Politics is concerned with power: the power to make decisions, to control resources, to control other people’s behavior, and to control their values.

What are the features of language used by politicians and by the media?

Why do politicians choose their words carefully?

Because they believe in the power of language to influence thought.

They believe implicitly in linguistic relativity.
Language as Thought Control

- Listen to Brook Gladstone’s piece on WNYC Radio.
- Discuss the choice of words:
  - Social security reform vs. Overhaul of social security
  - Personal accounts vs. Private accounts
  - Is “the war on terror” a war? Should it be capitalized like “The Vietnam War”?
  - Estate tax vs. Death tax?

Newspeak

- George Orwell’s novel Nineteen Eighty-Four was published in 1949.
- In the book, Orwell describes a future totalitarian society where the government tries to control not only the behavior but also the thoughts of the people.
- One of the ways in which thought is controlled is a new version of English called Newspeak.

Newspeak

- Newspeak is the official language of Oceania, and had been devised to meet the ideological needs of Ingsoc, or English Socialism. In the year 1984, there is nobody, who really uses Newspeak in speech nor in writing. Only the leading articles are written in this “language.” But it is generally assumed that in the year 2050 Newspeak would supercede Oldspeak, or common English.
Newspeak

- The purpose of Newspeak is not only to provide medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other methods of thought impossible.
- Another reason for developing Newspeak is, to make old books, or books which were written before the era of the Party, unreadable. With Newspeak, Doublethink would be even easier.

Newspeak

- The vocabulary of Newspeak is so constructed as to give exact and often very subtle expression to every meaning that a Party member could properly wish to express, while excluding all other meanings and also the possibility of arriving at them by indirect methods.
- This is done partly by the invention of new words, but chiefly by eliminating undesirable words by stripping such words as remained of unorthodox meanings.

Examples of Newspeak

- **free** - Only exists in the sense of “The dog is free of lice.” The concept of political freedom has been replaced by the word *crimethink*.
- **Miniplenty** - Ministry of Plenty (rationing). The Ministry of Plenty controlled the entire economy.
- **ungood** - Bad. One of the rules of Newspeak is that any word can be turned into its antonym by adding the prefix “un-.” This allowed the removal of repetitive words such as *horrible, terrible, great, fantastic,* and *fabulous* from the language.
Newspeak in the News

“One way to fight evil is to fight it with kindness and love and compassion”
– President George W. Bush

Newspeak in the News

“A friend is someone you know about, someone you can trust. A brand’s a bit like that. You meet this friend through advertising. Without advertising, how would you recognize your friends?”
– International Advertising Association

Newspeak in the News

“There have been false reports that CNN has not used the word ‘terrorist’ to refer to those who attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon. In fact, CNN has consistently and repeatedly referred to the attackers and hijackers as terrorists, and it will continue to do so.”
– CNN
We need Newspeak!

- Why doesn’t the public feel concerned about global warming or the greenhouse effect?

The Language of Politics

1. Presupposition
2. Implicature
3. Metaphor
4. Euphemism
5. The ‘rule of three’
6. Structural parallelism
7. Pronouns
8. Bushisms

Implicature

- Implicature allows the politician’s audience to make assumptions about the existence of information that is not made explicit in what the politician actually says.
The 2002 Race for Governor of Wisconsin

Jim Doyle
Democrat

Scott McCallum
Republican Incumbent

What are the implications in these statements?

- “Doyle said producing better-paying jobs, improving education and cutting health care costs are his main concerns.”

- McCallum “plans to improve the quality of life for all Wisconsin citizens.
  - Strong economy, higher paying jobs and lower taxes
  - Quality and accountability in education
  - Protecting senior citizens”

Rhetoric: The Language of Persuasion

- Use metaphors to make the abstract concrete.
- Use euphemism to make things more positive than they otherwise might be.
- Use the rule of three.
- Use structural parallelism.
- Use pronouns with care to foreground or hide agency, and to include or distance the speaker and the audience.
Rhetoric: The Language of Persuasion

“As Governor, I’ll make growing our economy, bringing spending into line and improving education my top priorities. I’ll work with labor, industry, government, and educators to strengthen and build new industries, create more high-paying jobs, and keep our children and grandchildren here at home. Together, I’m convinced we can create an economy every bit as strong as the Packers offensive line!” – Jim Doyle

Rhetoric: The Language of Persuasion

“Taxes: No tax increase! Taxes are a major roadblock for the state’s economic success, and that’s why Scott McCallum is fighting to lower the tax burden on Wisconsin’s hard-working families.”
– Scott McCallum for Governor 2002 website

The Rule of Three

“As a parent of three children, Scott McCallum’s education reforms are rooted in the principle that parents know best how to educate their children. Government’s role is to provide parents with the tools, choices and the foundation for providing their children with a world-class education.”
– Scott McCallum for Governor 2002 website
The Rule of Three

➢ “We have to work to really make sure we restore values to Wisconsin government,” he said. “Our campaign is going to be about the fundamental issues.”
➢ Doyle said producing better-paying jobs, improving education and cutting health care costs are his main concerns
➢ Eau-Claire Leader-Telegram

Use Pronouns with Care

➢ Compare the use of pronouns by Jim Doyle and Scott McCallum in extracts from these two speeches:

- *My Vision for Wisconsin* by Jim Doyle
- *Build Wisconsin* by Scott McCallum

Doonesbury on Bushisms
Doonesbury on Bushisms

“After all, Europe is America's closest ally.”

“Pea porridge gray, we'll eat it up, and then we'll rape and burn the全身 close to death.”

— Sept. 17, 2004

“September 11, 2001. I was at the scene of the crime. No, sir, it’s a day I will never forget.”

— Sept. 11, 2001

“Truth is, why I want to Congress and September 11th, I want my freedom and my right to bear arms and keep parts.”

— Sept. 11, 2004

“OUr enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we, they never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we.”

— Aug. 30, 2004

“Send us shopping, then we'll send our messages.”

— Dec. 31, 2004
Doonesbury on Bushisms

“...we are not just a shape or form created, a human being, pay God.”
— Jan 11, 2005

Politics is not just institutions …

Politics happens on the streets.
What was the Orange Revolution?

- The Orange Revolution was a movement of Ukrainian citizens that began on election day Sunday, November 21, 2004, and arose in protest against disreputable campaign tactics and election fraud by the administration presidential candidate. The “orange” in the title comes from the orange that was Viktor Yushchenko’s campaign color.
- An election day rally of many thousands of Yushchenko’s supporters grew in the following days to a rally of hundreds of thousands or even millions of people, with some people camping out along the central street in the city.
- The end date for the Orange Revolution was December 26, 2004. On that day Ukrainians went back to the election booths and a majority of them again voted for opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, this time successfully voting him into office.

The Language of Ukrainian Politics

- The Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” had its own theme song: 
  - Разом нас багато (Razom Nas Bahato = “Together we are many”)

What features of the language of politics can you identify in “Razom Nas Bahato”?

Together We Are Many!

- Together we are many
  - We cannot be defeated.
- Falsifications. No!
  - Machinations. No!
  - Prison rules. No!
  - No to lies!
  - Yushchenko. Yes!
  - Is our President. Yes! Yes! Yes!
- We aren’t beasts of burden.
  - We aren’t goats.
  - We are Ukraine’s sons and daughters
  - It’s now or never
  - Enough of waiting
- Together we are many
  - Together we cannot be defeated.