

***Ministry of Higher Education***

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***Department of English***



***Persuasive Language Strategies and Techniques  
in Political Speeches***

A paper

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***By***

***Aseel Majed Adnan***

***Supervised By***

**Prof. Dr. Qasim Obayes Al\_Azzawi**

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# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ  
الْخَاسِرِينَ (٨٥)

صدق الله العظيم

سوره ال عمران الآية ٨٥

In the name of Allah The most Gracious the Most  
Merciful,

(And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam. It will  
never be accepted of him and in the thereafter he will be  
one of the losers.)

Great truth of God

Surah Al-Imran verse 85

DR. Muhammed Taqi-ud-din. Madina, K.S.A, 2012

## **Dedication**

To my father, who had encouraged me all my life

To my mother , the spring of love and kindness

To my sister and brothers

I dedicated this work

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my deep gratitude and sincere appreciation to my supervisor for his careful supervision , unlimited support , patience , help and, advice. I am also indebted and grateful to his .

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## **Section One**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 The Problems**

Persuasive language is the language being use when convincing others for something. It can be seen and heard around you every day. We'll see it in TV commercials, social media, magazines, billboards, and any other medium where advertisement campaigns are placed. While you may think persuasive language is only for the ones who communicate with the public to convince, it is actually helpful to learn it. At one point or another, you may have used it without noticing it, and you may also need to use it in the future. Persuasive language can be employed when you want others to believe your viewpoints and conclusions, accept your facts, and get someone to take a certain action. It can be done verbally, nonverbal, or even written. To make your message easier and more compelling, different techniques can be used. Your audience and your motive become the basis on which technique to use (Perloff ,2003 : 8) .

This paper is an attention to bridge this gap through answering the following questions

1. What are the strategies of persuasive language that are used in political speech?
2. What is the most used types of persuasive language that are found in the selected data?

## **1.2 Aims**

The study aims at:

1. Shedding light on the persuasive language strategies and techniques.
2. Investigating how of persuasive language are used in political speech .

## **1.3 Hypothesizes**

The study hypothesizes that:

1. There are many classification of persuasive language strategies and techniques that the speakers face difficulties in recognize them.
2. There are many definition of persuasive language .

## **1.4 Procedures**

In order to fulfill the aims of the study , the following steps are adopted :

1. Presenting a theoretical background knowledge about persuasive language in particular .
2. Explaining the classification of persuasive language strategies and techniques .
3. Presenting how the persuasive language use in political speech .

## **1.5 Limits**

The paper is limited to the definitions of persuasive language, its strategies and techniques and its use in political speech .

## **1.6 Value**

It is hoped that this paper would be of some help to English students, teacher and linguists.



## **Section Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Persuasion is considered by most scholars as an effective way speakers or writers can master. Persuasion skills are important for everyone especially political leaders. The ability to influence an audience is a necessity to be a successful politician. Gass (2011: 3) clarifies that "persuasion is a type of human communication. There are positive sides of persuasion. For example it helps creating peace agreements between countries. Persuasion is very beneficial for varied and different purposes." Thus, successful persuaders can achieve their goals easier, faster and better than others.

Many scholars agree on the fact the rhetoric was first known in Ancient Greece. Philosophers and great thinkers like Plato, Aristotle and many others have put the basic rules of rhetoric or persuasion as it is known in contemporary terminology. So, rhetoric and persuasion are used interchangeably. Thomas et.al (2004: 45) states that rhetoric is "the art of using language so as to persuade or influence others; the body of rules to be observed by a speaker or writer in order that he may express himself with eloquence. Partington (2010: 13) defines rhetoric as the arts of persuasive discourse. Van Dijk (1997: 12) states that rhetoric is "the art or study of persuasive public discourse. One central element of this classical rhetoric focused on special means that make discourse more memorable and hence more persuasive, namely the figures of speech."

Thus, persuasion makes use of non-linguistic features like metaphor, personification, repetition and it also makes use of some linguistic features like intensifiers, adjectives lexical items to make discourse more expressive, persuasive, developed and attractive.

## **2.2 Persuasive Language**

Fairclough (2012:18) define persuasive language is a type of language that is written to persuade. This could be to persuade the reader to buy something, believe something, or think something. Persuasive writing is a written form of an oral debate and can be a fun and interesting style of writing for students to practice. Persuasive texts feature different types of language. The different methods used in persuasive writing at this level usually are: Imperative verbs, alliteration, facts, opinions, rhetorical questions, and repetition. For students, persuasive writing can be a great way of expressing their views and opinions on a subject. Practicing persuasive writing using persuasive writing devices is a great way to find out what students are passionate about and give them the opportunity to do research on subjects that they are interested in. This helps students be more involved in their class work.

Persuasive writing is any written work that tries to convince the reader of the writer's opinion. Aside from standard writing skills, a persuasive essay author can also draw on personal experience, logical arguments, an appeal to emotion, and compelling speech to influence readers. Persuasive writing relies on different techniques and strategies than other written works: In a persuasive essay, it's not enough to simply inform; you also have to convince the reader that your way of thinking is best.

So to help you get started, this guide explains all the basics and provides persuasive writing examples. (Meyer , 2009:1)

Yule (1983:1) state that persuasive writing is a written form of an oral debate and can be a fun and interesting style of writing for students. Persuasive writing is used to convince or persuade a reader that the writer's opinion of a topic or cause is correct. When writing persuasive essays students need to be well versed in word selection, framing logical arguments and creating a strong cohesive closing argument. persuasive writing important for students, persuasive writing can be a wonderful means of expressing their views about a subject. It is a way to tap into what students are passionate about and give them the opportunity to do research on subjects that they are interested in. This helps students be more involved in their class work. Engaging in persuasive writing also helps students improve skills such as different styles of writing, writing structure, doing research, and forming evidence based logical conclusions, opinions and arguments.

## **2.3 Strategies of Persuasive Language**

### **2.3.1 Metaphor**

Van Dijk (2000: 77) states that metaphor is one of rhetoric devices in which abstract, complex, unfamiliar, new or emotional meanings become familiar and more concrete. The aim of using metaphor in political speeches is mainly of persuasive nature. Thomas et al. (2004: 46) state that politicians have to use metaphors to express abstract concepts as concrete entities. Their aim is to facilitate difficult concepts and meanings for the audience.

### **2.3.2 Personification**

Personification is a figure of speech. It is a literary or a poetic device in which language is used indirectly, metaphorically and in an imaginative way. Personification can be formed of a word or a phrase to make a comparison between two similar identities. Thomas et al. (2004: 47) clarifies that personification is viewed as a type of metaphor that is more frequently used in political discourse to refer to countries as though they were humans.

### **2.3.3 The Three Part List**

It is one of the most common persuasive strategies which combines identities that are equal in importance. Thomas et al. (2004: 49) argue that the three part list is a very common device in political discourse which makes discourse more interesting and pleasing. They give an example from the 1997 British Parliamentary elections: "this is the result of four years of Liberal Democrat and labor, whine and weakness." Some CDA scholars use varied terms to refer to the same concept like "the set of three", "the rule of three", "the three part list (the treble)", "group of three".

### **2.3.4 Contrast**

Van Dijk (1984: 139) argues that contrastive operations are typically used to highlight the differences between two groups or between two lifestyles or interests. Contrast comes to surface when there is a social struggle or competition over different aspects of life. For example, "we work hard, they are lazy; they easily get jobs, and we do not." (Van Dijk 2000: 49).

### **2.3.5 Repetition**

Van Dijk (2000: 83) states that repetition is a general rhetorical device which can be found in different discourses. It is a current phenomenon. Repetition can be formed at the level of a word, a phrase or even a sentence.

### **2.3.6 Personal Pronouns**

Personal pronouns are important in sending persuasive messages by political leaders. For example, the first personal pronoun "I" is used to emphasize concepts and to declare some kind of responsibility. And also the pronoun "we" can be used to show togetherness and a share responsibility (Thomas et al. 2004: 52).

### **2.3.7 Modality**

Van Dijk (2000: 51) states that different propositions can be modified by different kinds of modalities. Different modals have different meanings depending on the context of situation. For example, the modal auxiliary "will" expresses determination or willingness. The modal "can" expresses probability or ability.

## 2.4 Persuasive Techniques

According to Johnstone ( 2008:2) there are some techniques use in persuasive language.

**Evidence:** Using evidence is very persuasive as it makes the reader see the author as knowledgeable and the argument as more logical or reliable.

**Attacks:** Attacks on opposing views, or the people who hold them can persuade the audience by portraying views and beliefs which are contrary to the author's contrition as foolish, dangerous, uncaring or deceitful. Using humor to make fun of these views can be particularly persuasive. Note: can offend or alienate audience if overdone.

**Inclusive and Exclusive Language:** Inclusive language such as 'we', 'our,, us, and exclusive language such as 'them' can persuade by including the reader, or by creating a sense of solidarity or a sense of responsibility.

**Rhetorical Questions:** Rhetorical questions are questions that do not require and answer and are asked for effect only. They engage the audience and encourage them to consider the issue and accept the author's answer, or imply that the answer is so obvious that anyone who disagrees is foolish.

**Cause and effect:** arguments may claim there is a cause and effect relationship when really there is just a relationship and other factors should be considered.

**Analogy:** Analogy is a form of reasoning which compares one thing with another in order to make a particular point.

**Formal Language:** Formal language can make the author sound knowledgeable while removing emotion from the issue. This can make the argument sound reasonable and rational, and the contention seem balanced

**Colloquial language:** Colloquial language is informal, everyday, conversational language that includes down to earth views and is seductive because it appears friendly, and can make the audience feel that the author is on the same wavelength as them

**Imagery and Figurative Language:** use of figurative language, metaphor and simile can paint a word picture for audience, making the point visually and by comparison, or appeal to emotions. They can also make the author appear sophisticated or well spoken

## **2.5 The Function of Persuasive Language**

In modern American culture, we are bombarded daily with oodles of persuasive messages: advertisements, political nonsense, guidelines on proper social behavior, romantic nothings. The persuasive purpose is used to convince, or persuade, the reader that the opinion, or assertion, or claim, of the writer is correct or valid. Persuasion is more selfish than argument . Argument attempts to arrive at a logical solution to an issue. But persuasive writing is concerned primarily with convincing the reader at any cost. Various appeals are used to manipulate the reader. Persuasive writing has a definite bias, or lack of objectivity. Its function is to change the mind of the reader or to move the reader to action. ( Rogers 2005:369).

Because of its goal, the persuasive purpose is usually the primary purpose in a piece of writing. The author may supplement the persuasive purpose with any of the other purposes. But when combined with other purposes, the persuasive purpose rises to the top. The attempt to convince the reader overrides all other goals in the writing . (Ibid)



## **Section Three**

### **3.1 Persuasion Language Political Speech**

Political discourse analysis is one field tackled under the umbrella of CDA. It studies political speeches and debates by different presidents. Fairclough (2012:18) define political discourse analysis as that sort of analysis which is originated from a critical perception. That means, this perception emphasizes two features of political discourse which are: reproduction and contestation or competition of political authority. Moreover, he describes the concept of political discourse in terms of political persons or individuals including both politicians and citizens who pay attention to the political actions and political institutions. That is to say, any political discourse cannot be treated as a political one if it is out of its political institutions or contexts like parliament or government. Thus, political speeches consist of some features such as the use or ornamental and appealing expressions with a view to convincing their audience.

They usually use foreign phrases known as political jargons, three part statements, rhetorical questions and pronouns to influence and impress the audience. Political speeches might have many quotations and adequate use of repetitions. This use of such expressions can be manipulative and persuasive.

Many scholars agree on the fact the rhetoric was first known in Ancient Greece. Philosophers and great thinkers like Plato, Aristotle and many others have put the basic rules of rhetoric or persuasion as it is known in contemporary terminology. So, rhetoric and persuasion are used interchangeably. Thomas et.al (2004: 45) states that rhetoric is "the art of using language so as to persuade or influence others; the body of rules to be observed by a speaker or writer in order that he may express himself with eloquence." Partington (2010: 13) defines rhetoric as " the arts of persuasive discourse." Van Dijk (1997: 12) states that rhetoric is "the art or study of persuasive public discourse. One central element of this classical rhetoric focused on special means that make discourse more memorable and hence more persuasive, namely the figures of speech." Thus, persuasion makes use of non-linguistic features like metaphor, personification, repetition and it also makes use of some linguistic features like intensifiers, adjectives lexical items to make discourse more expressive, persuasive, developed and attractive.

Persuasion is considered by most scholars as an effective way speakers or writers can master. Persuasion skills are important for everyone especially political leaders. The ability to influence an audience is a necessity to be a successful politician. Gass (2011: 3) clarifies that "persuasion is a type of human communication. There are positive sides of persuasion. For example it helps creating peace agreements between countries. Persuasion is very beneficial for varied and different purposes." Thus, successful persuaders can achieve their goals easier, faster and better than others.

Persuasion is one of the most important aspects of discourse analysis. It shows how people, especially politicians, use language in a persuasive manner to convince people about different matters.(Ibid)

## The Analysis

### 3.2 Data

Barack Obama ,Second Presidential Election Victory Speech . Delivered 7 November 2012, McCormick Place Chicago, Illinois

### 3.3 The Analysis

Obama at the beginning of his speech uses the pronoun "we" many times **We are an American family / and we rise or fall together as one notion and one people "**

He considers all the American people as one family , and they will be together in all circumstances . By these words he refers to the unity of people . Obama uses the pronouns (I) emphasizes Obama's personal responsibility as a political leader.

**" I am looking forward to reaching out and working with leaders of both parties to meet the challenges we can only solve together".**

Obama by these words tries to create an impression in his audience and show them his power and his future plans , and he can only do this by their help .

**"We can work together to move the country forward"**

He uses these words to show them that they have their rights in this country , and also they have the responsibility to participate and move on this country. Obama again uses personal pronouns for example the pronoun "I" is used to emphasize concepts and to declare some kind of responsibility .

**"I believe we can keep the promise of our founding"** Here Obama Shows the people that he hold all the responsibility for bright future . Personification is a powerful tool that the presidents use for portraying images by appealing to the feelings and emotions of people being addressed .

**" You will hear the determination in the voice of a young field organizer"**.

Obama personified the determination as a human being and we are going to hear its voice .He supports or encourage these specific group . Obama uses the technique of personification for the second times .

**" I'm not talking about blind optimism ..... I have always believed that hope is that stubborn thing inside us that insists, despite all the evidence to the contrary that something better awaits us, so long as we have the courage to keep reaching, to keep working, to keep fighting. "**

Here Obama personifies the optimism as human who cannot see , to show the importance of hope in their life , and how they cannot do anything without it , he impliedly encourage them to go forward and to keep working . Obama again uses personification technique .

**" The country moves on with confidence "**

He uses country which is abstract concepts as concrete entities (move on) in order to show them that they are in the right way and their future will be full with confidence. Barack Obama uses the personification again .

**" Our economy is recovering."**

He personified economy as recovering , in order to feel American people feel optimistic about their future . The modal auxiliary which is one of the strategies of persuasion , the model "can" expresses probability or ability for example

**"I believe we can keep the jobs, and new opportunity / we can build this progress we've made / we can seize this future together "**

Thus, it is clear that Obama focuses on two things. The first one is that working together for the public interest by using the pronoun "we" ,and the second thing is showing his ability and his willing to build this country by using the model "can" . Obama also uses here the repetition strategy by repeat the phrase "we can" three times to emphasis its required meaning .

**"You'll hear the determination, you'll hear the deep patriotism, you'll hear the pride in the voice of volunteer "**

Obama uses this technique because this kind of words are likely to hear by everyone specially if it comes from the president. Obama also uses contrast which is used to high-light the differences between two groups .

**"Because we are not as divided as our politics suggest"**

Obama here contrast between what politics suggest and what are they in fact, he use this technique to make the American people feel proud .

Obama also uses the metaphor technique in this speech in order to express abstract concepts as concrete entities. For example he says

**"These arguments we have are a mark of our liberty "**

Obama here links the arguments with liberty . The three part list is frequently used by PM. Obama tries to connect and combine many concepts, putting them together in a specific arrangement.

**"We want our children to live in America that is not burdened , that is not weakened, that is not threatened".**

Here Obama elaborate how their future should be . He uses the word children instead of ( I want you to live .. )in order to make them sympathy with him , and show them that he is eager about the future of their children

### **3.4 Discussion of Results**

**Table (1)**

<b>Type of Persuasive Language</b>	<b>Fre.</b>	<b>%</b>
Evidence	8	36%
Rhetorical Questions	10	45%
Cause and effect	2	9%
Analogy	1	2%
Formal Language	1	2%
Total	22	100%

In the above table rhetorical questions scores the heights frequency with (10) frequency of 45% percentages

Evidence: scores the frequency with (8) frequency of 36% percentages.

Analogy and formal Language : scores the frequency with (1) frequency of 2% percentages.

Cause and effect: scores the heights frequency with (2) frequency of 9% percentages.



## **Section Four**

### **Conclusion**

After analyzing the selected speeches it has been concluded that president use linguistic and literary strategies to persuade his audiences. political leader Barack Obama use some persuasive strategies and tools to make his discourse or speech more persuasive and to convey his specific policies, ideas, views and plans. Barack Obama refers to the other sources with a high intention and he finds the sources for his arguments in juridical, political, historical, literary sharing personal experience is highly developed in Barack Obama corpora including some factual statistics. The references of the other sources raise the trustfulness of Barack Obama and they have a strong effect on the audience because of the familiar salutations, usage of personal pronouns you and your the persuasive strategies via language reflect the ideologies of politicians. The language used in the speeches reveals that president employ some persuasive techniques which enable him to convey their messages effectively. influence and convince their audiences. He make his audiences agree with him accept his appeals, change his attitudes towards some issues or plans, trust his political system and his government as well. Persuasion is one of the most important aspects of discourse analysis. It shows how people, especially politicians, use language is a persuasive manner to convince people about different matters. This research deals with the persuasive strategies available in political discourse. The study uses the data taken from Obama as an American president.

Persuasion is considered by most scholars as an effective way speakers or writers can master. Persuasion skills are important for everyone especially political leaders. The ability to influence an audience is a necessity to be a successful politician.

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