of Trump or certain events, and how his rhetoric has evolved in his second inaugural speech (2025) which has become a significant moment in his second term in office and the entrenching of his populist political ideas and nationalistic aspirations. The unavailability of an in-depth assessment of the integration of Foucault discourse-power theory with the three-dimensional CDA model by Fairclough can be viewed as the gap in the analysis of how the subsequent political discourse of Trump contributes to a golden age narrative, which helps to legitimize power, mobilize exclusionary ideologies, and reproduce the sensation of right-wing populism in an ever more polarized sociopolitical context. Such lack of clarity creates the necessity of another critical analysis of the verbal 2025 inaugural rhetoric by Trump in a multidimensional format to demonstrate how language acts as a control mechanism, as well as ideological reproduction.

Methodology

The research design was qualitative, which is grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as in which the theory of discourse and power premised on the work of Michel Foucault is the theoretical base of the research. The methodology will be critical in examining how the story of the golden age, power legitimization, and mobilization of resistance against the corrupt establishment was created in the second inaugural address by Donald Trump. The method of the analysis is linguistic strategies, discursive practices, and their sociopolitical implications, a combination of the textual analysis with the contextual and intertextual one.

Research Design

This qualitative study is based on the interpretivist approach, which concentrates on the meaning and the power relations inherent in the speech of Trump. The selection of CDA is in line with the purpose of the research which is to unravel the interaction of language, ideology and power especially in political discourse. This analysis combines an idea of Foucault (1980) on the conceptualization of power and discourse with three-dimensional model proposed by Fairclough (2013) in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the data.

Data Collection

The main source of data is the second inaugural address of Donald Trump that will be delivered on January 20, 2025. The speech is publicly circulated in the form of official transcripts, video tapes, and reliable media channels. The text is selected due to its importance as one of the political events during which Trump presents his vision, policies, and ideological views in front of both national and international audience.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis in this research paper involved a four-step process that was conducted in a systematic manner to analyze the second inaugural address by Donald Trump in details. The first one was the review and transcription of the speech in search of the major themes and rhetoric structures and features of the language with the assistance of other sources, such as media commentaries and academic articles that might assist one to comprehend the context. In the second step, a coding framework has been developed based on the concepts of Foucault about the

discourse and power and the three-dimensional approach by Fairclough to conduct the thematic analysis of linguistic, discursive, and social facets. The third stage applied Fairclough model to analyze the text on the basis of its textual, discursive and social attributes by using Foucault concepts in discourse building of power and ideology. Finally, the fourth step generalized findings and found the power of language in the Trump administration to form authority, opposition and the power of ideological stories and provided a more nuanced view of the sociopolitical meaning of the speech.

Data Analysis

The second inaugural speech by Donald Trump was analyzed critically to determine the linguistic, discursive, and sociopolitical features that are incorporated in his speech. The development of Foucault theory of discourse and power and Fairclough three dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are the theories that have been used to analyze the use of language as a process of establishment of authority and resistance and ideological justification of stories. Being a political statement and reflection of a more general sociopolitical trend, this speech can be analyzed in a systematic process to learn about the prevalent themes, devices of rhetoric, and discursive patterns.

The method of analysis of the research provides a more emphasis on the intercourse between the micro-level language features and the macro-level sociopolitical environment. Trump appeals to the use of emotionally colored diction, repetition, symbolic metaphor linguistically, which is addressed in order to understand how his rhetoric establishes a picture of national resurrection and makes the reader believe that his rule is a changer of destiny. The discursive analysis evaluates the appeal to historical and cultural narratives of the speech to follow the nationalist and populist policies, and to shun the opposite perspectives. The speech is placed in the context of the contemporary problematic issues of political polarization, anti-globalist positioning, and right-wing populism in the social layer of the research to evaluate its further usage.

It is on this multi-dimensional concept that the analysis of the data would allow drawing out a faint image of the rhetoric of Trump is establishing and sustaining patterns of power, social fissures, and ideological flows, at work in constructing a polarizing vision of nationality and governance.

Table 1: Trump's 2025 Inaugural Address

Dimension	**Focus of Analysis**	**Examples from Speech**	**Interpretation**
Textual Dimension	Lexical Choices	-"Golden Age of America," "corrupt establishment," "radical," "common sense," "liquid gold," "Liberation Day."	These terms construct a polarized worldview. "Golden Age" invokes nostalgia and optimism, while "corrupt establishment" demonizes opposition. "Liberation Day" frames the speech as revolutionary, reinforcing power and moral authority.
	Rhetorical Strategies	Repetition of "America," "will," and "we." - Binary oppositions: "us vs. them" (e.g., citizens	Repetition emphasizes certainty and authority. Binary oppositions strengthen in-group solidarity and delegitimize external entities (e.g., "establishment" or "criminal aliens"),

		vs. establishment).	justifying aggressive policy measures.
	Framing Devices	"Sovereignty will be reclaimed," "safety will be restored," "sunlight is pouring."	Frames the administration as restorative and divinely inspired, positioning Trump as a savior figure while simplifying complex societal problems into solvable issues under his leadership.
Discursive Practice	Intertextuality	References to Martin Luther King Jr., historical U.S. values, and past policy successes (e.g., "Remain in Mexico").	Trump aligns his vision with iconic figures (King) and policy legacies to gain moral and historical legitimacy, despite significant ideological contrasts with those references.
	Discursive Strategies	Appeals to patriotism ("America will flourish," "We will make his dream come true") and fear ("vicious weaponization").	Patriotism appeals to unity and pride, while fear-based language mobilizes support by portraying an urgent need for change.
	Audience Engagement	Direct address to specific groups: "African Americans," "Hispanic Americans," and "wealthiest individuals."	Strategically broadens inclusivity to demonstrate unity, while thanking specific demographics for their support creates a perception of nationwide alignment with his agenda.
Social Practice	Sociopolitical Context	References to inflation, energy crises, hurricanes, fires, and border issues.	Situates the discourse within current crises to frame his administration as a solution to both domestic and international problems, capitalizing on discontent with previous governance.
	Power Dynamics	"I will declare a national emergency at our southern border." - "I have no higher responsibility than to defend..."	Trump asserts executive authority and centralizes decision-making power, positioning himself as a decisive leader acting on behalf of the people, while minimizing the role of institutional checks and balances.
	Mechanisms of Exclusion	"Criminal aliens," "foreign gangs," and "mental institutions."	Frames out-groups as existential threats, justifying exclusionary and militaristic policies, which reinforce in-group identity and national sovereignty narratives.
Power and Exclusion	Identity Construction	- "We will not forget our Constitution, and we will not forget our God."	Constructs a moral and religious identity for his administration, aligning governance with traditionalist and nationalist ideologies while alienating secular or progressive viewpoints.
	Legitimization	"I was saved by God	Claims divine intervention as

	of Actions	to make America great again."	justification for his leadership, elevating his authority beyond political legitimacy to a moral and spiritual mandate.
	Control Through Policy Language	"I will sign historic executive orders," "marshal the vast powers," "drill, baby, drill."	Policy language emphasizes immediacy and decisiveness, showcasing his administration as action-oriented and unrelenting in achieving its goals, consolidating control over national narratives and governance structures.

The discourse of national transformation that Donald Trump has constructed in his second inaugural speech fits the research questions about linguistic, discursive, and sociopolitical aspects. By using emotionally charged words and repetitive rhetoric devices, Trump is able to justify his authority and also at the same time project the so-called golden age as a reality that will occur during his reign and also denial of authority to the allegedly radical and corrupt establishment. The use of language such as Liberation day and golden age stir up a sense of nostalgia and patriotism and this works to strengthen his sense of in-group identity among his supporters. His allusions to Martin Luther King Jr. and traditional values intertextuality borrow moral and historical legitimacy, even though the ideologies are opposite to each other. This is in line with the query of how his discourse engages and replicates nationalist as well as populist discourses. The location of his speech is to current crises, e.g. inflation, failure of public health, and border insecurity, which makes his administration the only solution, conditional on the interactions of power and social political trends. His binary oppositions (e.g., us vs. them) and processes of exclusion (e.g., criminal aliens vs. mental institutions) create a discourse of fear and urgency, which justifies the use of aggressive politics and consolidates his powers as an executive. After all, the speech is a power production site wherein the speech is not merely reflected, but actually constitutes the sociopolitical reality, with the vision of unity and control being built on the premise of exclusionary populist rhetoric.

Table 2: Trump's 2025 Inaugural Address

Dimension	**Focus of Analysis**	**Examples from Speech**	**Interpretation**
Textual Dimension	Lexical Choices	- "Golden age," "manifest destiny," "liberate our nation," "exceptionalism," "ambition," "God bless America."	These terms construct a narrative of national pride, nostalgia, and divine inspiration, presenting Trump as the leader of a transformative era and reinforcing national exceptionalism.
	Rhetorical Strategies	Repetition: "We will," "America," "thank you." - Metaphors: "lifeblood of a great nation," "carry our flag into new horizons."	Repetition emphasizes certainty and leadership, while metaphors evoke imagery of progress, ambition, and patriotism. These strategies frame Trump's leadership as visionary and America as bound for greatness.
	Framing Devices	"End the Green New Deal," "protect American workers," "rebuild the nation."	Frames policy changes as necessary for protecting traditional values and national sovereignty, casting prior policies and international entities as threats to

			American prosperity and independence.
Discursive Practice	Intertextuality	- References to William McKinley, Manifest Destiny, American pioneers, and historical accomplishments like World Wars.	Historical references create legitimacy by aligning Trump's agenda with iconic achievements, situating his leadership within a legacy of American strength and progress.
	Discursive Strategies	Appeals to economic sovereignty: "Tariff foreign countries," "rebuild the auto industry."	Economic-focused rhetoric positions Trump as a protector of American industry and workers, using the narrative of economic decline and recovery to galvanize support and justify protectionist policies.
	Audience Engagement	Acknowledgment of specific groups: "Autoworkers," "parents and children," "people of faith."	Engages diverse constituencies to create a sense of unity and shared purpose. Specific recognition fosters inclusivity while appealing to traditionally conservative values like family and faith.
Social Practice	Sociopolitical Context	- Policy changes: "Revoke the electric vehicle mandate," "establish the Department of Government Efficiency."	Reflects contemporary political tensions, such as debates over climate policy, government overreach, and economic restructuring. These policy shifts are framed as corrective measures to restore America's sovereignty and power.
	Power Dynamics	"I will establish…," "I will end…," "we will restore…"	Trump centralizes power in his leadership, emphasizing his role as the primary agent of change. This reflects a populist dynamic where the leader embodies the will of the people and challenges institutional power structures.
	Mechanisms of Exclusion	"Two genders: male and female," "radical political theories," "China is operating the Panama Canal."	Exclusionary language frames opposition or diversity as threats, reinforcing conservative ideals while marginalizing dissenting perspectives or alternative narratives.
Power and Exclusion	Identity Construction	"Americans are explorers, builders, innovators," "We are one people, one family."	Constructs a unified national identity grounded in ambition, progress, and patriotism, while simultaneously excluding groups or ideologies perceived as un-American.
	Legitimization of Actions	"My proudest legacy will be that of a peacemaker and unifier," "The American people have spoken."	Frames his actions as morally and democratically justified, appealing to collective will and historical precedent to legitimize sweeping policy changes and centralization of authority.
	Policy as Power	"Establish the External Revenue Service," "Reinstate service members," "Rename the	Policy announcements emphasize decisive action and control, signaling Trump's capacity to deliver on promises and reshape the nation's trajectory.

		Gulf of Mexico.”	

Donald Trump speech provides the narrative of the national recovery and exceptionalism and answers the research questions of linguistic strategies, discursive practices, and sociopolitical implications. In the language he employs, words of negative emotional appeal are used dynamically like the golden age, liberate our nation and manifest destiny, which is more concerned with ambition, unity and patriotism which makes his headline in bringing change to the focus. The element of certainty and confidence is strengthened with the help of rhetorical devices, such as repetition, metaphors, and provide a sense of something desperate and unavoidable. To make his agenda incorporate in a tradition of greatness and to give his actions not only morally right but also rightful in terms of history, the speech is discursively grounded in the historical examples of great American achievements, such as the Panama Canal and the Manifest Destiny. His framing of groups and policies including opposing radical political theories as well as gender redefinition differences is reflective of a bigger sociopolitical approach of traditionalist ideology consolidation against the alternative perspectives. The current crises are the places where Trump derives power (e.g. economic troubles, cultural divisions etc.) and his leadership will seem the solution to the national decline. This discussion explains the way his rhetoric generates power, builds support, and legitimizes restrictive policies, which are in line with the general populist strategies of redefining the identity and the course of America.

Findings of the Study

In the discourse analysis, he speech delivered by Donald Trump, it can be observed that the discourse is applied in a complex way to construct power, support to mobilize and justify the exclusionary policies. According to the structure of analysis, these results may be divided into three broad dimensions, that is, linguistic strategies, discursive practices and sociopolitical implications.

Strong emotionally-charged words and rhetoric are employed by the speech by Trump in order to create a narrative of the national rebirth and position himself as a transformational leader. Phrases like golden age, liberate our nation and Manifest destiny are positive and nostalgic and assist in mirroring his administration as the initiator of national revival. We will and America enhance the sense of unity and confidence but such metaphors as lifeblood of a great nation and carry our flag into new horizons contribute to creation of the image of development and inspiration. These linguistic choices are not only explaining the necessity of his vision but also form vision of the world where his leadership is proven as the only way to solve the crisis in the country.

The discourse of Trump is rather intertextual, as it relies on the references to the American past and cultural ideals, making his leadership aligned with the history of the national accomplishments. The mention of such names as William McKinley, the Panama Canal, and the Manifest Destiny put his policies in the context of economic and territorial expansion in history. Trump justifies his plan by referring to the achievements of the past, which make the continuation of the American greatness and appeals to the feeling of nostalgia of his supporters. Nevertheless, these sources also act as a filter to disregard the other visions as they underline a unique account of development which is connected to the traditionalist and nationalist ideals. The speech also targets particular demographic groups, namely the autoworkers, veterans and people of faith to expand his perceived inclusivity and strengthen the bond of in-group solidarity.

The speech echoes the more general sociopolitical trends of populism, nationalism and polarization, electoral power concentrated in the hands of Trump. Ending the Green New Deal, defining gender as male and female, and stopping radical political theories are some of the policies that are an exclusionary strategy that is corroborative with conservative ideologies. Such policies are formulated as the corrections to the perceived injustices, where Trump poses as the moral and political savior of the nation. His packaging of the opposition groups like the foreign powers, political elites and progressive ideologies as a danger to American sovereignty and identity justifies violent policy actions. Moreover, trump emphasizes his attention to crises (e.g., economic instability, cultural division, and government inefficiency), which increases the feeling of the urgency, helping him to legitimize the sweeping executive actions and drive his story of decisive leadership.

The role of the populist is centralization of power in the leadership of Trump where his rhetoric is dominated by statements such as I will make... I will end... we will restore... etc. The mechanisms of exclusion could be traced in the framing of the groups of radical political theorists and foreign powers as the existential dangers to strengthen the in-group identity based on the traditional American values. Trump connects his policies with a national developmental history, citing the past successes such as Manifest Destiny and economic growth under McKinley to create an ethical and historic justification of his program.

The results prove that the speech of Trump is actually a weapon of creating a polarized image of America, and his political leadership is presented as both a uniting and divisive power. Though his words and allusions are reassuring and proud among those who agree with him, they also exclude those who disagree and give credence to social stratification. This is in line with the general trends of the right-wing populism in which political figures employ language to cement power, create in-group positive attitudes, and shut out other views.

Discussion

The speech by Trump creates the narrative about the golden age through the use of emotionally colored language, repetitions, and symbolic metaphors, which can make people feel nostalgic and inevitable. Such expressions as golden age, liberate our nation, and manifest destiny help to demonstrate his leadership as a curative and revolutionary one and place his administration as the only actor that can turn America around. His vows are solidified in oneness and assurance through repetition of we will and America as a part of a national identity. There are also metaphors like the lifeblood of a great nation, carry our flag into new horizons, which make a good imagination of the advancement and desire which enhances the emotional value of his outlook.

At the same time, Trump discredits the so-called corrupt establishment by portraying it as the enemy of national renewal. Such terms as radical political theories, foreign powers, and government censorship depict institutional opposition as morally worthless and absolutely anti-American. Such a binary choice between the righteous people and the wicked elite is connected to populist politics, which allowed Trump to justify his rule as a savior figure. His heavy reliance on first-person declarations about the things he will create, end, and restore, make his leadership power centralized and support the notion of him being a decisive and transforming figure.

The address of Trump seriously relies on the concepts of populism and nationalism as it focuses on the sovereignty, protectionism, and the traditionalism of culture. He recreates the kind of populist dichotomy between the people and the elite by making institutional actors and foreign power the

main barriers to American greatness. As an illustration, his expression of opposition to the Green New Deal, bureaucratic inefficiency, and radical political ideologies fits the populist discourse that criticizes the bureaucratic excess and progressive principles. His policy proposals including abolishment of government censorship and repealing of mandates are appealing to his supporters since they are packaged as the restoration of suppressed freedoms that had been repressed by the elites.

The American exceptionalism and historical achievements (Manifest Destiny, Panama Canal and the Wild West) signify the nationalist discourse. Trump asserts his presidency as a series of the history of the greatness of the United States by relying on these historical narratives in establishing his leadership as an extension of the tradition. This historical agenda reinforces a shared cultural identity and provokes an action to perceived external and internal threats to American sovereignty such as a foreign state possessing control over the Panama Canal or ideological threats to traditional gender norms.

Trump also directly targets the core demographic voters, including autoworkers, veterans, and people of faith, where he creates a feeling of inclusivity and enhances the in-group solidarity. This populist appeal adds to the effectiveness of his rhetoric because it shows how his agenda cuts across partisan and demographic lines, despite silencing the voices of opposition.

The golden age vision described by Trump supports and mirrors the major sociopolitical trends, such as the right-wing populism, the increased polarization of politics, and anti-globalism. At the core of his speech lies the populist account of regaining sovereignty and reinstating traditional values, and it makes his administration a reaction to the failures of the globalist and progressive policy. His arguments against the Green New Deal, directives, and foreign nations dominating American interests are directly related to anti-globalism that focuses on the idea of self-reliance and national independence.

Political polarization can be seen in his contextualization of the opposition groups in existence as an existential threat to American prosperity and identity. The use of terms such as radical and weaponizing the government to demonize his opponents makes Trump develops a polarizing rhetoric that isolates opposing views as he gains the backing of his supporters.

The linguistic techniques, such as repetition, metaphors and emotionally-charged language, create a strong narrative of national revival, which justifies his position and overrules his opponents. The reproduction of populist and nationalistic discourses in his speech is his leadership as the defense mechanism against the institutional overreach and the degradation of the culture, which he supports by invoking both historical and cultural memory. The vision of the golden age is consistent with wider sociopolitical developments of right-wing populism, political polarization, and anti-globalism, and upholds a traditionalist, exclusionary narrative that is appealing to his audience but widens social divisions.

The results of this paper are consistent with the past literature of populist and nationalist speeches, especially the adoption of polarized narratives to develop power and garner support. According to Laclau (2005) theory of populism, where leaders can mobilize the divergent grievances into a single identity, the use of binary oppositions by Trump like the people versus the corrupt establishment is akin to his theory. The emotionally charged language and references to history, i.e., the phrase of golden age and Manifest Destiny, are reminiscent of the phenomenon of nostalgic nationalism labeled by Bonikowski (2017), according to which leaders appeal to the past greatness in order to justify their policies. Like the study of Moffitt (2016) on right-wing populism,

the speech by Trump escalates the crisis and positions himself as the only savior who can reverse the situation in the country, which likewise binds in-group adherence and alienates dissent. The exclusionary rhetoric, which was apparent in the Trump commentary about the radical political theory and redefining of gender norms, is also in line with the discoveries of Wodak (2015) in the study of right-wing populist rhetoric, which frequently utilizes the effect of exclusion to affirm traditionalist views. Besides, his emphasis on anti-globalist rhetoric, including economic sovereignty and the critique of international treaties, can be compared to the analysis provided by Inglehart and Norris (2016), who aim at tracing the causes of the cultural backlash that underpins populist movements in Western democracies. All these findings support the idea that the rhetoric of Trump is rooted in the wider sociopolitical patterns of polarization, traditionalism, and anti-globalism, showing that his linguistic and discursive strategies can be aligned to the patterns that have been identified in previous research on populist leaders.

The results of the current analysis are very similar to Foucault theory of discourse and power and the three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model provided by Fairclough, explaining how the speech by Trump creates, supports, and justifies power using language. The idea of discourse as a control mechanism proposed by Foucault (1980) can be used to analyze how Trump has attempted to construct his concept of the golden age through the use of linguistic devices of control such as repetition, metaphors, and emotionally charged words that have been used to naturalize his position to power and delegitimize the corrupt establishment. The focus on crises as well as the savior image of Trump fits into the idea of power as a relationship that is realized in the discussion, which places him at the heart of the discourse over the definition of the national identity and the state of affairs. Likewise, the results establish that discourse functions in textual, discursive and social levels as Fairclough (2013) argues. On the textual level, the language used by Trump supports binaries (e.g. us vs. them), which creates polarization and in-group cohesion. On the discursive level, his allusions to the historical accounts and cultural norms are based on intertextuality to justify his policies and support his leadership with traditionalist principles. On a social practice level, larger sociopolitical trends are reflected and strengthened by the speech, including right-wing populism and anti-globalism, through the lens of national problems as caused by elite failures and foreign threats. The correspondence of the results and these frameworks underlines the dual role of the rhetoric of Trump, as it both constructs an exclusionary vision of unity and gathers the supporters against the perceived enemies, as it is a critical intersection of language, ideology, and power theorized by Foucault and Fairclough.

Conclusion

This paper has critically examined the second inaugural address of Donald Trump in the framework of Foucault theory of discourse and power as well as the three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model by Fairclough and identified how his rhetoric generates power, supports, and establishes the power of exclusionary narratives. The analysis shows that the language used in the speech is emotionally charged, uses repetition and symbolic metaphors in order to create the narrative of a golden age that justifies his power as a transformative leader with the status of an illegitimate ruler of the corrupt establishment. Trump appeals to a history of national achievement and cultural aspiration by making intertextual allusion to the accomplishments of the past and cultural ideals, which is appealing to traditionalist and nationalist principles. The way he has framed crises, including economic instability and cultural divisions makes the sense of urgency bigger, enabling him to centralize power and excuse the broad changes in policy.

The paper shows how rhetoric by Trump is indicative of wider sociopolitical tendencies of right-wing populism, political polarization, and anti-globalism, all of which focus on sovereignty, economic protectionism, and cultural traditionalism. The policies of exclusion, including his attack on radical political theories, reinterpretation of gender norms, also tend to polarize the discussion on the matter, which leads to in-group solidarity and exclusion of opposing views. Such findings are in line with the vision of Foucault of discourse as a form of control and his mode of discourse as that that works on the textual, discursive and social levels, which is how language aids in the operationalization as well as the reflection of power relations within the society.

In conclusion, the inaugural speech of Trump is unifying as well as polarizing, it builds the vision of the national rebirth that is gaining popularity among Trump and at the same time makes the boundaries of division more rigid within the society with the help of the rhetoric of the exclusionary populism. This study applies to the understanding of ways in which the discourse of political leaders grants authority, organizes the resistance, and reconstructs the senses of nationality yet sheds the light on the general workings of the contemporary politics of communication and populist rhetoric. Future research on this topic can build on the present by making comparisons between the rhetoric of Trump and other populism leaders or study its long-term effects on the populations and democracy.

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