Le rapport entre l’idéologie, la rhétorique et le système politique –
Analyse de discours politiques de présidents argentins

The relationship between ideology, rhetoric and political system – an analysis of political speeches of Argentine presidents

Carmen Buschinger, M.A., Universität Augsburg

1http://www.philhist.uni-augsburg.de/de/lehrstuehle/romanistik/angewandte/mitarbeiter/buschinger/
E-Mail: Carmen.Buschinger@Phil.Uni-Augsburg.de
Résumé

Ce projet de recherche, portant le titre provisoire « Le rapport entre l’idéologie, la rhétorique et le système politique », traite le sujet du langage politique. Il aborde le rapport qui existe entre les structures de textes rédigés en langage politique, les structures conceptuelles de l’idéologie politique, les structures sociales de l’interaction et les structures institutionnelles du système politique.

Quant à l’aspect diachronique de ce sujet, l’analyse portera un intérêt particulier à la question de savoir dans quelle mesure les changements dans les structures politiques, les concepts idéologiques, les formes rhétoriques, les stratégies argumentatives et les caractéristiques textuelles se développent de façon parallèle. De plus, il s’agit d’examiner dans quelle mesure les traditions discursives subsistent dans un système politique et dans les discours politiques officiels ou s’ils se manifestent dans le langage politique avec un certain retard. Cet exposé donnera un aperçu du projet.

Mots-clés: langue politique, idéologie, rhétorique, système politique, l'Argentine, peronisme

Abstract

The research project, “The relationship between ideology, rhetoric and political system – an analysis of political speeches of Argentine presidents” (working title), deals with political language. It focuses on the relationship between text structures in political and ideological language, political ideology and institutional structures of the political system.

Regarding the diachronic aspect of this topic, the study will investigate the changes in political structures, ideological concepts, rhetorical forms, strategies of argumentation and text features shown on a parallel development through time. Additionally, it will be analysed whether traditional features of discourse survive in a political system through official political speeches or if they make a delayed appearance. This paper will provide an outline of the research project.
Appropriation et transmission des langues et des cultures du monde: Actes du Séminaire Doctoral International 2012 coordonnés par G. Ziegler, I. Schneider, G. Torresin et A. Simpson

Keywords: political language, ideology, rhetoric, political system, Argentina, Peronism
1. Object and aim of the study

Assuming that there is a relationship between ideology, rhetoric, and the political system, the researcher investigates the complex relationship between these three elements by analysing political speeches of presidents in Argentina within three periods– from 1946 to 1955, from 1973 to 1974, and from 1983 until today. The two aims of this research are as follows: 1) to characterize Peronism linguistically, ideologically and politically by analysing the political speeches and 2) to describe the “modified” Peronism that is expressed in political speeches since the re-democratization of Argentina in 1983.

2. Foundation – ideology, rhetoric, political system

In general, ideology is a system of values and patterns of thought of a specific social group. This repertoire of values and particular ways of viewing the world is manifested in various verbal and non-verbal forms. Ideological language is considered to be a subdomain of political language. In this context of research, ideology, especially in relation to politics, is particularly interesting; while politics is always connected to ideology, political decisions tend to be based on specific value systems. A non-ideological, purely technocratic approach to politics simply does not exist. After classifying the phenomenon of Peronism, the researcher will analyse the ideological language in order to describe the thoughts and actions of a language community in each period. Information about a particular ideological worldview will be uncovered systematically and pragmatically by analysing ideology-related expressions.

Rhetoric as “elocution” implies that the speaker utilises his speech to convince his audience of a proposition or persuade them to carry out a particular action. In order to persuade an audience through effective speaking, speakers use rhetoric to offer a variety of methods and strategies, which will be revealed in this research. During the selection of political speeches, classical elements of the structure of speech such as euphemisms, metaphors, and rhetorical expressions will be examined. Moreover, an analysis of patterns of reasoning and strategies of argumentation will be included to link traditional analysis with methods of text linguistics.
Political science is being categorized as the types of governmental regimes according to the features of their internal governance. Two basic types of political systems are democracy and autocracy. There is only a fine and rather undefined line separating the two systems. Between the ideal-typical democracy and perfect totalitarianism, there is a continuum on which we can classify political systems. The political system of a country may move back and forth along this continuum over a period of time. A regime may achieve a certain condition at one point, but a dramatic change in the political environment may change this condition. This change manifests itself in the language used in political speeches. It is one of the central aims of this research to describe this linguistic phenomenon.

This overview shows that the three central terms – ideology, rhetoric, and political system – are intertwined. Ideology is revealed in rhetoric, and consequently, in the political system. The political system, as defined in this thesis, is the specific type of government along the democratic and autocratic continuum, which arises from an ideological conviction and evolves from and with language.

3. Methods

By going through the selection of political speeches, the three branches of politolinguistics – polity, politics, and policies – are connected. Polity focuses on language and the political system, and deals with the organisation of political institutions. This research analyses the use of language in totalitarian political systems, as well as the specific text-type used. The second field, politics, focuses on language and the political process. It is assigned to analyse the strategic aspects of political language, for example, euphemisms and metaphors and the process of ideological polysemy. The level of lexis in this context is the interface between the areas of polity and politics, and involves for example, the study of key concepts and keywords. The third branch, policies, investigates language usage in specific political fields. This often coincides with the objects and circumstances of the current political interest of the public. Therefore, through the approach of politolinguistics, the research analysis will be conducted on word, sentence, and text levels.
4. Corpus

The corpus consists of political speeches by Argentine presidents. Political speeches are embedded to a large extent in ideology, rhetoric, and the political system. The president, as head of state and government, as representative of the political system, and as an essential element of the power structure, attempts to manipulate his audience through his political speeches – he wants to convince and persuade them of his interests. The speeches that are analysed are primarily intended to bring about a consensus in a ceremonial way such as the inaugural speeches and the speeches given by presidents on national celebrations like the Día de la Independencia and the Primer Gobierno Patrio. These speeches are expected to contain a varied repertoire of ideological language, rhetorical figures, as well as forms and strategies of argumentation.

5. Structure

The thesis will be divided into two main sections. The first section lays the foundation. It covers the concepts of ideology, rhetoric, and the political system in order to classify the phenomenon of Peronism. The second section is the empirical part of the research – the linguistic and stylistic analysis of political speeches. This will be further sub-divided into two parts. The first part analyses political speeches of Juan Domingo Perón given during his mandate as president from 1946 until 1955 and from 1973 until his death in 1974. His speeches will form the basis of comparison for the political speeches analysed in the second part. The second part of the empirical analysis examines the political speeches of all Argentine presidents since 1983 during their presidencies that are as follows: Raúl Alfonsín (1983-1989), Carlos Menem (1989-1999), Fernando de la Rúa (1999-2001), Eduardo Duhalde (2002-2003), Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007), Christina Fernández de Kirchner (2007).²

It is the aim of the second empirical part to examine, whether the political speeches of non-Peronist presidents like Raúl Alfonsín or Fernando de la Rúa contain

² The presidents Ramón Puerta (2001), Adolfo Rodríguez Saá (2001), and Eduardo Camaño (2001-2002) are not included because of their short mandate during the transitional period.
ideological elements of the original Peronism. Thus, it will be shown that ideologies are connected to the political system, and yet their boundaries are often fluid.

Based on the findings of the first empirical part, the following questions are treated in the second empirical part: how has Peronism changed over time? Are there any parallels between the original Peronism and new forms of Peronism like the “Menemism” or “Kirchnerism”? How can the similarities and differences be characterized linguistically, stylistically, and ideologically?

6. Conclusion

The central question of this dissertation is: is there a relationship between ideology, rhetoric, and the political system? If yes, how does it manifest in language and rhetoric? In case that there is no relationship, the results of the empirical analysis are expected to show no distinctive linguistic features in the rhetoric. However, if there is a relationship – and this is the basic assumption –, then there will be traceable distinctive linguistic features in the political speeches. This will therefore allow conclusions to be made on specific ideologies, which are ultimately elements of the political system.

Based on a diachronic cross-section of political speeches of Argentine presidents from 1946 until 1955, from 1973 until 1974, and from 1983 until today, it is the objective of this research to show change, differences, and similarities of the usage of ideological and political language together with the change and development of political systems. The relationship between ideology, rhetoric, and the political system will be scrutinised through an empirical analysis of select political speeches and their ideological language, rhetorical figures, as well as reasoning patterns and strategies.
7. References


