

Discursive definition of the U.S.-Russian ‘reset’ in the messages of Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev in 2008-12

One of the aims of the present project is to develop a discourse analytic method for analyzing political texts. This method blends an influential hegemony theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (predominantly discussed in their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* as well as in other related works) and linguistic methods used in Critical Discourse Analysis: analysis of conceptual metaphors and analysis of assumptions as proposed by Norman Fairclough (2003). As conceived, this method should allow for deeper understanding of linguistic message, diminishing subjectivity in interpretation, and bringing an influential political theory to work in the linguistic research.

To see how the proposed method can be applied, this project analyzes the messages of Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev delivered in 2008-12 with a special focus on the term ‘reset’. While the U.S.-Russian ‘reset’ is generally conceived as an improvement in the U.S.-Russian relations, the term has never been clearly defined and thus met differing interpretations in Washington and Moscow. Roughly, the results of the analysis show that for Obama the U.S.-Russian ‘reset’ is mainly about security, whereas for Medvedev it is largely about respect.

Literature

Fairclough, Norman. 2003. *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. New York: Routledge.

Laclau, Ernesto. Mouffe, Chantal. 2001. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. New York: Verso.