

The Power of Empowering Women in Political Discourse:

The Case of Hillary Clinton's Speech

قوة تمكين المرأة في الخطاب السياسي: حالة خطاب هيلاري كلينتون

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Abstract

This article demonstrates how language can be used in a text as a prime effective means to orient readers, shape public opinion, and defend women's rights in a global setting, where some nations still deny women their most basic right which is the right to live a decent life. Despite the widespread and growing global support for women's rights, this denial still occurs today. The article also highlights the ways in which a political text may be utilized to convey the injustices experienced by women and offers strategies for empowering them to speak up and realize their goals. As a result of supporting women, the society will be empowered and the nation develops and advances. This is due to the fact that women are the vital component of every nation's development. Such notions are revealed by conducting a textual analysis of Hillary Clinton's 'Key Note Speech' based on Fairclough's (2020) Critical Discourse Analysis and the notion of ideology as proposed by Reisigl and Wodak (2009).

Key words: Women support, justice, power, political discourse, women's rights.

ملخص

توضح هذه المقالة كيف يمكن استخدام اللغة في النص كوسيلة فعالة لتوجيه القراء، وتشكيل الرأي العام والدفاع عن حقوق المرأة في بيئة عالمية، إذ لا تزال بعض الدول تحرم المرأة من حقها الأساسي وهو الحق في العيش الكريم. وعلى الرغم من الدعم العالمي الواسع للتطابق والتمتازيد لحقوق المرأة، إلا أن هذا لا يزال يحدث حتى اليوم. ويسلط المقال الضوء

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ماجستير في اللغة الإنكليزية وآدابها- العراق

هذه المفاهيم من خلال إجراء تحليل نصي لـ «خطاب الملاحظات الرئيسة» لهيلاري كلينتون استنادًا إلى الخطاب النقدي ليفيركلاف ومفهوم الأيديولوجية كما اقترحها رايسيجل ووداك (2009).

الكلمات المفتاحية: دعم المرأة، العدالة، السلطة، الخطاب السياسي، حقوق المرأة.

أيضًا على الطرق التي يمكن من خلالها استخدام النص السياسي لتبيان المظالم التي تعاني منها النساء، ويقدم استراتيجيات لتمكينهن من إبداء آرائهن وتحقيق أهدافهن. وبذلك يقوى المجتمع وتتطور الأمة وتتقدم. ويرجع ذلك إلى حقيقة أن المرأة هي العنصر الحيوي في تنمية كل أمة. لقد كُشفت مثل

Introduction

Texts contain a record of the author's inner thoughts. Social structures or events can be seen in texts by having a professional analyst do a specific analysis. This is because language's primary purpose is communication and it plays a critical role in the social members' daily interactions. A text is a semiotic aspect of social events including speeches, interviews, and written documents Fairclough (2010). As a clarification of this idea, this is an example from the political realm. Within the realm of politics, social members are designated to a particular social position in order to exhibit a given behavior. That is, politicians are social members who work in the field of politics. These social members may be diplomats, legislators, or mayors. As a result, their speech, discourse, or any writing they produce will depict social life from a specific perspective. According to Bhatia (1993), the

language used by politicians contains a language type that is different from the language used in daily interactions and communication, as well as in activities that members of the public engage in on a daily basis, like reading an email or a journal. The wording used by politicians is similar to that used in the law.

Political Discourse and Political Discourse Analysis

According to Srour (2021), language serves as a medium of association, and as a result, people connect with their environment and with each other in society. Thus, "language becomes expressive of the basic intrinsic notions in people such as their feelings, thoughts, emotions, and ideas" (p. 242) and consequently, their ideology. Furthermore, Srour (2023) considers that the more elite and in high social positions language users are, the more powerful and controlling

they become, which enables them “to promote specific ideologies within society” (p. 115). An example of this is from the field of politics and/or diplomacy through political discourse.

Political discourse is taken into account by the CDA perspective because it is crucial to the establishment, maintenance, and justification of dominance and power. In other words, authority and power are closely associated with particular social spheres (political, media, education, etc.), their professional staff, and academic or social institutions (Fairclough, 1992; Van Dijk, 1993). Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) is the term used to describe the linguistic study of political discourse. Hence, Political Discourse Analysis is viewed primarily as “a form of argumentation, and as involving more specifically practical argumentation, argumentation for or against particular ways of acting, argumentation that can ground decision” (Fairclough, I., Fairclough, N., 2012, p.1).

The knowledge of the ins and outs of language by a politician or a diplomat is a must. Accordingly, a politician “cannot effectively achieve the desired diplomatic effect without a comprehensive knowledge of the intricacies of the designated language” (Srouf, 2023, p. 116). In addition, political discourse is not

without significant features. According to Kenzhekanova (2015), political discourse is signified by the interaction of twelve key notions. Collectively, they establish the fundamental principles of political speech and enhance its semantico-pragmatic elements in order to impact the audience’s understanding and consciousness. The principles include the author’s persona, which embodies the traits of both status and personal discourses, communication factor, informational content, intentionality, estimation, conventionality, emotive style, modal usage, intertextuality, sociocultural context, and communication form and means.

Political discourse analysis, thus, is a significant field that arises many debates. The most popular explanation for it is that PDA focuses on the examination of political discourse, even though we still need to determine what discourse is political and what isn’t at a given point. Politicians, who are its producers or actors, are aware of the political discourse. The vast majority of political discourse actually consists of the thoughts and conversations of experienced politicians or political institutions, including prime ministers, presidents, and other members of parliament or government at local, state, and nationwide levels (Van Dijk, 1997).

Hillary Clinton as a Supporter of Women

A number of well-known public speakers from a variety of backgrounds focused their talks on empowering women. Women's rights were championed by speakers including Serena Williams, Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, Malala Yousafzai, and, of course, Hillary Clinton. Hillary Diane Clinton is a contentious American diplomat, political authority figure, and former solicitor. She formerly served as New York's representative, the country's first lady, and the 67th secretary of state. She created history by being the first woman to represent the majority in a US presidential election, even if she lost to Donald Trump in the 2016 contest (Caroli, 2022). Hillary Clinton had a successful political career in addition to being regarded as a feminist icon.

According to Hillary Clinton's speeches, women have the right to live lives free from prejudice, abuse, and servitude. She also campaigns for women's pay equity, voting rights, and access to education. Caroli (2022) posits that Hillary Clinton's remarks are important and crucial because she is a political person and a feminist. Moreover, Hillary Clinton supports her arguments with a variety of structures. In this instance, it is necessary to

ascertain how she uses language to draw in and sway the audience. Furthermore, the speaker herself was an important player in the decision of the author of the present article to choose this subject. This is because, in addition to being a controversial politician, Hillary Clinton is a symbol of feminism. She employs a variety of strategies in her talks to in order empower women and to draw in an audience, which increases the relatability, controversy, and influence of her lectures.

The Politician as a Leader: Personal Traits

Given that Hillary Clinton is a politician, it is imperative to emphasize the character attributes of a leader. There exist five characteristics that a politician or leader needs to possess in order to be a leader (Aichholzer & Willmann, 2020). They refer to them as "desired leadership traits" (p. 5). As a result, a political candidate who possesses these qualities will win over the audience members who are listening to the speech. These attributes enlighten the public about the candidate's anticipated tenure in the Oval Office as well as the details of the proposed implementation of the presidential plan. As a result, public expectations also influence these

characteristics. In other words, the public would rather see a presidential candidate display particular traits of leadership.

In addition, the audience looks for strong character attributes including morality, ideology, and devotion to core ideals. Also, they start to recognize the politician as one of their own and begin to identify with him. Therefore, the general public anticipates that the presidential candidate will complete the majority, if not all, of the necessary duties that he/she has committed to completing. He/she may therefore be required to work closely with the public and/or make frequent appearances in public via social media for purposes of communication. This means that in order to convince them that the presidential candidate can effectively lead the nation and resolve all of the delicate issues and societal difficulties, the audience looks for specific leadership traits from him.

Applying and materializing the promises made by the politician requires honesty. It is therefore anticipated that he will fulfill his pre-election pledges. The presidential politician needs to be powerful, devoted, and assertive in order to achieve this. These are attained via the candidate's decisiveness and extrovertism. In other words, the public does not like

it when a politician stoops to solve an issue or occasionally changes his mind. Aichholzer and Willmann (2020) state that steadfastness is a highly desired quality. Thus, a key characteristic of a leader is their commitment to and possession of strong principles. Furthermore, a great leader must possess the important personality attributes of dependability and trustworthiness. Concurrently, the public so much anticipates that a leader will have these qualities.

Review of Literature

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a theory and method that Quyen (2022) uses to analyze a speech by Hillary Clinton titled "Women's rights are human rights." This analysis reveals how language in particular is embedded within power and ideology, and how language and society are related. The first introduced are the notions of power and ideology as well as the theoretical foundation of CDA. The societal background of women's position is also disclosed, encompassing both historical and contemporary women's positions. After that, the study briefly discusses Hillary Clinton's contributions to the fight for women's rights. As such, the foundation for the analysis of the speech is established in terms of

methodology by the significance of Systemic Functional Grammar to CDA and a framework of CDA. The speech is examined in the article using CDA as a framework where three steps make up the analysis: description, interpretation, and explanation. The final section of the article offers a summary of the main conclusions, closing thoughts, implications for teaching and learning translation, and suggestions for additional research.

The vocabulary used by Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in their final three presidential debates is examined by Kashif et al. (2022). The writers specifically look at each candidate's word choices. The goal is to use Systemic Functional Grammar to communicate the persuasive methods with respect to the frequency of occurrence of transitivity. The results show that although Hillary Clinton employs a lesser percentage of existential, relational, behavioral, and mental processes, Trump uses a higher percentage of material and verbal processes. Hence, according to Kashif et al. (2022), these demonstrate that Trump has a concrete and stated opinion on important American issues. Hillary Clinton's use of the procedures, however, presents her strategy as sympathetic, thoughtful, and compassionate.

The goal of a study by Susatyo and Wardhono (2019) is to comprehend and describe the language style that Hillary Clinton used in her March 14, 2018 speech titled "Learn English: Hillary Clinton makes history speech" that was posted on YouTube.com, with a subtitle. The approach utilized to collect the data is repeatedly listening to, reading, writing, and recording Hillary Clinton's speech texts in order to comprehend, identify, and clarify the linguistic style employed throughout. The purpose of their qualitative descriptive study is to analyze and identify the appropriate language style. Understanding this can be aided by Hillary Clinton's use of language style in her speech. Rhetorical slogans and figurative language can also help her to communicate complex ideas more effectively. Accordingly, the authors believe that a message can be made "alert" by using stored messages. Employing diverse syntactic patterns or metaphorical language can aid listeners in recalling a crucial aspect of the content. This is because the persuasive appeal may be strengthened by the messages presented.

Design, Methodology, and Framework

The article adopts a qualitative design. Qualitative research is a type of social action that sheds light

on how people understand social interaction, how they evaluate their life experiences, and how they perceive the social reality of others. In accordance with the researcher's goals, various texts, images, field notes, interviews, and/or other forms of data collecting may be used in this kind of study (Zohrabi, 2013; Davidson et al., 2016). This article is also descriptive since it "aims to accurately and systematically describe a situation or a phenomenon in order to identify characteristics, features, and categories" (Bhandari, 2020, p. 2) of a particular text in the field of political discourse which is a selected text uttered by Hillary in relation to supporting women.

This article utilizes the first level of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis which is the textual level. The purpose is to pinpoint the linguistic features of Hillary Clinton's speech titled 'Keynote Speech'. At this level the analyst examines the following notions: vocabulary and word choice, grammar and sentence structure such as phrases, repetitions, prepositions, specific use of nouns and pronouns, negation, and modality. It is important to note that Fairclough (2010) believes that not all the features may occur in a single text. Accordingly, the analyst must include "only those features peculiar to the text at hand" (p. 132).

The article also uses the notion of ideology as proposed by Reisigl and Wodak (2009) in their Discourse Historical Approach (DHA). To them, the negative aspect of power through ideology rests on the following three points:

1. Ideology is regarded as a worldview from one perspective only. Such a perspective includes opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and representations that are shared only by a specific group of social members.
2. Ideology is maintained for the purpose of establishing and prolonging imbalanced power relations. This is manifested mainly through discourse.
3. Ideology has a prime function. It is a vehicle for radically transforming power relations (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009, p. 88).

However, any subversion of the three elements empowers the group that subverts them. Hence, the prime notion is how ideology is used: to either manipulate for personal political reasons or to maintain justice and empower. This depends on the politician or speaker, their background, and their intention to either balance or imbalance the power scale.

Analysis

Hillary Clinton talks about women's human rights in her speech.

She utilizes discourse markers in order to commence her speech. She also presents the historical events at the beginning of her speech. This is crucial because she wants to bolster the arguments she will make on human rights later in her address. When she states, “Forty million displaced persons are trapped and refugee camps in addition to 58 disparate and rival rust Nations struggle to agree on a Virgin of Peace to replace the others of War,” she employs specific nouns to convey numbers (Hillary, 2018, p. 1). Hillary Clinton backs up her assertion with accuracy in these remarks. They suggest that there are other peace agreements with different ideas about how to bring about peace.

Hillary Clinton employs the hyperbole technique after introducing herself by stating, “but getting agreement on a single text was fiendishly difficult” (Hillary, 2018, p. 1). A use like this indicates that the difficulty was higher than usual. Additionally, Hillary Clinton states that “the delegates drafted, revised, rewrote and argued” using a series of past tense action verbs (Hillary, 2018, p. 3). The procedures that the political representatives of Human Rights took to finalize the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are revealed by

such a use. Furthermore, when Hillary Clinton says:

“Now, with midnight approaching and December 9th drawing to a close it was time for a final vote Eleanor knew that she had the support to win but you worried that any descent would Direct The Fragile consensus she had negotiated”(Hillary, 2018, p. 2).

She employs personification and the discourse marker “now”. Personification is employed in this phrase for both the ‘midnight’, where it is personified as an individual approaching closely, and the date, where it is personified as one who is approaching a destination. Additionally, the word “wreck” in “wreck the fragile consensus” (Hillary, 2018, p. 2) personifies the word “descent,” suggesting that someone is dismantling a specific weak agreement.

Hillary Clinton employs the device of ‘if’ conditional, modality, vagueness, and personification through nominals as follows:

“History has proved her right. If Eleanor where here today I think she would be appalled but not surprised to see dictators still oppressing the people from Moscow to Beijing and beyond. you would see authoritarians growing in influence corruption and economic injustice still deeply entrenched and in too many places getting worse...

you would see racism and xenophobia still turning us against one another” (Hillary, 2018, p. 2).

With these remarks, Hillary Clinton identifies and explains her position, which assumes that the nation is one of those that is home to dictators. For Hillary Clinton, Eleanor would be horrified that racism still persists in these nations as a result.

Furthermore, in “the full measure of freedom the full experience of dignity and the full benefits of citizenship” (Hillary, 2018, p. 2), certain vocabulary items are repeated constantly to highlight the existence of activists and leader citizens who have battled for generations to remove all barriers that prevented people, especially women, from living decent lives and in a dignified manner. Discourse markers like “let us, yet, still, too, you’d see, it’s time for all of us, so... Yes, I came here today, but I knew” (Hillary, 2018, p. 3) are employed by Hillary Clinton to establish a cordial rapport with the audience and dispel any formality between her and the audience. Also, she uses metaphor and persuasion when she says:

“The goals of Human Rights has been close to my heart for a long time. Looking back now I can see how lessons from my family and faith about treating others as equals along with the

activism of the 1960s and the work I did as a young lawyer put me on this path” (Hillary, 2018, p. 3).

It is clear from these words that Hillary Clinton is using emotive language to win over the listeners. She thus employs a support to bolster her assertion, based on her actual experiences. She therefore illustrates how progress has been gained in the fight against those who oppose women’s human rights through the application of cause and effect. “Human rights are not just a stuff of philosophy or high diplomacy but they must be substance of everyday life’ as Eleanor famously said, they begin in the small places close to home” (Hillary, 2018, p. 3). This is a noteworthy usage of modality where Hillary Clinton employs the ‘must’ modal of obligation in this instance. Its function is significant because it gives no option for the listener but to regard what this speaker says.

Democracies and human rights are interdependent, and as such, they both need to be safeguarded. This is made clear by the imagery she uses in order to discuss these two ideas and by her suggestion that they “are under siege” (p. 4). This imagery has to do with personification and battle. Human rights seem to be like a person who is stuck and desperately needs help.

Therefore, the metaphorical device amplifies the image and increases its impact on the listeners.

Interpretation and Conclusion

Hillary Clinton covers a number of significant ideas on women's empowerment in her address. She lists every requirement that women must meet in order to exist, beginning at home, spreading throughout society, and eventually consuming culture and customs, beyond space and time. She suggests that women should be employed, but not all jobs should be assigned to them by force. First, a woman's employment is an act of empowerment for her own right. In order for women to be able to support themselves and their families, they need to be able to obtain a fair income, which is one of the specific requirements for this position.

Third, a woman with such a pay can live with her family in decency. This implies that working women are also necessary for families. Therefore, a woman's family would have financial security if she had a respectable career. As a result, the family's children will also have the opportunity to receive good education, nutrition, and care. Fourth, according to the Declaration, women are entitled to freely establish a union, which entails the freedom

to exercise their influence in society. Fifth, women are entitled to Social Security benefits, particularly as they age, lose their jobs, or become incapacitated. The idea in question has a profound impact on society as a whole.

Accordingly, if a woman does not obtain adequate schooling or does not get knowledge at all, this will impact her children as well as the way she nurtures them. Future generations as well as the entire society will be badly impacted by this. Hillary Clinton switches from using a formal to a more informal style later in her speech. As a result, she switches between topics, from discussing the family to discussing politics and laws, and finally she discusses diplomatic relations and international law. Then she goes back again to talk on an individual basis.

This is important because it shows that Hillary Clinton appears to be sitting down with the audience and having a brief discussion. She gains the listener's trust by using conversational language that is compassionate and breaks down barriers between them. She goes on to discuss empowering women when she says that the community is a three-legged table. This concept of advancing women's rights and fostering societal prosperity, transcends the individual to the collective. Such a metaphor is

significant because it illustrates the role that women play in society: when a woman is weak, society cannot be strong and as such, it becomes unstable.

In conclusion, Hillary Clinton finalized her speech by stating that she will continue to support women until society improves, until men begin to support women, and until every woman and child live in dignity and prosperity; qualities that are naturally bestowed upon them since birth. Hence, this analysis reveals three things. First, politicians must support women, whether through policy plans or legislations. Second, Hillary Clinton is a fierce defender of women's human rights and third, politics and diplomacy can be molded to be in the favour and service of the public good.

According to Hillary Clinton, women become more vulnerable to abuse when they are not allowed to participate actively in politics or even in the political action itself. Her speech demonstrates her decisiveness and gives the audience a chance to take action to defend women's human rights. In order to help women achieve support and international acknowledgment that these rights are not just women's rights but also inclusive and "part and parcel" of human rights, the speech projects the idea of women's rights onto the global stage. The language elements indicate efforts to empower women. They serve as an urgent call to action in order to end all historical discrimination against women and enable them to take the initiative.

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