



Book Review — *Language and Politics: A Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Perspective*, by Juliane House and Dániel Z. Kádár.

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Language and Politics offers a holistic exploration of political discourse through the lens of pragmatics. Juliane House and Dániel Z. Kádár adopt the linguistic approach of pragmatics to maintain objectivity in evaluating political language across diverse politics-oriented discourses (pp. 1–2). They depart from typical monolingual and ethnocentric perspectives by integrating multilingual and cross-cultural methods to analyse data from different linguacultures. Specifically, House and Kádár employ a contrastive cross-cultural pragmatic framework to study political language in multilingual data, compare the language of politicians in different roles, examine foregrounding in political language and evaluate stance-taking by political actors in diverse speech contexts.

This book explores a territory different from previous approaches to language and politics, such as critical discourse analysis (CDA), in terms of its aim and methodology. The primary focus of CDA is to critique power relations, social discrimination and oppression as conveyed in different social interactions, especially political discourse. In *Language and Politics*, the pragmatic approach proposed by House and Kádár is an offshoot of CDA—the political discourse analysis (PDA), to be precise. While PDA explores the domains of political power abuse, domination and reproduction, the authors shift drastically from ascertaining social injustices in their approach to PDA, and instead, evaluate political language use without invalidating the CDA approach to PDA. By strictly adhering to the linguistic principles of pragmatics rather than borrowing the interdisciplinary perspectives of CDA, House and Kádár investigate how ideology produces ethnocentric interpretations of language and politics, as well as how it manifests in politically relevant interactions.

The volume is constituted of eleven chapters, including a glossary of key terms and indices. It is organised into two parts, with a separate introductory chapter. The first part covers methodological issues in four chapters, while the second part addresses the key topics in six chapters, ending with the concluding chapter. The introductory chapter outlines the theoretical and methodological foundations of the text and situates the adopted approaches within the field of linguistics. The authors present a synopsis of the book's contents and its structure in this chapter to give the readers an idea of what to expect. As a customary practice, every chapter of the book, including the introductory chapter, ends with a list of recommended readings.

In its four chapters, part one of the book dwells on the framework upon which the study is built, the pitfalls of adopting an ethnocentric view when studying politically related data, associating values with political actors and entities at the outset of research and using research to support a pre-held conviction. The book is particularly “linguistic-oriented”; it adopts a “bottom-up” approach to language use, as well as “replicability” view and “contrastive” analysis (p. 17). Its analysis is linguistically anchored in an inventory of pragmatic concepts, especially speech acts and context. One substantial issue addressed relates to how ethnocentric conceptions influence researchers themselves. Similarly, House and Kádár link the risk of associating values with political actors and entities to the adoption of the top-down approach for comparing them (p. 51).

The book's second part considers topical issues that are closely related to communicative strategies in news reports, ideological convictions and language use, aggression in political institutions, as well as politics and translation. The discussion in this part of the volume also includes an exploration of sensitivity in language and politics, particularly regarding politically relevant data in countries that do not support such research. Other sensitive language issues that are discussed in the section are the study of secretive data produced by politicians and the study of painful topics, including “public ritual apology” (p. 96). The conclusion, which is the last chapter of the second part, provides a retrospective of the chapter discussions and incorporates recommendations for future studies.

House and Kádár have clearly explored how three distinct pitfalls could impede objective analyses of language use in politically relevant data. They

provide scientific justifications and moral understandings through case studies and replicability. These approaches have not only provided detailed insights into underlying issues related to the adoption of the ethnocentric perspective to the analysis of political language across diverse politics-oriented discourse; they have also helped in establishing a proper methodological framework for PDA. In addition to the authors' use of case studies and reflections for clarity, objectivity and establishment of a proper analytical model for evaluating political discourse, the choice of the cross-cultural pragmatic approach adds further significance to the book. The volume has provided a foundation for researchers to reflect on how the understanding of cultural differences could help them to navigate variations in different politics-oriented conversational data.

As mentioned in the foregoing, the book analyses data from different linguacultures by integrating multilingual and cross-cultural methods. However, House and Kádár have explored eight countries (UK, Slovenia, Germany, Hungary, Croatia, US, China and Japan), selected from three continents—Europe, North America and Asia—without consideration of data from Africa and other regions. For those continents that are examined, there is an imbalance in representation, with Europe more heavily featured. This is a limitation to the cross-cultural and multilingual positioning and choices of this volume. Even though this limitation is worthy of consideration and incorporation into possible future studies, the book in its current form qualifies as a valuable roadmap for more comprehensive analyses of wide varieties of politically oriented discourses from the pragmatic standpoint.

Overall, *Language and Politics: A Cross-cultural Pragmatic Perspective*, is a good source of reference for critical studies that explore a wider variety of politics-oriented data texts, be it spoken or written. The in-depth methodological and theoretical foundations of the texts in pragmatics and PDA establish the book as a veritable resource for scholars and students across humanities and social science disciplines, including linguistics, anthropology, sociology as well as politics and governance. The exploration of diverse political discourses from different linguacultures extends the relevance of the book to a variety of cross-cultural contexts.

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