

A Stylistic Analysis of American President Trump's Speech on Illegal Immigration and the Opposition's Response to It

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Abstract

This study is a stylistic analysis of President Donald Trump's speech on illegal immigration and the Democrats' response to it. The objective is to identify the stylistically significant features in the speeches and discuss their effects on the target audience. In order to explain the stylistic features in the context of the speech, qualitative and descriptive method was adopted. The results show that both President Trump and the Democrats used persuasive and defensive language. Subject specific and descriptive words which conjure the image of the crisis at southern border are found prevalent in the speeches. Syntactically, simple and complex declarative sentences, anaphora and parallelism are found prevalent. Both President Trump and the Democrats used rhetorical appeals and devices as persuasion strategies to convince the audience to accept their bids. In sum, the findings underline the political antagonism between President Trump and the Democrats achieved via linguistic devices.

Introduction

Speech is a formal talk delivered to a target audience in a particular context. Its making is prompted by certain objectives or goals that the speaker wants to achieve. The speaker's purpose of delivering a speech could be to

inform, educate or persuade the audience. Political speech borders on some issues of interest to the members of the public, which the politicians take advantage of to communicate their political ideologies. Through making speeches, politicians influence the people's political thoughts, opinions or beliefs. Political speeches are prepared and delivered in a designated political forum, context or domain. In democratic nations, political speeches are integral part of government activities. Irimiea (2010) cited in Hakansson (2012) claims that political speeches have been regarded as a major part of American democracy, and they have been so throughout history. The speeches are usually delivered by leading politicians on behalf of a political party, government or a nation as in the case of this study.

Politics as the art of governance is dependent on language, because it plays vitals roles in communicating political ideologies and performing other political activities. Chilton (1998) refers to language as 'the universal capacity of humans in all societies to communicate and politics is the art of governance.' Language enables politicians to conceive and transmit ideologies to the electorates. In fact, the success or failure of politicians sometimes depends on their choice of language. Orwell (2013) opines that in order to achieve their political goals, politicians use persuasive language to affect the political beliefs of the electorates. Similarly, Stepanyan (2015nabolz) posits that politicians often pay attention to various rhetorical techniques to enhance their ideas. Similarly, Rozina and Karapetjana (2009) aver that the language applied in political discourse uses a broad range of rhetorical devices at the phonological, syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic and textual levels.

The foregoing implies that language is a vital and indispensable instrument in politics. Therefore, this study investigates the stylistic features of President Donald Trump's address to the nation on Tuesday 8th January, 2019 and the opposition's response to it. This is achieved by examining the lexical, the syntactic, the rhetorical features and the figurative expressions in the speeches and discuss how they affect the target audience.

Literature Review

The language of politics is the variety of language used in political domains to achieve political goals. Majali (2015) is of the view that political language embodies message meant to inform, persuade or educate the target audience. It deals with issues of interest to the people, especially those that affect their lives negatively or positively such as war and peace. It is a variety of language that politicians use to influence the thoughts and beliefs of the electorates in order to gain acceptance and acquire votes. Safwat (2015) observes that political language deals with the use of power to organise people's mind and opinion. It is associated with the various talks about getting and maintaining power. Thorne (1997) argues that political language can be recognised in a variety of forms but in each case, lexical and syntactic choices are directly linked to the audience, purpose, and context of the discourse. Political speeches as she further points out can be scripted as part of political campaign and fund raising, or unscripted as in responses made in the house of commons, media interview, manifestoes etc. Political language, therefore, can be written to be spoken or impromptu and is shaped by context, audience and the goal(s) that a politician wants achieve.

Style and Stylistics

In ordinary usage, the term style refers to the way something is done or made. This definition includes style in architecture, in hairdo, in fashion, in dancing etc. As a linguistic concept, style refers to the manner of writing or speaking that characterizes an individual or a group. Etymologically, the term style is derived from a Latin word “stylus” which means writing instrument used by the Romans in ancient times for writing on wax or stone tablet (Fakuade, 1998; Galperin, 2016). The term later metamorphosed to style and developed many senses which rendered it ambiguous or polysemantic. This means that it can be defined from different perspectives.

Leech and Short (2007) argue that in its most general interpretation, the word ‘style’ has fairly uncontroversial meaning: it refers to the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose and so on. This definition suggests that the circumstances surrounding a speech event or situation, the socio-cultural background of the speaker and what he/she wants to achieve constitute style. Murtaza and Qasmi (2013) define style as a writer’s individual mode of expression, way of putting his conceptions into words. It involves a long list of choices at paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes: choice of lexical items, use of tropes and figures of speech, phrasal and syntactic structures and the shape of organization of paragraph. They further maintain that these choice make the writer an individual as clearly discernible and differentiable as he is in the frequency and quality of his voice, in his behavioural and idiosyncrasies and ways of walking and laughing. It is the whole man, the whole of his self that speaks through style. This detailed definition

is reflective of Buffun's definition of style as a man, which places emphasis on a speaker or author.

Crystal and Davy (1985) define style as some or all the language habits of one person, that is, the selection of language habits, the occasional linguistic idiosyncrasies which characterise an individual uniqueness, or some or all the language habits shared by a group of people at one time, or over a period of time; or when used in evaluative sense, it refers to the effectiveness of the mode of expression.

It can then be inferred that the term style pertains to a distinctive linguistic or a peculiar way language is used by an individual or a group to create effect. It involves selection of words and patterning them to affect a target audience in a given communicative context. In literature, style is often seen in terms of aesthetic use of language, especially in literature.

Stylistics is the study of style in language used in communication. Crystal and Davy (1985) point out that the aim of stylistics is to analyse language habits with the main purpose of identifying from the general mass of linguistic features common to English as used on every conceivable occasion, those features which are restricted to certain kinds of social context, to explain, where possible, why such features have been used, as opposed to other alternatives; and to classify these features into categories based upon a view of their function in social context.

Matthew (1997) defines stylistics as the linguistic study of style in language; traditionally of variations in usage among literary and other texts; now more generally

of systematic variations in either writing or speech, which relates to the types of discourse or its context. Stylistics attempts to describe, analyse and explain how a writer used language to achieve desired effect in communication. Similarly, Norgaard, Montoro and Busse (2010) are of the view that stylisticians use linguistic models, theories and frameworks as their analytical tools in order to describe and explain how and why a text works as it does, and how we come from the words on the page to its meaning. They further argue that stylistics involves identifying linguistic features used by an author or speaker at the phonological, lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic or discursive to achieve certain communicative effect.

Stylistics is a branch of linguistics concerned with the study of style in texts, especially but not exclusively, in literary works. Also, called literary linguistics, stylistics focuses on figures of speech, tropes and other rhetorical devices used to provide variety and distinctiveness of a speech or writing (Nordquist, 2018). Stylistics studies language in both literary and non-literary texts in using linguistic approach. ArtColumba (2018) refers to it as a discipline devoted to the study of style. It is a systematic, methodical, or scientific study of style objectively. A scientific approach to the study of style relates to linguistics, a science that is concerned with the study of how language works.

Stylistics is, therefore, is the analysis and description of linguistic features of both literary and literary texts. It deals with the identification and description of distinctive linguistic features and all linguistic levels.

Studies on Political Speeches

Many scholars have conducted studies on political speeches from different perspectives. In this section, some of the studies are briefly reviewed. Safwat (2015) investigates the role of language in communication and interpretation of intentions in selected speeches of John Kerry in Presidential Campaign in 2004 and George Bush's inaugural address in 2001. The study focused on the pragmatic functions of locution, illocution and perlocutionary acts of the speeches. The findings show that the overall relative frequency percentages for the selected speeches are: commissives 40%, assertives 35%, directives, 20% and expressive 5%. The results show that Kerry relied more on sentences that performed commissive acts than other speech acts since he committed to some future actions and promised to make the world fit the words. Bush used sentences with assertive acts more than other speech acts since the assertive has truth value which can only enhance the effect of the asserted proposition. Hence, the data are characterized by a preponderance of commissive, assertive and directive acts that are mostly used as mobilization strategies, especially in political campaigns, where it is essential for candidates to their listeners to win election.

Savoy (2010) carries out a lexical analysis of US political speeches. The study describes a US political corpus comprising 245 speeches given by senators John McCain and Barack Obama during the years 2007-2008. The main characteristics of the collection were presented and the common English words most frequently used by the two political leaders were compared with ordinary usage. He employs a Z score combined with smoothing

technique of the underlying probability to identify those terms that adequately characterize subset of this corpus and then compared that measure with mutual information, chi-square and log-likelihood approaches. Through applying the Z score method to various corpus subsections, the most significant words used by both candidates during the two years were identified. How to track both the overused and the underused terms by a given speaker or how the treatment of a given topic varied during the campaign was also demonstrated.

McClay (2017) conducts a descriptive analysis of Donald Trump's campaign speeches. The study aims to reveal the ways that Trump constructs a reality for his audience through representations of social actors. The results show that Trump's speeches reveal an ideology consistent with strategic patterns of us vs them. By identifying this pattern, the study highlights the importance of understanding the underlying ideology of Trump's messages in the interpretation of the discourse he uses to frame it.

Anderson (2014) carries out a stylistic analysis of some political speeches by John Evans Atta Mills with a view to unravel the stylistically significant features prevalent in the speeches, identify the possible relationship between the background of the speaker and the stylistic features, and ascertain whether or not the inherent stylistic features project him as a man of peace as he was acclaimed. The approach is eclectic which encapsulates the metafunctions as postulated in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and Onah's Concept of Peace as perceived in the African Traditional culture as its framework. The data analysis is structured on

Fairclough's three dimensional models which includes; a textual analysis, a discursive analysis and a social-cultural analysis (2001). The findings show that the speaker employed stylistic features such as the positive self-projection, repetition, code switching, biblical allusions, historical allusion, a fatherly imagery and the imagery of preacher. Also, inherent in these stylistic features is the speaker's mental disposition, his world view and the traces of his background. The manner in which these prevalent stylistic features were employed by the speaker with respect to the underlying socio-political, socio-cultural and religious situation of the country project him as the man of peace.

Horvath (2009)'s study examines the persuasive strategies of President Obama's public speaking as well as the covert ideology of the same, enshrined in his inaugural address. The analysis is grounded in Norman Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. The selected corpus ideological and persuasive components are assessed, thus revealing Obama's persuasive strategies. The results of the study have shown that the key ideological components of Obama's speech can be summarized into the following concepts: pragmatism, liberalism, inclusiveness, acceptance of religious and ethnic diversity and unity. The keywords analysis showed that the most prominent words employed by Obama are 'nation', 'new' and 'America', and a overall dominance of the personal pronoun 'we', which is evidence of Obama's inclusive perception of American society and the need for unity, which is understood as necessary at a time of national peril.

Gushthini, Amalia and Sobarna (2018) conduct a pragmatic analysis of Donald Trump's and Hillary Clinton's speeches at the 2016 USA presidential and how they served as instruments of power. The analysis is divided into three steps: describing the context, analyzing the illocutionary acts, and analyzing the power dimensions. The results of the study show that the speakers use the speech act as an instrument of power with classification of representative, commissive, and expressive. In this regard, the researchers found that the speakers demonstrated their power to try to convince the voters in their society to trust them to be the president. The result also showed that the speeches are powerful enough to sway voters in voting.

Munir's (2014) study is a stylistic analysis of Barack Obama's second inaugural address. The study reveals and explains the use of figurative language in Barack Obama's second inaugural address, and identifies the lexical and syntactic structures of the sentences in which the figurative language is used. The study employed a descriptive qualitative method since it emphasized on describing the use of figurative language in Barack Obama's second inaugural address. The research reveals that Obama employs seven types of figurative language in his second inaugural address. They are metaphor, synecdoche, hyperbole, personification, metonymy, paradox and simile. It also showed that the lexical and syntactic structure of the sentences in which figurative language is employed. The analysis of the lexical structure shows that the figurative language is employed in the form of words, phrases and clauses, Furthermore, the syntactic structure shows that the figurative language in Barack Obama's second inaugural

address is employed in simple, complex and compound sentences. Barack Obama achieves effectiveness by the use of figurative language in his second inaugural address.

Abuya's (2012) study focuses on the pragma-stylistic features in President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's Inaugural Speech, specifically the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts. The analysis hinges on Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) speech acts theories. The findings of the study revealed the following sentential patterns: assertives -55%, directives-10%, verdictive -15%, commissives, -75%, and declaratives-40%. These results imply that President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan relied more on sentences that performed commissive acts than other speech acts in his inaugural speech. This demonstrates that politicians are apt to show appreciation to the people after victory at the polls. Hence the speech act analysis assists in the interpretation of the messages in the selected speeches.

In sum, the reviewed studies show that political speeches have been studied from different perspectives. While this study is similar to some of the reviewed works in that it pays attention to stylistic features of speeches, the divergence lies in the comparative approach to different speeches with apparently opposing ideologies.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The full transcripts of President Donald Trump's speech and the Democrats' response to it were down loaded from the website of *The New York Times*. The first is President Donald Trump's bid for the building of the physical wall, while the second and the third are responses of the

Democrats to it delivered by Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate leader Chuck Schumer. Qualitative approach is employed to investigate the stylistic features of the speeches. Specifically, descriptive approaches propounded by Crystal and Davy (1985) and Leech and (2007) were adopted. The two approaches are adopted to enhance detailed and in-depth analysis of the linguistic features. Crystal and Davy (1985) suggest an ordered linguistic description which seems most satisfactory in realizing the general aim of stylistic analysis. The approach entails taking the object of study—a particular piece of language, or text—and discussing it in terms of a number of interrelated levels of description. At each level, one of the ways language is organized is studied. The levels are phonetic and graphetics, phonological and graphological, grammatical, lexical, and semantics. Leech and Short's checklists of linguistic and stylistic categories entail placing the categories under four general headings: Lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, cohesion and context. Semantics is not listed as a separate category because it is easier to arrive at semantic interpretation through other categories.

The data presentation and analysis has been divided into two parts. The speech of Donald Trump and the responses of the Democrats are analysed separately before comparison of the linguistic features was made under conclusion. In the course of analyzing each speech, excerpts were used to support claims and discussions. In his speech, President Trump vigorously persuades the citizenry to accept and support his bid for building physical border wall. His choice of language is persuasive and defensive.

Lexical Choices

Lexis in stylistics pertains to the choice of words often referred to as diction. Stylistic analysis at this level, deals with the author's or speaker's choice of vocabulary whether, simple, complex, or technical. The analysis of President Trump's speech shows that the key words are subject-specific. They are directly linked to the subject of the speech, that is, illegal immigrants, which led to the controversial border security options between President Trump and the Democrats. The lexical choices depict the persuasive and defensive stance of Trump and the Democrats. Trump employed descriptive words/phrases to conjure up the picture of the border crisis in the minds of the audience. Most of the nouns are pre-modified or post modified by adjectives to give vivid description of the situation at the southern border. The words/phrases in italics in the two paragraphs below describe the security threat at the southern border.

Every day, Customs and Border Protection agents encounter *thousands of illegal immigrants* trying to enter our country. We are out of space to hold them, and we have no way to promptly return them back home to their country. America proudly welcomes *millions of lawful* immigrants who enrich our society and contribute to our nation, but all Americans are hurt by *uncontrolled illegal* immigrants.

This is *a humanitarian* crisis. A crisis of *the heart*, and a crisis of *the soul*. Last month, *20,000 migrant children* were illegally brought into the United States, *a dramatic* increase. These children are used as human

pawns by *vicious* coyotes and *ruthless* gangs. One in three women is sexually assaulted on the dangerous trek up through Mexico. Women and children are *the biggest* victims, by far, of our broken system.

The first paragraph contains contrastive description of the illegal and the lawful immigrants. Trump uses this contrast to justify his bid for building the border wall to frustrate illegal immigrants but encourage the legally qualified. The adjectival phrases pre-modifying the noun *immigrants* give a vivid description of the crisis at the southern border. In the second paragraph, the head noun *crisis* is pre and *post* modified to give detailed description of it. The first is pre-modified by the adjective *humanitarian*, the second and the third are post modified by the prepositional phrases '*of the heart and of the soul* respectively. The repetition of the synonymous words *heart and soul* creates rhythmic flow, which appeals to the feelings of the audience. The adjectives are therefore deliberately used to create a lucid mental picture of the crisis at the southern border in the minds of the audience.

Syntactic structure

The speech is predominantly in declarative sentences. A declarative sentence makes statement or assertion and its subject precedes the predicate and serves as the theme. Information on the subject is supplied in the predicate, which is technically referred to as the rheme. In political speeches, politicians use declarative sentences to declare or state facts.

Every day, Customs and Border Protection agents encounter thousands of illegal immigrants trying to enter our country. *We* are out of space to hold them, and *we* have no way to promptly return them back home to their country. *America* proudly welcomes millions of lawful immigrants who enrich our society and contribute to our nation, but *all Americans* are hurt by uncontrolled illegal migration.

Sentence one of the above paragraph is a complex declarative sentence. The phrase “Every day”, at the initial position of the sentence is used to draw the attention of the audience to the frequency or prevalence of the illegal immigrants at the southern border. The second sentence is a compound declarative. The subjects of the simple sentences linked by the additive conjunctions are placed at the beginning of each. The third sentence is a compound-complex declarative sentence. Like the second sentence, the subjects are served to the beginning of the linked sentences. The implication of using complex declarative sentences is that immature readers may encounter problems of explicating and comprehending the pieces of information, since more than one idea is expressed. Apart from the use varieties of complex declarative sentences loaded with various information, President Trump also used simple declarative sentences. Examples are highlighted in the following paragraph:

The border wall would very quickly pay for itself. The cost of illegal drugs exceeds \$500 billion a year. Vastly more than the \$5.7

billion we have requested from Congress.
The wall will also be paid for indirectly by
the great new trade deal we have made with
Mexico.

The two simple sentences shown in italics are terse. They are concise and easy to comprehend. The sentences are appealing and free of superfluous words. The reader may easily read and comprehend them.

Rhetorical devices

Rhetorical devices are linguistic strategies employed by speakers/writers to create special effects. They are used as tools for persuasions.

Anaphora and Parallelism

These are slightly differing rhetorical strategies used to emphasize or reinforce an idea or stance. Anaphora is the repetition of a word or words at the initial of a phrase, while parallelism is the repetition of parts or an entire sentence in a similar way. It is employed to convey several ideas in a series of similar constructions. The use of Anaphora and parallelism enable speakers or writers to make emphasis or draw the audience's attention to a particular part of message. The repetition of similar structures creates rhythmic flow and appeals to the readers. The two italicised sentences in the paragraph below are examples of the use anaphora and parallelism.

This is the tragic reality of illegal immigration on our southern border. This is the cycle of human suffering that I am determined to end. My administration has presented Congress with a detailed proposal to secure

the border and stop the criminal gangs, drug smugglers, and human traffickers. It's a tremendous problem.

Anaphora is an effective stylistic device used to achieve emphasis, stress a point, or reinforce an idea. The repetition of "This is" at the initial of the first two sentences is an example of anaphora, while the entire sentences are parallel structures employed to make emphasis and appeal to the emotions of the audience. They also create a mental picture of the humanitarian crisis at the border.

Antithesis

Antitheses are contrastive pairs. They are syntactic devices consisting of two parts or ideas in opposition. They are antonyms placed either at the beginning or end of a sentence. The stylistic function of antithesis is to emphasize contrasting features (Lehtsalu, Liiv and Mutt, 1973). The paragraph below is an example:

This is a choice between *right and wrong, justice and injustice*. This is about whether we fulfill our sacred duty to the American citizens we serve. When I took the oath of office, I swore to protect our country and that is what I will always do so help me God.

The words in italics in the above paragraph are contrastive pairs. Trump used them to appeal to the audience and entice them to make critical judgment and decision, having presented them with facts on both sides. He sees his bid for building the border wall as *right* and

justice and the Democrats' rejection of it as *wrong* and *injustice*.

Rhetorical appeal

Rhetoric is the art of persuasion in speech making. It is the application of different persuasion methods to influence the thoughts or beliefs of the audience by a speech maker. Aristotle recognised ethos, pathos and logos as persuasion modes. These are used to stir the emotions of the audience and prompt action. President Trump uses rhetorical strategies to persuade the audience to accept his proposal. In the opening of the speech, Trump demonstrated the use of ethos. He identifies with the Americans (My fellow Americans) and expresses his personal decision to address the citizenry on the security threat at the southern border. He says 'My fellow Americans, tonight I'm speaking to you because there is a growing humanitarian and security crisis at our southern border'. The use of the personal pronoun 'I' excludes any other person. It demonstrates self-confidence, commitment and shouldering of responsibility.

The credibility and capability of the President in the opening of the speech is followed by logos. He uses facts and figures to persuade the citizenry to accept and support his proposal for building border security wall. "In the last two years, *ICE officers made 266,000 arrests of aliens with criminal records including those charged or convicted of 100,000 assaults, 30,000sex crimes, and 4,000 violent killings.*" He supports the figures with hyperbolic expression. "Thousands of Americans have been brutally killed by those who illegally entered our country and thousands more lives will be lost if we don't

act right now.” The president used these strong evidences to magnify the looming danger in the minds of the audience in order to prompt actions.

Having given strong facts and evidences, president Trump shifts to the use of pathos to appeal the emotion of the audience. He says “This is a humanitarian crisis. A crisis of the heart and a crisis of the soul”. The repetition of the noun crisis creates rhythmic flow, and stirs the emotion of the audience. It is followed by a strong evidence to convince the audience to accept his proposal for the building of physical security wall. “Last month, 20,000 migrant children were illegally brought into the United States, a dramatic increase.” Another appeal to the emotion of the audience made by Trump reads “This is the tragic reality of illegal immigration on our southern border. This is the cycle of human suffering that I am determined to end”. The two sentences contain repetition at their beginning which appeals to the audience and prompts action. The use of the two sentences create visual image of the situation at the sound border in the minds of the audience. These are intended to convince the audience to see his reason for pushing the border wall funding.

Metaphors

Metaphor is a direct comparison of two things or ideas of distinctive qualities. It is the transfer of meaning based on the similarities of two things. Lehtsalu, Liiv and Mutt (1973) are of the view that besides its function of denoting an object, a metaphor serves to give it expressive characteristics. Politicians use metaphor frequently in their speeches to present their political

ideologies or claims. The following are examples found in President Trump's speech:

Our *southern border* is a *pipeline* for vast quantities of illegal drugs including meth, heroin, cocaine, and fentanyl.

America's *heart broke* the day after Christmas when a young police officer in California was savagely murdered in cold blood by an illegal alien, just came across the border.

In the first sentence of the above excerpt, Trump compares the southern border to a pipeline. Pipelines are channels meant for the flow of oil. In this context, Trump compares the heavy and easy smuggling of drugs into the country through the southern border to the easy flow of oil in pipelines. He uses this metaphor to draw the attention of Americans to the intensity of the crisis at the southern border.

In the second sentence, Trump uses the metaphor of a state as a person in his bid for the building of the border wall. The reference to America as if it is a person with physical heart is meant to make the audience see the murder of an American by an illegal alien as a tragedy, which something must be done about it.

Hyperbole

Hyperbolic expressions are among the distinguishable features of political speeches. They are used to overstate issues and events more than is true or usual. Politicians use hyperbolic expressions to slant the truth and divert the attention of the audience. Hyperbole in this context is employed to move sway the minds of the audience away

from the reality in order to prompt action. In political speeches, politicians often use hyperbole as propaganda strategy. They often convey their actions and ideologies by exaggeration or overstatement.

Over the years, *thousands of Americans have been brutally killed* by those who illegally entered our country and thousands more lives will be lost if we don't act right now. America proudly welcomes *millions of lawful immigrants* who enrich our society and contribute to our nation, but all Americans are hurt by uncontrolled illegal migration.

The above examples show President Trump's use of propaganda by exaggeration to sway the minds of the audience. He employed hyperbolic expressions to persuade Americans, stir their emotions and gain their supports for the building of the border wall. Trump uses 'thousands' to conceal the truth and persuade the audience to support his idea. In the second example, Trump made an overstatement of the number of lawful immigrants cross the American borders. *Millions* in this context implies indefinitely large, extensive, great, vast, immense, or gigantic.

Democrats' Response (Nancy Pelosi and Senator Chuck Schumer)

These speeches are responses of the Democrats to Trump's address to the nation about his bid for the funding of the border wall. The responses sound antagonistic because, while the President is making a bid for funding the construction of a physical barrier to

barricade the immigrants, the Democrats are making their bid for better alternative-the funding of innovation-modern technology.

Lexical Choice

The lexis is directly related to the stance of the Democrats for a better way of resolving the border crisis and reopening the government. The choice of words by the Democrats clearly depicts their opposition to the President's idea. The words are therefore defensive and persuasive. The words in italics in the following sentences are examples:

The fact is on the very first day of this Congress, House Democrats passed Senate Republican legislation to reopen government and fund *smart, effective* border security solutions.

But the president is rejecting these bipartisan bills which would reopen government over his *obsession* with *forcing* American taxpayers to *waste billions of dollars on an expensive and ineffective wall*, a wall he always promised Mexico would pay for.

The fact is, President Trump has chosen to hold *hostage critical services for the health, safety*, and well-being of the American people, and withhold the paychecks of 800,000 innocent workers across the nation, many of them veterans.

The words *smart and effective* in the first paragraph modifying the noun phrase "border security solution" and

depict the democrats bid for alternative border security. In example two, the word *obsession* is used by the Democrats to persuade the audience to believe that Trump's preoccupation with the building of physical wall is undemocratic, because it would be a waste of billions of dollars. The words *expensive and ineffective*, which are used to modify the wall, are meant to persuade the citizenry to accept or support the alternative border security put forth by the Democrats. The adjective *critical* in example three modifies the various services that Trump held hostage by the shutdown.

Syntactic Structure

The Democrats in their response to President Trump's bid for the building of security border wall employed predominantly simple and complex declarative sentences. Declarative sentences declare or state the truth of a proposition to which the speaker or the writer is committed. The following paragraphs are examples:

There is no excuse for hurting millions of Americans over a policy difference. Federal workers are about to miss a paycheck. Some families can't get a mortgage to buy a new home. Farmers and small businesses won't get loans they desperately need.

The above paragraph consists of four simple declarative sentences. A simple declarative sentence declares or states only one proposition to which the writer or the speaker is committed. Instead of fusing the propositions in a complex construction, they are enumerated one by one. The reading of the simple sentences may be boring but they enhance easy comprehension. They are concise

and devoid of superfluous words. Complex declarative sentences have also been found stylistically significant. As the name implies, complex declarative sentences express complex propositions. The paragraph below contains examples.

The fact is on the very first day of this Congress, House Democrats passed Senate Republican legislation to reopen government and fund smart, effective border security solutions. But the president is rejecting these bipartisan bills which would reopen government over his obsession with forcing American taxpayers to waste billions of dollars on an expensive and ineffective wall, a wall he always promised Mexico would pay for.

The paragraph above consists of two complex declarative sentences. The first sentence is a compound complex declarative sentence. It consists of an initial subordinate clause, followed by two main clauses joined by the additive conjunction 'and'. The Democrats drew the attention of the citizenry to two of their vital actions-*passing bill to reopen government and funding smart, effective border security*. The second sentence is a complex declarative sentence. It is linked to the preceding sentence by a contrasting coordinating conjunction 'but' at the initial of the sentence. Rejection of the bill by the President depicts his insistence to build physical border wall. In the second sentence, the Democrats drew the attention of the citizenry to the effects of the border wall that the President Trump wants

to build. This is to make the audience support their alternative border security solution.

Rhetorical Devices

Rhetorical devices are linguistic expressions that speakers/writers employ to create desired effects. They are linguistic expressions used to appeal to the emotion of the reader or audience.

Anaphora and parallelism

The democrats used anaphora in the following paragraph to achieve emphasis, stir the audience's emotion and prompt action.

The fact is, we all agree we need to secure our borders while honoring our values. *We can* build the infrastructure and roads at our ports of entry. *We can* install new technology to scan cars and trucks for drugs coming into our nation. *We can* hire the personnel we need to facilitate trade and immigration at the border. *We can* fund more innovation to detect unauthorized crossings.

The repetition of the first person pronoun projects the Democrat's ideological principle of inclusiveness. The pronoun 'we' in this context stands for American people. The phrases "we can" repeated at the initial of the sentences depict the conviction of the Democrats that there are better border security options than the President's physical way. Parallelism in conjunction with anaphora is used by the Democrats to appeal to the audience's emotion. It is a recurrent syntactical similarity evidenced by the repetition of parts or sentences equal in

importance. Parallelism adds balance and rhythm and, most importantly clarity to the sentence (Harris, n. d). Parallelism in the above paragraph is employed to reinforce the Democrat's stance and justify their reasons for rejecting Trump's bid for building the wall. They also emphasize the Democrats' stance for better alternative. These constructions create rhythmic flow that appeal to the imaginations of the audiences.

Antithesis

In antithesis, two opposite ideas or things are placed side by side to entice the audience to make critical judgment. It establishes clearly, the contrast between two ideas. The features in italics in the following paragraph are examples:

Tonight, and throughout this debate and throughout his presidency, president trump has appealed to *fear, not facts, division, not unity*. Make no mistake; Democrats and the president both want stronger border security. However, we sharply disagree with the president about the most effective way to do it. The symbol of America should be the Statue of *Liberty, not a 30-foot wall*.

In the paragraph above, fear and facts are in contrast. Fear results to negative outcome, while facts to the positive. Trump in his address appeals to Americans using visual imagery to gain acceptance. The Democrats on the other hand based their speech on facts which they emphasized throughout. Division and unity are also contrasted. To the Democrats, Trump's ineffective and expensive wall would cause division rather than unity

among Americans. The audience is expected to take critical decisions after being confronted with these contrasts. *Liberty and 30-foot wall* are contrasted. American government respects and pays much attention to human rights and is ever ready to protect them. This contrast draws the attention of the audience to the fact that Trump's bid for the building of border wall violets human rights. America is hospitable. She welcomes and treats visitors well. Against this background, the Democrats reject Trump's bid for building border wall and describe it as ineffective and expensive.

Rhetorical appeal

The Democrats employed the three Aristotelian rhetorical appeals viz: ethos, pathos and logos in their persuasion and defense. Ethos is the credibility and trust of the speaker; Logos is the act of persuading to the audience using facts and figures, while pathos is an appeal to the emotion of the audience. It is the act of convincing the audience through creating emotional response. The Democrats used all the three rhetorical appeals to persuade the audience to reject Trump's bid for building physical wall and accept their suggestions for the use of innovative technology. The senate leader, Senator Chuck Schumer used ethos to draw the attention of Americans to the credibility and the trust of the Democrats in the first paragraph.

My fellow Americans, we address you tonight for one reason only. The president of the United States, having failed to get Mexico to pay for his ineffective, unnecessary border wall, and unable to convince the Congress or the American

people to foot the bill, has shut down the government.

The opening sentence “My fellow Americans, we address you tonight for one and one reason only” presents the Democrats as patriotic, caring for and protecting. To gain the audience’s acceptance, the opening sentence is followed by an expression exposing the failure of President Trump. Both the Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Senate leader Chuck Schumer employed logos as persuasion strategy. They accused the President of choosing ‘fear than fact’. Throughout their speeches, they endeavoured to appeal to the people by presenting the facts on the border crisis. The speakers for the Democrats used facts and figures to persuade the audience.

The fact is, President Trump has chosen to hold hostage critical services for the health, safety, and well-being of the American people, and withhold the paychecks of 800,000 innocent workers across the nation, many of them veterans.

In the above paragraph, the speaker appeals to the audience to consider the deadly impact of the shutting down of the government by Trump. The shutting down of the government deprived the citizenry of critical services. To qualify the extent of the deprivation, the Democrats used figures to support their claim (**800,000** innocent workers across the nation).

The Democrats used pathos severally to appeal to the people. Example of the use of pathos is evident the following paragraph:

American democracy doesn't work that way. We don't govern by temper tantrum. No president should pound the table and demand he gets his way or else the government shuts down. Hurting millions of Americans who are treated as leverage.

In the above paragraph, the speaker appeals to the audience by confronting them with open condemnation of the President's shutting down the government. These terse declarative sentences hit the emotion of the people directly and prompt action. The sentences paint in the minds of the audience, the picture of an undemocratic and wicked President.

Metaphor

A metaphor is one of the forms of languages used in literature, in every day and formal speeches. It is a comparison between two unlikely things and does not use any special language to establish the comparison (Nebholz, n.d). The women and the children at the border are metaphorically presented differently by Trump and the Democrats. The following paragraph by the Democrats captures both conceptions.

The fact is, the women and children at the border are not a security threat. They are *a humanitarian challenge, a challenge that President Trump's own cruel and counterproductive policies have only deepened.* And the fact is, President Trump must stop holding the American people

hostage and stop manufacturing a crisis, and must reopen the government.

Trump sees the women and the children at the border as security threat, while the Democrats see them as humanitarian challenges. Trump describes them as security threat because of the criminal acts associated with their presence. He conceived the idea of border wall to arrest the situation, which the Democrats see as only deepening his cruel and counterproductive policies. The Democrats conceived the idea that the women and the children at the border deserve better humanitarian treatments. The shutting down of the Government by Trump is described by the Democrats as imprisoning the Americans and Manufacturing crisis.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figure of exaggeration often employed by politicians for making propaganda. The Democrats in the following paragraph used hyperbolic expression to persuade the citizenry to belief that America can resolve the crisis without shutting down the government.

My fellow Americans, there is no challenge so great that our nation cannot rise to meet it. We can reopen the government and continue to work through disagreements over policy. **We can** secure our border without an ineffective, expensive wall. And **we can** welcome legal immigrants and refugees without compromising safety and security.

The first sentence sounds hyperbolic. The speaker makes assertion out of his personal conviction that America has the ability to face every form of challenge. To persuade the audience, the speaker repeated the inclusive first person pronoun “We” and the modal auxiliary verb expressing ability “can” at the initial of the sentences. The use of this anaphora is meant to persuade the audience to believe that America has the potential to handle every challenge. The three parallel structures seem to exaggerate the potentials for handling the border crisis.

Conclusion

Conclusion can be drawn from the outcome of the study that the language used by both parties is highly persuasive and defensive. The choices of words are directly linked to the border crisis. Trump sees the border crisis as security threat, while the Democrats see it as humanitarian challenges. Both Trump and the Democrats employed similar persuasion strategies to gain the audience’s acceptance. The lexical and syntactic structures of the speeches provide the audience with the clear picture of the border crisis caused by illegal immigration. Trump appeared to have used more descriptive language to make the audience see clearly the reasons for his bid to build physical border wall to barricade the immigrants. The Democrats on the other hand appeared to have employed facts to persuade the audience to reject Trump’s bid and accept theirs (the use of innovative technology).

The language is also highly appealing. Both parties employed Aristotelian rhetorical appeals-ethos, pathos and logos as persuasion strategies. These strategies are

used to appeal to the audience's emotion so as to influence their thoughts and beliefs. Rhetorical devices such as anaphora, parallelism, and antithesis are the different forms of repetitions used by both parties to stir the emotion of the audience and prompt actions.

Therefore, it can be inferred from the results of the study that the languages as well as the ideologies underlying them are generally antagonistic. Trump made a bid for the building of physical border wall to barricade the illegal immigrants; while the Democrats made theirs for better modern innovative technology. Both parties selected language carefully to persuade the audience to accept their ideologies and to justify their stance/position.

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