

An Analysis of Theme and Rheme in a Selected Social Media Post by Vladimir Putin

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the Theme and Rheme of Russian President Vladimir Putin's speech and evaluates its effectiveness. The speech delivered during his annual address to the Federal Assembly in Moscow, the speech often attracted public interest and curiosity about its meaning. It had a significant impact on social media platforms like TikTok and YouTube, becoming viral. This significant attention was why Putin's speech was chosen for this research. The research employed a qualitative approach. The data were viral speech delivered by Putin in Moscow in 2024. Data were collected through observation and analyzed by comparing, describing, classifying, and presenting it using tables and descriptions. The findings showed 1 Unmarked Simple Theme (UST) (11.1%), 3 Unmarked Multiple Themes (UMT) (44.4%), no Marked Simple Theme (MST), and 3 Marked Multiple Themes (MMT) (44.4%) in the speech. The dominance of UMT and MMT was due to the "marking" function, emphasizing statehood and nationalism. The speech discussed global conflict-causing behaviors, emphasizing that Russia will not be influenced by other countries, especially Ukraine. In conclusion, the speech effectively conveyed its message through a primarily declarative and expressive mode in terms of Theme and Rheme.

Keywords: Theme and Rheme, Vladimir Putin' speech, social media

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis Theme dan Rheme dari pidato Presiden Rusia Vladimir Putin dan mengevaluasi efektivitasnya. Pidato ini disampaikan selama pidato tahunannya kepada Majelis Federal di Moskow, pidato ini sering menarik minat dan rasa ingin tahu publik tentang maknanya. Pidato ini memiliki dampak signifikan di platform media sosial seperti TikTok dan YouTube, menjadi viral. Perhatian signifikan inilah yang menjadi alasan mengapa pidato Putin dipilih untuk penelitian ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Data yang digunakan adalah pidato viral yang disampaikan oleh Putin di Moskow pada tahun 2024. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan dianalisis dengan membandingkan, mendeskripsikan, mengklasifikasikan, dan menyajikannya menggunakan tabel dan deskripsi. Hasil temuan menunjukkan adanya 1 Unmarked Simple Theme (UST) (11,1%), 3 Unmarked Multiple Themes (UMT) (44,4%), tidak ada Marked Simple Theme (MST), dan 3 Mark Multiple Themes (MMT) (44,4%) dalam pidato tersebut. Dominasi UMT dan MMT disebabkan oleh fungsi "penandaan", yang menekankan kenegaraan dan nasionalisme. Pidato tersebut membahas perilaku yang menyebabkan konflik global, menekankan bahwa Rusia tidak akan dipengaruhi oleh negara lain, terutama Ukraina. Kesimpulannya, pidato tersebut berhasil menyampaikan pesannya melalui mode deklaratif dan ekspresif dari segi Theme dan Rheme.

Kata kunci: *Theme and Rheme, pidato Vladimir Putin, media sosial*

A. Introduction

Discourse analysis is the study of language use within social contexts, particularly in interactions between speakers. The data for discourse analysis can be in the form of text, whether spoken or written (Liyana, 2018). In line with that theory, Ni Putu (2020) says discourse refers to a unit of language that is longer than a single sentence and encompasses most of everyday communication. Moreover, Tannen et al. (2015) in Waluyo et al. (2023) state discourse analysis involves examining how language is used to express meaning, structure social interactions, and shape social identities. It explores the relationship between language, power relations, and the social context in which communication occurs. On the other hand, Saragih & Saragih (2021) state that discourse represents the meaning conveyed through text, which is defined as any functional unit of language in context. The theory indicates that discourse analysis encompasses all forms of text, including dialogue or conversation, as they carry contextual functional meaning.

Furthermore, Halimah & Kartika (2022) outline discourse analysis examines how text and speech within social and

political contexts. This theory describes discourse analysis as the study of various types of text, such as dialogue, conversation, and speech, focusing on how they convey functional meaning within their context. In conclusion, discourse analysis is the study of language use within social contexts, focusing on interactions between speakers and the functional meaning conveyed through text and speech. This field encompasses both spoken and written forms of communication, examining how language is used to express meaning, structure social interactions, and shape social identities. It also explores the relationship between language, power dynamics, and the social context in which communication occurs. Discourse analysis involves analyzing various types of text, including dialogue and conversation, and speech, to understand their contextual significance and impact within social and political frameworks.

When examining a clause as a message within discourse analysis, it is split into two components: the Theme and the Rheme. The Theme is the initial part of the message or the starting point of the text while the Rheme comprises the remainder of the message or once the Theme has been

established (Saragih & Saragih, 2021). Moreover, Rahardjo & Hidayat (2021) state in written English, regardless of whether it's a simple clause or a full sentence, segments of discourse can be divided into two components: Theme and Rheme. In line with that theory, Octaberlina & Muslimin (2020) state the initial part of a clause is typically used to link the clause to previously mentioned information. The theme of a clause always includes information that is either explicitly mentioned in the text or commonly understood through context.

Furthermore, Hidayat (2023) says the theme is a crucial element that serves as the starting point of the message and indicates what the clause is about. Typically, the theme is the first element in a clause. It is part of a specific structural arrangement that organizes the clause into a coherent message. A message consists of both a theme and a rheme, making the analysis of theme and rheme in a conversation, especially in speech, the focus of the clause.

In accordance with the previous statement, the researcher aims to investigate the theme and rheme in the speech by Vladimir Putin. The researcher chose Putin's speech because he is one of the most influential figures in the world. Putin has served as the president of Russia Since May 7, 2000, and won the 2018 presidential election with 76 percent of the vote to become the next president. He is now recognized as one of the most influential people in the world. <https://bisnis.tempo.co/read/1819517/10-orang-paling-berpengaruh-di-dunia-versi-times-of-india-xi-jinping-nomor-satu>. His speech often attracted public interest and curiosity about its meaning, and had a significant impact on social media platforms like TikTok and YouTube, becoming viral.

According to Listman (2021), social media platforms have quickly emerged as a major channel for communication, especially

among young adults. They have introduced a new realm of data that researchers find invaluable. Content that gains wide popularity on social media, often called "viral", is often cultural. Social media networks are online applications that enable individuals to interact and connect with each other (Listman, 2021). So, all domestic and foreign news are easily accessible with just one smartphone, and Vladimir Putin's speech on the invasion of Ukraine became public consumption. the video depicts how authoritative Vladimir Putin spoke in front of the parliament and officials in Moscow. The speech has been watched hundreds of times by social media users, especially on YouTube and TikTok platforms, as reported by the Bloomberg television channel from the United States which has 2 million subscribers around the world.

With the advancement of social media technology, users can access information from all over the world (Iftikhar & Omer, 2021). For example, YouTube users felt that the speech could be understood by reading the subtitles even though the speech was in Russian articulating how effectively the message conveyed its true meaning and how that meaning affected them (Fried, et al. 2022). In addition, Putin's speeches can provide insight into Russian foreign policy, geopolitical strategy and the dynamics of international relations. Putin's speeches often accompany important events in the modern history of Russia and the world (Haltiwanger, 2022). Speeches given by Presidents or State Leaders are fascinating subjects for in-depth study. As Farauqi (2018) notes, the speech in question is closely related to the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, whose recent address about the Russian invasion of Ukraine went viral on social media. The speech discusses the causes and implications of the invasion. The Russian Federation is considered to have ambitious foreign policies. After experiencing a downturn

following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has risen again under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin (Bakrie et al., 2022). Thus, the researcher concludes that Russia has the capability to stand alone as a country without relying on assistance from other nations, supported by effective and sustainable management of its defense sector.

From all the points above, many researchers investigate similar topics but focus on different prominent individuals. The relevant studies first, Octaberlina & Muslimin (2020) conducted a study titled Theme-Rheme Analysis and Thematic Progression in Joko Widodo's Speech. The results showed that the speeches mostly exhibit different topical and textual themes, focusing on theme and rheme with translation analysis. The second is Waluyo, et al. (2023) conducted a study entitled Theme and Rheme Analysis on Viral Dialogue of the Series "Queen Charlotte: a Bridgerton Story". The findings showed the text was dominated with UST (Unmarked Simple Theme). The reason for this theme to be dominant was the function of "markedness" which was to give special status within the clauses.

Meanwhile, this study focuses on analyzing the theme and rheme in Vladimir Putin's speech delivered in Moscow. Therefore, the study aims to uncover the message's meaning by examining its Theme and Rheme, interpreting the choice of words, and understanding how the speech captured listeners' interest, leading it to become viral. To find out the results of the analysis of the speech text by determining the Theme and Rheme. According to Saragih & Saragih (2021), Theme and Rheme can be categorized based on their markedness and complexity. In terms of markedness, there are two types of Themes: Unmarked and Marked Theme. Unmarked Theme, which conveys a message in a common way, and Marked Theme, which

presents information in a non-standard way. For instance:

I saw you on the beach yesterday
(Unmarked)

Yesterday, I saw you in the beach
(Marked)

Regarding complexity, Themes can be either Simple Theme, which holds a single functional position in a clause, or Multiple Theme, which includes more than one element within a clause. The components of Simple Theme are Participants, Process, or Circumstances, while Multiple Theme are Textual, Interpersonal, and Topical Theme, often signaled by conjunctions, conjunctive, relative pronouns, and continuative. An example would be:

I stay at home (Simple)

The men went to the beach and they visited the museum (Multiple)

When the characteristics of Markedness and complexity are combined, Themes can be further categorized into Unmarked Simple Theme (UST), Unmarked Multiple Theme (UMT), Marked Simple Theme (MST), and Marked Multiple Theme (MMT) (Saragih & Saragih, 2021).

B. Research Method

This study employs a descriptive design with a qualitative approach. According to Aspers & Corte (2019), qualitative research is a cyclical process aimed at enhancing understanding within the scientific community by closely examining the phenomena being studied to create meaningful distinctions. Additionally, Kaharuddin (2021) noted that qualitative research is descriptive and often involves in-depth analysis. In qualitative research, the subject's perspective is emphasized, and theoretical frameworks are used to guide the research focus, ensuring it aligns with relevant and accurate facts.

The following is Vladimir Putin's speech in Moscow in 2024, which grabbed the public's attention, and went viral: "*We will not allow anyone to interfere in our*

internal affairs the so-called west with its colonial habits, the habit fueling of national conflict around the world, does more than just hold back our development instead of Russia, they need dependent depleted spaces where you can say anything in essence they would like to do to Russia the same think that they did in many other regions of the world. including Ukraine to bring discord into our home and weaken us from within but they miss calculated”.

According to Halliday's theory as referenced by Saragih and Saragih (2021) in Waluyo et al. (2023), the researcher follows five steps in analyzing the data, which are:

1. Separating the speech into clauses
2. Analyzing the clauses on the basis of the Theme and Rheme
3. Classifying Themes
4. Deriving pattern Textual Function in the speech
5. Evaluating success of the speech

C. Result and Discussion

1. Separating the speech into clauses

- 1) We will not allow anyone to interfere in our internal affairs the so called west with its colonial habits.
- 2) The habit fueling of national conflict around the world,
- 3) Does more than just hold back our development instead of Russia,
- 4) They need dependent depleted spaces where you can say anything in essence they would like to do to Russia.
- 5) The same think that they did in many other regions of the world.
- 6) Including Ukraine to bring discord into our home and weaken us from within,
- 7) But they miss calculated.

2. Analyzing the clauses on the basis of the Theme and Rheme

Table 2.1. Analysis of Theme and Rheme

Theme	Rheme	Remarks
We	will not allow anyone to interfere in our internal affairs the so called west with its colonial habits.	UMT
The habit	fueling of national conflict around the world,	UST
Does more than	just hold back our development instead of Russia,	MMT
They	need dependent depleted spaces where you can say anything in essence they would like to do to Russia	UMT
The same think	that they did in many other regions of the world.	MMT
Including Ukraine	to bring discord into our home and weaken us from within	MMT
But	they miss calculated	UMT

3. Classifying Themes

Table 3.1 Themes and the Proportion in the Text

NO	TYPES OF THEME	NUMBER	PERCENTAGEE
1	Unmarked Simple Theme (UST)	1	11,1%
2	Unmarked Multiple Theme (UMT)	3	44,4%
3	Marked Simple Theme (MST)	-	
4	Marked Multiple Theme (MMT)	3	44,4%
		total	100%

4. Deriving Pattern Textual Function in the Speech

Based on the data, it was found that the speech was mainly composed of UMT and MMT (44.4%), while the rest was UST (11.1%). Among the three functional positions; participant, circumstance, or process, the participant was the most dominant. This dominance is indicated by the frequent use of "they" and "we" in the speech.

5. Evaluating success of the speech

The speech focuses on nationalism and the significant influence of Russian President Vladimir Putin on the global stage. President Putin asserts that Russia will not be undermined by other countries and urges his people to remain steadfast during the invasion of Ukraine. The text is primarily declarative, featuring statements and assertions rather than questions or commands. The speech effectively utilizes a strong, assertive tone (Tenor) to convey its message about national sovereignty and resistance to foreign interference (Field). The use of declarative sentences and emotive language (Mode) enhances its impact, aiming to rally domestic support and present a united front against external adversaries. This approach is typical for presidential speeches, which often seek to reinforce national identity and resolve in the face of external challenges. In conclusion, the speech effectively conveyed its message through a primarily declarative and expressive mode in terms of Theme and Rheme.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

The analysis revealed the speech contained 1 Unmarked Simple Theme (UST) (11.1%), 3 Unmarked Multiple Themes (UMT) (44.4%), no Marked Simple Theme (MST), and 3 Marked Multiple Themes (MMT) (44.4%). Thus, the dominant themes are UMT and MMT. The prevalent use of UMT and MMT contributes to the natural flow of dialogue commonly found in state of the nation addresses by presidents worldwide. The speech focuses on nationalism. The Mode of the speech primarily consisted of declarative statements, allowing the speaker to convey his thoughts, emotions, and desires.

In terms of Theme and Rheme, it is recommended to introduce more Unmarked Simple Themes (UST) and Marked Simple Themes (MST) to diversify the speech. While Unmarked Multiple Themes (UMT) and Marked Multiple Themes (MMT) contribute to a natural flow, incorporating simpler themes will enhance clarity and aid in simplifying complex ideas.

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