



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING SIMPLE AND CONCISE
ENGLISH IN POLITICAL SPEECHES

Tojimatova Arofatxon Toyirjon qizi

Faculty of Foreign Languages Philology and Language Teaching (English)

Group: 24.107

Supervisor: Adambayeva Nafisa Qodirberganovna, PhD

tojimatovaarofat@icloud.com

+94 273 67 70

Abstract: *This article investigates the effectiveness of using simple and concise English in political speeches. In recent years, political communication has increasingly focused on clarity and accessibility in order to reach broader audiences. The study examines a number of well-known political speeches and analyzes their linguistic features, with particular attention to sentence structure, vocabulary choice, and rhetorical simplicity. The analysis reveals that speeches delivered in clear and straightforward language are more easily understood by diverse audiences and tend to have a stronger persuasive effect. In addition, the use of concise expressions helps speakers maintain audience attention and emphasize key messages. The findings suggest that simplicity in language is not a limitation, but rather a strategic choice that enhances the overall impact of political discourse.*

Keywords: *political speeches, simple English, conciseness, linguistic analysis, persuasion, audience understanding*

Аннотация: *В данной статье исследуется эффективность использования простого и лаконичного английского языка в политических выступлениях. В современных условиях политическая коммуникация всё чаще ориентируется*

на ясность и доступность речи с целью охвата широкой аудитории. В работе анализируются известные политические выступления с точки зрения их лингвистических особенностей, включая структуру предложений, выбор



лексики и степень риторической простоты. Результаты анализа показывают, что выступления, построенные на понятном и ясном языке, легче воспринимаются аудиторией и обладают более сильным убеждающим эффектом. Кроме того, краткость высказываний способствует удержанию внимания слушателей и акцентированию ключевых идей. Полученные данные подтверждают, что простота языка является не недостатком, а важным стратегическим инструментом в политическом дискурсе.

Ключевые слова: политические выступления, простой английский язык, лаконичность, лингвистический анализ, убеждение, понимание аудитории

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada siyosiy nutqlarda sodda va qisqa ingliz tilidan foydalanish samaradorligi tahlil qilinadi. Hozirgi davrda siyosiy kommunikatsiyada nutqning aniqligi va tushunarligi muhim ahamiyat kasb etmoqda, chunki bu keng auditoriyani qamrab olish imkonini beradi. Tadqiqot doirasida mashhur siyosiy nutqlar o'rganilib, ularning lingvistik xususiyatlari — gap tuzilishi, so'z tanlovi va ritorik soddalik darajasi tahlil qilinadi. Tahlil natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, sodda va aniq ifodalangan nutqlar turli auditoriyalar tomonidan oson qabul qilinadi hamda kuchliroq ishontirish ta'siriga ega bo'ladi. Shuningdek, qisqa va lo'nda jumlar tinglovchilarning diqqatini saqlab turishga va asosiy fikrlarni ajratib ko'rsatishga yordam beradi. Umuman olganda, tilning soddaligi cheklov emas, balki siyosiy nutqlarning ta'sirchanligini oshiruvchi muhim strategik vosita hisoblanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: siyosiy nutqlar, sodda ingliz tili, qisqalik, lingvistik tahlil, ishontirish, auditoriya tushunishi

Introduction

Political communication is fundamentally dependent on language, which functions not only as a means of transmitting information but also as a tool for persuasion, identity construction, and power negotiation. In contemporary society, where political speeches are broadcast through mass media and digital platforms, the audience has become increasingly diverse in terms of language proficiency,



educational background, and cultural context. As a result, the effectiveness of a political speech largely depends on how accessible and understandable it is.

One of the most noticeable tendencies in modern political discourse is the shift toward simple and concise English. This shift reflects the need to ensure inclusivity and maximize audience reach. According to George Orwell, unclear and overly complex language often hides meaning rather than clarifies it, reducing the communicative value of speech. In contrast, clarity and simplicity make ideas more transparent and easier to evaluate.

Historical and modern examples support this idea. Speeches by Winston Churchill during wartime and Barack Obama in contemporary politics demonstrate that simple language can carry powerful emotional and ideological messages. Therefore, analyzing the role of simplicity and conciseness is essential for understanding the mechanisms of effective political communication.

Literature review

The effectiveness of language in political speeches has been widely discussed in linguistic and communication studies. Scholars emphasize that clarity, simplicity, and accessibility are central to successful communication, especially in political contexts where audiences are diverse.

One of the earliest and most influential contributions to this topic is the work of George Orwell,¹ who argued that unclear and overly complex language often conceals meaning rather than expresses it. He emphasized that good writing should

1 George Orwell (1903–1950) was an English writer and essayist who analyzed the relationship between language and politics.

be direct, precise, and free of unnecessary complexity. His ideas remain highly relevant in analyzing political discourse today.

From a classical perspective, Aristotle² highlighted the importance of clarity in effective persuasion. In his theory of rhetoric, he explained that communication should be easily understood in order to influence the audience successfully. This principle supports the idea that simple and concise language enhances both logical and emotional appeal.



Modern discourse analysts such as Norman Fairclough³ and Teun A. van Dijk⁴ have expanded this understanding by examining how language reflects power and social structures. Their studies suggest that accessible language allows speakers to connect more effectively with broader audiences, thereby increasing the impact of political messages.

In addition, research in cognitive linguistics indicates that people process simple and familiar language more efficiently. Complex sentence structures and low-frequency vocabulary increase cognitive load, making it harder for listeners to follow and retain information. This supports the idea that concise language improves comprehension and memory.

Empirical studies of political speeches also demonstrate that repetition, short sentences, and common vocabulary contribute to effectiveness. For example, speeches by Barack Obama and Martin Luther King Jr. are often cited as examples of how simple language can produce strong emotional and persuasive effects. The literature suggests that simplicity and conciseness are not merely stylistic choices, but essential components of effective political communication.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design supported by elements of discourse and rhetorical analysis. A corpus of political speeches was selected from

2 Aristotle – (384–322 BC) was an ancient Greek philosopher who studied rhetoric, logic, and the principles of effective persuasion.

3 Norman Fairclough – (1941) is a British linguist and scholar known for his work in critical discourse analysis, examining how language reflects power and social structures.

4 Teun A. van Dijk – (1943) is a Dutch linguist and scholar specializing in discourse studies, focusing on the relationship between language, cognition, and society.

different historical periods and political contexts, including speeches by Winston Churchill⁵, Barack Obama⁶, and Martin Luther King Jr..



The analysis was conducted based on several measurable and observable linguistic parameters:

1. Sentence length analysis: average number of words per sentence;
2. Lexical frequency: proportion of high-frequency vs. low-frequency vocabulary;
3. Syntactic complexity: use of subordinate clauses and embedded structures;
4. Rhetorical strategies: repetition, parallelism, and direct address;
5. Semantic clarity: explicitness of key ideas and absence of ambiguity;

Additionally, a comparative framework was applied to contrast speeches characterized by simplicity with those that rely on formal and complex language. The study also draws on principles from discourse analysis developed by Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk, which emphasize the relationship between language, cognition, and society.

Results

The findings of the study demonstrate that the use of simple and concise English significantly improves multiple dimensions of speech effectiveness.

Audience comprehension is notably higher in speeches that use shorter sentences and familiar vocabulary. Linguistic studies suggest that sentences exceeding 20 words are more difficult to process in real-time listening conditions. In contrast, speeches by Barack Obama often maintain moderate sentence length, ensuring clarity and flow.

Repetition and parallelism emerge as key features of effective speeches. In the famous speech by Martin Luther King Jr., the repeated phrase “*I have a dream*” serves as both a structural and emotional anchor. This type of repetition enhances memory retention and reinforces the central message.

5 Winston Churchill – (1874–1965) was a British statesman, army officer, and writer who served as Prime Minister during World War II and is renowned for his powerful and inspirational speeches.



6 Barack Obama – (1961) is an American politician and attorney who served as the 44th President of the United States from 2009 to 2017, known for his influential speeches and oratory skills.

Emotional engagement is stronger when language is simple and direct. For example, Winston Churchill used short, powerful phrases such as “*We shall never surrender*”⁷, which created a strong emotional response and sense of unity.

Accessibility for non-native speakers increases significantly with simpler language. In global contexts, where English often functions as a lingua franca, complex vocabulary and idiomatic expressions can create barriers to understanding.

The data indicate that *conciseness improves attention span*. Long and complex sentences tend to overload cognitive processing, while concise expressions help maintain listener focus and emphasize key points.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm that simplicity and conciseness are essential components of effective political communication. From a cognitive perspective, human information processing favors clarity and predictability. Simple sentence structures reduce cognitive load, allowing audiences to focus on meaning rather than decoding linguistic complexity.

From a rhetorical standpoint, simplicity enhances persuasion. According to classical rhetoric developed by Aristotle, effective speech depends on clarity (*logos*), emotional appeal (*pathos*), and speaker credibility (*ethos*). Simple language supports all three elements by making arguments understandable, emotionally resonant, and trustworthy.

In the context of globalization, political leaders must communicate with audiences beyond their immediate linguistic communities. Simple English functions as an international medium that reduces misunderstanding and facilitates crosscultural communication.

The study also highlights that simplicity is often a deliberate strategy rather than a natural outcome. Skilled speakers carefully select words, structure sentences,



and use repetition to maximize clarity and impact. This suggests that effective political speech is not only about content but also about linguistic design.

7 W. Churchill, (1940, June 4). *We shall fight on the beaches* [Speech to the House of Commons]. UK Parliament.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this study highlights that the effectiveness of political speeches is closely linked to the speaker's ability to communicate ideas in a clear and accessible manner. Rather than relying on complex structures or sophisticated vocabulary, successful political figures tend to prioritize simplicity and precision in their language.

The evidence suggests that simple and concise English not only improves understanding but also allows speakers to establish a stronger emotional connection with their audience. This connection is essential in political contexts, where trust, clarity, and persuasion play a decisive role. In addition, the use of straightforward language ensures that messages are inclusive and can be understood by people from different linguistic and educational backgrounds.

REFERENCES

1. Aristotle. (c. 350 BC). *Rhetoric* (W. Rhys Roberts, Trans.). New York: Modern Library.
2. Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a Global Language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Fairclough, N., & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical discourse analysis. In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse as social interaction* (pp. 258–284). London: Sage.
4. Orwell, G. (1946). *Politics and the English language*. *Horizon*, 13(76), 252–265.
5. van Dijk, T. A. (1997). *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction*. London: Sage Publications.
6. Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. Longman.
7. Stubbs, M. (1983). *Discourse Analysis: The Sociolinguistic Analysis of Natural Language*. Oxford: Blackwell.