

The Power of Persuasion: Analyzing U.S. Candidates' Rhetoric

A linguistic study reveals that Kamala Harris and Donald Trump could not be more different in their campaign speeches.

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Through the use of stylistic devices like anaphora and metaphors, Trump demonstrates a comparable rhetorical finesse to Harris.

- Trump primarily conveys negative emotions such as fear and anger in his speeches, whereas Harris and Walz emphasize optimism and solutions.
- Overall, Kamala Harris and Tim Walz are linguistically stronger than Donald Trump and J.D. Vance.



The presidential election in the USA is less than two weeks away. How candidates formulate and communicate their messages is crucial to whom voters ultimately cast their ballots for. Language experts from the learning platform Lingoda have conducted an [extensive linguistic analysis](#) of the language used by presidential candidates Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, as well as vice-presidential candidates Tim Walz and J.D. Vance. The analysis looks at each candidate's rhetoric, comprehensibility, linguistic accuracy, empathy, aggressiveness, sentiment, willingness to compromise, and gender-sensitive language, highlighting how these four politicians position themselves through their speeches.

Both Republicans and Democrats Shine with Strong Rhetoric

Donald Trump and Kamala Harris utilize numerous rhetorical devices to amplify emotional appeals. Trump employs short, punchy sentences and a relatively simple sentence structure that is easy to follow. He also relies on superlatives and other rhetorical devices such as anaphoras to emphasize his messages. In contrast, Harris builds a personal connection with the audience

through anecdotes in her rhetoric. She also skillfully uses rhetorical devices like repetition to clarify her stance.

Trump Displays the Least Empathy, Harris the Most Compassion

Expressing empathy is a crucial factor in political speeches, especially in times of crisis. Among the four US politicians examined, Harris shows the most compassion, followed by Tim Walz. She openly discusses human experiences and expresses her solidarity. Trump, on the other hand, exhibits comparatively little empathy in his language. His style often appears self-centered, with his compassionate words quickly coming across as clichés.

Willingness to Compromise or Stubbornness: How Candidates Present Themselves

Willingness to compromise is an indicator of whether politicians are open to collaboratively seeking solutions with other stakeholders. Tim Walz and Kamala Harris present themselves as the most willing to compromise. In contrast, Donald Trump appears rigid, unwilling to accept any opinions other than his own.

Mood – What Emotions Do the Candidates Evoke?

Kamala Harris and Tim Walz create an optimistic tone in their speeches, highlighting the opportunities that lie ahead for the United States. They are distinctly solution-oriented. Trump, however, focuses more on negative aspects, such as the country's issues and the performance of the current government, to bolster his message. He primarily constructs his speeches around statements that induce fear.

Aggression – Who Hits Harder?

Political debates often require defending one's position, and some politicians use more radical expressions or formulations. Donald Trump, in particular, relies heavily on aggressive language and frequently attacks his opponents. Kamala Harris also uses sharp language, especially against Trump, but is overall more restrained.

A detailed description of the analysis results in all eight categories, including examples from the speeches and an explanation of the methodology and sources used, can be viewed at:

www.lingoda.com/en/p/resources/language-analysis-political-tool

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Nadine Blöcher

ABCD Agency

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