

A Discoursal Analysis of Obama's First Acceptance Speech (2008)

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Abstract

Generally speaking, the language of political discourse is a complex issue which includes many strategies of language use to influence the receiver toward a desired attitude or thought. The use of language strategies differs depending on the aim and conviction of the speaker.

Though the terms *text*, *context* and *discourse* have been used ambiguously by different writers, each term has its own defining identity and principle which distinguishes it from the other related terms. The present paper, in its first section, presents a full exposition on each of the above three terms in addition to giving an explicit definition for the term *discourse analysis* in its broadest sense.

There has been another ambiguity which exists between the terms *political discourse* and *political discourse analysis*; this ambiguity is solved in the second section of this paper.

The paper mainly aims at making a discourse analysis of President Obama's acceptance speech which he has delivered in 2008 after his nomination for the presidency of the United States of America. Section three of this paper has been devoted for the analysis. Of all the American presidents, Obama's speech has been selected for analysis because he is well known for his rhetorical skills. The BBC journalist Stephanie Holmes

(2008), for instance, pinpoints Obama's "ability to captivate and inspire audiences with his powerful speeches". In addition, Ekaterina Haskins, professor of rhetoric at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, says, "I believe Barack Obama embodies, more than any other politician, the ideals of American eloquence,"(cited in Holmes (2008). Moreover, his acceptance speech in 2008 has been selected for analysis to find out the linguistic strategies which he resorted to in convincing the people of his fitness for the presidency.

After the analysis comes a number of conclusions which the paper has come to after the analysis.

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Section One

Text, Context, Discourse and Discourse Analysis

The terms *text* and *discourse* have been used ambiguously. Different researchers provide different definitions of the two terms. It might be said that, in everyday popular use the term *text* is restricted to written language, while *discourse* is restricted to spoken language. However, modern linguistics has introduced a concept of *text* that includes every type of utterance. Thus, a text may be a magazine article, a television interview, a conversation or a cooking recipe, just to give a few examples (Alba-Juez , 2009: 6).

According to De Beaugrande and Dressler ((1981) cited in (Alba-Juez, 2009: 7-8)), text is a *communicative event* that must satisfy the following seven criteria:

1. **Cohesion**, which is concerned with the relationship between text and syntax. It is related to certain phenomena such as conjunction, ellipsis, anaphora, cataphora, recurrence, etc. which are basics for cohesion.
2. **Coherence**, which is concerned with the meaning of the text. Here, it is possible to refer to elements of knowledge or to cognitive structures that do not have a linguistic realization but are implied by the language used, and thus influence the reception of the message by the interlocutor.
3. **Intentionality**, which is concerned with the attitude and purpose of the speaker or writer.
4. **Acceptability**, which concerns the preparation of the hearer or reader to assess the relevance or usefulness of a given text.
5. **Informativity**, which refers to the quantity and quality of news or expected information.
6. **Situationality**, which refers to the fact that the situation in which the text is produced plays a crucial role in the production and reception of the message.
7. **Intertextuality**, which refers to two main facts: (a) a text is always related to some preceding or simultaneous discourse; and (b) texts are always linked and grouped in particular text varieties or genres (e.g.: narrative, argumentative, descriptive, etc.) by formal criteria.

It is also believed that text is everything that is meaningful in a particular situation: "By text, then, we understand a continuous process of semantic choice" (Halliday, 1978:137). In the purely text linguistic approaches (such as the cognitive theories of text) texts are viewed as a sort of explicit phenomena of cognitive processes and the context plays a subordinate role (Ibid). Levinson (1983: 13) restricts context to the basic parameters of the context of utterance which include participants' identity, role, location, assumptions about knowledge, etc.

Almost all the approaches of discourse analysis view text and context as the two kinds of information that contribute to the communicative content of an utterance. The text, in the one hand, is viewed as the linguistic

material (e.g. what is said, assuming a verbal channel). Context, on the other hand, is viewed to refer to the environment in which sayings (or other linguistic productions) occur. Concerning utterances, then, text is the linguistic content (the stable semantic meaning of words, expressions, and sentences) but not the inferences available to hearers depending upon the contexts in which words, expressions, and sentences are used. Accordingly, context is a world filled with people producing utterances: people who have social, cultural, and personal identities, knowledge, beliefs, goals and who interact with one another in various socially and culturally defined situations. The job of discourse analysis is to study both text and context (Schiffrin, 1994: 363).

Discourse is a broad term and it has many definitions integrating wide aspects of meanings ranging from linguistics, through sociology, philosophy and other disciplines. *Discourse* refers to language in use, as a process which is socially situated. Thus, we see that the terms *context* and *discourse* are sometimes used to mean the same. Discourse analysis is a process that can help to explain the relationship between what we say and what we mean and understand in a particular context (Paltridge, 2000: 3). The analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs (Brown & Yule, 1983: 1).

Slembrouck (2005:619) provides a broad definition for the term *discourse analysis*. According to him, discourse analysis refers to the linguistic analysis of 'naturally occurring connected speech or written discourse. It is an attempt to study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study 'larger linguistic units', such as conversational exchanges or written texts. It follows that discourse analysis is also concerned with 'language use in social contexts', and in particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers (Ibid).

An important characteristic of discourse studies is that they are basically multidisciplinary. Therefore, they cross the linguistic border into varied domains (poetics, semiotics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, and communication research). Because of the multi-faceted nature of discourse analysis, it is important for these to be integrated ((van Dijk, 2002: 10) cited in (Alba-Juez, 2009: 10)).

According to Adegbite (2000:63), the participants in a discourse do not rely only on their knowledge of language system in their interaction but

also need a combination of the knowledge of language system and the knowledge of the factors of situation in which communication takes place. This implies that apart from the verbal context, there are other contexts, which dictate the form and guide the use of an utterance.

Thus, when analyzing discourse, researchers are not only concerned with purely linguistic facts. They need to pay equal or more attention to language use in relation to social, political and cultural aspects. For this reason, discourse is not only within the interests of linguists but a field that is also studied by communication scientists, literary critics, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, social psychologists, political scientists, and many others (Johnstone, 2008: 10).

As noted above, not all researchers use and believe in the same definition of *text* and *discourse*. In the present paper, the general definition of discourse analysis, as **the study of language in use**, is adopted and Schiffrin's (1994) idea, of including both *text* and *context* as parts of *discourse*, is followed. Thus, the term *text* is considered in its narrow sense, not in the broad sense that could place it on a par with the term *discourse*.

Section Two

The Analysis of Political Discourse

For many decades, linguists have done extensive research on discourse analysis, particularly in the field of political discourse. Politicians design their discourse as directed to a heterogeneous audience consisting of three different kinds of interlocutors as follows:

1. **The pro-addressee:** He is the partisan who adheres to the ideals and principles of the party and who will vote for the candidate blindfold irrespective of their past actions or promises because they identify with the candidate or the party
2. **The counter-addressee:** He is the supporter of the opponent. The speaker's words or proposals will always draw vehement criticism from the counter-addressee
3. **The para-addressee:** He is the undecided voter who has not been convinced by either candidate in an election and remains irresolute until the last day.

(Raiter, 1999: 70)

Concerning the participants in the political discourse, it is possible to say that since legal, medical, and educational discourse include the next

participants, respectively, lawyers and defendants, doctors and patients, and teachers and students. So does a political discourse. This means that political activity requires the intervention of the following groups: citizens and voters, people as members of pressure and issue groups, demonstrators and dissidents, and so on. These groups participate in the operation of politics. Thus, they take part in political discourse. The point that is worth making is that relating politics and consequently political discourse to the public sphere makes the appearance of other participants possible (Van Dijk, 1997: 12).

A basic characteristic of political discourse is that it is produced by politicians. This obligatorily excludes those discourse genres restricted to the boundaries of the field of politics. Given the fact that political discourse is produced by a politician, it must be produced in an institution. Thus, political discourse is an institutional discourse. Thus, for a discourse to be political, it must be uttered or written by a politician in an institutional setting (Van Dijk, 2001: 5).

A final characteristic of political discourse lies in the idea that it is a class of genres defined by the domain of politics. This signifies that government deliberations, parliamentary debates, party programs, and presidential speeches are genres of political discourse. Defining the genres of political discourse rests upon context, the kind of profession the political speaker is occupying, the institution where the discourse is communicated, the result the political discourse intends to achieve, and finally the consequences of the political discourse: laws legislated, policies decided, or laws reviewed (Ibid).

The major point in the issue of the analysis of political discourse is that such an analysis should not merely be a contribution to discourse studies, but also to politics. This means that political discourse analysis should be able to answer genuine and relevant political questions and deal with issues that are discussed in political science. It goes beyond dispute that the analysis of political discourse is relevant for the new cross-discipline of discourse studies. Indeed, most scholars doing political discourse analysis are linguists and discourse analysts. However, considering the use or application of discourse approaches in political science, it is one of the few social sciences that so far have barely undergone the study of text and talk (Van Dijk, 1997: 11-12).

Section Three

The Analysis

The acceptance speech of President Barack Obama can be divided into the following parts:

1. The Introduction of the Speech (Paragraphs 1-4):

It is clear that President Obama's introduction is directed to both the pro-addressee and the counter-addressee. The introduction can be divided into three parts. In the first part, Obama addresses his pro-addressees when he accepts their nomination saying:

To Chairman Dean and my great friend Dick Durbin; and to all my fellow citizens of this great nation;

With profound gratitude and great humility, I accept your nomination for the presidency of the United States.

(<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=78284.#ixzz1sPsf9SFN>)

However, through addressing the multitudes represented by the phrase *all my fellow citizens of this great nation*, Obama's form of address can be perceived as more inclusive. It includes all nationalities and ethnicities and applies a more citizen-centered attitude. This style of Obama indicates that citizenry is the cornerstones of the American republic, and that the whole system is based on a grass root diplomacy.

In the second part, he addresses his counter-addressees represented by the other candidates who accompanied him in his election campaign saying:

Let me express my thanks to the historic slate of candidates who accompanied me on this journey, and especially the one who traveled the farthest... Hillary Rodham Clinton. To President Clinton... to Ted Kennedy, who embodies the spirit of service....(Ibid)

In the third part, he goes back to address his pro-addressees; this time represented by his wife and two daughters to express his love to them and tell them that he is proud of them saying:

To the love of my life, our next First Lady, Michelle Obama, and to Sasha and Malia – I love you so much, and I'm so proud of all of you (Ibid).

It is clear that the para-addressee is absent and not given any attention in the starting points of the speech.

2. His Life Story as a Normal American Citizen (Paragraphs 5-7):

In this part, Obama reminds the audience of his life story which he has already told four years earlier. He tells a brief summary of his story because the story hasn't been told for its own sake but for particular significance which is discussed in the conclusions.

3. Acknowledging the Economic Crisis (8-14):

This part starts with an attempt to raise the audience enthusiasm and rage against Bush's policies and government. Obama starts this part with severe criticism using effective and provocative words and phrases such as: *those defining moments, our nation is at war, our economy is in turmoil, the American promise has been threatened, more Americans are out of work and more are working harder for less, more are watching your home values plummet* and the like. Then he holds Bush the responsibility of the fall of the economic situation by mentioning his name immediately after describing the current economic situation saying:

*We meet at one of those **defining moments** – a moment when **our nation is at war, our economy is in turmoil, and the American promise has been threatened** once more.*

*Tonight, **more Americans are out of work and more are working harder for less.** More of you have lost your homes and even **more are watching your home values plummet.** More of you have cars you can't afford to drive, credit card bills you can't afford to pay, and tuition that's beyond your reach.*

***These challenges** are not all of government's making. But the failure to respond is a direct result of a broken politics in Washington **and the failed policies of George W. Bush**(Ibid).*

Then, in the same part, Obama shifts to another style, rather than the provocative expressions, to raise the Americans anger against the republicans. He starts giving examples of disastrous stories happened in America because of the critical economic situation:

America, we are better than these last eight years. We are a better country than this.

This country is more decent than one where a woman in Ohio, on the brink of retirement, finds herself one illness away from disaster after a lifetime of hard work.

This country is more generous than one where a man in Indiana has to pack up the equipment he's worked on for twenty years and watch it shipped off to China, and then chokes up as he explains how he felt like a failure when he went home to tell his family the news.

We are more compassionate than a government that lets veterans sleep on our streets and families slide into poverty; that sits on its hands while a major American city drowns before our eyes(Ibid).

4. An Attack against the Republicans (Paragraphs 15-33):

In the starting point of this part, Obama directs his words to the pro-addressee, counter-addressee and para-addressee:

Tonight, I say to the American people, to Democrats and Republicans and Independents across this great land – enough! This moment – this election – is our chance to keep, in the 21st century...(Ibid).

However, his attack is directed against the Republicans represented by John McCain, the Republican presidential nominee in the 2008 United States election, and George Bush, the former president of the United States. For this purpose, Obama has manipulated a highly provocative language. He has used four strategies:

A. Stating the aspects of failure for McCain using assertive speech acts. According to Mbisike (2008: 65), issuing an assertive speech act, the speaker believes the expressed proposition and also wants the hearer to

believe it too. Depending mainly on assertive speech acts, Obama has stated some issues of the misfortune that the Republicans have brought to the United States as shown in the following extract:

It's not because John McCain doesn't care. It's because John McCain doesn't get it. For over two decades, he's subscribed to that old, discredited Republican philosophy – give more and more to those with the most and hope that prosperity trickles down to everyone else. In Washington, they call this the Ownership Society (Ibid).

B. Quoting McCain's statements and the use of the indirect speech as shown in the following extract from the same part:

*The truth is, on issue.... He said that our economy has made "**great progress**" under this President. He said that the fundamentals of the economy are strong. And when one of his chief advisors – the man who wrote his economic plan – was talking about the anxiety Americans are feeling, he said that we were just suffering from a "**mental recession**," and that we've become, and I quote, "**a nation of**"(Ibid).*

C. Using rhetorical questions as shown in the following extract:

*But the record's clear: John McCain.... Senator McCain likes to talk about judgment, but really, **what does it say about your judgment when you think George Bush has been right more than ninety percent of the time?** I don't know about you, but I'm not ready to take a ten percent chance on change.*

*Now, I don't believe that Senator McCain doesn't care what's going on in the lives of Americans. I just think he doesn't know. **Why else would he define middle-class as someone making under five million dollars a year? How else could he propose hundreds of billions in tax breaks for big corporations and oil companies but not one penny of tax relief to more than one hundred million Americans? How else could he offer a health care plan that would actually tax people's benefits, or an education plan that would do nothing to help families pay for college, or a plan that would privatize Social Security and gamble your retirement?** (Ibid)*

Obama has used the rhetorical question four times in this part as a way of criticizing McCain's policy. The rhetorical question, according to Verderber et al (2012: 145), seeks a mental rather than a direct verbal response.

D. The use of calculations to show how he intends to make changes and reforms in the economic situation and to show the contrast between his policy and those of Bush and McCain:

Well it's time for them to own their failure. It's time for us to change America.

You see, we Democrats have a very different measure of what constitutes progress in this country.

We measure progress by how many people can find a job that pays the mortgage; whether.... We measure progress in the 23 million new jobs that were created when Bill Clinton was President – when the average American family saw its income go up \$7,500 instead of down \$2,000 like it has under George Bush.

We measure the strength of our economy not by the number of billionaires we have or the profits of the Fortune 500, but by whether someone with a good idea can take a risk and start a new business, or whether the waitress who lives on tips can take a day off to look after a sick kid without losing her job – an economy that honors the dignity of work (Ibid).

Obama ends this part by choosing careful and rather clever examples of the struggling American people that need to live better lives than those which the Republican government offered for them. He chooses members of his family, in addition to himself, as example of such people:

*Because in the faces of those young veterans ..., I see **my grandfather**, who signed up after Pearl Harbor... and was rewarded by a grateful nation with the chance to go to college on the GI Bill.*

*In the face of that young student who sleeps just three hours before working the night shift, **I think about my mom**, who*

raised my sister and me on her own while she worked and earned her degree....

*When I listen to another worker tell me that his factory has shut down, I remember all those men and women on the South Side of Chicago **who I stood by** and fought for two decades ago after the local steel plant closed.*

*And when I hear a woman talk about the difficulties of starting her own business, I think about **my grandmother**, who worked her way up from the secretarial pool to middle-management.... She's the one who taught me about hard work....*

*I don't know what kind of lives John McCain thinks that celebrities lead, but **this has been mine. These are my heroes....** And it is on their behalf that I intend to win this election and keep our promise alive as President of the United States (Ibid).*

5. Promises (Paragraphs 34-72):

In this part, Obama has made 46 promises all of which are issued indirectly. The most important significance of the promise is commitment. The spirit of commitment in any promise is adopted by the subject of the sentence by which the promise is issued. The subjects of the 46 promises are presented in the following table:

	The agent (subject) of the promise	Frequency of occurrence
1.	I	24
2.	We	7
3.	Non-finite sentence without subject	6
4.	Personified noun phrases	3
5.	It (referring to the government)	3
6.	The government	2
7.	You	1

Table (1): The Subjects of the Promises

The table above shows clearly that the pronoun *I* has the highest frequency of occurrence among the other subjects. Then comes the pronoun *we* which has the second rank in the frequency of occurrence. The following extract is an example which shows the use of the two pronouns above:

And I will not settle for an America where some kids don't have that chance. I'll invest in early childhood education. I'll recruit an army of new teachers, and pay them higher salaries and give them more support. And in exchange, I'll ask for higher standards and more accountability. And we will keep our promise to every young American – if you commit to serving your community or your country, we will make sure you can afford a college education.

We may not agree on abortion, but surely we can agree on reducing the number This too is part of America's promise – the promise of a democracy where we can find the strength and grace to bridge divides and unite in common effort.

(Ibid)

Other forms of promises which have occurred frequently are represented by the use of the non-finite verb phrases (without subject) preceded by the expression *Now is the time*.

Now is the time to finally meet our moral obligation to provide every child a world-class education, because it will take nothing less to compete in the global economy....

Now is the time to finally keep the promise of affordable, accessible health care for every single American....

Now is the time to help families with paid sick days and better family leave, because nobody in America should have to choose between keeping their jobs and caring for a sick child or ailing parent....

Now is the time to change our bankruptcy laws, so that your pensions are protected ahead of CEO bonuses....

And now is the time to keep the promise of equal pay for an equal day's work, because I want my daughters to have exactly the same opportunities as your sons (Ibid).

Three of the promises have contained subjects in the form of personified noun phrases; the first subject is *the market*, the second is *business* and the third is *a tax code*. The following extracts contain the three subjects referred to above:

*It's a promise that says **the market** should reward drive and innovation and generate growth, but that **businesses** should live up to their responsibilities....*

*Change means **a tax code** that doesn't reward the lobbyists who wrote it, but the American workers and small businesses who deserve it (Ibid).*

Obama has addressed the para-addressee (the undecided voter) five times in his promises when he has used the expression *government* five times (in three of them the pronoun *it* has been used referring to the government) as shown in the following extract:

*Ours is a promise that says **government** cannot solve all our problems, but what **it** should do is that which we cannot do for ourselves – protect us from harm and provide every child a decent education; keep our water clean and our toys safe....*

*Our **government** should work for us, not against us. **It** should help us, not hurt us. **It** should ensure opportunity not just for those with the most money and influence....*

(Ibid)

The pronoun *you* has been used only once as a subject of a promise and it doesn't have any significance.

6. Confirming the Promises (Paragraphs 73-89):

After presenting his promising plans for the future, Obama starts confirming his plans and promises. He does that depending on two strategies:

- A. He tries to gain their trust of his future plans and promises saying that his speech is not just happy talk and his plans do not represent Trojan Horse. He uses effective expressions like *happy talk* and *Trojan Horse* as a means to show that he has solid determination to make dramatic changes in the Americans lives. He tries to convince them that his ideas are fresh and workable. Otherwise, he wouldn't have stood in front of them today and he wouldn't have deserved to be nominated for the presidency of the United States. See the following extract:

I know there are those who dismiss such beliefs as happy talk. They claim that our insistence on something larger, something firmer and more honest in our public life is just a Trojan Horse for higher taxes and the abandonment of traditional values. And that's to be expected. Because if you don't have any fresh ideas, then you use stale tactics to scare the voters....

I get it. I realize that I am not the likeliest candidate for this office. I don't fit the typical pedigree, and I haven't spent my career in the halls of Washington.

But I stand before you tonight because all across America something is stirring (Ibid).

- B. Though there is no explicit reference to the counter-addressees, it is clear that Obama directs this part mainly to the audience in general and to the counter-addressees in particular because the counter-addressee is the one who is supposed to accuse Obama that his plans and promises represent happy talk. After trying to win their trust, he tells them that he needs them on his side to make the change which he cannot do without their support and help. See the following extract:

What the nay-sayers don't understand is that this election has never been about me. It's been about you.

For eighteen long months, you have stood up, one by one, and said enough to the politics of the past.... You have shown what history teaches us – that at defining moments like this one, the change we need doesn't come from Washington. Change comes to Washington. Change happens because the American people demand it – because they rise up and insist on new ideas and new leadership, a new politics for a new time (Ibid).

Obama goes on convincing the audience to make the change (to shift from a Republican government to a Democratic one) till he frankly provokes them not to turn back to the old policies as shown in the following extract:

America, we cannot turn back. Not with so much work to be done. Not with so many children to educate, and so many veterans to care for. Not with an economy to fix and cities to rebuild and farms to save. Not with so many families to protect and so many lives to mend. America, we cannot turn back (Ibid).

Obama, in this part in particular, has used a sort of effective words and expressions to support his ideas. For example he says, “*Our universities and our culture are the envy of the world....*”; he could have said that the American universities and culture are the best in the world. Another example is when he says, “*At this moment, in this election, we must pledge once more to march into the future. Let us keep that promise ... and in the words of Scripture hold firmly, without wavering, to the hope that we confess.*” He even quotes a young preacher from Georgia saying:

And it is that promise that forty five years ago today, brought Americans from every corner of this land to stand together on a Mall in Washington, before Lincoln's Memorial, and hear a young preacher from Georgia speak of his dream

"We cannot walk alone," the preacher cried. "And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back"(Ibid).

7. The Concluding part (paragraph 90):

This part consists of one statement in which the word *God* has been mentioned twice; once for the sake of the audience and another time for the sake of the United States as shown below:

*Thank you, **God** Bless you, and **God** Bless the United States of America.*

(Ibid)

Together with the quotation of the preacher, the conclusion gives us a hint that Obama tries to appear as a religious kind of person. Moreover, in his conclusion, he tries to be inclusive in his focus on the audience through the use of the pronoun *you* and the phrase *the United States of America*

Section Four

Conclusions

1. In the introduction, Obama has mainly directed his speech to both the pro-addressees and the counter-addressees neglecting the para-addressee. It seems that he wanted to thank his supporters by mentioning them first and expressing his gratitude for them as if he is trying to reward them in a way for supporting him. Moreover, it seems that he has also tried to win the acceptance of the counter-addressees by telling them how much he admires what they have done for the sake of the prosperity of the United States. The absence of the para-addressee shows that Obama is rather indifferent of such indecisive people who have neither supported nor opposed his nomination. This shows that both the pro-addressee and the counter-addressee form great issues for Obama because the former represent his power of success and the latter represent the obstacle of his success. They represent two opposite forces that should be carefully dealt with.

However, Obama doesn't want to seem biased to a particular group rather than the other. Thus, he mentions the phrase ***all my fellow citizens of this great nation*** as a way to tell the whole Americans that he is part of them and he knows how they think and what they want.

2. In the second part of the speech, Obama summarizes his life story in few lines. The majority of the Americans know the details of the story and Obama knows that. Thus, the story has significance. The significance of the story is that Obama wants to say that he is a typical American family man who seeks to achieve the dreams of his family that represents a typical American family. Again, he wants to tell the audience that he is close to the American citizens and knows exactly what they want.

3. The third part of the speech, which addresses the economic crisis, starts with certain provocative expressions. Obama uses such a linguistic means to raise the Americans exasperation against the Republicans in general represented by the vice president George Bush. Obama links these provocative expressions with the vice Republican president to send an indirect message that it is time to try the Democrats Party represented by Obama himself.

In addition to the provocative expressions, Obama uses the narrative style to raise the Americans exasperation against the Republicans. He tells the audience example stories of real Americans who have suffered because of the bad economic situation resulted from the bad policies of the Republicans.

4. Depending mainly on the use of assertive speech acts, Obama, in the third part of his speech, has launched an attack against his rivals (the Republicans). This indicates two things: the first is that Obama is a man who knows what he talks about, and the second is that Obama has educated himself well concerning his rival's mistakes in order to use them as powerful weapon in his attack.

The second strategy that Obama has used in his attack in this part is the direct and indirect report of McCain's statements. This strategy is a powerful and convincing one since it is impossible for a presidential candidate to tell lies about others. There is no doubt that the audience has interacted with Obama's words for he has been careful to choose a strategy that makes his words beyond controversy.

The third strategy that Obama has used, the rhetorical question, indicates that he is trying to address the minds of the audience so as for them to realize the essence of the message that Obama is trying to deliver about the Republicans. He definitely doesn't seek a verbal response, but the audience's profound conviction that the Republicans need to be away from the government this time as much as possible.

In addition to the direct and indirect report, Obama has used another powerful strategy which no one can question its objectivity and validity; the use of reliable calculations. In this way, Obama is gaining the trust and acceptance of the audience step by step. He works gradually and carefully to affect the minds of the audience through the use of such objective strategies that shows the contrast between his plans and the limited achievements of the former government.

At the end of this part, Obama starts to affect another sensitive part of humanity in the audience; the spirit of sympathy. He chooses members of his family and himself as examples of brave struggling Americans to tell the people that he has descended from a struggling family and he is a struggling man who always makes changes towards the better, whether for himself or for the others.

5. It is natural for a presidential acceptance speech to be loaded with promises in order for the nominee to show the audience that he deserves to be a presidential candidate. This is the case with Obama's first acceptance speech. All the promises have been issued indirectly to gain eloquence of expression and to make the speech more effective. In addition to eloquence, the speech shows the spirit of commitment indicated by the speech acts of promises.

Commitment has also been indicated by the high frequency of occurrence of the pronouns *I* and *we* as subjects for the promises. This shows that the speaker has committed himself to do something through the direct reference to himself and to his party represented by the heavy use of *I* and *we*. Moreover, there is an indication of self-confidence from the part of the speaker in that he commits himself directly to what he has promised to do.

Another indication of commitment and self-confidence is the use of non-finite verb phrases (without subject) preceded by the expression *Now is the time*. This expression has the significance that now is time to change from the Republicans to the Democrats because the presidency before Obama was for the Republicans for two successive eras. Obama seems very confident that now the Americans need to make some radical changes in their choices. Although the subject of these non-finite phrases is absent, there is a clear indication that Obama is referring to himself and it is impossible that he has made all this propaganda for someone else outside the domain of his party.

The strongest indication of self-confidence comes by Obama's promise in which he says. "That's the promise we need to keep. That's the change we need right now. So let me spell out exactly what that change would mean **if I am President.**" The use of the conditional subordinate conjunction *if* with simple present tense has a particular significance. According to Quirk et al (1985: 1008), the simple present tense in *if* clauses "refers to an assumed future actual situation." This means that Obama believes that his assumed future presidency is an actual inevitable situation which is going to occur soon.

The three noun phrases *the market*, *business* and *a tax code* have been personified as subjects for three of Obama's promises. The use of personification as a part of figurative language aims to help the listener to visualize what is meant by a phrase or expression. Politicians use language to persuade people that their thoughts, aims and ideas are equitable and to make their point vivid to the people. The speaker needs to use various language tools in order to make the message persuasive and comprehensible to the listener. Politicians seek to comply with the emotions, desires and needs of the audience. The use of personification is one of the tools for persuasion and an instrument for propaganda in political rhetorical language.

Using the expression *government* five times as the subject of five indirect promises, Obama has cleverly directed the para-addressee (the undecided voter) to win that voter and turn him/her into a pro-addressee. Obama has promised the audience of the form of government he intends to constitute; a government that solves all their problems, protect them from harm, provide each child a decent education, keep their water clean and their toys safe, etc. Obama has neither disparaged the Republicans nor praised the Democrats. He has only promised them of a government that he looks forward to. This is an indirect way to promise them of an ambitious Democrat government.

6. After promising the audience, Obama has devoted a considerable part of his speech (17 paragraphs) to confirm the promises. In this part, he has tried to relieve himself of the burden which he has put on himself by the promises. He has done that through involving the Americans in the achievement of a better American future. To be more effective, Obama resorts to certain effective words and expressions to gain the audience interest. His language is somehow

close to the poetic language. In addition to this style, Obama tries to appear as a man who is committed to God and his religion; he quotes a preacher and, in the conclusion, he prays God twice to bless the audience and the United States of America. The question which is raised in such a case is whether he is really a man who is committed to God and religion. The best answer here is taken from the Holy Quran in the Star verse where our Almighty God says, “*Do not pretend to purity; He knows best those who guard themselves against evil,*” God Almighty has spoken the truth.

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تحليل نصي لخطاب الرئيس اوباما عند قبوله لترشيح الرئاسة في عام ٢٠٠٨

مقدم من قبل

هدى هادي خليل

مدرس

ماجستير في اللغة الانكليزية وعلم اللغة

جامعة بغداد / كلية التربية للبنات / قسم اللغة الانكليزية

الخلاصة

تعتبر لغة النص السياسي بصورة عامة موضوع معقد ويتضمن العديد من الاستراتيجيات لأعمال اللغة للتأثير على المتلقي وأقناعه بوجهة نظر او فكرة معينة. ويختلف استعمال تلك الاستراتيجيات اللغوية اعتمادا على اهداف وقناعات المتحدث.

بالرغم من استعمال مصطلحات النص و السياق و الخطاب بطريقة غير واضحة من قبل العديد من الكتاب، غير ان كل واحد من هذه المصطلحات له هويته المحددة ومبادئه التي تميزه عن بقية المصطلحات المناظرة. يقدم البحث الحالي في جزئه الاول عرضا شاملا للمصطلحات الثلاثة الانفة الذكر بالاضافة الى تقديم تعريف واضح لمصطلح تحليل الخطاب بمنظوره الشامل. ان الفرق بين مصطلحي الخطاب السياسي وتحليل الخطاب السياسي غير واضح. يقدم البحث الحالي الحل لهذه المشكلة في جزئه الثاني.

يهدف البحث الحالي بالدرجة الاساس الى تقديم تحليل مفصل لخطاب باراك اوباما عند قبوله للترشيح كرئيس للولايات المتحدة الامريكية في عام ٢٠٠٨. وقد كُرسَ الجزء الثالث من البحث لهذا الغرض. تم اختيار الرئيس اوباما لكونه معروف بمهاراته الخطابية بحيث اشارت الصحفية المعروفة ستيفاني هولمز العاملة في الوكالة الاخبارية BBC اشارت الى قدرة اوباما على اسر والهام الجمهور بخطاباته المؤثرة. كما ان كاترينا هاسكنز التي تعمل كاستاذة لعلم البلاغة في مؤسسة نسيلاير للعلوم التطبيقية صرحت بانها تعتقد ان باراك اوباما يعتنق مثاليات الفصاحة الامريكية اكثر من اي سياسي امريكي اخر. كما ان خطاب قبول الترشيح الذي القاه في عام ٢٠٠٨ قد تم اختياره للتحليل للتعرف على الاستراتيجيات اللغوية التي يلجأ اليها اوباما لأقناع الناس بمدى ملائمتها لمنصب الرئاسة.

ينتهي البحث بعدد من النتائج التي تم التوصل اليها بعد تحليلي الخطاب.