

The Language of Politics

Ofer Feldman *Editor*

Debasing Political Rhetoric

Dissing Opponents, Journalists, and
Minorities in Populist Leadership
Communication

 Springer

The Language of Politics

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The Language of Politics series is an interdisciplinary, critical, and analytical forum for the publication of cutting-edge research regarding the way language is used by political officials. It focuses mainly on empirically-based research aiming to analyze and discuss the role, function, and effects of the vocabulary used by politicians and other officials in Western and non-Western societies. Such language can be broadcast live in venues such as parliamentary debates and deliberations, election campaign assemblies, political party conventions, press conferences, media interviews, and even non-broadcast (but later reported) speeches in front of support groups or during international negotiations – in traditional as well as social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). It can include polite, respectful, and deferential public speaking, or conversely, impolite verbal discourse, debasing and derisive comments, and the use of crude, vulgar, or abusive terms – including curses and obscenities – through irony, sarcasm, cynicism, ridicule, and mockery, to demean, degrade, humiliate, and insult individuals, the political opposition, or groups in society.

The series is located at the intersection of several social science disciplines including communication, linguistics, discourse studies, political sociology, political science, and political psychology. It aims to bring together multiple political and social theories and concepts; qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methodological approaches; and in-depth, empirical, communication- and language-oriented analyses. By addressing critical issues such as the use of words, terms, and expressions in parliamentary debate and political negotiations, and their effect from novel perspectives, it can expose the weaknesses of existing discourse analysis concepts and arguments, or reassess the topic in other ways through the introduction of different ideas, the integration of perspectives from disparate sub-fields or even disciplines. By challenging existing paradigms, authored books in the series will enrich current debates surrounding several complex, discourse relationships: between politicians' and citizens; between decision-makers and their colleagues; and in general, the way language shapes political culture in an increasingly globalized world. All proposals and books in this series are peer-reviewed by international experts in the aforementioned fields.

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*To the Hatanis—
Akifumi and Asaya,*

*Your life is what you speak it to be.
Speak life!*

Preface

This book is a companion to *Political Debatement: Incivility, Contempt, and Humiliation in Parliamentary and Public Discourse* (Feldman, 2023). Whereas the first book focuses on speeches, statements, comments, and remarks of politicians in their parliamentary and other official and less official private activities, the present book examines the language of selected political leaders in Western and non-Western countries, including Donald Trump (in the USA), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Turkey), Rodrigo Roa Duterte (Philippines), and Jair Bolsonaro (Brazil).

The two books represent the collective wisdom of scholars and researchers, experts in fields such as communication, political science, international relations, and social and political psychology. They discuss and provide a number of novel insights of theoretical and practical importance regarding some of the most important aspects of a particular type of language in politics, debasing discourse, as well as potential avenues for future research on the nature and effect of this type of language.

The two volumes form a collection with strong internal coherence and abundant cross-references among its contributions, and can be read jointly, as the chapters in the two books complement and “speak” to each other—or read separately as stand-alone books. Our intent (and hope) is that they preferably will be read and used together as a unified, polyphonic, and interdisciplinary contribution to the study of political debatement discourse.

The two books are part of the same project with its manifold goals. This includes (1) To define, identify, and assess the nature, characteristics, role, and usage of debatement language of politicians in different societies; (2) To determine the target (individual or groups) at the center of such rhetoric; (3) To examine the venues and circumstances in which debatement language is used; (4) To consider the social, political, and psychological rationale behind the use of such discourse in politics; (5) To analyze the effect of such language within the general and political culture of a given country; and last, (6) To offer ideas to further advance the scholarly research and debate on the functions of debatement discourse in the conduct of politics. As a whole, the authors in these books address current and upcoming research opportunities in political debatement, by describing, analyzing, and anticipating the

key areas of debasement on which students and researchers of political behavior and communication should focus.

As the editor of this book I was very lucky to have the opportunity to bring together an extraordinary group of scholars from different countries and would like to sincerely thank all of them for their support and dedication throughout this collaborative project, working hard to complete their respective chapters in a timely and comprehensive fashion. I hope that the process of writing their chapters has been a rewarding endeavor to them as well.

A special thanks to Sonja Zmerli for endless support and invaluable patience during the process of this project from its birth, and to my students and student/teaching assistants, Yuriko Kono and Yuki Nakagawa, for keeping my spirit and motivation high during the working on this project, and for finding applicable references and information. As always, Sam Lehman-Wilzig offered excellent language and copyediting work, attentively reading every word in this book while providing the authors with essential suggestions, feedback, and substantive criticism to obtain the highest quality in their contributions. We are all deeply indebted to him for his sincere and efficient work. I also want to thank the staff at Springer, especially to our editor Juno Kawakami, for their kind, enthusiastic, and competent work in preparing the book for publication. It goes without saying, as in my previous projects, none of the above-mentioned individuals assumes any responsibility for any mistake or flaws in this book—except perhaps my two grandsons Akifumi (3 years old) and Asaya (2 years old), to whom this book is dedicated.

Kyoto, Japan

Ofer Feldman

Reference

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