

EUPHEMISTIC SYMBOLSPEAK IN AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL SPOT(S)

Author **Alina-Mirela Pascu**

Dunărea de Jos University of Galați, Romania , alinamirela.pascu@yahoo.com

Abstract:

The account presented in this paper combines insights from verbal-centric and visual theories in arguing that Political Campaign Discourse exploits multimodal manipulation, with specific reference to American presidential advertisements. Symbolspeak, or deliberate distortion of reality designed via manipulation of (visual) language and other symbols, is a ubiquitous semiotic production in multimodal meaning making environments such as Political Advertising. The present work employs a theoretical splicing that builds upon politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987) with features of Intersemiotic Complementarity (Royce 2007) and a critical multimodal approach (Ledin and Machin 2020) to identify and analyse visual-with-verbal euphemistic symbolspeak across several layers of presidential campaign discourse (Benoit 1999, van Dijk 2006). Specifically, the article investigates American Presidential Campaign Ads proving multimodal manipulation based on two primary focuses: firstly, by turning the spotlight on the concept of euphemistic symbolspeak as an integrated multimodal manipulative tool in presidential campaigning. Secondly, by triangulating a (systemic) functional multimodal critical discourse study and applying this multidisciplinary framework to a representative sample, i.e. the 2020 Biden sponsored spot tagged Climate Change. The overall aim is to identify, analyse visual-with-verbal euphemistic symbolspeak representations constructed through multimodal and discursive strategies along with visual-verbal intersemiotic complementarity, and to unpack the legitimation of stereotypes reflected on sociocultural structures.

Keywords: *Multimodal manipulation; Visual euphemistic symbolspeak Presidential campaign spot; (Systemic) functional multimodal critical discourse analysis.*