



TRUMP'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS (2017): SALIENT STYLISTIC-RHETORICAL TRAITS

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ABSTRACT- In their Inaugural Addresses, American presidents (among whom the President Donald Trump) often endeavor to present their new plans and strategies and try to convince the audience with their upcoming activities and events that they intend to attain. Trump, in his 2017 inaugural address, seems to have recourse to certain stylistic and rhetorical devices to express his viewpoints and to direct his audience attention towards getting acquainted with his ideas in a way to persuade them to accept these ideas. A qualitative-descriptive method is followed to carry out the data and results analysis of the salient stylistic-rhetorical devices utilized by Trump. The paper concludes that Trump resorts to various devices; he gives reference to America as one unified nation glorifying its history and its great past men. Further, the use of personal pronouns help him to refer to different persons (*we* and *us* refer to himself and the audience, *I* refers to himself, *you* addresses the audience and *they* and *them* refer to others). Figurative devices (metaphor, parallelism and contrast) are employed to facilitate the conveyance of Trump's message and add a more vivid picture and a more musical tone to the conveyed message.

Key words: Trump, Inaugural, Address, stylistic-rhetorical

I. INTRODUCTION

Politicians often resort to the exploitation of stylistic-rhetorical devices to embellish their intended messages and to achieve success in public arguments or political consultations. Furthermore, as powerful instruments, stylistic-rhetorical procedures give expressive importance, reinforce politicians' views and debates on an issue and construct an imprint of a commanding leader (Staugaite, 2014). Undeniably, with the help of these devices, politicians tend to persuade people of their comforts and objectives, being aware of importance to appease the audience using persuasion. It has become gradually apparent that politicians attempt to entice the audience's courteousness by instituting confidence, inducing sentiments, thus making themselves seem more compassionate. In this sense, Walton (2007: 46-47) confirms that "persuasion is based on a conversational or dialogue structure, and can best be understood within such a structure".

Dating back to the time of Aristotle, persuasion has become the most efficient stylistic-rhetorical device in various speeches, particularly political inaugural addresses delivered by American Presidents, among which is Donald Trump's 2017 Inaugural Address. Put it another way, the aptitude to utilize linguistic means in harmony with "the requirements of each communication type is a valuable skill in achieving personal or public goals" (López, 2014).

Thus, this paper is intended to present an account of political language focusing on its main functions in society, political language as a specific register, political speeches illustrating inaugural addresses. Methodology, implying method used, sample and model of stylistic-rhetorical analysis, is given to offer a grounding for the data analysis (Trump's 2017 Inaugural) Address, followed by the main findings that the analysis arrives at.

1.1 POLITICAL LANGUAGE

Earlier, Aristotle defines human as a political animal who lives in polis (*Politikon Zoon*) and adds that it seems that "man is a political animal in a sense in which a bee is not, or any other gregarious animal. Nature, as we say, does nothing without some purpose; and it has endowed man alone among the animals with the power of speech". (*The Politics*. 1253, translated by T.A Sinclair 1992)

Likewise, Chilton and Schaffner (2002:57) suggest that "politics is a form of life, it does not refer to academic thing only to talk about it", but it can exist among people. Wodak, (2001: 90) additionally

clarifies that "politics cannot be existed without using language in abroad sense". In fact, it leads to the composition of a social assembly under the tent of "politics".

As politics is often presented as a struggle to control power, it is "only through language that such goal could be accomplished" (Ayeomonia and Akinkulere, 2012:2). Then, language is an authoritative instrument manipulated used by politicians to achieve their aims. Furthermore, language gives a choice to say some words or not and the relation between language politics is a vital one that make O'Bar and O'Bar affirm that "the relationship between language and politics is taken in the sense that language is presented as a means and /or an issue to bring about social and political goals" (1976:10).

In this connection, Schaffner (1997:1) refers to the role which language plays in political will and in order to convey this will to social action, the use of language is so important. Both language and politics are regarded as one stance. Language is considered as a tool of politics, which politicians use to achieve their desires, effects or impressions on their audience. So, they are interrelated and it is difficult to separate language from politics.

Baily (1976:253) highlights the relationship between the two concepts language and politics affirming that "the appropriate use of language in many political institutions and processes becomes a source of power". The skillful use of language puts the ability to understand spoken message which lies behind the spoken, the hints, threats, etc.

From another angle language exploited in politics should not be seen a mere "natural medium of communication" (Woods, 2006: 53). It directs people towards "specific beliefs, action and thoughts". Then, Language is used by politicians to attain multipurpose such as "protest to legitimate, to persuade as well as to intimate" (ibid: 50).

1.2 POLITICAL LANGUAGE AS A REGISTER

An important feature of language variety is that it discloses the "speaker's attitude, mood and feeling with respect to the subject of discourse and the other participants in it" (Young, 2006:76). Being a variety of language, a political language is described as the language of politics seen as a "lexicon of a conflict and drama of ridicules, and reproach, pleading and persuasion, colour and bite permeated. A political language is designed to valour men, destroy some and change the mind of others" (Szanto, 1978: 7).

Similarly, Chilton and Schaffour (1999:212) affirm that political register includes linguistic and other actions implying power of its inverse and resistance. A special type of linguistic resources may be due to the functions behind issuing political language, i.e., to steer the emotions of audience and to affect their opinions and attitudes.

Viewing political language as a distinctive variety (technically known as register), Akmajian *et al.*, (2001:302) maintain that it is a special vocabulary and syntactic forms which progress to satisfy the particular needs of the profession. In other words, politicians employ a particular linguistic structure (such as phrases and sentences) with vocabulary items (such as phones, morphemes and words) to attain the messages that they intend to convey, that is, to persuade and attract the audience's attentions towards a certain idea or view.

Particularly in their inaugural speeches after being elected, American politicians (including Donald Trump) endeavor to let listeners accept their new future plans and policies. Therefore, they resort to various stylistic and rhetorical maneuvers to draw the audience's attentions towards the on-going events, a point which the following pages aim to unveil. This is owing to the fact that politicians are often aware that "words are loaded with unequal weights, depending on who utters them and how they are said, such that some words uttered in certain circumstances have force and conviction" (Bourdieu, 1991: 01). In all their speeches, Politicians attempt to boost their language in a peculiar manner to provide additional effect and influence to the messages they intend to transfer so as to attain their objective of "winning more votes" (ibid).

1.3 POLITICAL SPEECHES: PURPOSES

It is obvious that some people's speech has a more power than other's; the opinion of certain people is taken to be more commanding and reliable than other opinions of other people (Richardson, 2007: 9). Focusing on the social function of political language, a political speech indicates "expressions which

comment on government action rather than the private conduct of an individual" (*Indigo Dictionary of Political Science*, 2007: 230).

Schaffner (2009:158) has another view about political speech, he notes that it is "a complex form of human activity". For Botting (2012:1) political speeches include receiving "elected speeches, constituency speeches, parliamentary speeches, special interest speeches" to the United Nations and similar international organizations.

More elaborately, Collins (2002:1) defines political speech as "the deliberate oratory in which there is an emphasis on the politician to convey his speech. He may deviate from ordinary usage and even develop a special language of his own". Neale (1998:13) affirms that politicians through their public speech can achieve their different aims on their audience by using a way by which they stress and outline their speeches in order to create an effect on their hearers.

In addition, Gruber (1993) affirms that a political speech is not simply "a monologue, but it is an ideal of social interaction which aims at influencing people", or is regarded an essential diplomatic mean permitting the "negotiations of specific meanings" (p, 305). A spoken political language should be seen as a process on the outcomes, monitors every word produced from his mouth, and his next utterances. In addition politicians observe their interlocutors and listener's reaction minute by minute.

In case of politics, a speaker is completely qualified and has a sort of authority that enables him/ her to speak before his/ her audience (Beard, 2000: 35). In political speeches, it is necessary for the speaker to bring about the attention of his/ her audience by using an effective persuasive language. This leads politicians to highlight and stress the crucial issues and concerns of his community, trying their best to convince their addressees that their beliefs are good for their benefits (Price, 2000: 343).

1.4 INAUGURAL ADDRESSES

The word 'inaugural' is taken to mean "ceremonies and firsts: an inaugural or inaugural address is the first speech made by a President at a ceremony also called the *inauguration*." Although this term is mostly connected with Presidents. This can be attributed to "any kind of official first" (Vocabulary Dictionary, 2016, s.v. *Inaugural*). More elaborately, *Collins Concise English Dictionary* (2016, s.v. *inaugural address*) defines the inaugural address as a "speech given during a formal ceremony or speech event which informs the people of his or her intentions as a leader".

Inaugural speech is given by the new voted president soon "after he has been sworn into office. In the inauguration speech, the president announces his projects and plans for the term of office (the presidency period he will hold for four years)". In this type of speeches the public should feel contented and pleased simply because it is a festive and a carnival day for every state including USA. Every elected president begins with a speech comprising "phrases and sentences designed to be memorable", as he raises issues such as shared moral stakes from the past. Furthermore, in this type of speech, the president, implicitly or explicitly, announces his new political plans and policies that must be administered in his governmental agenda (Welliver, 2004: 1).

Essentially, Rohler and Cook (1998) expound that an inaugural speech is well organized "to appeal to their countrymen to take pride in their country, to cherish their long-held traditions, and to put behind them the divisiveness of the past campaign and unite for the common good" (p. 243). The inaugural speech, as the official entrance of the elected president, would be manipulated to declare political morals and standards, and convince the community to give consent and upkeep them. Hence, the suitable manipulation of rhetorical policies seems to be a prerequisite to the president to assure his successful administration later and convince his audience.

The inaugural speeches are a specific type of discourse which Aristotle realized as "*epideictic*" (etymologically, this term originally comes from Greek "*epideiktikos*" and "*epideknunai*" to mean display, show off. They revolve around certain events, and they are manipulated to "bring people up to speed on things that have, are or will be going on in the world". They are designed to display something, particularly the skill of the speaker. As soon as the president takes an oath, "a newly elected president will give his Inaugural Address, where he tells the citizens of the United States his plans for his term. This speech is done to get the nation excited about the prospect of a new president" (*Collins Concise English Dictionary*, 2016).

Brock, Scott and Chesebro (1990: 343) clarify that inaugural addresses are “epideictic rhetoric” since they are:

“delivered on ceremonial occasions, mix past and future in present contemplation, affirm or praise the shared principles that will guide the incoming administration, ask the audience to focus upon traditional values, employ elegant, literary language, and rely on heightening of effect by amplification and affirmation of what is already known and believed.”

It follows from the discussion above that American Presidential Inaugural Addresses are described as having certain characteristics that distinguish them from other kinds of political speeches. They are, special types of speeches, formal presentations of new presidents which are often highly persuasive and ideological in nature, having various functions linked to the political scene of a country and exhibiting various exceptional stylistic-rhetorical agencies that specify these speeches as inaugural addresses.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative descriptive method is followed to identify the most salient stylistic and rhetorical traits used in Donald. J. Trump's Inaugural speech delivered on 20 January 2017, for the “45th President of the United States” who takes office after the most spiteful campaigns in the modern history of America. The procedures for the analysis imply going through the address painstakingly, identifying the outstanding stylistic and rhetorical agencies manipulated in the text, illustrating how these agencies are purposefully exploited and finally drawing up the functions behind the use of these agencies. In other words, why does Trump resort to these stylistic-rhetorical devices?” Strikingly important, the analysis touches upon the context in which this address occurs.

1.5 DATA ANALYSIS

After the identification of the type of the most prominent stylistic and rhetorical devices, the researchers endeavor to give justifications and reasons for the purpose behind the use of such devices, arriving at the main findings. This use is attributed to the fact that Trump (in delivering his Inaugural addresses) intentionally has recourse to these prominent rhetorical-stylistic traits which designate it distinctive from other types of political speeches. However, the most noticeable stylistic-rhetorical traits displayed in Trump's 2017 Inaugural speech are:

1.5.1 Reference to the Nation and its Glorious History

This inaugural speech gives an occasion to Trump to take the nation together in order to remedy its injuries. He begins his inaugural with an optimistic statement envisioned to request all American citizens, but there is an implied criticism of what has done before. He in some way criticizes the other current presidents, including, Obama, in thanking his ancestor for a smooth transition. Trump avows that

“We, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and restore its promise for all of our people. Together we will determine the course of America and the world for many, many years to come. We will face challenges. We will confront hardships, but we will get the job done.”

Nevertheless, he asserts the resentment and bitterness of the campaign by giving reference to the history of USA by recalling Abraham Lincoln's words in his “second inaugural address in 1865, just months before the end of the American Civil War”(Tackach, 2002). The aim of evoking Lincoln's word is to give reference to history and patriotic people such as Lincoln who bitterly conferred the war and oppression, and struggled to put an end to all people's sufferings, so he ended his speech with the words of appeasement:

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

Here, Trump's Inaugural address shows his feeling of malevolence towards many and charity toward few. Moreover, he recalls Franklin Roosevelt's words which highlighted the strength and power of American as a country of freedom:

“We have learned that we cannot live alone, at peace; that our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations far away. We have learned that we must live as men, not as ostriches, nor as dogs in the manger.”

Through his statement, Trump wants to talk about consolidating borders and protectionism. All the way through his address, Trump gets seethed against the previous presidents and politicians around him. Further, he takes an additional outstandingly masked potshot at “Congressman and civil rights” actions. In sum, he deliberately mentions great men in history to draw the audience attention to the comparison between the old loyal leaders and the shaky irritated ones nowadays.

1.5.2 Person pronouns

The utilization of the first person plural 'we', and its derivatives 'us' and 'our' are often used in Trump's speech. He employs such pronouns to generate empathy and identification with the audience unconsciously or even subconsciously. In other words, he intends to inform them the 'I' and 'you' belong to the same social group and have common welfares which are crucial to shorten the distance between him and the spectators. He overuses such pronouns all through his address:

“We gather on these steps to carry out the orderly and peaceful transfer of power, and we are grateful to President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama for their gracious aid throughout this transition.”

Furthermore, he resorts to the use of the third pronoun plural *they, them* and *their* when referring to the glory of his ancestors and great men in the history. This pronoun is also used by Trump to give compassion and consideration to a particular group of great men in the American history:

“I am always leery of statements about transferring power back to the people. The term ‘people’s republic’ has often been associated with oppressive communist rule. I will be curious to see how, concretely, power that Americans supposedly do not have now will be transferred back to them.”

A look at this quote shows that Trump rarely manipulates the pronoun 'I' unless necessary. In this extract, he does so in order to display his mindfulness and loyalty to USA and its citizens. Indirectly, he wants to reflect his sorrowful feelings about the loss of great decent people. Indirectly, he attempts to arouse their feelings towards him as a sensitive president who strives to protect and bring happiness to them.

1.5.3 Metaphor

The utilization of metaphor is one of the most noticeable devices, commonly found in political texts. Most scholars are interested in how metaphor is utilized as an influential device in political speeches, utterances which can be either literal or figurative. Metaphor is associated with the event and adjusted with an area which the speech is delivered. The difference between literal and figurative language is discussed and any word can be understood as a metaphoric language in terms of the context in which metaphor is utilized (Charteris-Black, 2005:14). Put simply, the conception of metaphor depends on the knowledge of society, i.e., how metaphors are conceived by people, and the context in which metaphor is used (Goaty, 1997:137)

Trump focuses on the use of metaphor in order to arouse people's emotions. In the following extract, he exploits a very powerful metaphor in "rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones" to offer an everlasting unity of Americans, their commitment to common life values and historical experience:

“But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones, across the landscape of our nation; an education system, flush with cash, but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge.”

In addition, he uses the term "carnage" inappropriately, but metaphorically to refer to “a bloody slaughter and to describe America” as a country which attends only to throw together mistaken “populism against something that does not exist.” Trump wants to declare that in America, there exist a lot of problems and matters which are more important than carnage; therefore, he warns people against carnage. In fact he promises to put an end to fatal event of massacre and slaughter and ask people to be unified as one nation.

"This American carnage stops right here and stops right now. We are one nation – and their pain is our pain. Their dreams are our dreams; and their success will be our success."

1.5.4 Contrast

Contrast is a rhetorical tool by which a politician can express two conflicting ideas or parts which exhibit a kind of opposition (Beard, 2000: 39). Trump, like his predecessors, has recourse to contrast to emphasize a certain idea through showing opposition between past, present and future states:

"But that is the past. And now we are looking only to the future."

By using these three contrastive times (*past, now* and *future*), he tries to highlight some points (relating to time) and to attract the audience's attention towards a specific idea implied in his intended message (that Americans must make use of the past to build the present which leads to the well-fare of the Americans' future).

1.5.5 Parallelism

Parallelism is a "device which expresses several ideas in a series of similar structures" (Jones and Peccei, 2004: 51). It is a creation of well-adjusted procedure realized via the repetition of an identical syntactic form. Two types of parallelism are often recognized: "lexical and syntactic parallels". Lexical parallelism is "an effect of repetition of the same words or certain relationships between words, mostly referring to the same word group, such as verbs or nouns". Trump constantly makes use of parallelism to attain certain purposes as shown in the example below:

"I will fight for you with every breath in my body – and I will never, ever let you down."

Here, Trump attracts the audience attention towards a kind of a balanced relation through the repetition of the form of *I will + V*. This type of paralleled structures emphasizes the confirmation of fighting for people and never letting them down. The idea of fighting for Americans is coupled with the idea of not frustrating them

II. CONCLUSION

The stylistic-rhetorical analysis of Trump's (2017) Inaugural Address reveals that he utilizes different types of stylistic and rhetorical tools to achieve various purposes and functions. In most of the speech, he resorts to Divine sources and historical considerations as a way of attracting people's attention towards the glory of America's past. Furthermore, Trump gives reference to the unity of America in relation to his reference to some Biblical citations. He wants to emphasize the most significant standards and morals of the American people, to reveal multiplicity of religions in the USA, and to add spiritual credence and authority to his address.

Further, the insertion of the pronouns "we" and "us" in his speech aims to refer himself as an average citizen, a regular member of the American society, not a leader. Through the employment of this first person plural pronoun (*we*), Trump endeavors to reflexively construct empathy with the public. He wants to get himself closer to them, letting them have more compassion with his speech. He indirectly intends to inform his audience that they (he and his audience) be a member of the same class and share mutual interests which are crucial to abridge the remoteness between him and his audience. Covertly, this maneuvering of these pronouns can aid him to minimalize the group difference. The pronoun *You* is also peculiarly used to refer to his enemies and opponents; he directly appeals to rivals to show America's power and force. Metaphor and contrast gives Trump more freedom and flexibility to express his points of view more clearly.

Metaphor is exploited by Trump to give brightness and liveliness to words and expressions observed in his address. He succeeds to make a comparison between two entities which have something in common. He resorts to metaphor because it helps him to make the intended message more intense and more remarkable as it touches upon real images taken from real life. Through metaphorical utilization, he is able to reveal a straight representation of an object and consequently he can provide different pictorial and powerful imageries.

Parallelism and contrast are utilized to enhance Trump's power and force as they produce agreeable rhythm to his speech. In addition to being used to offer a solid musical attribute to his address and to make it unforgettable, the main function in Trump's address is to make it stress-free for the audience to track his speech. Generally, pronouns, metaphor parallelism and contrast (as stylistic-rhetorical devices) are used to emphasize persuasion.

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