

Hate Speech Acts in Populist Rhetoric

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ABSTRACT

This research will study populism and populist rhetoric. At the first section of the research, common features of populist rhetoric is highlighted. In the second section of this study, by means of descriptive methodology phenomenon of populist rhetoric is studied. Also, communicative patterns of populist leaders are formulated. Furthermore, Speech act theory, is used in analysis of populist rhetoric. In brief, the side effects of use of hate speech acts in populist politicians' rhetoric will be evaluated. For this study tweets of Donald Trump will be used as the input of research study. And the traces of hate speech will be followed in his speech.

Keywords: Dismantling Normalities, Populist Rhetoric, Speech Act Theory

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I. INTRODUCTION

Populist context and populist rhetoric (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007) addresses the people and wills of the people. Populist rhetoric is associated with "dominance of real people" on different communicative contexts. Moreover, Populism emphasizes on horizontal accountability. Populist rhetoric has found different transmitter and facilitator like mass media and social media. Mass media and social media which are widely used by modern and postmodern world facilitate and remove obstacles that may emerge in communication of different people. Language of people entered to the literary language and language of the people become important in political contexts too. In evaluating these kinds of languages. It can be declared that language of mass and normal people have discriminative features. Authors who use the language of mass in their writings add features which are common among mass. These violation of noble mode of language use and using language of mass is accompanied with change in structure and order of global political system.

These added features can be at different locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary levels. These nuances can be added by politicians to their speech when they address the people. Populist politician who use these nuances while they address people. This study will start with investigating the common features that can be found in populist contexts. Also, whether hate can be considered as indispensable feature of populist rhetoric? This research will attempt to answer these questions.

II. COMMON FEATURES OF POPULIST RHETORIC

Populist leaders like Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen, Norbert Hoffer, Nigel Farage, and Geert Wilders have been dominant and prominent today in many countries. There can be found common features among communicative styles and strategies of populist politicians. Populist politicians like Trump, Ahmadinejad, Hugo Chavez have common communication styles. For example, Ahmadinejad puts a table in front of his home and listens to the people's problems. He attracts people's attention. And prefers direct communication with people. Another example is Trump who has preferred twitter as a communication tool. And other Media who analyse his speech is considered as fake Media. Twitter is a platform that there is no mediator between people and politicians. Populist politicians use different styles and strategies in order to attract attention of mass of people. But common features can be found among differentiated aspects.

Populism is a phenomenon that attempts to stir the will of the people. These will of the people are impressed by different strategies and different styles. Cultural differences affect the strategies which populist politicians use in order to stir the emotion of mass. But the common feature which can be recognised among the populist politicians is that they attempt to communicate with mass of people with or without mediator and maybe this is the reason that they consider themselves the real people. They talk on behalf of the people (Taggart, 2018).

There have been done a lot of research to prove that advertisements have effect on the choice people make. Politicians, political parties, social media, communicative tools and procedures affect subconscious of mass. Moreover, politicians especially populist politicians may misuse online domain in order to achieve their political objectives. In other words, populism is associated with ideology of insurgent politicians who attempt to win votes (Bonikowski, 2016).

III. APPLICATION OF SPEECH ACT THEORY TO POPULIST RHETORIC

Speech act theory (Austin, 1962) is a sub field of pragmatics that studies how words are used not only to present information but also to carry out actions (Searle, 1975). Speech acts analyze language at three levels. Locutionary level, literal meaning, illocutionary level, communicative intention, what is meant by the speaker, my intention. Perlocutionary level, pragmatic effect, the intended effect to be produced by the utterance on the receiver (Searle, 1975). Hatred speech acts includes utterances “that is abusive, insulting, intimidating, harassing, and/or incites to violence, hatred, or discrimination. It is directed against people on the basis of their race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, age, physical condition, disability, sexual orientation, political conviction, and so forth (Comandini & Patti, 2019: pp.163-171).

According to Van Dijk every person forms and constructs its mental model which is a representation of a single event. Mental models are learned in society and these mental models of individuals are constructed in society. Populist politicians reshape mental models of mass by words, logos, and utterances. Words, utterances and sentences which transmit codes and mental meanings which can transform to actions. There are no genetic for transmission of hatred. These altered codes are acquired in the social environment. Hatred speech acts have an active and ‘executive’ nature. A hate utterance is itself an act; the thought it expresses is in itself an act of negation (Nancy, 2013: pp. 5-7).

IV. DISTORTION OF CONTENTS BY POPULIST POLITICIANS

Twisting reality for political game are strategies that populist politicians use. Manipulation of figures, half-truth, false promises, and post facts are part of these strategies. For example, Trump exaggerated on exchange with China. For instance, Trump highlighted the idea that foreign exchange with China was increased. However, there was no change in the amount of foreign exchange with China.

Another example for twisting reality is that Trump claimed that he was successful on the project of maximum pressure on Iran and US president, Trump has done a great job by removing US from JCPOA deal. Trump claimed that maximum pressure worked. But fact is that it didn't work. And European allies of US left US alone. As US played an insurgent role in political arena of international law.

Exaggeration of what they have done is one of the important strategies that populist leaders use. They exaggerate about achievements, and political success. Moreover, they exaggerate on existence of global dangers and their attempts on removing these global threats.

Another tactic that populist politicians use are distortion of concepts and meanings. For example, they call coup a kind of national victory or fest. Another example is with the word terrorism. Who is the terrorist? Can we consider anyone who is in opposite position a kind of terrorist? Sometimes syndical activists, teachers, university lecturers are considered terrorists.

V. HATE SPEECH ACTS AS INDISPENSABLE FEATURES OF POPULIST RHETORIC

According to speech act theory, perlocutionary layer of every word affects mental models of individuals. Populist politicians who use language and emotion of mass use words in order to polarize the society in to “us” and “them”. For example, we are great Americans. But others such as immigrants make our great world terrific, and immigrants are desired to blame. Manipulative style of populist leaders may play role in constructing mental models of citizens.

Populist discourse is an instance of relational ‘empty signifiers’ that can take on varied content, depending on social context. These categories gain their meaning through a process of ‘identification’ (i.e., classification), whereby specific social groups are construed as ‘the people’ (us) and pitted against oppressive ‘others’ (them)” (Fırıncı, 2018: pp. 255-274). Hostile portrayals and stereotyping of groups and minorities as “other”, “different” or “dangerous” can lead to dehumanization.

Bart Bonikowski (2016), a researcher from Harvard University, regarding populism, argues that channeling social frustrations associated with rapid social change into deep resentments against immigrants and ethnic, racial, or religious minorities has proven to be profitable political strategy. Populist use this strategy in order to polarize society to us and them. Populist politicians especially right-wing populists define immigration as a problem. Populists highlight disadvantages that immigrant bring with themselves, but they don't mention that maybe these brains drain from third world countries may

bring great advantages. Also, deemphasize or ignore bad attitudes of the receiving country of immigrants may have toward these immigrants. Polarization by emphasizing on otherness and putting the blames on them.

In other words, hate speech act targeting ethnic, religious, sexual minorities, immigrants and other groups is a widespread phenomenon, including in political discourse. It is increasingly found not only in the political discourse of far-right parties, but spreads also into the rhetoric of mainstream parties. Populism does not relate only to countries under situations of austerity: today there is a new phenomenon of populism in world (Tulkens, September 2013: pp.1-8).

Moreover, hate speech is a matter of a great dispute and argumentation globally although the standard on this under international law are in fact reasonably developed. International law not only allows, but actually, states to ban certain speech on the basis that it undermines the right of others to quality or to freedom from discrimination and occasionally also on the basis that this is necessary to protect public order. International law contains a number provisions which provide a framework for balancing freedom of expression against interests of others in a context of hate speech (Mendel, 2010: pp. 9-10).

As Heiko Maas (2015), the German Minister of Justice puts it: "Hate speech is often not restricted to mere act of hateful speech. It often moves from words to deeds. The fact that "mental incitement" too often turns into violence can be seen in the surge in attacks on refugee shelters: in 2014, the number of acts tripled in comparison with the previous year".

And according to Rydgren 2005, the xenophobic language of populists is contagious (Rydgren 2005). In this regard, Hogan and Haltinner (2015) declare that 'transnational populist playbook' that has diffused across the Western world and consistently construed immigrants within overlapping themes of economic, security and identity threats (Hogan & Haltinner 2015). Moreover, signifier like threats are used in order to clarify more about identity of foreigners, refugees and asylum seekers.

VI. DISMANTLING NORMALITIES BY POPULIST RHETORIC

Populism has been defined in many different ways, mostly in regard to political ideology and political dynamics, but only in recent years in relation to communication variables. Populist communication patterns oppose ideological features into mainstream political communication.

Looking from a bird' eye view on how populism have affected world can be summarized as its effect on Global system and global world order. Populist politicians and populist rhetoric have dominated manipulative styles. Populist Politicians attempt to convert diplomatic norms which have been established during the history. Dismantling these normalities can cause emergence of extreme abnormalities like Fascism, and Nazism which have spoiled and damaged human history. Also, it can be declared that converting some abnormalities to norms and usual behaviour is really dangerous. Populist discourse is an instance of relational 'empty signifier's that can take on varied content, depending on social context. These categories gain their meaning through a process of 'identification' (i.e., classification), whereby specific social groups are construed as 'the people' (us) and pitted against oppressive 'others' (them)" (Firinci, 2018; pp. 255-274).

It can be declared that populist claims-making is located at the juncture of the *politics of inequality* and the *politics of identity*, where questions about *who gets what* are constitutively intertwined with questions about *who is what* (emphasis original). Such exclusionary populist narratives target 'elites', who are perceived simultaneously as being at the top of society and as outsider to a given society.

Populist discourses as inherently anti-pluralist and majoritarian discourses that construe diversity as a threat to social cohesion and constantly create demonized out-groups: minorities, migrants, dissidents and opposition parties and politicians (Filc, 2009 cited in Yabanci, 2016).

Hostile portrayals and stereotyping of groups and minorities as "other", "different" or "dangerous" can lead to dehumanization. This effect can escalate rapidly when hostile rhetoric reaches a large audience by means of broadcast, print or digital media and lead to real-life violent hate crimes, including genocide.

VII. SIDE EFFECTS OF HATE SPEECH ACTS AS INDISPENSABLE FEATURE OF POPULISM

The concept of hate speech is increasing in modern world. There are no clear-cut regulations to restrict hate speech in online domain. Hate speech doesn't merely express ideas or dissent. Hate speech promotes fear, intimidation and harassment in series violation of human dignity up to the causing depression and possibly suicide attempts of hate speech victims. It can be an incitement to murder and even genocide of those against whom it is targeted. Hate speech need to a unified regulation. Because there are clashes among national laws. And there is a distinctive inconsistency between national law and international law. Populist politicians use dissemination of hatred speech in order to manipulate minds of mass and public opinion.

It is also widely acknowledged that hate speech poses a serious threat to the physical safety of the members of the targeted groups. According to Amadeu Antnio Stiftung's chronicle of anti-refugee incidents ("Chronik flüchtlingsfeindlicher Vorfälle", o. J.), there were 1249 reported attacks against asylum-seeking individuals or their lodgings in Germany in the year 2015, 3769 in 2016 and 1939 in 2017.

Moreover, Hate speech can be considered to be one of the major issues currently plaguing the online social media. With online hate speech culminating in gruesome scenarios like the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar, anti-Muslim mob violence in Sri Lanka, and the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting, there is a dire need to understand the dynamics of user interaction that facilitate the spread of such hateful content. In this paper, we perform the first study that looks into the diffusion dynamics of the posts made by hateful and non-hateful users on Gab (Mathew *et al.*, 2019: pp.173-184) .

According to Adama Dieng, OHCHR news on genocide and hate speech ,the demonization of immigrants by populist politicians seem to exacerbate such attacks with sanctimoniousness and hateful rhetoric. Populist politicians seem to exacerbate such attacks with sanctimoniousness and hateful rhetoric. Also, European council declares that hate speech can have dreadful consequences that violate rights of other people, in some cases leading up to hateful and violent action.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In brief, hatred speech acts have an active and 'executive' nature. A hate utterance is itself an act; the thought it expresses is in itself an act of negation". Hate speech acts convey perlocutionary meaning that of hatred to those who are considered as others. Implicit meaning loads which were conveyed by hate speech acts which are used in populist rhetoric can be widely found in the language of populist politicians like Donald Trump.

According to the evaluations of populist rhetoric, beside hate speech acts which are indispensable feature of populist rhetoric, populists use different strategies like dismantling normalities, distortion of content. By analysis of speech of populist politicians like Donald trump, it can be claimed that populist politicians use communicative styles and strategies in order to reshape and transform mental models that are learned in society. These communicative styles and strategies by populist politicians transmit hate codes and hostile portrayals and stereotyping of groups and minorities as others which can lead to dehumanization.

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