

РИТОРИКА

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THE USE OF PERSONAL PRONOUN “WE” AND ITS VARIANTS IN DONALD TRUMP’S DISCOURSE (BASED ON HIS PUBLIC ADDRESSES DURING THE 2015-2016 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IN THE USA)

Needless to say that politicians have always valued the role of language in putting certain political, economic and social interests into practice so as to convince audiences of the accuracy of the arguments they present in addition to their own personal conviction. As a matter of fact, language plays a crucial role in political discourse as it prepares, accompanies and influences every political action. K. Hyland believes that unless people are convinced that something is true, they are unlikely to be persuaded [3, p. 63]. Therefore, argumentation is regarded to be successful when politicians manage to back up their claims in such a way that the audience can change their opinion in politicians’ favour. For this reason, politicians need inductive and deductive proofs to defend their own ideas, to convince the audience and to impact on them.

A considerable interest in the phenomenon of the most extravagant political candidate as well as the current president of the USA – Donald Trump requires a detailed analysis of rhetorical means he exploits to manipulate the masses which, in turn, led to his victory in the US elections.

Trump’s discourse characterises by explicit exploitation of personal pronouns, in particular third person plural pronoun *we* and its variants. By using *we* and its variants, he welcomes the audience into the text. Therefore, the listener is not only engaged into the process of creating discourse but also feels the connection to the speaker. Thus, Trump “claims an equality with his audience [3, p. 71]” creating a sense of listener-speaker consolidation in their endeavour to achieve the same aim. Trump’s credibility is also reinforced in this case. The following examples display Trump’s use of *we* and its variants:

*«Who would've believed that when **we** started this journey on June 16th last year, **we**, and I say **we**, because **we are a team**, would have received almost 14 million votes, the most in the history of the Republican Party and that the Republican Party would get 60 percent more votes than it received eight years ago, who would've believed this, who would've believed this [6]?»*

*«**Together**, we will lead **our** party back to the White House, and we will lead **our** country back to safety, prosperity, and peace. We will be a country of generosity and warmth. But we will also be a country of law and order [6]».*

*«To all Americans tonight in all of **our cities** and in all of **our towns**, I make this promise - **we** will make America strong again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again. And we will make America great again [7]».*

Judging by the abovementioned examples, we can be interpreted, on the one hand, as Trump's attempt to place everyone under one umbrella, for example, addressing the audience as *a team*, using an adverb *together*, and using a possessive pronoun *our* as in the expressions *our party*, *our cities*, *our towns*. On the other hand, Trump establishes his leadership role as being the one who can speak on behalf of people. Fairclough argues that through such uses of *we*, Trump "claims the right to speak for the people as a whole [2, p. 181]".

According to Fairclough, there are generally two types of *we* pronouns, namely, inclusive *we*, which includes the audience as well as the speaker, and exclusive *we*, which refers to the speaker but does not incorporate the addressee [2, p. 182].

The examples of Trump using *we* inclusively are provided below:

*«**We** will bring the same economic success to America that Mike brought to Indiana, which is amazing [5]».*

*«**We** will treat everyone living or residing in our country with great dignity [4]».*

The examples of Trump using *we* exclusively are the following:

*«On Monday, **we** heard from three parents whose children were killed by illegal immigrants Mary Ann Mendoza, Sabine Durden, and my friend Jamiel Shaw [4]».*

*«Immediately after Dallas, **we** have seen continued threats and violence against our law enforcement officials [7]».*

*«As long as **we** are led by politicians who will not put America first, then **we** can be assured that other nations will not treat America with respect the respect that **we** deserve [4]».*

In the latter instances, Trump refers specifically to the Republican Party:

*«But here, at **our** convention, there will be no lies. **We** will honor the American people with the truth, and nothing else [6]».*

*«For the money **we** are going to spend on illegal immigration over the next 10 years, **we** could provide 1 million at-risk students with a school voucher, which so many people are wanting [7]».*

*«**We** will build a great wall along the southern border [6]».*

There are even cases where Trump uses *we* in a somewhat ambiguous way:

*«I have seen firsthand how the system is rigged against our citizens, just like it was rigged against Bernie Sanders – he never had a chance. But his supporters will join our movement, because **we** will fix his biggest issue: trade. Millions of Democrats will join our movement, because **we** are going to fix the system so it works fairly and justly for each and every American [5]».*

It is quite difficult to decide whether *we* here is referring to the nation, the Republican Party or both. Therefore, he uses *we* in rhetorically different ways in his discourse in order to make sure that all areas of political persuasion are covered through these combinations.

To conclude, Trump is someone who includes and values audience participation in the thinking and decision-making process. For this reason, he opts for using *we* and its variants. By doing so, he creates a sense of togetherness with his audience.

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