



El General Francisco Franco's "The Power of Beliefs"

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Abstract

This study analyzes and shows the elements of Francisco Franco's various speeches and manner in which he targeted people's beliefs and conduct. His prime targets were the higher education organizations, educators and college students. Franco believed they needed to be indoctrinated in order to eradicate the republican beliefs from the previous Spanish administration. Thus he directed his propaganda towards them. His yearning to reach out to teachers and students was evident in *Discurso pronunciado por S.E. El Generalísimo Franco, Jefe del Estado Español con motivo de la inauguración del presente curso escolar y de la Ciudad Universitaria de Madrid*. The totalitarian vocabulary of the text comprises a utopian vision of reality and covert techniques of persuasion as well as control that, when combined, provided a potent weapon of manipulation. Taking into account both the era's historical setting and the current political climate, this critical discourse analysis of the speech selected incorporates Wodak's historical discourse approach with other approaches to analyze topoi in critical discourse. We see in the findings of this article how the combinations of a charismatic leader and power of speech play an important role in obtaining support of the population, even when it is against their own personal interest and well-being.

Keywords: Franquismo, historical discourse approach, indoctrination, political discourse, political propaganda, topoi.

1. Introduction

Francisco Franco employed a considerable measure of smoke and mirrors in their statements to make it appear as though Spain was in pristine condition after the 1939 Civil War. Francisco was a Spanish dictator and militiaman who was born in El Ferrol in 1892 and died in Madrid in 1975. After taking part in an attempted coup *d'état* on 18 July 1936, he eventually led troops that opposed the second Republic and was victorious in the Civil War of 1936 to 1939. He personally held strong conservative beliefs such as the value of order and Authority and distrusting legislative rule, liberals and democracy in general. At the end of the Civil War, he also set up a government in Spain that had ties to Hitler's Nazism and Mussolini's fascist movement, both of which were supporters and sources of inspiration to him. This form of rule was of course a personal dictatorship with a defined doctrine based on his Catholic character, Unitarian, Ultra-right list autonomy and distaste for all liberal and like so parties. He also achieved a concept of a charismatic personality leader known by the title of "Caudillo de España", meaning warlord or the strongman of Spain (*Biografía de Francisco Franco Bahamonde*, n.d.). On 3 April 1939, Franco gave a speech on *Radio Nacional* which was the following message: "*¡Españoles, alerta! España sigue en*

Guerra contra todo enemigo del interior o del exterior, perpetuamente fiel a sus caídos. España, con el favor de Dios, sigue en marcha, Una, Grande y Libre, hacia su irrenunciable destino” (Spaniards, alert! Spain continues at War against all the enemies inside or outside, perpetually loyal to its fallen. Spain, God be willing, continues in the march, One, Great and Free one, to its inalienable destiny) (González Duro, 1992: 229). *El Generalísimo Franco* established in these brief statements key aspects that would define his political vocabulary throughout the following years of his dictatorship. Therefore, instigating a perpetual battle with Gods’ support against the “enemy” (such as communism, anarchy, negative criticism, etc.) is, thus, to bolster his authoritarian rule. The authors Fusi and Palafox (1997) mentioned “the formation of an authoritative discourse (AD) involving authors, journalists, politicians, professors, priests, and religious leaders” (pp. 259-260). Nonetheless, Franco’s voice eventually dominated the period’s political conversation. Given that a dictatorship has one supreme leader, one authoritative voice, and ultimate repression of alternative views, all political conversation must be attributed to this person. In accordance with Fusi and Palafox (1997) Franco’s early propaganda and one of his regime’s key goals was to make it look that the dictatorship, which came to power by an undemocratic military coup in a world that revered freedom and democracy, was not actually unconstitutional (pp. 259-260).

In the case of Franquismo, Pinto (2004), stated “the regime’s objective was comparable: to overlook the illegalities of their authority and to control the political discourse by promoting the cult of personality surrounding the Caudillo; military strength; Spanish unity; the greatness of the fatherland; and the deeply embedded traditional values of Catholicism, family, and order” (cited in Ferreira et al., 2013: 258). By employing religion, Franco was able to create an alluring picture of a Catholic state. In actuality, his wife claimed he “worshipped patriotism” (Tusell, 1988: 17).

With the conclusion of World War II and a few years previously, “the Spanish government had to alter its image in an effort to gain international recognition and foreign help” (Fusi & Palafox, 1997: 259-260). This is Spanish fascist propaganda. The *Discurso pronunciado por S.E. el Generalísimo Franco, Jefe del Estado Español con motivo de la inauguración del presente curso escolar y de la Ciudad Universitaria de Madrid* (Pronounce discourse by S.E el Generalísimo Franco, Chief of the Spanish State with motive of inauguration of the present scholar course and the University City of Madrid) on October 12th, 1943 is a remnant of this fascist time that preserves the regime’s that indoctrinates educators and college students. This research views ideology as being both *topos* of authority and a *topos* of history due to the sociopolitical environment in which education transmits the ideology of those in power. It seeks a unique place in history; promotes a “bridge” between education and nation; and strives for Spain’s peaceful and prosperous future (Žagar, 2010: 12).

2. Literature review

This section will provide an overview of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and historical discourse analysis (HDA), *topos* and their function; and the power of influence, which will also serve as a framework used to analyze speaking power. It also invites the reader on a short trip through the history of the era of “Franquism”. Since it is most relevant to the speech being analyzed in this article.

2.1 Critical discourse analysis

In conformity with Wodak (2001), and Van Dijk (2001) critical discourse analysis aims to view social problems and particularly the way the discourse contributes to the reproduction of power-play and abuse as well as dominance. Similarly, to Fairclough (1995), a discourse can be

understood from the linguistic point of view, which is written or spoken and thus it includes other forms of communication such as non-verbal and symbols that also make language a “form of social practice” (p. 7). Fairclough (1995) describes critical discourse analysis as a framework that integrates “(a) analysis of text, (b) analysis of processes of text production, consumption, and distribution, and (c) sociocultural analysis of the discursive event [...] as a whole” (p. 25). It offers a critical point of view on the discourse that is being analyzed, allowing us to understand the ideologies that underlie it. Van Dijk (2008) noticed in CDA the “way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (p. 352). Furthermore, attempts to reveal the real meaning and purpose of what has been said and how it is represented towards the society. Van Dijk (2008) indicates four characteristics: The first one to focus on social problems and political issues; second, critical analysis of social problems in a multidisciplinary manner; third, does not only describe the discourse structures but explains them and fourth, the relationship between power and dominance in society. How it is enacted, confirmed, legitimated, reproduced or challenged. In doing so this will help the reader understand what other forces are at play here when we also take into account the energy of the speech and its giver. For, without it the speech and discourse itself lose momentum and it must be noted that any discourse must be given in direct proportion to the energy of whoever gives it. If a good speech would be given in an unemphatic manner, even the most eloquent of words will sound dull.

2.2 Historical discourse approach (HDA)

Wodak’s (2001) historical discourse approach (HDA), which was created as a framework for political discourse research, can analyze a speech or a written text in a specific event. According to Wodak (2006), CDA should make decisions at each stage of the study process, and these judgments should be made public. This suggests that it is possible, on a theoretical level, to explain why some interpretations of discursive events appear more plausible than others. From this perspective, Wodak (2006) acknowledges “speaking is considered a social activity, and the triangulation principle is utilized to decrease the possibility of bias” (p. 65). Rogers (2004) comments that “researchers using the HDA begin with the data’s substance, which may be primarily linguistic, and investigate the methods adopted by specific actors across the time” (p. 150). Moreover, Žagar (2010), HDA employs the triangulation concept of argumentation theory, or more precisely, the notion of *topoi*.

2.3 *Topos/topoi*

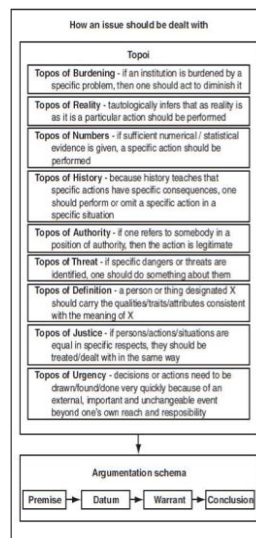
Topos and *topoi*, according to Wodak (2006), are logical components that pertain to crucial explicit or inferential premises. These are “the conclusion norms, or the grounds about the substance of argument or argument that connect them to conclusion or claim” (p. 74). They serve as a bridge between the argument or reasoning and conclusion. In addition to the definition provided above, Richardson (2004) defines *topoi* as “reservoirs of generalized core ideas from which particular statements or arguments might be generated” (p. 230). According to Žagar (2010), both *topos* and *topoi* relate to things that are evident, well-known, and commonly utilized, such as tables, chairs, standing up, and many other common occurrences. *Topos* and *topoi* remain one of the most perplexing and contentious concepts in the history of rhetoric and argumentation (p. 5)

Žagar (2010) offers a review of the most frequently used *topoi* compiled by Richardson (2004) and Wodak (2009). The items in their lists include a compiled list with the most frequently used *topoi* in writing and conversation. Although in Wodak’s (2009), were utilized when “negotiating specific agenda in meetings, or attempting to persuade the audience of one’s interests, visions or positions” (cited in Žagar, 2010: 6-7). They contain nine *topics* according to Wodak

(2011), the “speaker utilizes these resources to deal with issues during argumentation, referring to the speaker so that he or she can present themselves in a positive way and showcase the opponent negatively” (pp. 42-44). Based on these lists, Hasan, (2020) came up with a list founded on Wodak (2011) and Richardson (2004) work which is the following; the list contains the different types of *topos/topoi* that aid in the analysis of the speech (pp. 136-137):

- 1) Burdening (the speaker seeks to minimize and diminish the issues that his or her government or institution suffers from);
- 2) Reality (politicians rarely speak about reality. Even though, the speaker in numerous times talks about reality in the political action);
- 3) Numbers (are used to justify during an argument the order to support the given evidence);
- 4) History (teachers that there are specific actions and have specific consequences. Thus, the speaker utilizes this *topos* for self-positive presentation);
- 5) Authority (legitimizes the action or decision that should be made);
- 6) Threat (the speaker at times relies on this *topos* to justify those necessary actions should be made to diminish any type of danger);
- 7) Definition (a person or thing designated X should carry the qualities/traits/attributes consistent with the meaning of X);
- 8) Justice (if persons/actions/situations are equal in specific respect, they should be treated/dealt with in the same way) and;
- 9) Urgency (decisions are actions need to be drawn/found/done very quickly because of an external, important and unchangeable event beyond one’s reach and responsibility.

As seen in Figure 1 Hasan (2020), gather the information and create the list of *topos*, but also, as for the argumentation theory from Toulmin, as previously mentioned to have a correlation when it comes to identifying *topos/topoi* in an argumentation.



Note: As demonstrated in Figure 1, by describing the categories of each *topos* and contrasting it with the argumentation schema produced by Toulmin’s diagram (1995), Toulmin replaced *topoi* with warrants and added qualifiers and reservation strength.

Figure 1

Additionally, Alemi et al. (2018) mention “each time a politician delivers a speech, the audience attempts to discern if the speaker is moderate, modest, authoritarian, or radical” (pp. 3-5). On the other hand, Meyer (2001) suggests “politicians utilize *topoi* to indicate whether they agree or disagree with certain political organizations or points of view” (pp. 14-15). Therefore, a political speech contains an intentionally dynamic argument. In order to interpret Žagar (2010), HDA analysts must address two factors: first, they must identify the arguments and conclusions in a given discourse fragment with clarity and precision; and second, they must illustrate how probable *topoi* connects to these arguments. Moreover, “the *topoi* are consistent with the *Rhetoric*, which provides guidelines for arguments that do not have a specific predicate, such as that something is wonderful, honorable, good, just, etc.” (pp. 18-19).

In the context of HDA analysis, this would include bringing attention to a “well known or discussed” issue of what the author intended or what he or she exactly wanted to say. According to Toulmin, “*topoi* serves as the argumentative premise or foundation of an argument. It must be made clear that HDA is not an argumentation theory per se; rather, it is only the use of argumentation or portions thereof” (cited in Žagar, 2010: 22).

3. Methodology

Following Wodak’s (2011) nine *topoi* were utilized to conduct the analysis of Franco's political speech. This discourse has six sections as a reminder to the reader. What I sought to analyze was the *topos* the author uses to describe power as a man with religious beliefs and nationalism and what the message conveys. The aim of this qualitative technique of analysis employed in this study is to provide a context-dependent approach using HDA as the instrument of analysis. According to Amossy (2018) it integrates in its analysis “all available background information” and examines each utterance in context: its analytical practice is by definition socio historical. Moreover, it combines argumentative and discursive analysis by examining how the context's language is used to convey meaning (cited in Hassan, 2020: 137).

It investigated the *topoi* El Caudillo had utilized in his discourse in order to persuade the public about his views on regional (at national and religious level) and international issues as well as the political and social issues concerning education.

I selected this text because I considered that the discourse expressed clearly what the intentions were as well as motivations. It reflects his personal ideology and desire for the future of the Spanish population in the twentieth century. Afterwards, I selected the theoretical framework that I considered to be more appropriate for developing the analysis, which I described previously so the reader knows what I was based on to carry out the analysis. Next, I did a literature review on the historical context and on the figure of Franco, in order to provide the reader with a summary of how the situation developed throughout time. This helped me highlight what had been the main goals and conflicts that are the most representative of authoritarianism, religion, and patriotism in their own timeframe. After identifying the *topoi* suggested by Wodak's and classifying them within the *nine topoi*, I was able to offer a classification and interpretation of the various *topoi* that compose the discourse. In order to do this, I went over the *topoi* that are in the six sections and identified them as used by Franco. Then I was able to offer an interpretation of the same. To facilitate comprehension, I will present all of this in the next sections. Sometimes more than one *topoi* will be found in the same line of each section. This is not to cut off ideas and thus will allow the analysis to flow.

4. Findings and discussion

In this section, I interpret the *topoi* in Francisco Franco’s speech to the Spanish people about the opening of a university in Madrid and classify them based on how, according to Wodak (2011) *nine topoi*, “HDA incorporates information about historical sources and the context of political developments” (p. 59). Thus, “*topoi*” refers to the implicit and explicit axioms that speakers use to link their reasoning to their conclusions. I also presented an interpretation to them to understand what the author meant when he said it. I should say that this is a personal interpretation that can be looked into in the future.

5. Discourse analysis – Francisco Franco’s nationalist discourse

HDA is seen as an appropriate tool for examining political discourse, primarily because it acts as a link between speech and community in the Spanish context. In accordance with Michels (1968) “leaders have always been labeled as radicals, as belonging to one of the political factions, left or right, depending on their political positions” (cited in Richardson & Wodak, 2009, p. 253). Similarly, Van Dijk (2002) mentions “their political rhetoric reflects one’s distinct ideological perspectives” (p. 203). Wodak’s (2011) HDA could examine whether there are discrepancies in political and ideological identities among both Spaniards and Francos. Therefore, *topoi* assists in clarifying the speaker’s position on local concerns and illustrating but also describing the correlation the speaker intended to establish with the power obtained.

5.1 *Topos of history*

In agreement with Forchtner (2014) politicians use it to promote their ideas, demonstrate their authority, and make choices, as well as to showcase themselves favorably and others unfavorably. It also contributes to illuminating historical events and bringing them to life in the present (p. 19).

5.2 *Topos of threat*

As reported by Wodak (2001) there are two requirements that are necessary. The first one, “If a political action or decision has particularly detrimental or threatening consequences, it should not be taken or made.” The second tenet is that “one must take action against specific dangers and threats” (p. 75).

5.3 *Topos of definition*

“Profesores y alumnos universitarios: nuestras batallas y desde que ordenaron sobre nuestros campos y ciudades las banderas victoriosas de la paz, que vivimos día a día una vida penosa y dura, [...] reconstruir una Patria en ruinas, restableciendo su estructura nacional, revalorizando sus perfiles históricos, encajando la de la vez, sin reparar en la lejanía de la meta ni en la inquietud de los incesantes obstáculos, la situación material y moral en que estaba sumido nuestro pueblo cuando alboreó el comienzo de nuestra Cruzada. [...] nunca se ha visto cercada la actividad gubernamental de dificultades mayores; nunca ha sido preciso laborar desde las alturas del Poder con más intensidad y denuedo y con más firme serenidad y corazón.” (Discurso, 1-2, pp. 357-358)

“University professors and students: our battles and since they ordered the victorious flags of peace over our fields and cities, that we live a painful and hard life day by day, [...] rebuilding a Homeland in ruins, reestablishing its national structure,

revaluing its historical profiles, fitting that of the time, without noticing the distance from the goal or the concern of the incessant obstacles, the material and moral situation in which our people were plunged when the beginning of our Crusade dawned. [...] government activity has never been surrounded by major difficulties; It has never been necessary to work from the heights of Power with more intensity and courage and with more firm serenity and heart.” (Speech, 1-2, pp. 357-358)

As you can see, all the topics mentioned above can be classified into two parts: power and nationalism. Franco is narrating to the people how the previous government has implemented policies that led to Spain’s demise and causes the audience to reflect on the feelings of loss. The audience begins to feel the power and Euphoria of greatness again and by using three capitalize words “Patria (Fatherland), Cruzada (Crusade) and Poder (Power)” He installs the ideas of nationalism and referencing the crusades of Catholics versus Muslims thus resulting in national power.

5.4 *Topos of authority*

In accord with Forchtner and Wodak (2018) this is a “highly plausible official argument” (p. 139). It bolsters the speaker's confidence and conveys power and responsibility.

“Todo este colosal esfuerzo no ha querido mantenerse en el estudio puro de un mejoramiento materialista. Funesto y suicida es levantar el nivel de la vida si esta no se hace cristiana y digna si no se le imprime una huella de reforma interior.” (Discurso, 2-3, pp. 358-359)

“All this colossal effort has not wanted to remain in the pure study of a materialistic improvement. It is disastrous and suicidal to raise the level of life if it is not made Christian and dignified if a trace of interior reform is not imprinted on it.” (Speech, 2-3, pp. 358-359)

And in this second part we see how State and religion are coming together under him and replacing science and scholars. By playing that a devout life is worth seeing, not only does he give power to religion and State but also makes reference to the power of a monarch which in time past was the only person God will speak to as the head of the country and State.

5.5 *Topos of justice and history*

“[...]la ardiente inquietud por la creación de una ciencia verdadera, sometida inexorablemente al servicio de los intereses espirituales y materiales de la Patria; de otra preocupación porque es una densa y auténtica cultura cristiana penetrated en todos los ámbitos de la nación y nos de la promesa de una juventud fuerte y unida para cumplir sin vacilación nuestro destino ante la historia.” (Discurso, 3, p. 359)

“[...] the ardent concern for the creation of a true science, inexorably submitted to the service of the spiritual and material interests of the Homeland; of another concern because it is a dense and authentic Christian culture penetrating in all areas of the nation and gives us the promise of a strong and united youth to fulfill our destiny before history without hesitation.” (Speech, 3, p. 359)

In the section, Francisco mentions that students and teachers will be taught to undergo a necklace as a tickle and spiritual way to serve in the benefit of the country. He also lays the foundation for how the university ought to be conducted.

5.6 *Topos of reality, burdening, history and justice*

Aquí sucumbió la flor de la mejor juventud, inmolada en el más puro de los sacrificios. Diríase que ha sido prodigiosa su fecundidad. Ellos quedaron sepultados entre las ruinas, y hoy las ruinas han desaparecido para servir de cimiento a estos colosales edificios, que son ahora como monumentos votivos a la gloria de los muertos. Sobre el solar heroico que fué su tumba España ha reconstruido este vasto recinto, consagrado a las letras, con lo que les tributa el mejor de los homenajes, con lo que sienta la más esencial de sus afirmaciones espirituales. Ninguna Ciudad Universitaria del Viejo Continente puede enorgullecerse de tal ejecutoria, [...] es desde ahora para siempre memoria perenne de una juventud que salvó con la muerte a su Patria y obra de un Régimen vindicador del signo espiritual de la civilización y de la vida.” (Discurso, 4, p. 360)

Here succumbed to the flower of the best youth, immolated in the purest of sacrifices. It would be said that her fertility has been prodigious. They were buried among the ruins, and today the ruins have disappeared to serve as the foundation for these colossal buildings, which are now like votive monuments to the glory of the dead. On the heroic site that was his tomb, Spain has rebuilt this vast enclosure, consecrated to letters, with which it pays them the best of homage, with which it feels the most essential of its spiritual affirmations. No University City of the Old Continent can be proud of such an achievement, [...] it is from now on forever a perennial memory of a youth who saved his country with death and the work of a Regime vindicating the spiritual sign of civilization and life.” (Speech, 4, p. 360)

As you can see from the speech above, we can see the changes that will be made into higher university studies as representation of the state power. The idea of nationalism and the Catholic way are to be accepted and promoted throughout the studies at the University.

5.7 *Topos of threat, urgency and burdening*

[...] dotado de un sentido cristiano capaz de comportarse como tal entre sus semejantes, sin que la soberbia científica le coloque por encima del bien y del mal y le aparte de sus inexorables deberes para con Dios y para con la Patria. (Discurso, 8, p. 364)

[...] endowed with a Christian sense capable of behaving as such among his peers, without scientific arrogance placing him above good and evil and separating him from his inexorable duties to God and to the Homeland. (Speech, 8, p. 364)

As you can see from paragraph above religion would be before and foremost above any form of science and in his personal opinion God and Patriotism are first and above all else in regard to the ideology of the Spanish Society, again these words are capitalized to signify the importance and prominence it should have within the mind of The Listener and or reader.

5.8 *Topos of burdening, reality and history*

[...] a nuestros hermanos del otro lado del mar. Ellos forman con nosotros la comunidad hispánica, estrechamente unida por los vínculos de la religión y del idioma. Para las juventudes hispanoamericanas que quieran cursar sus estudios en la vieja Europa, madre de la civilización, se ha hecho también esta Ciudad Universitaria, la cual desde el primer día de su feliz iniciativa ya acarició la ilusión de servir de albergue y hogar a cuantos hijos de la América hispana desearan laborar en armonía con nuestros maestros y discípulos en pro de la común cultura que nos ha definido en la historia con caracteres espirituales fraternos.” (Discurso, 12, pp. 367-368)

“[...] to our brothers on the other side of the sea. They form with us the Hispanic community, closely united by the bonds of religion and language. For the Hispanic-American youth who want to pursue their studies in old Europe, the mother of civilization, this University City has also been built, which from the first day of its happy initiative already cherished the illusion of serving as a shelter and home to as many children of Hispanic America that wish to work in harmony with our teachers and disciples in favor of the common culture that has defined us in history with fraternal spiritual characters.” (Speech, 12, pp. 367-368)

In this excerpt Francisco mentions the interest of joining forces with Spanish-speaking countries crossing the Atlantic especially Mexico and the rest of Latin America. Once again, he makes allusions to Old Europe, the mother of civilization, thus linking the idea of colonization to that of a time of Glory. As one might notice Franco treated many countries as communist and not worthy to be allied with. Many of his ideologies stemmed from Hitler and Mussolini idiosyncrasy and very well permeated into his personal and political life as well as thoughts and personal beliefs. When reading his discourse and speeches the reader can very well see what influence does mind and what was most important to him in regards as to retaining power and imposing his belief on others for the benefit of the country and its development according to him and his regime. Those who did not share in his vision were permanently exiled and put to death so no sense of questioning could arise.

6. Conclusion

After analyzing the sections of this discourse, we can mention how the population was under the power and influence of Franco on a macro level, and micro level. This could be seen by the population reacting to what he would say in his discourses on radio, television, or public events, to how they spoke and thought of him. Creating terror in the population was not the only goal, but also causing distrust in everyone they knew and in other countries, punishing those who disagreed with them and the regime. This analysis took into account the historical discourse events that occurred, society's situation, and its cultural aspects as well. It must be said that the information cannot be analyzed separately from its background information coming from society at that time, including Franco and the culture. For authors such as Van Dijk, Fairclough, and especially Wodak, who was the author of this analysis, they gave the triangulation necessary to understand these topics within the historical events. For further research, it would be interesting to compare these discourse sections to the population of that time in contrast with the current population and compare viewpoints from how Franco was and is now seen and regarded by the people of Spain.

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