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هدى ياسين عبد الواحد

Department of English Cihan University-Erbil

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Using Halliday's and Hasan's Cohesion Framework to Analyze Trump's Speeches

Huda Yaseen Abdulwahid

Department of English

Cihan University-Erbil

Huda.yaseen@cihanuniversity.edu.iq

Abstract

This study is designed to explore the main linguistic features of the political speeches of the current president of the United States; Donald Trump. It aims to uncover the main cohesive devices used in his discourses that he delivered in his visits to the Saudi Arabia and Jerusalem respectively. To this end, a sum of two speeches is downloaded from different web sites. The data were analyzed using Halliday and Hasan's (1967) framework of cohesion. The analysis has showed that Trump has used cohesive devices heavily in Jerusalem while he has used them a little in Saudia Arabia. It is hoped that this study will contribute to cross cultural understanding, multi modality, and critical discourse analysis.

Key words: Political speech, discourse analysis, cohesion, multimodality

استخدام الاطار التحليلي لهاليدي وحسن للتماسك لتحليل خطابات ترمب السياسية هدى ياسين عبد الواحد

الخلاصة

صمم هذا البحث لايجاد اهم الخواص اللغوية للخطابات السياسية للرئيس الامريكي الحالي دونالد تومب ويهدف الى الكشف عن اهم وسائل التماسك المستخدمة في خطاباته السياسية التي القاها في زيارته الى المملكة العربية السعودية واسرائيل على التوالي. لهذا السبب فقد تم تحميل هذين الخطابين من عدة مواقع الكترونية وتم تحليلهما باستخدام اطار هاليدي وحسن (1967) للتماسك. وقد بين التحليل بان الرئيس ترمب قد استخدم الكثير من وسائل التماسك في خطابه في اسرائيل مقارنة بكم الوسائل التي استخدمها في خطابه في امملكة العربية السعودية. ويأمل الباحث بان يسهم هذا البحث في فهم التواصل الثقافي وتحليل الخطاب النقدي.

الكلمات الدالة: الخطاب السياسي، تحليل الخطاب، التماسك، تعدد الوسائط.

1. Introduction

The present study is an attempt to explore the cohesive devices as salient linguistic features used by the president Donald Trump to come up with a more coherent speech. Generally speaking, the coming of a new regime into government brings with it mixed feelings of uncertainty in some quarters and hope of a tangible change which goes in the interest of the public (Adesanmi, p. 210, 2010). When the president Barak Obama came to office, the world has witnessed a list of positive dramatic fluctuations. Here are some of his achievements:

- 1- Rescued the country from the Great Recession, cutting the unemployment rate from 10% to 4.7% over six years
- 2 – Signed the Affordable Care Act which provided health insurance to over 50 million uninsured Americans
- 3 – Ended the war in Iraq
- 4 – Ordered for the capture and killing of Osama Bin Laden
- 5 – Passed the \$787 billion America Recovery and Reinvestment Act to spur economic growth during the Great Recession
- 6 – Supported the LGBT community’s fight for marriage equality
- 7 – Commuted the sentences of nearly 1200 drug offenders to reverse “unjust and outdated prison sentences”
- 8 – Saved the U.S. auto industry
- 9 – Helped put the U.S. on track for energy independence by 2020
- 10 – Began the drawdown of troops in Afghanistan
- 11 – Signed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals allowing as many as 10 million people living in the U.S. illegally to avoid deportation and receive work permits.

(<https://washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/januaryfebruary-2017/obamas-top-10-accomplishments-revisited/>)

The era of the president Donald Trump, however, is accompanied by a list of negative changes. He rushed to repeal and replace Obama’s signature healthcare legislation and this action featured as “a debacle”. He also signed an executive order to ban visitors from seven Muslim-majority countries. Besides, the fruit of his first visit to the middle East that is clearly symbolized in the Gulf crisis and the imposing of diplomatic and economic sanctions on Qatar. All the evidence of the past 100 days suggest that the future is profoundly unpredictable. (<https://washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/januaryfebruary-2017/obamas-top-10-accomplishments-revisited/>)

Examining the actions on the ground, we can notice these fluctuations are clearly seen in the language used by the president Trump. Gee (1999) says that politics is a part and parcel of using language. Furthermore, far from exonerating us from looking at the empirical details of language and social action and allowing us simply to pontificate, an interest in politics demands that we engage in the empirical details of language and interaction. Politics has its lifeblood in such details. It is there that social goods are created, sustained, distributed, and redistributed. It is there that people are harmed and helped. Chilton and Schaffner (2002) mention that political activity does not exist without the use of language and the doing of politics is constituted in language. The relation between language and politics stems from the fact that language can be thought of as a resource of which is drawn up on to achieve socio political goals (Ismail, 2012:22). Sanders and Maat (2006:24) say that discourse is more than a random set of utterances; it shows connectedness. A central objective of linguists working on the discourse level is to characterize this connectedness. Halliday and Hasan (1976:50) describe text connectedness in terms of reference, substitution, ellipses, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. Cohesion occurs when the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The following types of cohesive devices have been distinguished:

Reference: two linguistic elements are related to what they refer to

Substitution: a linguistic element is not repeated but replaced by a substitution item

Ellipses: one of the identical linguistic elements is omitted

Conjunction: a semantic relation is explicitly marked

Lexical cohesion: two elements share a lexical field (collocation)

While lexical cohesion is obviously achieved by the selection of vocabulary, the other types of cohesion are considered as grammatical cohesion. Dividing cohesive devices into two main categories, Halliday and Hasan's (1976) mention that "however luxuriant the grammatical cohesion displayed by any piece of discourse, it will not form a text unless this is matched by cohesive patterning of a lexical kind" (cited by Aghdam & Hadidi, 2010:12). Halliday and Hasasn (1976) model of lexical cohesion is based on a division of the various lexical cohesive devices into two main categories; reiteration and collocation.

Reiteration is a form of lexical cohesion which involves the repetition of a lexical item, at one end of a scale; and a number of things in between- the use of synonym or a near synonym, super ordinate (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:278). This means that the notion of reiteration is much broader than that of repetition (He, 2014). Repetition is implied in reiteration. It is a basic figure in every verbal communication. Representing in most cases intentional and manipulative reiterations of

words, phrases, sayings, or text messages, repetitions are irrevocable means of expression of a given public speech and discursive interchange (Lazarov & Zlateva, n.d.) Boček (2016) mentions that reiteration is realized when there can be seen some kind of repetition in the text which establishes the continuity of the text.

Collocation is achieved through the association created by habitually co-occurring lexical items (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). The items occur in similar environments because they describe things or happenings that occur in similar situations. For example, when one sees the noun music in a sentence, it is more probable that the verb to listen will also appear in the sentence.

2. Literature Review

Looking for the main cohesive devices is a subject that has been worked a lot by many researchers.

Al-Majidi (2010) has explored the salient cohesive devices of the political speeches of the ousted Arab presidents during the Arab Spring Revolution. She has analyzed seven political speeches; three by the Tunisian President Zain Al-Abideen Bin Ali; three by the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak; and one speech by the Libyan president Muammer Al-Gaddafi. She has found out that repetition has been observed at the three levels: morphological, word, and junk. Her study has also revealed that the two forms of repetition: word strings and parallel structures have been deliberately employed in these speeches to reinforce and achieve different political strategies and ideologies such as the strategy of threatening the civil protesters. On the other hand, the study has showed that some types of repetition used in these speeches especially the two types of morphological repetition; pattern and root repetition are pseudo repetition, since they have no function and they are not motivated. The second type of lexical cohesion has been introduced in terms of “lexical couplets”. Five lexical couplets are figured out in this study and reflect the sense of peach and liberty and the meaning of growth and safety. These senses portray a positive picture of presidents’ ego that introduces a contradictory image of the reality of their homelands. Besides, collocation as a type of lexical cohesion has been figured out, but it is idiosyncratic and cannot be predicted easily in terms of the meaning of the associated words.

Moreover, it is quite clear that not only politicians try to use cohesion to sell their ideas but also academic people tend to do so. Aghdam and Hadidi (2010) have explored and explained the occurrence of two types of lexical cohesive; synonymy and collocation evident generally in both academics and news genres in a comparative approach. The results show that in the discussion section of academic articles, synonyms is the

prominent cohesive device which manifests itself within a large number of cohesive chains. The analysis of news genre demonstrates that collocational bonds are the salient cohesive devices occurring in this genre. The striking presence of chain leaps across unrelated collocational words is an important finding. The frequency and percentage of synonymous words are higher than collocational words in academic articles. In the news genre, the frequency and percentage of collocational words are higher than the synonymous words.

Some other researchers have focused on only one cohesive device. Q.He (2014) has paid attention to the lexical repetition as a type of cohesion device used in the cohesion system of Systemic Functional Linguistics. He has focused on how lexical repetition has some implications for language teaching. His study explores the use of lexical repetition patterns in language teaching, finding it is instructive to apply lexical repetition patterns in the selection of new words in vocabulary teaching and in the summarization and comprehension of text in reading teaching.

Some other researchers have studied the effect of using cohesive devices on convincing the speech community of their goals. Prados & Peñulas (2012) have studied the cohesive devices used in three political texts- the Gettysburg address, I have a dream, and Obama's inaugural address and their potential persuasive function. They have first carried out an analysis of cohesion in these three masterpieces of political writing, applying their own model based on the combination and adaptation of those found in Halliday and Hasan's (1976) and Beaugrande and Dressler's (1981), in order to cover a wide range of devices and, at the same time, ameliorate some flaws ascribed by critics to Halliday and Hasan's (1976).

The results reveal that, although they share similarities, the texts also show differences in the cohesive devices employed. Then, they have suggested a new dimension for the analysis of cohesion: intertextual cohesion, a device to extend the scope of cohesion beyond the limits of the text. This tool has revealed that all three speeches can be recognized as examples of a common American rhetoric: the use of some of the same contents (i.e. repetition, synonymy, and more complex types of paraphrase) and some of the same structures (i.e. parallelism) demonstrate that politicians pass the torch to one another in their desire to uplift American people by believing they are a free nation and they should contribute with their work so that freedom survives and succeeds.

Some other researches have analyzed the speech of the Nigerian president to figure out the main cohesive devices used. Enyi & Chitulu

(2010) in their paper entitled “Texture and Textually in Political Discourse: A Study of Cohesive Devices in President Goodluck Jonathan’s Inaugural Address May 2011” have analyzed the lexical devices employed by the Nigeria’s president Goodluck Jonathan in crafting his May, 2011’s Presidential Inaugural Address (PIA). Their study has focused on the various lexical cohesive devices the president used to bring his message and intentions to the front court of the listeners’ and readers’ attention. They have figured out that the president made preponderant use of : lexical repetition, synonyms and near synonyms, superordinate/ hyponyms and the various shades of oppositeness of language use, in fleshing out the details of his text and making the text to say what it intends to deliver. It has been discovered that politicians have particular intentions and aims that are not far from convincing, conscientizing, and swaying their target audience to their side on various issues, subjects or particular demands. To achieve these, they use a properly crafted, well-articulated, tightly knit coherent body of discourse rich in cohesive ties and other linguistic elements that give their texts texture.

2-Analysis and Discussion

The analysis of these two speeches is carried out comparatively. By putting Trump’s speeches under scrutiny, the researcher can figure out the use of the following cohesive devices.

2.1 Reiteration

2.1.1 Repetition

Generally speaking, there are two kinds of repetition; total repetition and partial repetition. Total repetition includes the repetition of the same word exactly like general- general. Partial repetition includes the repetition of just the stem with different affixes like free-freedom. The researcher has seen them both in Trump’s speeches but in different ratio. In his speech in Jerusalem, the first paragraph has witnessed the use of “I” three times while in his speech in Saudi Arabia it has been used only twice. This is a reiterative device of repetition that brings about lexical cohesion in the text and expresses that Trump in Saudi Arabia has more authority than in Jerusalem.

Besides, he has mentioned “Thank you” four times in Jerusalem while just once in Saudi Arabia. This reiterative device of repetition in use is deployed to convey emphasis that he is happy and thankful to those who stand by him in his quest for leadership in the Middle East.

In addition, in his visit to Saudi Arabia, he has repeated partially the following words:

I am honored.....you greatly honor us.....that does honor to God

Blessings.....Blessed

Invest.....Investment

Strengthen.....strengthening

And repeated the following words totally:

Our....our

Security.....security

Spirit.....spirit

Friendship.....friendship

Partnership.....partnership

This reiterative device of repetition has created harmony among ideas expressed in his text either in successive or distant sentences.

In his speech delivered in Jerusalem, he has repeated partially the following words:

Pray.....prayed

Pledged.....pledge

Inspired.....inspiration

Free.....freedom

Child.....children

Peace.....peaceful

Hope.....hopeful

And repeated the following words totally:

Land....land

Spirit.....spirit

Overcome.....overcome

Oppression.....oppression

Story.....story

Hope.....hope

Faith....faith

Christians.....Christians

We can notice that Trump's speech in Jerusalem is mainly full of total repetition while the partial ones are limited. He depends on it as a cohesive device for achieving cohesion across the different parts of his text and for emphasizing his ideas while in his speech in Saudi Arabia he has not relied a lot on total repetition as if he wants to affirm that he is not in need of persuading anyone of his ideas.

٣, ١, ٢ **Synonymy**

Synonymy is a common lexical cohesive device in political speeches. Apparently, Trump's speeches are no exceptions. To meet this, germane examples need to be brought to the floor. Trump has described America's relation with Israel as "unshakable bond" and "unbreakable spirit". By using these phrases, he describes the strong bond between these two countries. This synonymous use is also found in "sectarian differences" and "religious differences" to depict the difference among people, Jews,

Christians, Muslims, and every faith, living in Jerusalem. He has also used the following phrases “friends”, ‘partners’, ‘leaders’ and ‘heads of states’ to recognize distinguished world leaders present in the occasion. Besides, by looking thoroughly at his speech, the researcher can see the following synonymy samples:

Yearn for= eager to

Heritage= legacy

Holy= sacred

State = country

Terrorists=evils

Support= stand by

Murder=take=kill

The present and application of this device gives the speech an aura of importance. Besides, he has included some parallel structures in his speech as follows:

Join with me {to fight our common enemies

{to pursue our shared values

{to protect the dignity of every child of God

The courage {to overcome the oppression and injustice of the past

{to live in the freedom God intends for every person

Let us dream of future

Let us never forget that the bond between these two nations is woven

Let us remember our highest ideals

If one looks at Trump’s speech in Saudi Arabia, he can figure out that he has used a lot of parallel structures that fall in the category of synonymy.

These are the parallel structures:

The goal is {to meet history’s great test

{to conquer extremism

{to vanquish forces of terrorism

Barbarism will deliver you {no glory

{no dignity

If you choose the path of terror, your life {will be empty

{will be brief

I ask you to { join me

{work together

{to fight together

The world will be able {to live without fear

{to dream without limits

{to prosper without violence
Our goal is a coalition of nations
Our vision is {one of peace, security, and prosperity
{to enrich our nation consensus

We can defeat them by {starving terrorists of their territory
{false allure of their craven ideology

Besides, he has used some word-to-word synonyms as follows:

Historic agreement.....land mark agreement

Declaration.....announcement

Number of dead people.....number of vanished dreams

Aspirationsdreams

Extremism.....terror.....violence

The use of the above lexical cohesion devices foregrounds the resolve that Trump has to succeed in building a virile nation.

٣, ١, ٣. Superordinate/ Hyponymy

This is a relationship of entailment or inclusion. Examples: lions, fish, and ants are co-hyponyms of the superordinate item- animals.

When the researcher examines Trump's speech in Jerusalem, she does not notice a lot of superordinate examples. In his speech in Saudi Arabia, there are three though. He has urged the speech community to stamp terrorists out of

your place of worship, your community, your holy land, this Earth

The researcher ultimately understands the core of the entire paragraph and his text generally; that democracy must be built on hard work and its dividends will spread to the nooks and crannies of this country.

The second example of hyponymy is in the following lines:

Glorious wonders of science

Great cities built on the ruins of shattered towns

New jobs

These are blessings of prosperity and peace

He has mentioned the first three lines as co-hyponyms of (blessings). This lexical cohesive device is used in order to ask for the collective responsibility in running the new world free of terrorists and violence.

The third hyponymy is in the following lines:

“We now face humanitarian and security disaster in this *region* that is spreading across the *planet*”

The juxtaposition of these hyponyms gives his speech some rhythm and functions to carry people along his resolve in defeating terrorism.

٣, ٢ Collocation

Collocations have to do with accepted co-occurrence relationship of lexical items. Osisawa (2003) identifies seven collocational types: antonyms, complementaries, converses, part/part, part/whole, co-hyponyms, and links (cited by Enyi & Chitulu, 2010). For the purpose of this study, it suffices to explain just the major types.

3, 2, 1 Antonymy

Antonymy is used to express contrast between words and serves the purpose of emphasizing ideas. There are three types of distinct semantic oppositeness: complementary opposition, gradable opposition, and relational opposition or converses.

In complementary opposition, if one member of the part is true, then the other must be false. Example:

Pass-----fail

Happy-----sad

In gradable opposition, there is a possibility of presenting intermediate items such as

Hot-----warm-----cool-----cold

In relational opposition, if Nina is Linda's mother, the opposite will be that Linda is Nina's daughter. Other examples include :

Husband.....wife

Give-----take

By examining Trump's speech in Jerusalem, one cannot find a lot of examples. There are only two as written below.

The Jewish people have *suffered persecution and oppression*.....they have *endured and thrived*

The use of this complementary opposition highlights the strength of the Jewish people that all other nations should be afraid of.

This oppositeness is also included in this example:

“We pledge to stand by you and *defend* our shared values so we can *defeat* terrorism.

This opposition refers to the resolve of America and Israel to get rid of terrorism.

If one looks at Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia, he can notice a lot of anatomy examples though.

His speech has targeted all people regardless of their gender and age to defeat terrorism and build a new era of renaissance. Therefore, he has used such complementary opposition in the first lines and converse in the subsequent lines to link his ideas. Here are some examples:

Boys.....girls

Men.....women

Free fear

Safe.....violence

Besides, he has referred to the summit he has held in Saudi Arabia as “*beginning*” of the “*end*” to give coherence to the text.

To keep this harmony in his speech, he has highlighted the point that those terrorist who claim they are Muslims, they have no relation to Islam and their main aim is just to let people leave their countries to Europe or some other countries where they might find safety. Let us have a look at the following examples:

“This region should not be a place from which people *flee* but to which newcomers *flock*”

“Terrorists do not worship *God*, they worship *death*”

“This is a battle between *good* and *evil*”

Enemy.....friend

Gradual reform..... sudden intervention

ξ. Conclusion

By analyzing Trump’s speeches in Jerusalem and Saudi Arabia contrastively, the researcher has tried to scrutinize the main devices used to bring about the lexical cohesion. Everything considered, Trump in his speeches has employed reiteration with all its components namely partial and total repetition, synonymy, superordinate and various shades of opposition in language use. By doing so, he has not only hung sentences together, rather, he has tried to sell himself and the agenda of his regime to the perceived stake-holders, on the one hand, and the general public on the other. Besides, it is quite clear that the president was fully alert in utilizing these devices that are some how persuasive in his speech in Jerusalem. However, his speech in Saudi Arabia was a little bit simple and he has not used as many cohesive devices as he used in the aforementioned country. These find outs are compatible with the research’s objectives.

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