

Ideological Representation of Political Mockery: Critical Discourse Analysis of American Presidential Discourse

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Abstract

Despite the growing body of research on political discourse, less attention has been given to mockery as an ideological strategy in American presidential discourse. This gap therefore suggests the need to explore how mockery can be used not only as a rhetorical device but also as a communicative strategy. The current study investigates how the act of mocking can function as ideological strategy in political discourses. Mockery contributes to ideological polarization by reinforcing an “them versus us” framework and negatively representing out-groups. The study adopts a mixed- methods research design combining a quantitative and qualitative eclectic analytical framework. While the qualitative approach adopts the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, drawing on Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional model. The datasets consist of (10) selected extracts from interviews, press conferences, and media interactions. The paper reveals that mockery functions as a powerful strategy for undermining the credibility of journalists and controlling speech interaction. Mockery plays a significant role in constructing ideological meanings and intensifying social divisions through the distinction between “them versus us”. This study engaged to understanding political discourse by highlighting mockery as a communicative strategic tool operating at interactional, ideological, and linguistic levels, and elucidates how language is used to construct power relations in the contemporary political communication.

المخلص

على الرغم من تزايد الأبحاث حول الخطاب السياسي، إلا أن السخرية كاستراتيجية أيديولوجية في الخطاب الرئاسي الأمريكي لم تحظَ بالاهتمام الكافي. تشير هذه الفجوة إلى ضرورة اكتشاف كيفية استخدام السخرية ليس فقط كأداة بلاغية، بل كاستراتيجية تواصلية أيضًا. تبحث هذه الدراسة في كيفية توظيف السخرية كاستراتيجية أيديولوجية في الخطابات السياسية. إذ تُسهم السخرية في الاستقطاب الأيديولوجي من خلال تعزيز إطار "نحن - هم" وتشويه صورة الجماعات الأخرى. تعتمد هذه الدراسة منهجية بحثية مختلطة تجمع بين إطار تحليلي انتقائي كمي ونوعي. يعتمد المنهج النوعي على إطار تحليل الخطاب النقدي، مستندًا إلى نموذج فيركلوف (1995) الثلاثي الأبعاد. تتكون مجموعات البيانات من عشرة مقتطفات مختارة من مقابلات ومؤتمرات صحفية وتفاعلات إعلامية. إذ تكشف الدراسة أن السخرية تُعدّ استراتيجية فعّالة لتقويض مصداقية الصحفيين والسيطرة على الحوار. كذلك تلعب السخرية دورًا هامًا في بناء المعاني الأيديولوجية وتعميق الانقسامات الاجتماعية من خلال التمييز بين "نحن" و"هم". وتتناول هذه الدراسة فهم الخطاب السياسي من خلال تسليط الضوء على السخرية كأداة استراتيجية تواصلية تعمل على المستويات التفاعلية والأيديولوجية واللغوية، وتوضح كيف تُستخدم اللغة لبناء علاقات القوة في التواصل السياسي المعاصر.

Introduction

Political interaction is an important domain in which language is strategically used to influence public opinion, form identities, and promote ideologies. Politicians use a number of linguistic and rhetorical appeals to persuade audiences and make their beliefs and/or criticize their opponent right. Among these strategies, mockery has emerged as a prominent feature in contemporary political discourse (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008). However, mockery in political exchange can serve as a communicative mode that requires asserting power, establishing social distance with followers, and positioning of opponents negatively (Leech, 1983; van Dijk, 2008).

Seeing language as closely connected to power and ideology, critical discourse analysis suggests that discourse is not neutral but reflects underlying power relations and ideological structures (Fairclough, 2001). In this case, meaning is inherently discursive and socially constructed, as it is shaped by context determined and social identity (Blommaert, 2005, p. 4). When it comes to

political language, political actors construct representations, influence perception, and reinforce ideological meanings through the use of language) Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008). In this context, political discourse can be referred to as the art of employing strategy of language to achieve goals such as persuasion, legitimization, and mobilization. As Chilton (2004, p. 4) explains, political discourse relies on rhetorical strategies and implies meanings to influence public perception. As social actors, politicians use language to construct identities and shape political narratives within specific social and political contexts. (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2008).

The discourse which conducts political issues such as the one stated by Trump provides a relevant context for examining this phenomenon. The communicative style of the American president can be described as the rhetorical style that seems to be unique in its manner, involving both emotional appeal and identity construction, and the frequent use of mockery as well. His discourse represents a significant example of how language functions as a tool of persuasion and ideological construction in contemporary political communication. By considering previous studies, they have examined the use of language in political discourse especially with regard to persuasion, ideology and power. Chilton (2004) emphasizes the role of political discourse in constructing “us versus them” divisions and employing rhetorical strategies to attack opponents. Similarly, van Dijk’s (2008) also points out the influence of discourse on manipulation and ideological control and shows how language is used to influence public cognition and reinforce the polarization of groups. The findings suggest that language plays a crucial role in shaping beliefs and maintaining dominance.

In the field of humor and sarcasm, Attardo (2001) explores the role of humor, sarcasm and ridicule, that, through pragmatic mechanism to communicate the implied meanings. These insights are applicable to the use of mockery as a communicative strategy based on indirect meaning. Likewise, Dynel (2009) acknowledges different forms of conversational humor, including mockery. It has been utilized as a tool for evaluation and social positioning, whereby speakers can express their attitudes and construct social relationships within interaction. In terms of modern politics, Wodak (2015) argues that populist political discourse is often grounded in simplistic and emotive charged language, such as mockery and the negative representation of political opponents. Such strategies are clearly visible in the rhetoric of Donald Trump, who uses

ridicule to construct identities, assert power, and to delegitimize opponents. However, despite the growing body of research on political discourse, less attention has been given to ‘mockery’ as an ideological strategy in American presidential discourse. This gap suggests the need to explore how mockery is used not only as a rhetorical device but also as a communicative strategy.

Therefore, this study aims to examine how mockery functions as an ideological strategy in American political discourse such as Donald Trump by addressing the following question: How does mockery contribute to ideological representation, particularly in constructing “us versus them”? The study displays that Mockery can be realized through specific features such as evaluative language, and repetition. Mockery serves as a key function including interactional dominance, control of discourse, and delegitimization of opponents and journalists. It contributes to ideological polarization by reinforcing an “us versus them” framework and negatively representing out-groups. This study however is significant because it contributes in comprehending how language is strategically employed in political communication to influence public opinion and construct ideological meanings. It also highlights the role of mockery as an effective communication strategy in contemporary political discourse.

Ideology

When it comes to consider ideology, Knight (2006, p. 625) defines the term and is commonly understood as a relatively stable set of beliefs and values that shapes how individuals perceive and interpret the social world. Although the core definition of ideology has remained consistent, its connotations have changed over time, often being associated with political conflicts and power struggles. By taking critical discourse into account, it can be said that ideology cannot be viewed only as an explicit belief system, but as a set of implicit and taken-for-granted assumptions in everyday discourse (Fairclough, 1995, p. 14). These implicit ideologies often appear natural or neutral. Moreover, they cannot be easily recognizing or challenge. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), ideology may be embodied by conceptual metaphors that structure how people think and understand reality. For example, political ideologies such as conservatism, liberalism, and nationalism are often expressed through metaphorical frames that shape public perception of issues like security, economic policy, and immigration. However, it is worth mentioning when such beliefs become widely shared and unquestioned, they contribute to

what Gramsci (1971, pp. 12-13) describes as hegemony where dominant groups maintain power by defining common sense and social norms. In political discourse, this can be observed when certain viewpoints are normalized and accepted without question, while alternative perspectives are marginalized. Building on this perspective, ideology in political discourse is not merely expressed in direct utterances, but also in some other strategies that are more implicit which can shape how social groups are represented. In political settings, ideologies can be expressed and reinforced in discourse in ways that emphasize group distinctions and divisions. van Dijk (2008, pp. 121-122) states that political discourse often relies on the ideological square, which involves emphasizing the positive sides of “us” and negative sides of “them”. This discursive approach is very significant in reinforcing group polarization and ideological positioning.

Ideologically, mockery can be conceptualized as an ideological strategy in political communication. When using mockery, speakers can represent and/or address opponents negatively, undermine their credibility, and depict them as inferior or illegitimate. This is the reasoning of the ideological square, in which negative representations of the others are reinforced to strengthen in-group identity. This is however corresponds with the idea of ideological representation in discourse, where language is employed to maintain power relations and influence audience perception (Fairclough, 1995, p. 25). Therefore, politicians can use mockery to portray opponents as inferior, incompetent, or untrustworthy, thereby reinforcing ideological boundaries and shaping the opinion of people on various social and political groups.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Although discourse and ideology are closely related, they serve different analytical purposes. Discourse operates at the communicational level, focusing on how meaning is constructed through interaction and context. In contrast, ideology operates on the cognitive and belief system level, shaping how individuals perceive and interpret the social world (van Dijk, 1998, p. 8). Nevertheless, the two are not independent, as ideology is expressed and reproduced through discourse, and discourse serves as the medium through which ideological meanings are communicated and preserved.

On the basis of this knowledge, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is concerned with how language, power, and ideology are related. Norman Fairclough (2001, pp. 1-2) argues that discourse helps in production and reproduction of dominance, inequality and social control. CDA views discourse as a form of social practice, and focuses on the fact that language is reflective and constitutive of social structures. Similarly, van Dijk (2008, p. 3) explains that the aims of CDA is to analyze how discourse structures enact, confirm, and reproduce power and dominance relations in society. It is especially concerned with implicit meanings, underlying ideologies and how discourse can shape social cognition and group relations. In this regard, discourse plays a crucial role in political communication, where language is strategically used to persuade audiences, construct identities, and reinforce ideological positions. Discursive strategies in this situation, such as mockery, may operate as ideological tool for expressing power, shaping perception and enforcing ideological distinctions between social and political groups.

Political Discourse

In order to understand how language operates in the field of politics, it becomes necessary to examine the concept of political discourse as a particular area of study. Generally, it refers to the use of language in political contexts to accomplish certain objectives like persuasion, legitimization, the enactment of power, etc. It does not solely take place in formal political institutions, but it also exists in media discourse, public debates, everyday political communication, etc., which leads to the construction of political reality. As Wodak (2009, pp. 1-3) argues, political discourse reflects complex processes of decision-making, social interaction and power relations in the society. From a critical discourse perspective, political discourse may be interpreted as a kind of social practice that is influenced by historical, social and ideological circumstances. It is essential in the formation of political identities, shaping public perception, and power structures. Relationally, Fairclough (2001, p. 27) points out that discourse is both socially shaped and socially constitutive in the sense that it is not only a reflection of social reality but it also plays a role in constructing it.

Moreover, the research of the Critical Discourse Analysis indicated that the political language frequently is based on indirect approaches, stylistic devices, and discursive actions that allow speakers to address multiple audiences and advance certain ideological standpoints. As an illustration, Ruth Wodak and Michal Krzyzanowski (2008, p. 8) show that language is being strategically employed by political actors to create meaning, shape public perception, as well as legitimize specific opinions. Furthermore, van Dijk (2006) points out that the political discourse is often associated with ideological polarization whereby, speakers focus on the positive representation of their group and the negative representation of others. Political communication has been more mediated and strategically created in contemporary political communication, especially political speeches, interviews, and media coverage. This change is indicative of the increasing role of the mass media and online platforms in the creation of political messages and their reception by the audience (Fairclough, 2003, p. 22; van Dijk, 2006). In this regard, the case of contemporary political figures such as Donald Trump is highly relevant, because their discourse frequently employs emotionally charged language and rhetoric to appeal to the audiences and reinforce ideological meanings. Mockery, therefore, can be interpreted as a discursive and ideological strategy in the political discourse that demonstrates the relationships in power and social standing. It can be employed as a persuasion technique to delegitimize opponents, create group identity, and shape audience perception (Fairclough, 1995, p. 25; van Dijk, 2008, p. 121). Political actors can build in-group solidarity at the expense of opposing groups through mockery, thus contributing to the reproduction of ideological divisions in political communication.

Mockery as a Communicative Act

To have a better understanding of the use of mockery in political discourse, it is necessary to examine it as an act of communication within the pragmatic framework. Mockery may be described as a verbal action where a speaker mocks, imitates or criticizes another target in a manner that conveys negative evaluation (usually implicitly) (Dyner, 2009). It has been perceived not as a stylistic aspect only, but as a meaningful communicative act, which fulfills particular social and interactional roles. From a pragmatic perspective, mockery may be examined with references to the theory of speech acts by John L. Austin (1962) who regards language as action instead of the mere means of communicating. In this sense, mockery

functions as a performative action, whereby speakers act by using language in a manner of criticizing, attacking, or undermining others. Likewise, John Searle (1969, p. 16) notes that utterances carry out illocutionary acts, by which speakers use utterances to express communicative intentions that go beyond the literal meaning. Mockery can thus be understood as an illocutionary act; it conveys evaluation, stance and attitude towards an intended target/s. Further, the suggested act is closely associated with the notion of face-threatening acts (FTAs) (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 65–68). Following their politeness theory, FTAs have been perceived as communicative actions that endanger the social image (face) of addressees. This places mockery as a powerful interactional strategy, especially where there is a power imbalance or conflict situation.

In addition to what we have stated above, the use of mockery action is often based on the implicit meaning and requires a pragmatic inference. As Sperber and Wilson (1995) explain, communication involves the process of inferences where the hearers understand the meaning that is not explicitly expressed. Mockery can be executed by using irony, exaggeration, or imitation and therefore it is the audience who needs to deduce the intended meaning of the speaker. This indirectness enables speakers to express criticism with some deniability or rhetorical ambiguity. In political discourse, mockery can function as a strategic communicative act and serves various purposes. One may use it to challenge opponents, undermine their legitimacy, and position them in a negative light before the audience. Meanwhile, mockery can reinforce the solidarity among in-groups as it can form common attitudes and emotional resonance among followers. According to Charteris-Black (2011), evaluation and emotionally charged language are usually used in political rhetoric to influence audiences and create persuasive meanings. In this regard, mockery can be seen as a powerful tool, not only a pragmatic act, but also a socio-pragmatic and ideological strategy in social communications such as the political one. At the socio-pragmatic level, it functions as an interactional act through which speakers express evaluation, perform face-threatening acts, and exercise control within communication (Brown & Levinson, 1987). At the ideological level, mockery serves as a discursive tool for representing social groups, reinforcing “us versus them” distinctions, and delegitimizing opponents (van Dijk, 2008). In political arena, these two dimensions often overlap, as mockery is used not only to attack opponents interactionally, but also to position them negatively within broader ideological frameworks.

Methodology

In order to explore the ideological role of mockery in political discourse, a mixed research method has been adopted. The qualitative component is dominant since it makes it possible to examine the utilization of language in the formation of social meanings, power relations, and ideological standpoints in political contexts in a more detailed way (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008). On the other hand, the quantitative part is based on the content analysis, where the instances of mockery in the chosen data are described, categorized and quantified. This includes the coding of various forms of mockery, which include insult, accent mockery, and dismissal, and the frequency and distribution of these. The qualitative interpretation is supported and enhanced by the quantitative results.

The research is mainly analyzed via the three- dimensional model suggested by Fairclough (1995, pp. 96-100) that covers textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. On the textual level, the analysis is based on linguistic characteristics of mockery, including evaluative language, exaggeration, and lexical choice. The production and interpretation of mockery in political communication is studied at the discursive practice level. At the social practice level, the broader ideological implications of mockery (such as power, dominance, and exclusion) are analyzed. Additionally, the linguistic capital concept suggested by Bourdieu (1991, pp. 37-39) is used to clarify how mockery is used to mirror and uphold unequal power relations among speakers. In this respect, mockery can be considered an ideological strategy within broader structures of power and hierarchy.

The data of this study is based on selected extracts from press conferences and interviews involving the American president Donald Trump and journalists. These extracts are drawn from a dataset provided for the purpose of this study, which includes transcripts of authentic political interactions collected from publicly available sources such as media interviews and press conferences. The extracts represent naturally occurring instances of political discourse in authentic communicative contexts. The dataset is intended to be analyzed as a primary data because it includes actual examples of political communication that could be analyzed as a strategy of mockery as an ideological strategy. The extracts are selected through purposeful sampling rather than chronological criteria. They were picked on the basis of their relevance to the research topic, especially where there are clear instances of mockery in political interaction.

Moreover, the chosen data are suitable to the quantitative component of the study, as they can be identified, classified, and quantified with the help of content analysis to determine various types of mockery. This allows identifying the patterns of frequency and distribution throughout the data set, thus supporting the qualitative interpretation.

Analytical Framework

The analysis of mockery examples in this study has been done to identify the linguistic realization, interactional functions, and ideological aspects of mockery can be examined. The framework consists of the following dimensions:

- Qualitative and Quantitative Dimension

The quantitative dimension is based on content analysis, in which the instances of mockery are identified, classified, and quantified. The extracts are coded according to types of mockery, including direct insult, accent mockery, and dismissal. These instances are then analyzed according to their distribution and frequency to identify any patterns in the data. This provides an overview of how often and in what ways mockery occurs in political discourse across the dataset and supports the qualitative analysis.

- Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The study is mainly informed by the three-dimensional model proposed by Fairclough (1995, pp. 96-100), which consists of textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. This approach enables the analysis to go beyond the description of the surface and the connection between language and power and ideology. At the textual level, the analysis focuses on linguistic features such as lexical choices, exaggeration and evaluative language. The analysis examines the mockery production, and interpretation in political communication at the level of discursive practice. At the social practice level, the analysis considers the broader ideological implication of mockery in terms of power, dominance, and marginalization. Moreover, Fairclough (2003) is used to inform the linguistic analysis of discourse, especially in terms of evaluative language use and representation. It allows for fine-grained analysis of the construction of meaning at the textual level. The current study is further maintained by van Dijk (2008, pp. 120-122), especially

in relation to ideological polarization, and the construction of the representations of “us versus them” in political discourse.

Analytical Procedure

The analytical procedure of this study is systematic and structured in accordance with the adopted framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. The given procedure is aimed at making sure that mockery is analyzed coherently and on a multi-level basis as an ideological strategy in political discourse. First, a qualitative analysis of each extract has been given to identify the discursive, social and textual use of mockery in the given political discourse. The instances of mockery are identified and coded quantitatively based on content analysis. Each extract is examined and categorized based on the type of mockery it represents, such as insult, accent mockery, or dismissal. The frequency and distribution of these categories are then calculated to determine recurrent patterns among the data. From other perspective, the study concentrates on other factors such as language attitudes, indexicality, etc, to examine how specific language use attributes different meanings such as foreignness, perceived competence, and group membership (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

The three-dimensional model suggested by Fairclough (1995, pp. 96-100) is used to discuss mockery at the textual, discursive, and social levels. The textual level analysis is done based on the linguistic characteristics like the choice of words, exaggeration, and rhetorical strategies. Moreover, the concepts by Fairclough (2003) are also included to help elaborate on a more linguistic examination, especially when it comes to representation and evaluative language. At the discursive practice level, the production, distribution, and interpretation of mockery in political communication are considered. On the social practice level, the analysis examines the broader ideological implications of mockery, especially in connection with the power, dominance, and marginalization. Besides, the insights from van Dijk (2008, pp. 120-122) socio-cognitive approach are included to describe how mockery is involved in reproducing ideology and strengthening group polarization, in particular through the construction of “us” versus “them” representations. The results of these analytical processes are holistically interpreted with each level of analysis complementing the others. The procedure prioritizes analytical depth over

breadth, making sure that mockery is analyzed not merely as an interactional process, but also as an ideological practice that is entrenched in a wider socio-political framework.

Fairclough (1995). See Figure 1.

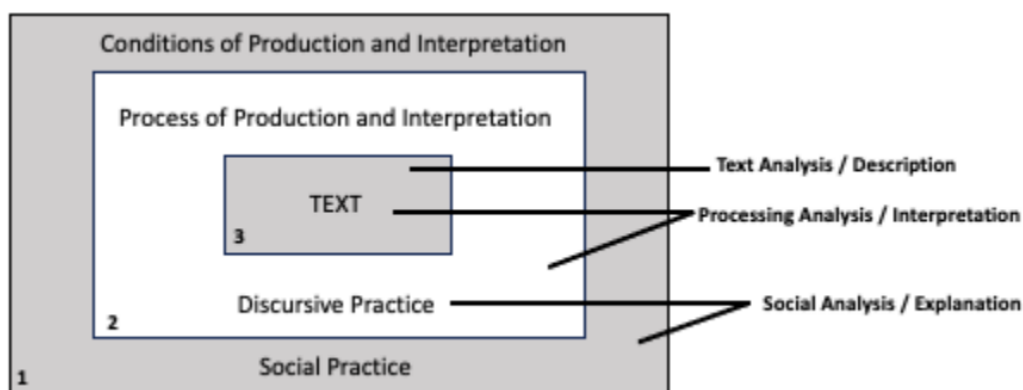


Figure .1: Fairclough model of CDA

Data Analysis

Extract 1 (press conference October, 2025)

This extract is an example of mockery that is mainly realized through accent mockery (M2), accompanied by dismissal (M3), and sarcastic evaluation (M4). The categories are determined by the explicit linguistic and interactional features present in the extract.

In the first extract the accent mockery (M2) is clearly evident in the sentence “**we cannot understand a word you say**”, on the part of the speaker where Trump clearly points out that the problem of communication lies with the speech of the journalist. This is further supported by the previous utterance “**I do not understand a word she says**”, which highlights the perceived unintelligibility of the journalist. The references of understanding in both of the situations is not neutral but serves to assess the linguistic competence of the speaker. Moreover, the expression “**Beautiful accent, but we cannot understand a word you say**” has been obtained as an example of sarcastic evaluation (M4). The first positive phrase “**Beautiful accent**” has been followed immediately by a negative assessment, creating a contrastive structure and it results in irony. This implies that the apparent compliment functions as a kind of ridicule rather than a true

praise. Mockery works at the interactional level through dismissal (M3). This however is reflected by not answering the question directly, instead he shifts the attention away from the political issue and concentrates on what the journalist is saying. The delayed reaction and relying on another speaker to reinterpret the question represent other evidences that the original question is not viewed as a valid or worthy of immediate engagement.

It is worth mentioning that the constant emphasis on lack of understanding, combined with ironic evaluation, have been used to make the journalist inferior in a public setting. In addition, the interaction reflects interactional dominance, where the speaker interrupts the communication flow and dictates the direction of the exchange. In the first extract mockery can be viewed as an accent-based evaluation, as the journalist is evaluated based on his French accent as a marker of foreignness and minimized communicative legitimacy (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). It can be also explained in terms of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), as the speaker implicitly makes his own language as a standard one, while marginalizing the speech of the journalist.

From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, through the extract, we can see how mockery contributes to construct power relations and ideological meanings. At the textual level, evaluative language and contrastive structures create a negative representation of the journalist. At discursive practice level, the question of politics has been shifted aside temporarily, and the interaction has been shifted towards performance and audience engagement. At the social practice level, the extract is indicative of broader patterns of exclusion, especially through the construction of an implicit “us versus them” distinction (van Dijk, 2008), in which the journalist is positioned as an outsider. On the whole, this extract shows that mockery is realized through recognizable linguistic and interactional features that function strategically to delegitimize the interlocutor, assert dominance, and reinforce ideological boundaries in political discourse.

Extract 2 (Press conference, Nov 2025)

This extract represents an instance of mockery primarily realized through accent mockery(M2), accompanied by elements of dismissal (M3). These categories are recognized based on interactional features and explicit linguistics in the extracts.

In the second extract the accent mockery (M2) is also evident in the sentence: **“I can’t understand a word he says. it is the accent; it is a little bit tough to hear that”**. In this statement the speaker overtly puts the blame on the trouble in understanding on the accent of the journalist thus turning a communicative problem into a negative evaluative stance concerning the speech of the journalist. This explicit mention of the accent demonstrates that ridicule is a systematically constructed using linguistic choices rather than being incidental. Moreover, previous statements like the one where she says, **“You gonna have to go louder”**, contribute to the construction of mockery, since the repeated attempts to have her clarify the statement begin to shift from neutral position of interaction to a negative evaluative stance. This growth indicates the interactional manner in which mockery grows rather than appearing suddenly. Mockery at the interactional level also works through dismissal (M3). That is clear in the speaker’s redirection of the interaction in **“How about you? Please! Go ahead back there, Go back there.”**, which in fact removes the journalist from participation. By passing the turn on to the other interlocutor, the speaker would not have to address the initial question and undermine the legitimacy of the journalist in the interaction. In addition, the interactional dominance is evident in the redirection of turn-taking since the speaker dominates the interaction and decides who is permitted to speak. In this selected extract, mockery reflects accent-based evaluation, in which the speech of the journalist is indexed as an indicator of foreignness and diminished communicative legitimacy (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). This helps to construct the hierarchical relations among speakers. This can also be understood in the light of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) because the speaker makes the speech of the journalist less legitimate in the interaction.

In terms of Critical Discourse Analysis, the passage shows how ridicule helps in shaping the power relations and ideological meanings. On the textual level, the direct mentioning of the accent creates a negative image of a journalist. At the discursive practice level, the question posed by the journalist is disrupted and abandoned as the interaction is redirected. On the social practice level, this is indicative of overall trends in exclusion wherein some voices are marginalized on the basis of language traits. Ideologically, the extract adds to an implicit “us versus them” distinction (van Dijk, 2008), with the journalist being portrayed as an outsider whose words are difficult to comprehend. This strengthens group boundaries and underpins the hierarchical placement within political discourse. In general, this extract shows that mockery is systematically achieved by means of linguistic and interactional elements, and acts strategically

to delegitimize the interlocutor in order to control the participation and support hierarchic power relationships in political communication.

Extract 3 (Press conference, Feb 2025)

This extract represents an instance of mockery which is mainly realized through accent mockery (M2), accompanied by sarcastic evaluation (M4) and some aspects of dismissal (M3). These are categories identified based on explicit linguistic and interaction features of the extract.

In relation to evaluative language and representation, accent mockery (M2), appears to be clear in the statement **“I am having a little hard time understanding you. The only problem is I can’t understand a word you are saying.”**. With this utterance, Trump explicitly expresses his challenge in understanding the speech of the journalist. Thus, by doing so, the speaker is forming a negative evaluative stance towards the communicative competence of the journalist. This repetition of focus on incomprehensibility demonstrates that mockery has been systematically constructed through evaluative and contrastive linguistic choices rather than being incidental. Moreover, the expression **“it is a beautiful voice and a beautiful accent. but I can not understand a word you are saying”** seems to be a sarcastic evaluation (M4). The first favorable evaluation (“beautiful voice”, “beautiful accent”) has been quickly followed by a negative evaluation, creating a contrastive evaluative structure that creates irony. This shows that the seemingly flattering statement represents a sort of ridicule and not praise thus reinforce the negative evaluation of the journalist.

Mocked also operates at the interactional level through dismissal (M3). This is evident in the reply given by the speaker when he said **“Good luck, live in peace”** which is a non-responsive and formulaic reply that avoids addressing the substance of the question of the journalist. In this way, the speaker terminates the interaction and does not engage in a meaningful engagement, and delegitimizing the contribution of a journalist. The ironic praise and the explicit claims of incomprehension represent a combination to bring down the journalist in a social context. Moreover, the closing sentence also serves as an interactional control strategy because the speaker decides when and how the conversation should stop. Here in this extract, mockery reflects accent-based evaluation, meaning that the speech of the journalist is indexed as a sign of

foreignness and reduced communicative legitimacy (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). This contributes to the construction of linguistic hierarchies among speakers. It is also explicable in terms of the notion of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991): the speaker makes the speech of the journalist less legitimate in the interaction.

From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, in line with Fairclough (1995), the extract illustrates how mockery aids in the creation of power relations and ideological meanings. At the textual level, the contrastive evaluative structure constructs a negative representation of the journalist. At the discursive practice level, political content is no longer addressed, but personal judgment becomes the new direction. This is indicative of broader patterns of exclusion at the social practice level, in which the voices, which can be linked to foreign identities, are marginalized. Ideologically, the extract provides a part of implicit “us versus them” distinction (van Dijk, 2008), with the journalist characterized as an outsider whose words are hard to comprehend. This strengthens the boundary of groups and reinforces the hierarchical positioning in political discourse. This extract illustrates that mockery is strategically realized by means of linguistic and interactional elements, which is aimed at delegitimizing the interlocutor, controlling participation, and reinforce hierarchical power relations in political speech.

Extract 4 (Media Statement, Apr 2026)

This extract represents an instance of mockery primarily realized through direct insult (M1), accompanied by negative evaluative language (M4). This extract differs from earlier extracts because they rely on accent-based mockery, while this one demonstrates a more explicit and intensified form of verbal attack targeting the professional identity of journalist.

Mockery seems to be evident and clear from the following statement **“she is, from her voice, to her lies, and everything else about her, one of the worst ‘personalities’ on television, a real loser! People cannot stand watching her”**, especially in relation to representation and the evaluative language. In this utterance, a sequence of strongly negative lexical choices the speaker employs, like “worst”, “lies”, and “loser”, which construct a highly negative evaluative stance toward the journalist. The cumulative design of the sentence, which includes multiple negative attributes (“from her voice, to her lies, and everything else about her”), condense the attack and

strengthen the negative representation. However, this extract differs from the previous three because mockery here has been identified as unmitigated. In other words, no attempts have been given to disguise or soften the insult. This suggests a communicative strategy aimed at reputational damage and public discrediting.

From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, in line with Fairclough (1995), the extract illustrates how mockery aids in the creation of power relations and ideological meanings. At the textual level, the contrastive evaluative structure constructs a negative representation of the journalist. At the discursive practice level, the statement functions as a public act of evaluation aimed at shaping the perception of the audience. At the social practice level, this indicates broader patterns of power assertion and delegitimization, where the figures of the media are discredited to break the voice of opposing. The extract contributes to the construction of hierarchical distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate media actors in terms of ideological representation. The speaker supposes authority in defining value and reliability within the media space, while the journalist is located as an undesirable figure. This supports ideological positioning and reinforces power asymmetry in political discourse. In general, this extract shows that mockery can be realized through intensified evaluative language and direct insult, functioning strategically to influence audience perception, delegitimize the target, and reinforce hierarchical power relations in political communication.

Extract 5 (Interview, Nov 2025)

This extract represents an instance of mockery primarily realized through direct insult (M1), accompanied by dismissal (M3). Unlike prior extracts that rely on evaluative contrast or accent-based mockery, this example shows a highly direct and unconditional form of verbal aggression.

Drawing on Fairclough's (2003), especially in relation to representation and evaluative language, mockery has been clearly identified in the following utterance **"Quiet, quiet piggy!"**. This expression combines an imperative structure with pejorative labeling, where "quiet" which functions as a command and "piggy" as a disparaging label. The repetition of "quiet" serves as an intensifier, emphasizing the attempt of the speaker and reinforcing the directive force of the utterance to silence the interlocutor. the utilize of "piggy" introduces a dehumanizing metaphor,

emphasizing the mockery and constructing a strongly negative representation. At the interactional level, mockery operates through dismissal (M3). The imperative “Quiet” serves not just as an insult but also as a means of interactional suppression since it interrupts the journalist and prevents the continuation of the question. This shows that ridicule and control of participation in the interaction is achieved through mockery. The insulting word “piggy” undermines the social value and identity of the journalist, while the command “quiet” restricts the right of the journalist to speak. This dual function demonstrates mockery as a verbal aggression and interactional dominance. From another perspective, the extract reflects negative social evaluation through dehumanizing metaphor where the journalist positioned as inferior and dehumanized. It can be understood in terms of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) because the speaker asserts the symbolic power by delegitimizing the voice of the journalist in the interaction.

From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, in line with Fairclough (1995), the extract shows how ridicule contributes to the construction of power relations. On the textual level, the imperative structure “quiet” and derogatory labeling “piggy” constructs a highly negative representation of the journalist. At the discursive practice level, the interaction is abruptly interrupted, and the journalist is unable to finish his/her question. On a social practice level, this is indicative of broader patterns of dominance and exclusion, in which some voices are suppressed in the political discourse. Concerning the ideological representation, this extract reinforces the hierarchical relationships between the speaker and interlocutor with the speaker assumes authority and positioning the journalist as the inferior party. This example of constructing inequality through direct verbal aggression and dehumanization, rather than linguistic difference, as opposed to accent-based mockery. All in all, this extract illustrates that mockery is realized through direct derision, metaphor and interactional suppression, which strategically suppress the interlocutor, establish dominance, and reinforce hierarchical power relations in a political conversation.

Extract 6 (Press conference, Oct 2028)

This extract represents an instance of mockery mainly realized through direct insult (M1) with the incorporation of sarcastic evaluation (M4) and elements of dismissal (M3). In contrast to the

previous extracts, the mockery in this case is directed towards the intellectual competence of the journalist, not his linguistic performance.

When it comes to consider Fairclough's evaluative language and representation, this is clearly evidenced in the sentence **"I know you are not thinking. You never do"**. Here, the speaker uses directly negative evaluative language to construct a highly negative representation of intellectual competence of the journalist. The declarative structure makes the judgment as a factual statement rather than a subjective judgment, through intensifying the force of the insult.

Also, the previous statement, **"She is shocked that I picked her"**, is a sarcastic evaluation (M4). The implication of the statement is that the journalist is unprepared or has no confidence, thus invalidating her credibility and making her appear to be incompetent. This adds to the construction of mockery by implication of evaluative meaning. At the interactional level, mockery also operates through dismissal (M3). This can be seen in the sequence **"No, go ahead. Go ahead!"**, where what would seem to be a permission to speak is then followed by a direct insult. This poses an interactional contradiction which undermines the involvement of the journalist, as she is at the same time permitted to speak and delegitimized. The interactional control has been observed in such a pattern in which the speaker controls turn-taking and the right to participate. The statement that **"you are not thinking"** is a direct attack on the credibility of the journalist, while the repetition **"you never do"** adds additional pressure to the attack. This places the mockery as a form of verbal aggression and interactional dominance. From different angle, the extract has a negative assessment of intellectual capability, where the journalist is positioned as inferior. This helps to the construction of hierarchical relations of authority amongst the participants. It can also be explained in the language of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), where the speaker claims the power of symbols by delegitimizing the role of the journalist in the interaction.

From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, in line with Fairclough (1995), the extract shows that mockery contributes to the construction of power relations and ideological meanings. On the textual level, the explicit negative evaluative language constructs a highly negative representation of the journalist. At the discursive practice level, the communication is organized through interruption, insult and controlled turn taking. On a social practice level, this is an

expression of broader patterns of dominance and marginalization, in which some participants are positioned as less legitimate. In terms of ideological representation, the extract strengthens hierarchical differences of dominance and subordination, in which the speaker assumes control and the journalist is presented as lacking intellect and mind. In contrast to accent-based mockery, the case establishes the inequality based on cognitive competence attacks, rather linguistic difference. Comprehensively, this extract shows that mockery is accomplished by direct insult, sarcastic evaluation, and interactional control, and it is done strategically to delegitimize the interlocutor, undermine credibility, control participation, and strengthen hierarchical power relations in political discourse.

Extract 7 (Press conference, March 2026)

This extract represents an instance of mockery that particularly realized through dismissal (M3), with the elements of sarcastic evaluation (M4) and direct insult (M1). In contrast to the earlier extracts, the mockery here is directed at the journalistic question as opposed to the personal qualities of the journalist.

When it comes to consider Fairclough's (2003), especially as regards to evaluative language and representation, this is clearly evidenced in the sentence **"What kind of a question. A question like this, how do you expect to ask something like that?"** In these lines, the speaker uses highly pejorative evaluative language to construct the inquiry as inappropriate and unreasonable. The negative evaluation is supported by the repetition of interrogative forms, presenting the inquiry as essentially flawed. Moreover, the phrase such a ridiculous question represents explicit negative evaluation (M4), in which the adjective ridiculous functions as a strongly negative lexical choice. This adds to the construction of mockery by framing the contribution of the journalist as something of little value and legitimacy.

Mockery also operates through dismissal (M3) at the interactional level. This can be seen in the way the speaker does not give a direct answer, as shown in **"Why would I ever answer a question like this?"**, and the exaggerated response **"Oh yes, I am going in tomorrow at 3 o'clock"**, that serves as a sarcastic answer. These tactics reorient the interaction away from informative communication toward evaluative performance, and thus undermine the journalistic

inquiry. The repetitive questioning and evaluating labeling undermines the professionalism of the journalist. Sarcasm adds to the severity of the attack, framing mockery as a form of verbal aggression and interactional control. Thus, the extract reflects a negative evaluation of the professional competence when the role of a journalist is doubted and undermined. This helps in building hierarchical relations of authority in the interaction. It can be viewed in terms of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) as well since the speaker is a person who asserts symbolic power of naming what can be considered a valid question.

In terms of Critical Discourse Analysis, following Fairclough (1995), the extract demonstrates how mockery contributes in the construction of power relations and ideological meanings. At the textual level, the evaluative language, the rhetorical questions construct a systematically negative representation of the contribution of the journalist. At the discursive practice level, the interaction is redirected from delivering information to assessing the query. At the social practice level, this is indicative of broader patterns of discursive control, where power is upheld through dismissal and discrediting of certain types of inquiry. Ideologically, the extract reinforces hierarchical distinctions between authority and legitimacy in which the speaker positions himself as the arbiter of the validity of the question. This contributes to discursive marginalization of dissenting voices in the political discourse. In general, this extract shows that mockery is realized through evaluative language, rhetorical questioning, and interactional dismissal, and it serves a strategic role of delegitimizing the inquiry, controlling the interaction and reinforcing hierarchical power relations in political discourse.

Extract 8 (Press Interview, March 2026)

This extract represents an instance of mockery primarily realized through direct insult (M1), accompanied by dismissal (M3). Unlike earlier extracts, mockery here targets the professional legitimacy and identity of the journalist rather than their linguistic or cognitive ability.

Based on Fairclough's (2003), evaluate language and representation, this is clearly evidenced that this is done by the statement **"Get yourself a real job"**. This statement has an imperative form with explicitly negative evaluative language, which constructs a strongly negative representation of the professional situation of the journalist. The phrase "real job" suggests the

journalist's role is not legitimate and therefore, invalidates his or her professional identity. Additionally, the above dialogue **"who do you work for?"** I do not know what that is" also reinforces the mockery as it indicates rejection of the institutional identity of the journalist. The alleged lack of familiarity of the speaker is an indirect evaluative strategy that undermines the credibility of the journalist and the organization where he or she works even more. Mockery also operates at the interactional level through dismissal (M3). This can be seen in the abrupt termination of the interaction after the insult, where the speaker avoids substantive engagement to the question put by the journalist. The pattern is indicative of interactional control because the speaker is able to control participation and the validity of the interaction.

From what we have stated above, the statement **"Get yourself a real job"** undermines social value and credibility, and framing mockery as a form of verbal aggression and interactional dominance. The above given extract reflects negative evaluation of professional legitimacy, in which the journalist positioned as lacking authority. This helps in the formation of the hierarchical relations of power in the interaction. In terms of the linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) this is also viewed because the speaker asserts symbolic power by determining what is considered as a legitimate profession.

In terms of Critical Discourse Analysis, following Fairclough (1995), the extract demonstrates how mockery contributes in the construction of power relations and ideological meanings. On the textual level, the imperative structure and evaluative language construct a strongly negative representation of the journalist. At the discursive practice level, the interaction is terminated rather than developed, preventing meaningful interaction. At the social practice level, this is indicative of broader patterns of exclusion and delegitimization, in which the voice of the professional is disregarded in the political domain. By taking ideology into consideration, the extract reinforces hierarchical distinctions between the legitimate and the illegitimate in which the speaker positions himself as the authority to define the acceptable professional roles. This adds to the marginalization of the journalist as a discursive participant and his or her institutional affiliation. Comprehensively, this extract shows that mockery is realized through direct insult, interactional dismissal, terminating interaction, and reinforcing hierarchical power relations in political discourse.

Extract 9 (Press Interview, Nov 2025)

This extract represents an instance of mockery primarily realized through direct insult (M1), accompanied by dismissal (M3). and some elements of evaluative language (M4). In contrast to the previous extracts, the mockery here is directed at the intellectual capacity of the journalist as well as the validity of the journalistic inquiry, making it one of the most explicit forms of verbal aggression in the dataset.

Drawing on Fairclough (2003) especially in relation to evaluative language and representation, this is clearly evidenced in the utterances “**Are you stupid**”? **Are you a stupid person**?” These utterances involve explicitly negative evaluative language, as a repetitive interrogative structure that serves as a direct insult. The repetitiveness further adds to the evaluative pressure, constructing a highly negative representation of the journalist’s intellectual competence.

Besides this, the statement “**you are just asking questions because you are a stupid person**” reinforces the mockery too by the use of causal attribution, where the journalistic question is described as the effect of intellectual incompetence. This extends the insult of the person to the act of questioning itself, thus undermining the journalist’s contribution and the legitimacy of inquiry. Mockery also operates at the interactional level through dismissal (M3). Instead of communicating with the content of the question, the speaker shifts the interaction from information exchange to personal attack. This turn is indicative of interactional control since the speaker subjugates the communicative intent of the exchange and replace it with personal attack. Reiteration of the word stupid is a direct attack on social value and trust. The degree and frequency of the insult frame mockery as an expression of intensified verbal aggression and dominance in interaction. The selected extract here indicates a strong negative evaluation of intellectual competence, in which the journalist positioned as inferior. This helps in building hierarchical relationships of power and authority in the interaction. It is also explainable in the terms of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) because the speaker asserts symbolic power by discrediting the role of the journalist and redefining the rules of legitimate involvement.

In terms of Critical Discourse Analysis, following Fairclough (1995) the extract illustrates how mockery helps in the construction of power relations and ideological meanings. On the textual

level, the evaluative language is used repeatedly, with the evaluative language being explicitly negative in nature, which creates a systematically negative representation of the journalist. At the discursive practice level, the interaction is structured in terms of confrontation and repetitive insult as opposed to dialogue. This is manifested at the social practice level in broader patterns of exclusion and delegitimization, whereby some voices are marginalized through verbal aggression. In terms of ideological representation, the extract strengthens the hierarchical differences between competence and incompetence, with the speaker positioning himself as the dominant speaker and the journalist in the role of an intellectually inferior. Moreover, references to “these people” suggests a group-based generalization, which can be explained by the terms of ideological polarization (van Dijk, 2008), where individuals are associated with negatively evaluated groups. In general, this extract shows that mockery is realized through repeated direct insult, evaluative emphasis, and interactional dismissal, as a strategic act of delegitimization of the interlocutor, suppression of meaningful interaction, and reinforcement of hierarchical power relations in political discourse.

Extract 10 (Press Interview, Dec 2025)

This extract represents an instance of mockery primarily realized through direct insult (M1), accompanied by sarcastic evaluation (M4) and some elements of dismissal (M3). In contrast to the previous extracts, the mockery here is directed at the intellectual capacity of the journalist through comparative evaluation.

Based on Fairclough (2003) especially in relation to evaluative language and representation, this is clearly evidenced in the utterances “**I got a perfect mark, which you would be incapable of doing so**”. In this statement, the speaker constructs a comparative evaluative structure, where self-praise (“I got a perfect mark”) is instantly contrasted with the negative evaluation of the journalist (“you would be incapable of doing so”). This contrastive pattern produces mockery by positioning the journalist as intellectually inferior and the speaker as superior. Additionally, the reference to “**aced it**” functions as an informal self-evaluative expression that reinforces self-presentation of the speaker as competent, while the negative comparison is further intensifying. This contributes to the construction of mockery through implicit evaluative contrast (M4). Mockery can also operate at the interactional level through dismissal (M3). This can be seen in

the closing statement **“Goodbye everybody!”**. Which abruptly terminates the interaction without addressing the question of the journalist. This shows interactional control over the exchange, where the speaker determines when the interaction ends and avoids further engagement. The comparative structure intensifies the threat by contrasting inability and ability directly. This frames mockery as a form of verbal aggression and interactional dominance.

From other perspective, this extract indicates evaluation grounded in intellectual hierarchy, where competence is used as a basis for social differentiation. This contributes to the construction of hierarchical relationships of power and authority in the interaction. It is also explainable in the terms of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), because the speaker asserts symbolic authority positioned himself as intellectually superior and the journalist as inferior.

In terms of Critical Discourse Analysis, following Fairclough (1995) the extract illustrates how mockery helps in the construction of power relations and ideological meanings. On the textual level, the contrastive evaluative structure constructs a systematically negative representation of the journalist. At the discursive practice level, the interaction is structured in terms of confrontation and abrupt termination. At the social practice level, this reflects broader patterns of exclusion and authority, where the speaker controls both interpretive and participation authority. In terms of ideological consideration, the extract strengthens the hierarchical differences between competence and incompetence, with the speaker positioned himself as the dominant speaker. This contributes to the marginalization of the journalist within the interaction. This extract shows that mockery is realized through self-praise, comparative evaluation, and interactional dismissal, functioning strategically to control the interaction, delegitimize the interlocutor, and reinforcement of hierarchical power relations in political discourse.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis can be conducted by coding instances of mockery into four main categories: accent, insult, sarcastic evaluation, and dismissal. The quantitative analysis reveals that dismissal (M3) is the most repeated form of mockery, accounting for 37.5% of the total instances. This is accompanied by insult (M1) and sarcastic evaluation (M4), each representing 25%. whereas accent mockery (M2) appears less frequently, accounting for 12.5% of the total

instances. These findings show general patterns in the use of mockery, instead of being limited to linguistic ridicule. Speakers often use mockery to avoid answering questions and to control the flow of interaction, as indicated by the high frequency of dismissal.

Table 4.2: Coding of Mockery Across Extracts

Extract	Insults (M1)	Accent Mockery (M2)	Dismissal(M3)	Sarcastic Evaluation(M4)
1	0	1	1	1
2	0	1	1	0
3	0	1	1	1
4	1	0	0	1
5	1	0	1	0
6	1	0	1	1
7	0	0	1	1
8	1	0	1	0
9	1	0	1	0
10	1	0	1	1

Table 4.3: Frequency and Distribution of Mockery Types

Type of Mockery	Code	Frequency	Percentage
Insult	M1	6	25%
Accent Mockery	M2	3	12.5%
Dismissal	M3	9	37.5%
Sarcastic Evaluation	M4	6	25%

Total Instances	-	24	100%
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As shown in Tables (4.2) and (4.3), total instances of mockery were identified across the dataset, indicating that more than one type of mockery may occur within a single extract.

Discussions and Conclusions

The quantitative findings provided an overview of the occurrence of different types of mockery, while the qualitative analysis provided a detailed account of the systematic realization of mockery through linguistic, interactional and ideological features. Importantly to mention, the results are discussed in relation to the research hypotheses to determine their validity. The analysis reveals that mockery is consistently signaled through a set of forms across the dataset. Notably, evaluative language is a key, as the political figure has used negative lexical items such as insults and derogatory expression to construct a negative representation of journalists. These forms are often intensified by repetition to intensify the force of mockery. Moreover, mockery often can function to undermine the addressee's competence and worth. This is clear in the case of direct insult (M1), sarcastic evaluation (M4) and dismissal (M3), which all contributes to undermining the journalist's credibility. This is further supported by the quantitative findings, which demonstrate that the forms are occur frequently in the dataset. Overall, the findings indicate that mockery is systematically constructed through linguistic and pragmatic features.

The analysis represents that mockery serves as a key function, especially controls of discourse, interactional dominance, and the delegitimization of journalists. This result shows that speakers use mockery to control interaction and limit journalist's participation by avoiding engagement with the content of their questions. However, that can reinforce the speaker's dominance in the interaction. Moreover, mockery is used to delegitimize journalists by undermining their role and presenting their contributions to the interaction to be invalid. This occurs in cases of explicit insult (M1), dismissal (M3) and sarcastic evaluation (M4). The quantitative results further support this findings, as dismissal (M3) is the most frequent type of mockery in the dataset. It can be said that mockery contributes to Ideological polarization by reinforcing "us versus them" distinction and constructs a systematically negative representation of the journalist and other social groups. The analysis suggests that mockery places the speaker in a superior position, while

representing others as less credible. This can be seen in direct insult (M1), sarcastic evaluation (M4) and dismissal (M3), which contribute to the hierarchical distinctions within the interaction. This analysis aligns with the work of Teun A. van Dijk (2008), particularly ideological polarization, where discourse is used to construct opposition between "us" and "them". In conclusion, the results suggest that mockery is used as a means of reinforcing social division in political discourse.

Therefore, it can be said that this research aimed to examine mockery as an ideological strategy in political discourse, by exploring how it has been realized, the functions it serves in discourse and its role in constructing ideological meaning. The analysis demonstrate that mockery is consistently realized through linguistic and pragmatic features such as evaluative expressions, repetition, and face-threatening acts. It also show that mockery serves important functions, such as interactional management, dominance, and the delegitimization of journalists. Moreover, the findings show that mockery plays a role in ideological polarization by reinforcing an "us versus them" distinction and constructing negative representations of journalists and other groups. The results support the three hypotheses and show that mockery is not simply used as a stylistic device in political discourse, but as a strategy to control interaction and reinforce power relations. This study contributes to understanding of political discourse by drawing attention to mockery as a communicative strategy at linguistic, interactional and ideological levels. However, the study is limited by the size of the dataset and the fact that it focuses on a single political figure. To build on this study, future research could expand the dataset and examine the use of mockery in different political contexts.

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