

Political Speeches: Exertion of Power through Linguistic Means

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Abstract. This paper examines two political speeches by Mr. Tony Blair and aims at demonstrating how a close analysis of linguistic features in the texts can contribute to the comprehension of power relations and ideological processes in *discourse*. To bring to light the exertion of power, the analysis concentrates on such linguistic means as nominalization, the use of pronouns, and diverse lexical choices. These means have been chosen as primary tools for the analysis due to the fact that they are closely related to the three functions that language is said to perform, namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday, 1975:17, as cited in Malmkjaer, 1991:161). The approach defined as *critical linguistics* is concerned with the analysis of how underlying ideologies mediated through discourse are embodied in linguistic expressions. The method of critical linguistics was particularly devised in response to such problems as a fixed, invisible ideology permeating language. As posited by Fowler (1991:67), it is the main concern of critical linguists to study ‘the minute details of linguistic structure in the light of the social and historical situation of the text, to display to consciousness the patterns of belief and value which are encoded in the language – and which are below the threshold of notice for anyone who accepts the discourse as “natural”’.