



The Communication Presentation of Barack Obama Public Speaking Style

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Abstract. The main idea of this research is to analyse the English modals in Obama's speech semantically. The modal auxiliaries selected for analysis include (Will, Would, Can, Could, and Should). All the modal auxiliaries are interpreted based on the framework of Coates' (1983) semantic clusters. The qualitative method of analysis is applied into this study. The modal auxiliary of 'can' signifying possibility functions to evoke positive emotions and connotations in the mind of all the listeners. It highlights the possibilities that are associated with people's hopes and wishes and reminds all citizens to look on the bright side, and the persuasion form is realized through the motivation on the Obama's speech modal auxiliaries' words.

Keywords: Obama's, Modality, Function, Speech, Public Speaking.

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INTRODUCTION

The distinction between Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis is crucially important. According to McCarthy (1991), the former is "the study of the link between language and its usage situations." The phrase Discourse Analysis refers to the study of the connection between language and its usage situations. In the 1960s and early 1970s, several disciplines, including linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology, and sociology, contributed to its development (McCarthy, M. 1991). Berlson (1952) examines the subsequent, Content analysis is a research approach for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of communication's evident content. Quantitative in that it entails counting and measuring quantities of elements such as words, pictures, etc., and qualitative in that it is an interpretation rather than a measurement. (Berlson, 1952, 263), The ideational meta function is one of the most significant functions of language because it enables the speaker or writer to communicate his experience of real-world things through language. Through this function, the speaker and writer express their personal experiences of the surrounding environment via language. (Halliday, 1971, 332). In other words, the ideal function delivers knowledge, experience, and substance that are fresh and unfamiliar to the recipient. Halliday argues, "Texts with several levels of experiential significance can be interpreted" (Halliday). The study of transitivity focuses on how actions are represented in texts, as opposed to what kinds of activities exist in a text, who performs them, and to whom they are performed (Kadhim & Al-Shaibani, 2013, p. 23). Similarly, Mills (1995) thinks that the study of transience is exclusively concerned with how words are represented. (Mills 1995, 143–144). The transitivity system has six processes: the material process, the mental process, the relationship process, the behavioural process, and the linguistic and existential processes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

According to Halliday (1970), a situation's context is divided into three categories: field, tenor, and mode. In accordance with this, Halliday divides language into three main Meta functions: experiential, interpersonal, and textual. Each of the three Meta functions is concerned with a different aspect of the world and a different mode of clause meaning. According to Halliday (1994:68), it is through the Interpersonal Metafunction that language users establish, negotiate, and assume their position in social relationships; it is concerned with clauses as exchange (Li , 2004, p.146) Numerous research articles and books on interpersonal analysis have been produced in recent decades. Regarding this, we might cite Kadhim and Al-Shaibani (2013), p. 23.

An Interpersonal Analysis of Du Mu's "Qingming" and Its Translated Versions (Huang, 2002) and "On the Interpersonal Meaning of Reflexive Expressions in Autobiography" (Li, 2001), as well as the gradual shift, demonstrate discourse analysts' growing interest in the discourse analysis of speech, which focuses primarily on the relationship between form and meaning. In functional grammar, "choice is meaning" is a generally accepted premise, while in discourse analysis, form is the realisation of meaning (Huang 1998). To achieve the communicative goals of their speeches, orators employ every possible tactic and use figures of speech often and extensively (Li 2004:38). Thus, speech preserves its distinctive characteristics in terms of language usage and becomes a distinct discourse type. Following Systemic Functional

Grammar, the objective of this paper is to assist readers in comprehending Barack Obama's Victory Speech and evaluating it based on its compatibility with the Interpersonal Meta function analysis, which is intended to give suggestions on how to craft more effective speeches.

As per Halliday (2000), modality plays a significant part in the execution of the interpersonal meta function of clauses by indicating the extent to which the proposition is legitimate. This is one of the ways in which clauses carry out this function. Modality is the gap between "yes" and "no," which indicates the speaker's estimations of the probability or duties involved in what she is saying. Modality, according to Thompson (2000, p. 57), comprises Modal words and Modulation. Modality is the gap between "yes" and "no" that reveals the speaker's estimations of the probabilities or responsibilities involved in what she is saying. Modality includes modularization, modulation, probability (possible-likely-certain), and regularity (sometimes-usually-always). In addition to non-verbal and verbal, non-deliberate and deliberate expressions, modal verbal operators are one of the most prevalent ways to communicate modality as a function of Mood. Modality, as realised by modal verbal operators, incorporates degrees and scales on the validity of a claim, thus the phrase "Modal Commitment." According to Halliday (1994), there are three fundamental levels of modal commitment: high, middle, and low. And varying degrees of modal commitment led to distinct interpretations. (Ye, 2010, p. 146.)

RESEARCH METHOD

The paradigm of Coates' (1983) semantic clusters will be used to analyse the modality of Obama's presidential address. The information was obtained from CNN and www.cnn.com. In addition, the selection of modality is limited to sentences containing modal verbs, whereas phrases without modal verbs will not be considered. The related extracts are taken from Obama pre-prandial speech. The selection of the extract based on the category that we have discussed and highlighted in the abstract. Thus, the researchers are selecting only those extracts which contains the modals to be investigated.

RESULT

The modal usage of 'will' used in extract 1 denotes predication. Here, Obama talks about his prediction on his rival Romney's future action in the campaign. This prediction indicates that Obama clearly knows what the next move is going to be taken from the other side. Thus, he has indicated clearly in his speech that he would be or Romney's rival will the main obstacle that he might face. WILL is used to remind listeners that events are going to happen soon, i.e. have ad after ad, have pictures of me looking all old, etc. etc. The use of WILL shows Obama's confidence about his assertion. Modal WILL used in extract 2 denotes prediction, which can be paraphrased as "I confidently predict that..." Like extract 1, modal WILL used here also expresses the speaker's confidence in the truth of the proposition as well. The function of using modal WILL is to remind voters what kind of decisions that the next president and next Congress are going to make and these decisions are going to have a huge impact on this country. Obama talks about how crucial and meaningful of their choices are, because their decisions are closely related to the future of the nation. Obama

persuades all listeners to take this presidential election seriously. The president-elect's decisions can make difference for their generation and even for their next generations.

In this extract of modal usage 'would', Obama talks about his promises that he made four years ago. Modal auxiliary WOULD is used to signify the meaning of past WILL=volition. Here, WOULD is used with first person pronoun "we", which refers to Obama and his government. Coates (1983) points out that WOULD denotes past volition is infrequently used, because the past is known, and what people intended to do in the past becomes relatively insignificant in the light of what is known to have happened (p.207- 208). Obama deliberately mentions what he intended to do in the past in his speeches. The repeated use of WOULD functions as reminder which works for reminding people what he said before. By mentioning the past, Obama successfully introduces himself as an authoritative, honest and trustful person.

Meanwhile, the modal usage of 'can' illustrates the notion of possibility. The use of CAN in this case is to indicate the possibility of something happening as a result due to one's action. Here, Obama repeatedly uses modal auxiliary CAN to highlight the possibilities, i.e. "find a job", "save and buy a home", "send kids to college", and "retire with dignity", etc. And of these possibilities expressed by the modal CAN are assigned to second person pronoun "you". CAN functions to remind citizens to look on the bright side. Obama uses "you can" six times to encourage all the listeners that if they work hard together, and if they are willing to try, they will turn all the possibilities into reality. Can be paraphrased as "it is possible for you to do". From the context, modal CAN in this extract is identified to denote meaning of ability. The repeated uses of modal CAN are assigned to pronoun "we", which refers to people in general, here also includes Obama himself. The function of using "we" is to denote a collective force or a sense of unity to highlight the togetherness. Obama's use of the phrase "we can" in his speeches evokes positive emotions among audiences and inspires them towards progress. The function of the use of 'we can' is to encourage all the listeners that they have ability and capacity to create the life that they want.

The next modal auxiliary identified is 'should', which is used to offer an advice. Modal SHOULD can be paraphrased as "it is advisable that...". In this extract, the advice is given by "they" which refers to republicans, Governor Romney and his allies, while the addressees are "we", who refers to people in general, meaning all Americans. Here, Obama talks about Romney's economic plan. Obama uses the phrase "go back to the top-down economics of last decade" to associate with Romney's proposal, which indicates his proposal is out of date. The use of conjunction word "but" show Obama's negative attitude towards Romney's suggestion and also implies that what Romney has suggested is not applicable. In extract 22, modal auxiliary SHOULD is used to denote suggestion as well. Unlike extract 21, here, the suggestion is given by "we", which refer to Obama and his allies, and the addressees are all listeners. Obama uses the modal auxiliary SHOULD twice depict what he thinks advisable to do. The repeated use of modal in Obama's proposals makes audiences more easily to understand and highlights the how his proposal will be beneficial to majority of people, and hence it creases the persuasiveness. Comparing to Romney's suggestion, because it seems to meet the wishes of majority of Americans, i.e. "taxes on 98% of people don't go up". The last modal usage is 'must' carries the highest degree of obligation. In this extract, the Modal MUST is used twice to denote

obligation. And both of them are assigned with the first-person plural pronoun “we”, which refers to all American people. Therefore, the phrase “we must” can be paraphrased as “it is obligatory/ essential for all Americans to do something”. Obama uses the stronger obligation modal "MUST" in this particular extract. The repeated use of "we MUST" indicates the obligatory and essentiality to carry out a certain action. Obama not only wants listeners to realize the importance of this issue, but also seeks approval and support in his succeeding action. (Huang, 2013).

Table 1

Extract (will)	Narration
<p><i>They will have ad after ad after ad, and all of them will have scary voices</i></p> <p><i>They'll have pictures of me looking all old</i></p> <p><i>That's what the Republicans in Congress will say.</i></p> <p><i>The next President and the next Congress will face a set of decisions.</i></p> <p><i>That will have an enormous impact on this country</i></p>	<p><i>They will have ad after ad after ad, and all of them will have scary voices. (Laughter.) They'll have pictures of me looking all old and -- (laughter) -- broke down. You've seen those ads. You've seen them. That's what Mr. Romney is going to say. That's what the Republicans in Congress will say. And that may be their plan to win an election, but it's sure not a plan to create jobs. And the next President and the next Congress will face a set of decisions -- on the economy, and on the deficit, and on taxes -- that will have an enormous impact on this country not just today but the country that we pass on to our children.</i></p>
Extract (would)	Narration
<p><i>I told you we would end the war in Iraq</i></p> <p><i>I said we would end the war in Afghanistan</i></p> <p><i>I said we would refocus on the terrorists</i></p>	<p><i>Four years ago, I told you we would end the war in Iraq, and we did. (Applause.) I said we would end the war in Afghanistan -- we are. I said we would refocus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and we have.</i></p>
Extract (can)	Narration
<p><i>In this country you can make it</i></p> <p><i>That you can find a job that pays a living wage, and you can save and buy a home</i></p>	<p><i>The reason we came together was because we shared a belief in the basic bargain that built this country; the idea that if you're willing to work hard, if you're willing to take responsibility, that in this country you can make it. That you can find a job that pays a living wage, and you can save and buy a home. You can send your kids to</i></p>

<i>You can send your kids to college</i>	<i>college so they do even better than you did. You can retire with some dignity and some respect. The idea that no matter where you come from, no matter what you look like, no matter what your faith, no matter who you love, that in America you can make it if you try. I've never said it was going to be quick and easy. What I said was, we can move forward. We can make progress. We can make things better. We can strengthen our middle class. We can rebuild a strong foundation for our economy.</i>
<i>You can retire with some dignity</i>	
<i>In America you can make it if you try</i>	
<i>We can move forward and make progress</i>	
<i>We can make things better and strengthen our middle class</i>	
<i>We can rebuild a strong foundation for our economy</i>	

Extract (should)	Narration
<i>They believe that we should go back to the top-down economics</i>	<i>Governor Romney and his allies -- They're patriotic Americans. They've got wonderful families. But they believe that we should go back to the top-down economics of the last decade. Now, I believe that we should make sure that taxes on the 98 percent of Americans don't go up, and then we should let the tax cuts expire for folks like me, for the top 2 percent of Americans.</i>
<i>I believe that we should make sure that taxes on the 98 percent of Americans don't go up</i>	
<i>We should let the tax cuts expire for folks like me</i>	

Extract (must)	Narration
<i>We must honor our fallen heroes not just on Memorial Day, but all days</i>	<i>In the crucible of battle, you were tested in ways the rest of us will never know. You carry in your hearts the memory of the comrades you lost. For you understand that we must honor our fallen heroes not just on Memorial Day, but all days. And when an American goes missing, or is taken prisoner, we must do everything in our power to bring them home.</i>
<i>We must do everything in our power to bring them home</i>	

Source: Data Research, 2022

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study is to do a semantic analysis of the English modals in Obama's address. The chosen modal auxiliaries for analysis are WILL, Would, Can, Could, and Should. All modal auxiliaries are analysed

using Coates' (1983) semantic clusters as a framework. We realized that Obama used simple lexis and short sentences, sometimes long but understood clearly. Obama succeeded in closing the gap between him and his audience by using simple lexis and short sentences, sometimes long but understood clearly. From the transitivity structure, it is remarked that he used the material process mostly. It also shows how, through his speeches, he is provoking the Americans and Muslims to hold positive attitudes towards each other. Modality from another side is basically used to analyse the speaker's attitude and opinions. Obama made it easy for his audience to grasp the meanings of his speech by means of using modal verbs. He also used the present simple tense to give credibility to his speech and decisions, (Huang, 2013).

Critical Discourse Analysis is a useful method for revealing the hidden connections between language and ideology. This study is rooted in Fairclough's concept of ideology in the text. Obama's primary ideological points in his address may be summed up as follows: pragmatism, liberalism, acceptance of religious and ethnic diversity, and togetherness. Obama's future goals are shown using the modal auxiliary WILL denoting prediction. Possibility-signifying modal auxiliary CAN evokes good sentiments and implications in the minds of all listeners. CAN emphasises the opportunities linked to people's goals and desires and serves as a reminder to all residents to have a positive outlook. There are several directions for future research that could build upon the findings of a paper on the communication presentation of Barack Obama's public speaking style. Some potential avenues for further exploration include a comparative analysis of Obama's public speaking style with other political leaders: This could involve examining the communication strategies of other politicians to see how they compare to Obama's approach, and potentially identifying any common themes or differences among different leaders. A deeper examination of the role of nonverbal communication in Obama's public speaking: This could involve analysing his use of facial expressions, gestures, and other nonverbal cues to better understand how they contribute to his effectiveness as a speaker. An analysis of the impact of Obama's public speaking style on his audience: This could involve studying the reactions and responses of listeners to his speeches and evaluating the effectiveness of his communication techniques in terms of persuading and inspiring his audience. An examination of the influence of Obama's background and personal experiences on his public speaking style: This could involve exploring the role that his upbringing, education, and other life experiences may have had in shaping his approach to communication. An analysis of how Obama's public speaking style has evolved over time: This could involve studying the changes and developments in his communication approach over the course of his political career and considering the possible reasons for any shifts.

CONCLUSION

The gap of novelty in the communication field that this paper aims to address is the lack of in-depth analysis and understanding of the public speaking style of former President Barack Obama. While Obama's public speaking ability has been widely acknowledged and praised, there has been limited research on the specific linguistic and rhetorical strategies that he employs in his communication. This paper aims to fill that gap by conducting a thorough

analysis of Obama's public speaking style and identifying the key elements that contribute to its effectiveness. Through this analysis, this paper will provide valuable insights for scholars and practitioners interested in improving their own public speaking skills, as well as for those studying the use of language and rhetoric in political communication.

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