



METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSING PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A FUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATIVE APPROACH

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The study of idioms in political discourse requires a methodology that transcends simple repetition and formal classification. This paper proposes a functional and interpretative framework that views idioms as active discursive tools in political communication. By integrating corpus techniques and qualitative analysis, this paper outlines key principles for data selection, classification, saturation, and analytical validation. This framework clarifies how idioms shape beliefs, ideological orientations, and political legitimacy across different registers. Ultimately, only a methodologically integrated perspective can fully comprehend the discursive complexity of idiom meaning in political texts.

Phrases are generally defined as relatively fixed, conventionally understood, multipart expressions and are considered an indispensable element of political communication. Political actors frequently use phrases to simplify complex political agendas, shape value judgments about social realities, and reinforce institutional authority. Despite their widespread use, a systematic study of phrases in political discourse remains a methodological challenge, especially when analyzing what might be reduced to isolated combinations of words or purely semantic units. This paper does not regard language form as static, but proposes a methodological framework to reconceptualize phrases as function-driven discourse patterns. The framework integrates corpus-based technical and qualitative interpretive analysis, and focuses on examining the communicative function of phrases in specific political contexts. We do not only focus on word frequency or formal structure, but examine their functional roles, such as persuasion, evaluation, legitimization and ideological framework construction.

As is well known, in critical discourse analysis, political language is regarded as a constitutive force that actively shapes social reality. As linguist Fairclough has argued, repeated language choices promote the generation and reproduction of power relations by granting certain interpretations privileges and marginalizing others [5].

Phrases are particularly important in this process because their everyday use makes ideological connotations seem natural and self-evident. From a social cognitive perspective, Van Dijk emphasizes that discourse comprehension is based on shared mental representations, which are constantly reinforced by recurring linguistic patterns [11]. In political discourse, phrases such as "national interest" or "public security" act as schema triggers, activating familiar interpretation patterns.

Wodak's discourse history approach further emphasizes the importance of contextualization, arguing that political meaning stems from intertextual references and historical continuity [12]. From a methodological perspective, this means that phrase analysis must consider register, institutional framework, and socio-political context. Consequently, the



present framework treats phraseological units as dynamic and context-sensitive resources whose functions evolve through repeated use. In terms of the corpus underlying this study was constructed according to qualitative relevance than statistical representativeness. Following McEnery and Hardie, text selection prioritised political impact, institutional authority, and public circulation, ensuring the data reflected discourse with tangible social consequences [8]. The corpus includes parliamentary debates, executive speeches, policy statements, press conferences, and televised political interviews. Rather than predetermining corpus size, data collection proceeded until analytical saturation was achieved. Lincoln and Guba define saturation as the point at which additional data fail to generate new conceptual insights [6]. In practical terms, saturation was identified when newly added texts reproduced established phraseological patterns without expanding the existing functional categories. Expressions such as shared responsibility or difficult but necessary decisions repeatedly occurred across speakers and genres, indicating functional consolidation rather than discursive innovation. Phraseological units were identified through a two-stage procedure combining corpus tools with interpretative judgement. Initially, concordance analysis and keyword extraction were used to detect recurrent multi-word sequences. However, inclusion in the analytical dataset was determined by functional relevance compared frequency alone, in line with

Baker's critique of purely quantitative corpus approaches [1]. Furthermore, adopting Moon's framework, phraseological units were operationally defined as expressions displaying relative structural stability, pragmatically conventionalised meaning, and a recognisable discourse function [2]. For example, the expression drawing a clear boundary appeared frequently in discussions of immigration and security. Although structurally transparent, its repeated evaluative and legal deployment justified its treatment as a phraseological unit within political discourse. Analysis followed a legal and reflexive coding process inspired by qualitative content analysis. Mayring conceptualises qualitative analysis as a cyclical procedure in which categories are continuously tested and refined against empirical data [7]. Initial categories such as persuasion, evaluation, legitimation, and ideological polarisation were derived from theory and subsequently adjusted through close textual analysis.

The notion of constant comparison, formulated by Strauss and Corbin, further informed the analytical process by requiring each newly identified instance to be systematically compared with previously analysed examples [9]. This procedure enhanced internal consistency and facilitated the identification of cross-genre functional patterns. In accordance with Biber, Conrad, and Reppen, phraseological units were analysed in relation to situational context, communicative purpose, and genre-specific constraints [10]. For instance, the expression we must act decisively performs a mobilising and persuasive function in parliamentary debate, where immediacy and urgency are foregrounded. In contrast, within policy documents the same expression contributes to legitimisation by framing political decisions as unavoidable and rational. To illustrate the analytical framework, consider the phraseological unit defending democratic principles, frequently used in political discourse addressing international relations and national security. Although abstract in formulation, its repeated contextualisation constructs a moral dichotomy between an in-group associated with democracy and an out-group portrayed as authoritarian or threatening. This oppositional framing serves to legitimise restrictive or interventionist policies. Similarly, the expression leaving no one behind, prominent in post-crisis political narratives, functions as a positive



evaluative marker that projects social responsibility and inclusivity. At the same time, its formulaic stability allows it to circulate across genres while masking policy limitations or implementation gaps. These examples show that the persuasive force of phraseological units lies not in semantic originality but in functional repetition and ideological resonance. Analytical credibility was strengthened through methodological triangulation. Denzin defines triangulation as the systematic combination of multiple perspectives to enhance interpretative robustness [4]. In this study, triangulation involved cross-genre comparison, theoretical integration of CDA and corpus linguistics, and reflexive awareness of researcher positioning.

Charmaz's concept of reflexivity guided the analysis by emphasising the researcher's role in constructing meaning through interpretative choices [3]. By explicitly acknowledging analytical assumptions and decisions, the study enhances transparency and methodological reliability.

To sum up, this work has proposed a functionally oriented methodological framework for analysing phraseological units in political discourse. By combining corpus-assisted techniques with qualitative interpretation, the framework captures both recurrent linguistic patterning and context-dependent discursive functions. The approach avoids reductive quantification while maintaining analytical rigour, offering a flexible model applicable to different political contexts and languages. As such, it provides a solid methodological foundation for future research in political phraseology and discourse analysis.

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