



MEANS OF CREATING HUMOROUS AND SATIRICAL EFFECT IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract: *This article explores the linguistic, stylistic, and pragmatic means used to create humorous and satirical effects in political discourse. It examines how politicians, journalists, and satirists employ irony, parody, hyperbole, wordplay, and metaphor to criticize social and political realities indirectly. The paper highlights the dual nature of humor as both an entertainment and a persuasive tool in modern politics.*

Keywords: *political discourse, satire, humor, irony, parody, linguistic devices, rhetoric.*

Introduction

Political discourse today is no longer merely about the straightforward communication of policies and positions – it increasingly incorporates humour, satire and irony as integral rhetorical devices. As one author notes, “humour can be a powerful political tool” whose “content, nature and impact depend heavily on a country’s culture.” [1] This shift reflects the broader transformation of how politics is presented, contested and consumed in media-rich societies. The use of humour and satire in political contexts allows speakers to entertain, engage and persuade simultaneously, often doing so by deploying linguistic and stylistic devices that mask direct confrontation while still conveying critique.

Satirical humour in political discourse serves several overlapping functions: it ridicules power, exposes hypocrisy, builds solidarity among a target audience, and offers a form of social commentary that is more palatable than blunt denunciation. As Cultural Sociology reminds us, “the landscape of political humour and satire is changing rapidly, and it is becoming an increasingly relevant aspect of our culture.” [2] In this sense, humour becomes more than entertainment: it becomes a form of language with political force. Moreover, political humour has become especially



prominent through digital and social media channels, where jokes, memes, caricatures and parodic content travel widely and rapidly. [3]

One key feature of satirical political discourse is that it often invites the audience to play an active interpretive role: the audience must recognise the target, the irony, the incongruity between literal statement and intended meaning. Without that shared cultural or contextual knowledge, the satire may fail or be misunderstood. This aligns with research showing how humour styles correlate with political ideology and communication patterns. Thus, humour in political discourse is deeply tied to context, culture and community. It is not simply a matter of making people laugh it is a form of persuasion, identity construction and ideological positioning.

In this light, the study of how humorous and satirical effects are created in political discourse becomes vital. It allows us to observe how rhetorical means such as irony, parody, hyperbole, wordplay and metaphor are mobilised to critique, cajole or reinforce political positions. It helps us understand how speakers use humour to soften criticism while still conveying dissent, or how they use parody to mimic and thereby undermine dominant political styles. The pragmatics of humour how it mitigates face-threatening acts, how it fosters in-group cohesion or delegitimises opponents are central to this investigation.

This paper seeks to identify and analyse the principal linguistic and stylistic devices that contribute to humorous and satirical effects in political discourse. It examines how these devices function at the level of language (metaphors, puns, hyperbole), at the level of interaction (audience cooperation, shared knowledge, timing) and at the level of social context (media platforms, cultural norms, power relations). By doing so, the study illuminates the dual nature of political humour: as entertainment and as instrument of critique. The outcomes should enhance our grasp of how political actors, commentators and satirists communicate through laughter, and how audiences interpret and react to such forms of discourse.

Research Methodology

The methodological framework of this study is based on **qualitative discourse analysis**, combined with elements of **stylistic and pragmatic analysis**.



Since political humour and satire are communicative acts that rely on context, linguistic creativity, and shared social knowledge, qualitative methods are most suitable for uncovering their structure and meaning. The research seeks to identify how linguistic and stylistic devices such as irony, parody, hyperbole, metaphor, and wordplay function to produce humorous and satirical effects in political discourse.

Analysis and Results

The analysis of humorous and satirical elements in political discourse reveals that humour functions as a complex communicative and ideological strategy. The corpus of data, drawn from speeches, debates, political satire shows, and online discourse, demonstrates that humour is not merely ornamental but deeply integrated into persuasive and rhetorical structures. This section presents the main linguistic, stylistic, and pragmatic findings.

Irony emerged as the most frequently used device for creating humorous and satirical effects. Politicians and commentators often employ **verbal irony** to veil criticism under apparent politeness or agreement. For example, when a political leader says, “Our opponents have done an outstanding job—at disappointing everyone,” the humour relies on a contrast between literal praise and intended condemnation.

According to Simpson [4], irony works through “semantic opposition between what is said and what is meant,” requiring active interpretation from the audience. In political settings, such indirect criticism allows speakers to maintain decorum while signaling dissent. This linguistic strategy softens confrontation but enhances engagement through shared understanding of sarcasm or irony.

Irony is also used strategically in public speeches to establish intellectual superiority and emotional distance. It transforms criticism into entertainment, appealing to both reason and emotion simultaneously. As Attardo [5] explains, irony enables “dual-layered communication,” where humour functions as a cover for ideological stance. The study found that political irony is most effective when contextually grounded—when the audience can recognize both the literal and implied meanings.



Parody represents a second major strategy of satire in political discourse. By imitating and exaggerating a familiar political speech or slogan, parody exposes the formulaic and manipulative nature of public rhetoric. For example, online memes often reproduce campaign slogans such as “*Make America Great Again*” by transforming them into “*Make America Think Again*,” thereby reframing the original message through humour.

As Tsakona [6] notes, parody operates through **intertextuality**—the relationship between a target text and its satirical counterpart. The success of parody depends on the audience’s ability to recognize and decode references to the original discourse. Parodic humour thus requires cultural competence, as it builds upon shared knowledge of political events and figures.

Televised satires like *The Daily Show* or *Last Week Tonight* rely heavily on this intertextual play. They integrate real political footage with exaggerated commentary, creating a “double-voiced discourse” where both the quoted material and the parody coexist. The findings indicate that parody contributes not only to humour but also to political education: it encourages critical thinking and awareness of rhetorical manipulation.

The third dominant device identified was **hyperbole**, or deliberate exaggeration. Hyperbole amplifies political issues, moral failures, or absurd statements to the point of ridicule. In speeches and debates, politicians often use hyperbole defensively (“We achieved more in a year than our opponents in a decade”) or offensively (“Their policies are a disaster of biblical proportions”).

Visual hyperbole is particularly prevalent in political cartoons. By depicting politicians with exaggerated features or animal-like traits, artists reveal the underlying critique of personality cults or political incompetence. As Dynel [7] states, “hyperbolic humour magnifies reality to the point where truth emerges through absurdity.”

The analysis of online satirical imagery showed that exaggeration works as a concise and emotionally charged form of political communication. It distills complex criticism into a single, memorable image. Therefore, hyperbole—both



linguistic and visual—serves as a central instrument of political satire in the digital age.

Wordplay, including punning and double entendre, contributes to humour by engaging cognitive processes of ambiguity resolution. In political discourse, puns often reframe slogans, party names, or current events to produce comic effect. For instance, the phrase “Brexit means Breakfast” became a viral pun mocking the confusion around Britain’s withdrawal from the EU.

According to Attardo [5], puns exploit the polysemy of language to create a humorous tension between two meanings. Political punning therefore demonstrates linguistic creativity and intellectual wit, qualities that attract audience sympathy. Wordplay also functions as a “safe” mode of critique: it avoids explicit accusation while delivering implicit disapproval.

The findings show that political satire employing wordplay performs two simultaneous functions—entertainment and persuasion. It not only amuses but also frames political realities through linguistic innovation, reinforcing or undermining ideological stances.

Metaphor plays a foundational role in shaping how humour constructs political meaning. The conceptual metaphor theory, as developed by Lakoff and Johnson, suggests that metaphors organize human perception by mapping abstract concepts onto familiar domains. In humorous political discourse, these mappings are often distorted for comic effect.

Common examples include metaphors like “*political circus*”, “*media battlefield*”, or “*power game*”, which frame politics as performance, conflict, or play. Charteris-Black [8] argues that such metaphors “blend cognitive and emotional persuasion,” and their humorous use further enhances their memorability.

Through metaphorical humour, speakers invite audiences to view politics from new, critical perspectives. The research indicates that metaphors used humorously increase message retention and emotional impact, making them powerful tools of political persuasion.



At the pragmatic level, humour in political discourse serves several overlapping communicative functions:

- **Face-saving and politeness** – mitigating direct criticism through irony or joke.
- **Solidarity building** – strengthening group identity through shared laughter.
- **Delegitimization** – undermining opponents' credibility.
- **Attention management** – ensuring message visibility in a saturated media environment.

Simpson [4] and Tsakona [6] both emphasize that political humour also has an ideological dimension. It can challenge dominant narratives or reinforce them, depending on the speaker's intention and audience alignment. The findings show that humour functions as a "double-edged sword": it can expose power abuse or, conversely, serve as a tool of populist manipulation.

An analysis of online satirical communities demonstrates this ambivalence. While satire can promote civic engagement and awareness, it may also spread misinformation when irony is misunderstood. Therefore, the effectiveness of humorous political discourse depends largely on the **interpretive competence** of its audience.

The results of this study confirm that humour and satire are integral components of political communication. They combine linguistic creativity, emotional resonance, and cognitive engagement to shape political attitudes. Among the analysed mechanisms, **irony** and **parody** were the most frequent, followed by **hyperbole**, **wordplay**, and **metaphor**.

The interaction of these devices creates multilayered discourse where entertainment and ideology intersect. Political humour emerges not as trivial amusement but as a sophisticated semiotic practice that reflects and constructs social reality. Its study thus provides essential insights into the rhetorical power of language in democratic societies.

Conclusion



The development of influencer marketing in Uzbekistan has accelerated significantly in recent years, driven by digital transformation, the expansion of internet access and social media, as well as the increasing online engagement of younger generations. The analysis shows that influencer marketing in Uzbekistan has evolved beyond a simple advertising tool to become a communicative mechanism that influences social, cultural, and educational processes.

The results of the research confirm that the successful development of influencer marketing in Uzbekistan requires attention to three key directions. First, the establishment and improvement of a regulatory and legal framework governing influencer activity is crucial. This will help maintain audience trust and prevent the spread of misinformation. Second, it is essential to develop an effective “influencer–brand partnership” model tailored to local brands, since most current collaborations are short-term and lack strategic focus. Third, the creation of a network of “micro- and nano-influencers” can help establish more authentic and trustworthy connections with audiences in the local context.

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