

## **Discourse and Ideology. The Relation Mexico-US regarding the Border Wall**

## **Discurso e ideología. La relación México-Estados Unidos con respecto al muro fronterizo**

Recibido: 01/08/2019

Aceptado: 31/10/2019

Publicado: 05/12/2019

Carlos Ahuactzin Martínez  
[carlos.ahua@correo.buap.mx](mailto:carlos.ahua@correo.buap.mx)

Ignacio Torres Rodríguez  
[ignacio.torres@correo.buap.mx](mailto:ignacio.torres@correo.buap.mx)

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (México)

**Resumen:** La migración histórica de Latinoamérica hacia Norteamérica ha establecido un profundo vínculo cultural, económico y político entre México y los Estados Unidos, mediante un proceso discursivo institucional de cada nuevo gobierno norteamericano. El entonces candidato Donald Trump propuso la construcción de un muro fronterizo durante su campaña electoral, con el propósito de detener la migración mexicana, el narcotráfico y los criminales transfronterizos. En este contexto, el estudio analiza el discurso y el marco comunicativo del muro fronterizo, sobre la base del análisis crítico del discurso y los estudios ideológicos del populismo de derecha.

El corpus del trabajo desarrollado en el Laboratorio de Comunicación Política del Instituto de Ciencias de Gobierno y Desarrollo Estratégico considera dos procesos discursivos: *a)* las declaraciones de Trump y la publicidad electoral en la televisión, y *b)* las declaraciones de Enrique Peña Nieto en la televisión. El análisis incorpora la perspectiva del discurso multimodal; por lo tanto, el

lenguaje audiovisual se explora en sus dimensiones. Las preguntas de investigación son las siguientes: ¿cómo se ha concebido la política exterior con respecto a la relación bilateral entre los Estados Unidos y México? y ¿de qué manera los ciudadanos mexicanos están representados en el discurso del muro fronterizo? Esta perspectiva cualitativa organiza las categorías multimodales en tres niveles: *a)* sonoros, *b)* visuales y *c)* lingüísticos.

Dos dimensiones políticas articulan el estudio: *a)* la legitimidad de la política exterior y *b)* la representación de los ciudadanos dentro del discurso. El proceso de etiquetado del corpus incorpora el uso del software ELAN, que permite la integración de los niveles de análisis, concebidos en la composición del discurso multimodal. Los resultados del análisis establecen las líneas ideológicas discursivas de ambos líderes institucionales (mexicano y estadounidense) y permiten una comprensión de las estrategias discursivas que han configurado la política exterior en América del Norte.

**Palabras clave:** Discurso, Ideología, Multimodalidad, Campaña electoral, Política internacional.

***Abstract:** Latin America's historical migration to North America has established a deep cultural, economic and political bond between Mexico and US, by means of institutional discursive process in each new North-American government. The candidate Donald Trump proposed the construction of a border wall during his electoral campaign, with the purpose of stopping Mexican migration, drug trafficking and transboundary criminals. In this context, the study analyses the discourse and communicative framework of the border wall, on the basis of Critical Discourse Analysis and the Ideological Studies of Right-Wing Populism.*

*The corpus of the work developed in the Political Communication Laboratory of the Government Sciences and Strategic Development Institute considers two discursive processes: *a)* Trump's statements and electoral advertising on TV, and *b)* Enrique Peña Nieto's statements on TV. The analysis incorporates the perspective of the multimodal discourse; therefore, audiovisual language is explored in its dimensions. The research questions are the following: how does foreign policy has been conceived with regard to the bilateral relation US-Mexico? And in which way the Mexican citizens are represented in the*

*border wall's discourse? This qualitative perspective organizes the multimodal categories in: a) sound, b) visual and c) linguistic levels.*

*Two political dimensions articulate the study: a) the legitimacy of foreign policy and b) citizens' representation within the discourse. The labeling process of the corpus incorporates the use of ELAN software, which allows the integration of the analysis levels, conceived in the multimodal discourse composition. The analysis outcomes establish the ideological discursive lines of both, Mexican and American institutional leaders, and allow an understanding of the discursive strategies that have established foreign policy in this region of North America.*

**Keywords:** *Discourse, Ideology, Multimodality, Electoral campaign, Foreign policy.*

## **1. Introduction**

The democratic model in the West has faced important challenges in the early years of the 21st century in terms of strengthening plurality and defending human rights. The nation-states in Europe and North America experience a resurgence of nationalism, not only at the level of cultural identities, but especially in terms of control of power and economy. Faced with this growing phenomenon, governments have incorporated into their processes of political communication schemes of dialogue with citizens based on the principle of wide acceptance. However, the communication resources under this scheme have led to a “populism” both in public management strategies and in the discourses that accompany government policies and actions.

Also, in the scenarios of electoral confrontation, the communicative platforms of the presidential candidates have adopted “populist” approaches, which simplify the complexity and heterogeneity of the problems and build conflict scenarios, based on national needs and the allocation of responsibilities to groups exogenous to the dominant system. Therefore, the mechanisms of inclusion and tolerance in advanced democracies seem to diminish, in a context of strengthening national policies.

In the case of North America, the presence of extreme right-wing populism became visible during the United States presidential election campaign 2016, whose final candidates were Hillary Clinton, for the Democratic Party, and Donald Trump, for the Republican Party.

The divided political reality offered American citizens two visions of the electoral context: a limited political proposal by the Democrats and a provocative response to national problems by the Republicans. Trump candidate highlights the simplification of its political offer based, among other things, on the criminalization of migrants as a cause of the problems in the United States.

The paper analyzes the ideological discourse that prevailed in the campaign of the Republican candidate, based on the advances of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and its relation with the extreme right populism, from the proposal of construction of the border wall with Mexico and the representation of migrants as criminals.

In the process of dissemination of foreign policy with Mexico, the corpus of this work is organized in three moments: *a)* the primary elections, *b)* the electoral campaign and *c)* the government in office. In each stage, the enunciative orientation of the discourse about the US-Mexico border wall and its implications in the game of obtaining legitimacy of the candidates is recognized.

The election of 2016 in the US had characteristics that favored the polarization of the political context and the sense of the electoral strategies. In this way, Korostelina (2017), considers that:

- First, the global economic trend of further outsourcing blue-collar jobs, as well as more knowledge-based jobs, which started in the 1980s and reached its peak in the middle of the 2010s, has had a significant impact.
- Second, the income gap between rich and poor is currently at its widest in recent U. S. history.
- Third, the changing racial composition of the country –the new generation of millennials is 55.8 percent White and 44.2 percent non-White, with nearly 30 percent “new minorities” (Hispanics, Asians, and those identifying as two or more races)- has contributed to a growing feeling of cultural and racial stress among White Americans who have lower access to jobs and to elite education.

- Fourth, Islamic extremism is seen as a major threat to the U.S. [...] People are afraid of possible terrorism, and their fears are reinforced by the 2015-2016 terrorist acts in the U.S., Europe, and North Africa.
- Fifth, political polarization in the U.S. is at its highest in recent history [...] Political polarization affects people's assessment of presidential candidates. Many voters make a choice not based on their like of a candidate but rather their strong dislike of another.
- Sixth, voters in the U.S. exhibit a particularly low degree of trust in their politicians and their ability or willingness to change the situation facing the U.S., in addition to addressing the major issues concerning the public.

In the Mexico-US bilateral relationship, a migration policy of exclusion prevailed (Martin, 2017), in the proposals of Donald Trump. Two issues were the axis of the positioning in the matter: the construction of the border wall and the deportation of 11 million illegal immigrants in the US. These objectives were presented as the recognition framework for American citizens and the recovery of their economic and labour rights.

## **2. Theoretical approach**

### **2.1. Language and politics. The agenda of the Critical Discourse Analysis**

The role of the CDA in social studies has had a relationship with the analysis of the uses of language in processes of social change. In its broad conception, "CDA is a form of critical social analysis" (Fairclough, 2018: 13). This relationship is based on the way in which power, ideologies and institutions, mainly, participate in the social construction of reality. The CDA can contribute to understand by means of "dialectical reasoning" approach (Fairclough, 2018: 13) how social and political actions through language affect social life.

In the field of applied research, the CDA has reported epistemological capabilities to attract phenomena associated to social and political change. Its relevance is recognized to deepen the construction of ideological and linguistic models in the exercise of power (Fairclough, 2018; Van Dijk, 2005a; Wodak, 2015).

In its development, the CDA has allowed to explain the relationship between social practices, discursive practices and texts. In this way, as an approach

and work method, it reveals the relationships between the uses of language and the processes of social and political change.

With respect to the approach, the recognition of ideology as a substrate of Political Communication (PC), in the game of symbolic and discursive interactions in electoral processes involves facing the presence of belief systems (Van Dijk, 1998) that operate at the base of the semiotics of culture.

The beliefs, individual or social, are manifested more profound structures. The CDA (Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012), as a theory and method, conceives the possibility of asking about the ways in which individuals and institutions develop language practices (Halliday, 2001), as manifestations of social relations (Mayr, 2008).

These relationships can be based on more profound structures of collective thought, on mechanisms of appropriation of reality through particular uses of language (Chilton, 2004). Therefore, the construction of discourses and their pragmatic approach in the PC reveals, in some way, the presence of ideological processes.

## **2.2. Ideological discourse in political processes**

In the construction of ideological structures, Fairclough (1989) recognizes the function of “common sense” as an articulating element of meanings that give meaning to the differentiation of political identities. In this way, it delves into the power relations that are manifested through discourse, considering the different forms of social action. Therefore, the question is considered: “How does ideological common sense affect the meanings of linguistic expressions, conventional practices of speaking and writing, and the social subjects and situations of discourse?” (p. 78). It can be assumed that in moments of political polarization, “common sense” is reinforced by the identification of social problems and the identity of the political forces in conflict, as in electoral processes in bipartisan political systems.

The study of ideology in the field of discourse puts language and its meanings at the center of the question, as the configuration space of individuals and groups, in terms of asymmetric interactions and domain practices (Chilton,

2004; Fairclough, 1995, 1989 & 2006; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012; Van Dijk, 1998, 2005a and 2005b).

The CDA considers, in light of these communicative conditions, “ideologies as an instrument for the interests of certain groups with social power” (Mayr, 2008, p.11), depending on the needs for legitimation. This process is carried out subtly and it is the language that sustains and codifies (Brower, 2010), with its stylistic, argumentative and persuasive resources, the relations of inequality and domination.

The notion of ideology for the present study considers the social approach (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 29) as the most propitious to explain the underlying structures in political communities, in order to identify social belief systems. The problem that derives from the investigation of the ideology in the electoral spots considers that there is a discursive tendency to “generalize” in function of a specific belief.

Persuasion arises, in terms of this cognitive pretension, as a mode of realization of ideological discourse. On the basis of an “assertion”, the ideological discourse seeks to overcome other discourses, based on a series of particular features (Van Dijk, 1998):

- Personal beliefs vs socially constructed beliefs.
- Specific beliefs vs abstract beliefs.
- Specific social beliefs or historical beliefs.
- Factual beliefs vs evaluative beliefs (opinions, attitudes).
- Beliefs as factual truths (knowledge) vs beliefs as factual falsehoods (errors, illusions).
- Cultural beliefs (common sense) vs group beliefs (p. 41).

These distinctions referred to by Van Dijk (1998, p. 41) also imply that there are group beliefs and cultural beliefs. In them, the strength of culture as a process of construction of meanings provides individuals with a particular language, based on communicative needs. In this way, it is understood that in the electoral dynamics there is a lexical more or less recognizable for the audiences, whose terms of reference find their meaning in the language of political confrontation.

The positioning of the political parties in the electoral process imposes on the PC to focus on the periods and the ways in which the ideology is perceptible. To consider that there is an ideological manifestation in this period, in the electoral communication based on spots, supposes adopting a theory and a method that allows the identification of the discursive features in the construction of the ideologies.

The CDA, as an interpretive discipline, makes it possible to deepen the processes of meaning construction, in relation to the communicative contexts in which discourses are produced (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). An approach to the study of ideology (Fairclough, 2006) involves the recognition of at least two perspectives: a critical vision and a descriptive vision. For the CDA, it is interesting to know how discourses respond to certain forms of power and domination and how the dynamics of meaning construction in social contexts are established.

In the approach to the study of ideology in discourses, it is necessary to consider the relationships between social structures and social events, mediated by social practices. These relationships can be seen in the following way (Table 1):

**Table 1:** Relationship between levels of abstraction and semiotic dimensions.

Social ontology / levels of abstraction	Semiotic dimensions
Social structures	Semiotic systems (languages)
Social practices	Speech orders
Social events	Texts (includes speech, "statements")

**Source:** Fairclough (2006, p. 24).

The relations between semiotic systems and social structures are conceived as a normative framework for the use of languages to construct discourses that affect the maintenance of discourse orders, understood as the generic features of communication systems. In this way, in concrete situations, texts are the manifestation of semiotic systems and the orders of discourse, for example, a report, a spot, a parliamentary session, among other forms of ideological discourse.

The way discourses are performed in the PC supposes phenomena of inter-discursivity, that is, it implies the relationship with other discourses, with

other genres and other styles. In the analysis of the spots of the electoral campaign this relation is evident, especially when the political parties seek the space of differentiation regarding other electoral proposals. In this way, the recent past of parties and candidates often constitutes a starting point for confrontation.

### **2.3. On multimodality and semiotic systems**

In the field of media, political and electoral discourses have used the different digital platforms and incorporated new discursive schemes, which configure the messages through other semiotic modes (Van Leeuwen, 2005), such as the spot, whose persuasive resources have become more complex in the presentation of campaign proposals. In this way, multimodality has gained space in the configuration of political and electoral discourses. Faced with this situation, the study of ideologies from the Social Semiotics (SS) and the CDA has also incorporated new analysis strategies regarding multimodality (Jewitt, 2014a & 2014b).

For this reason, the CDA (Fairclough, 1989) has assumed a more open stance concerning the manifestations of language in social life and has extended its descriptive, explanatory and interpretative capacities on the way language, anyone be its modality, participate in social action. In the case of speeches that are made in different levels of configuration, under different formats and in different genres, printed, audiovisual or digital are addressed as multimodal discourses.

On the approach of multimodality in discourses, Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) proposed to conceive a “visual grammar” to describe “the way in which depicted elements - people, places and things - combine in visual ‘statements’ of greater or lesser complexity and extension” (p. 1). This vision was realized from the perspective of social semiotics and faced the challenges of multimodality.

In its development, the Multimodal Discourse Analysis, MDA) (Kress, 2012) has incorporated the different semiotic modes that come into play in the construction of discourses in media societies, in which the linguistic level is articulated with other modes of realization of the speech.

The analysis of political and electoral discourses increasingly participate in these processes of meaning, which is why a program and a research agenda are necessary to address the problems arising from the configuration, issuance, reception and interpretation of discourses in the field of mediatization.

The analysis of electoral spots includes the complexity of the semiotic modes that intervene in the construction of meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 4). In this study, multimodality has been conceived in relation to the implicit and explicit ideological constructions in the electoral spots, considering that the linguistic modality serves as an articulating element of the other semiotic modes.

For this reason, linguistic semiosis is recognized as a level of analysis that associates other meanings, which belong to other semiotic modes, such as visual and auditory.

## **2.4. Populism in action**

In the field of Discourse Studies, Wodak (2015) has documented the construction of far-right populist discourses in Europe and the United States. In his study, the presence of a populist politics and the strategies that have been implemented in the search for legitimacy of the extreme right parties are recognized. These discourses participate in the influence of the mass media and the identification of the great needs of the population, articulating solutions that may affect minority groups. It should be noted that one of the characteristics of populist discourse is its simplicity in presenting issues of importance and complexity, with the aim of favoring more comprehensible reception schemes for different audiences.

Populism in European democracies presents a set of communicative strategies that target minority groups as the cause of national problems (Wodak, 2015). However, in the case of North America, populist discourses have also sought to raise the levels of legitimacy of political and institutional leaders. In the 2016 election, the confrontation between the final candidates radicalized this trend. The orientation toward a populist discourse, with an impact on large sectors of the population, became visible.

A predominant feature comes from the construction of fear as imposition in scenarios of uncertainty. For this, real or imaginary dangers are focused and social and political actors are held responsible as “scapegoats” (Wodak, 2015). For Wodak (2015) there is a process of “renationalization” in the US and a tendency to create borders and walls. As she says:

- All right-wing populist parties instrumentalize some kind of ethnic / religious / linguistic / political minority as a scapegoat for most if not all current woes and subsequently construe the respective group as dangerous and a threat “to us”, to “our” nation; this phenomenon manifests itself as a “politics of fear”.
- All right-wing populist parties seem to endorse what can be recognized as the “arrogance of ignorance”; appeals to common-sense and anti-intellectualism mark a return to pre-modernist or pre-Enlightenment thinking.

Other works have documented the construction of a politics of fear in the speeches of DT, associated with processes of an emerging racism around undocumented migrants in the US (Martin, 2017; Heyer, 2018; Gantt, 2017). The campaign speeches reveal this communicative orientation and television electoral advertising reinforced the division between US citizens and migrant minorities.

In particular, the construction of stereotypes of Mexicans linked to crime and drug trafficking increased the polarization of campaign proposals and the targeting of social agents guilty of the problems in the US (Schubert, 2017). From the CDA approach, (Mohammadi & Javadi, 2017) the use of Trump’s discourse and ideological positioning strategies has been documented, revealing the underlying structures.

### 3. Methodology

The focus of the study considers the CDA as the analytical basis of the speeches issued by the Republican candidate Donald Trump in the US 2016 electoral scenario. As a communicative process, it deepens into two aspects: *a)* the legitimacy of the political actor and his immigration policy, and *b)* the representation of Mexican citizens in the campaign speech.

The integration of the corpus considered the treatment of the data obtained from The American Presidency Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Political Communication Laboratory at Stanford University. The material was compiled and labeled in Political Communication Laboratory of the Government Sciences and Strategic Development Institute.

Regarding multimodality, the methodological proposal of Van Leeuwen (2005 & 2008) was considered, within the framework of advances in the study of semiotic modes in audiovisual representation (Jewitt, 2014a & 2014b). Therefore, the levels of analysis of the corpus correspond to the visual, linguistic and sound modes, in their processes of construction of political discourse.

Regarding the research questions, two types of representations were focused: *a)* the Mexico-US bilateral relationship, and *b)* the image of Mexican citizens in electoral political polarization. Both representations have been labeled through the resources of the semiotic modes in relation to the “construction of the border wall”.

The spots of the campaign were analyzed based on the identification of the topics associated with the Republican candidate and the border wall. The analysis instrument was integrated with the annotations in the ELAN software for multimodal discourses.

Also, on the oral discourses, the lexical search was carried out to identify the use patterns of the terms “Wall” and “Mexico” and their phraseological derivations. The results are presented from the relevant findings and the classification of the rhetorical typologies in their use. These processes of analysis allowed us to reveal the ideological function of DT’s verbal and multimodal discourses in the US 2016 presidential election.

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

According to the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis, ideology manifests itself through the confrontation of beliefs, which can influence the construction of frames of understanding of the receivers. In this way, ideological discourse focuses on the opposition of systems of thought, to legitimize one of the visions with respect to problems or themes common to a given political community.

In his presentation speech as candidate for president by the Republican Party, one of the most emphatic issues was the construction of the border wall. DT at the moment of “Announcing Candidacy for President in New York City” (16/VI/2015) said:

I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I’ll build them very inexpensively, I will build a great, great wall on our southern border. And I will have Mexico pay for that wall (Trump, 2018a).

As a campaign promise, the proposal was in force at the different stages of the electoral process and established a media debate among the Mexican media in the days before the election. Likewise, the migratory regulation measure generated a growing polarization between the Hispanic communities in the US and, more precisely, in Mexico, as a country affected by the statements of the Republican candidate.

Another key moment for the electoral campaign was the acceptance speech of the nomination before the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio. In his speech before the Republican Party, DT announced its immigration policy and the measures it would implement in its governance.

In his commitment to the Republicans he promised the construction of a border wall and polarized the problem from the notions “legality” and “illegality”, to refer to the situation of migrants who represent a risk to the US. In terms of the configuration of political discourse, the ideological positioning helped to reinforce its electoral profile in the face of its adversary, Hillary Clinton, who had remained with a moderate stance on immigration issues.

We are going to build a great border wall to stop illegal immigration, to stop the gangs and the violence, and to stop the drugs from pouring into our communities. I have been honored to receive the endorsement of America’s Border Patrol Agents, and will work directly with them to protect the integrity of our lawful, lawful, lawful immigration system. Lawful.

By ending catch-and-release on the border, we will stop the cycle of human smuggling and violence. Illegal border crossings will go down. We will stop it. It won’t be happening very much anymore. Believe me. Peace will be restored. By enforcing the rules for the millions who overstay their visas, our laws will finally receive the respect they deserve (Trump, 2018c).

As can be seen, Trump's statements about the border wall and the migrants led to a semantic relationship between "illegality", "migration" and "violence". On the basis of these meanings, the discursive strategies for the construction of "scapegoats" were established during the campaign period until the election. The semantic relationship between the terms used in the discourse presents a set of oppositions at the level of beliefs (Van Dijk, 1998): specific beliefs vs abstract beliefs. However, the opposition also participates in the base of the proposal: cultural beliefs (common sense) vs group beliefs. The ideological feature prevails in the communicative orientation, where it is expressed that some lose and others win in unequal conditions.

Mexico currently receives \$24 billion in remittance payments annually from the United States. This provides substantial leverage for the United States to obtain from Mexico the funds necessary to pay for a border wall. The cost of a border wall is nothing compared to the hundreds of billions we spend year after year providing services and benefits to illegal immigrants. (Trump, 2018b).

In the sequence, DT's statements ideological meanings reinforce one another. The association between violence and illegal Mexican immigration is seen as a huge risk for the US. In this way, the representation of foreign and migratory policy takes on a negative meaning, by focusing on an exogenous "scapegoat" to the social system of the country (Wodak, 2015).

#### **4.1. The electoral spots and the ideological configuration of politics with Mexico**

The US 2016 election campaign revealed a polarization associated with the bipartisan political system and the legitimation processes of the final candidates: Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. The slogan of the first "Make America Great Again" presents a positioning in front of its adversary and the Democratic Party. In television political advertising, illegal immigration is conceived as the source of problems and represented as a threat. This representation corresponds to the "politics of fear" of the ideologies of right-wing populist parties (Wodak, 2015). For a vision of the symbolic composition of the spots, multimodal analysis allows the description of the elements and semiotic modes that act as generators of the ideological sense of audiovisual political advertising (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Composition of the symbolic values of DT.

Multi-modal dis-course	Rhythm	Composition ( <i>layout</i> )	Information linking	Dialogue	Mayor isotopy <sup>1</sup>
Two Americas: Immigration	<p>The screening of the audiovisual panels is organized in two sequences:</p> <p>a) Hillary Clinton and its relationship with immigration and crime.</p> <p>b) Donald Trump and his response based on the security of the nation and families.</p> <p>Each sequence lasts 15 seconds.</p>	 <p>F1</p>	Media inter-textuality	The relationship of semiotic modes is based on contrast. Clinton vs Trump. Criminal threat vs. security.	Make America Great Again
		 <p>F2</p>	Ideological relationship of opposition with Hillary Clinton.		
		 <p>F3</p>	It is associated with immigration and crime with the Democratic candidate (Frames 1-6).		
		 <p>F4</p>	The symbolization of the southeast of the US establishes an intertextual relationship with the border of Mexico and its migrants, at the level of representations (Frames 2-5).		
		 <p>F5</p>			
		 <p>F6</p>			

**Source:** Own elaboration based on categories of analysis by Leeuwen (2005).

1. We understand the “isotopy” as an effect of the recurrence of the semantic units that make possible the syntagmatic construction of the meaning and / or senses of the discourse, in the perspective that Rastier (2005, pp. 109-138) gives to the term. In political spots, isotopy can be revealed through the use of phrases, such as the slogan, that allow the symbolic and thematic identity of electoral advertising.

At the linguistic level, the spot presents the construction of negative stereotypes around the figure of illegal immigrants:

*Two Americas: Immigration*

*Transcript:* Narrator: In Hillary Clinton's America, the system stays rigged against Americans. Syrians refugees flood in. Illegal immigrants convicted of committing crimes get to stay, collecting Social Security benefits, skipping the line. Our border open. It's more of the same, but worse. Donald Trump's America is secure. Terrorists and dangerous criminals kept out. The border secure. Our families safe. Change that makes America safe again. Donald for president. I'm Donald Trump and I approve this message.

In the development of the spot, the ideological orientation participates in the configuration of a "common sense", based on the idea of illegal immigrants as criminals. The roles of the represented figures are highly antagonistic, depending on the political and ideological confrontation. Syrian refugees and illegal immigrants are represented as a "danger" to the US. In this way, Hillary Clinton maintains a relationship at the level of meanings with crime and DT is associated with change and security.

In another representative spot, "Great Again", the ideological fixation is more explicit. It is about the representation of terrorism. With this argument, the spot strengthens the belief of "a responsible minority" of the problems of violence that threaten the citizens. In the composition of the symbolic values of television political advertising, the visual and verbal modes establish the games of oppositions based on the "politics of fear" (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Composition of the symbolic values of DT.

Multi-modal dis-course	Rhythm	Composition ( <i>layout</i> )	Information linking	Dialogue	Mayor isotopy
Great Again	The spot is structured in two narrative sequences:  a) the threat of Islamic and Muslim immigration.  b) the threat of Mexican immigration.	 <p>F 1</p>	Media inter-textuality	The integration of semiotic modes is generated from the visual plane and the relationship between President Obama and the Democratic candidate, around the threat of crime and terrorism. Trump offers the solution to the problem with strongly restrictive measures.	Make America Great Again
		 <p>F 2</p>	The spot is framed by the electoral confrontation, linking the images of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, responsible for illegal immigration (Frame 2).		
		 <p>F 3</p>	At the visual level, the border with Mexico is represented and the radical idea of the wall is justified (Frame 5).		
		 <p>F 4</p>	Trump concludes the electoral message with the solution of the problem (Frame 6).		
		 <p>F5</p>			
		 <p>F 6</p>			

**Source:** Own elaboration based on categories of analysis by Leeuwen (2005).

The determination of the foreign policy on immigration matters is referred to in the spot “Great Again”. On the linguistic level, the message is articulated

from the justification of the threat to citizens. Three aspects are related in the multimodal discourse: “terrorism”, “illegal immigration” and “wall”.

### *Great Again*

*Transcript: I'm Donald Trump and I approve this message:*

Announcer: The politicians can pretend it's something else, but Donald Trump calls it radical Islamic terrorism. That's why he's calling for a temporary shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until we can figure out what's going on. He'll quickly cut the head off ISIS and take their oil. And he'll stop illegal immigration by building a wall in our southern border that Mexico will pay for. Trump: We will make America great again.

In this spot the representation of Mexico and Mexicans as a result of argumentation acquires a negative significance. In addition, it is assigned the responsibility of “paying” for the construction of the wall. In the context of the US electoral process, the spot had a high ideological charge, due to the determination of Trump's policy against Mexico.

The symbolic values identified point to two conditions of extreme right populism, which correspond to two discursive strategies: the targeting of minorities as threats and the modeling of a discourse based on general beliefs associated with a “common sense” of domination.

The relationship of the representations revealed the extremes of foreign and migratory policies, in which the notion of a populism of the Republican candidate does not seem to disappear, as it offered widely accepted solutions for citizens in the US.

## **5. Conclusions**

The study of Political Communication in electoral processes allows us to understand the polarization dynamics of parties and candidates, within the framework of the implementation of ideologies to influence voters. However, the discursive strategies used in television political advertising also incorporate other representations, which contextualize the political debate and the legitimacy mechanisms of the candidates. Under this approach, the policies

implemented determine not only the path of the campaign but also the relationship with other social and political actors.

In the case of Donald Trump's policy regarding Mexico, the analysis revealed a confrontational communicative relationship, which was linked to the risks that the US faces in terms of illegal immigration and internal security. The topics of the campaign, as the study shows, were developed from the polarization of the most vulnerable candidates and sectors of society, as happened with immigrant minorities.

In the determination of ideological strategies, an opposition was generated between cultural beliefs and group beliefs, through the negative representation of Muslims and Mexicans, among other minorities. The study's evidence allowed to identify the articulation of a populist ideology, as conceptualized in the works of Wodak (2015). Likewise, the multimodal analysis allowed to understand the relations between the semiotic modes that intervened in the construction of Trump's electoral discourse in the spots of the campaign.

As for the "border wall", the topic was present from the first speeches of the Republican candidate and remained valid even after his visit to Mexico. The symbolic configuration of the "wall" had audiovisual representations, in which illegal immigrants, with references to Mexicans, framed the notion of a danger for citizens in the US.

The implementation of a "politics of fear", typical of extreme right-wing populisms, was the ideological trend that marked the treatment of the "wall" proposal. This policy was articulated throughout the electoral campaign and influenced Trump's foreign and migratory policy with respect to Mexico. In this way, the Peña-Trump meeting in Los Pinos offered a diagnosis of the asymmetric relationship of political actors, in which the ideological orientation of the Republican candidate made visible the processes of domination in the international arena.

## References

- Ahuactzin, C. (2017). Electoral television advertising and persuasion in Puebla 2010. An approach from Critical Discourse Analysis. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, 29, 41-68.
- Baldry, A. & Thibault, P. (2006). *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis. A multimedia toolkit and coursebook*. Londres: Equinox.
- Benoit, W. & Glatz, M. (2017). *Persuasive Attacks on Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential Primary*. Nueva York: Lexington Books.
- Brower, J. (2010). El estatus semiótico-discursivo de la ideología: aportes para la re-lectura del discurso político. *Boletín de Lingüística* 22(33), 114-130. Recuperado de [http://www.scielo.org/ve/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0798-97092010000100006&lang=pt](http://www.scielo.org/ve/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0798-97092010000100006&lang=pt)
- Chilton, P. (2004). *Analysing Political Discourse. Theory and Practice*. Londres: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. Nueva York: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Nueva York: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2006). Semiosis, ideology and mediation: A dialectical view. En I. Lassen, J. Strunck & T. Vestergaard (Eds.), *Mediating Ideology in Text and Image. Ten Critical Studies*. Ámsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Fairclough, N. (2018). CDA as dialectical reasoning. En J. Flowerdew & J. Richardson (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*. Nueva York: Routledge.
- Fairclough, I. & Fairclough, N. (2012). *Political Discourse Analysis*. Londres: Routledge.

- Fuchsman, K. (2017). The Presidential Campaign That Astounded the World: A Psychohistory of Donald Trump and the 2016 American Election. *The Journal of Psychohistory*, 44(4), 292-309.
- Gantt, J. (2017). Donald Trump's "Political Incorrectness": Neoliberalism as Frontstage Racism on Social Media. *Social Media + Society*, 1-10. doi: 10.1177/2056305117733226
- Halliday, M. (2001). *El lenguaje como semiótica social. La interpretación social del lenguaje y del significado*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Heyer, K. (2018). Internalized Borders: Immigration Ethics in the Age of Trump. *Theological Studies*, 79(1), 146-164.
- Jewitt, C. (2014a). An introduction to multimodality. En C. Jewitt (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis* (pp. 14-27). Nueva York: Routledge.
- Jewitt, C. (2014b). Different approaches to multimodality. En C. Jewitt (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis* (pp. 28-39). Nueva York: Routledge.
- Korostelina, K. (2017). *Trump Effect*. Nueva York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis.
- Kress, G. (2012). Multimodal Discourse Analysis. En J. Gee, & M. Handford (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 35-50). Londres: Routledge.
- Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal Discourse. The modes and media of contemporary communication*. Londres: Hodder Arnold.
- Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design*. Londres: Routledge.
- Martin, P. (2017). Election of Donald Trump and migration. *Migration Letters*, 14(1), 161-171.

- Mayr, A. (2008). Introduction: Power, discourse and institutions. En A. Mayr (Ed.), *Language and Power. An Introduction to Institutional Discourse* (pp. 1-25). Londres: Continuum.
- Mohammadi, M. & Javadi, J. (2017). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's Language Use in US Presidential Campaign, 2016. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 6(5).
- Rastier, F. (2005). *Semántica interpretativa*. México, DF: Siglo XXI Editores.
- Schubert, C. (2017). Constructing Mexican Stereotypes: Telecinematic Discourse and Donald Trump's Campaign Rhetoric. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, 8(2), 37-57.
- Standford University (2016). *Campaign 2016 - Presidential General Election Ads*. Recuperado de <https://pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/2016>
- Trump, D. (2018a). Remarks Announcing Candidacy for President in New York City (16 de junio de 2015). En J. Woolley & G. Peters, *The American Presidency Project*. Recuperado de <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php>
- Trump, D. (2018b). Press Release - Donald J. Trump: Compelling Mexico to Pay for the Wall (5 de abril de 2016). En J. Woolley & G. Peters, *The American Presidency Project*. Recuperado de <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php>
- Trump, D. (2018c). Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio (21 de julio de 2016). En J. Woolley & G. Peters, *The American Presidency Project*. Recuperado de <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php>
- Van Dijk, T. (1998). *Ideology*. Londres: Sage Publications.
- Van Dijk, T. (2005a). Ideología y análisis del discurso. *Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana*, 10(29), 9-36.

- Van Dijk, T. (2005b). Política, ideología y discurso. *Quórum Académico*, 2(2), 15-47.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2005). *Introducing Social Semiotics*. Nueva York: Routledge.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in discourse and communication. *Discourse & Communication*, 1(1), 91-112.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*. Nueva York: Oxford University Press.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2009). Discourse as the recontextualization of social practice: a guide. En R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 162-186). Londres: Sage.
- Wodak, R. (2015). *The Politics of Fear. What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*. Londres: Sage.
- Wodak, R. & Meyer, M. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: history, agenda, theory and methodology. En R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 1-33). Londres: Sage.
- Woolley, J. & Peters, G. (2018). *The American Presidency Project*. Recuperado de <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php>