

Grammatical And Lexical Cohesion: Their Contribution to Rhetorical Effect of Barack Obama's Presidential Inaugural Address

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Abstract: - *The inaugural address is a genre of its own which could express presidents' ideas successfully, therefore, could stand up for ages in the heart of their residents. Barack Hussein Obama was elected as the 44th President of the United States on November 4, 2008. Being aware of its importance after presidential selection, his first Inaugural Address calling for a "new era of responsibility" was given on January 20, 2009 marking the commencement of his first four-year term as President. This paper aims at highlighting not only grammatical but also lexical cohesion in terms of discourse and power that have a contribution to rhetorical effect of the first half of his inauguration speech. The analysis of cohesion in this political speech is based on the cohesion model found in Halliday and Hasan (1976). From the perspective of grammatical cohesion, conjunctions, reference, ellipsis and substitution are the four mainly used categories. In terms of lexical one, collocations and repetition appear most frequently.*

Keywords: - *Barack Obama; grammatical cohesion; lexical cohesion; Presidential Inaugural Speech; rhetorical effect.*

1. Introduction

According to Schaffner (1997), political speeches originating from political texts which are political since they are the result of or a part of politics determined by history and culture, and their topics are primarily related to politics which fulfill various functions depending on different political activities. Schaffner also argues that political texts tend to be characterized by ideological aspects in relation to the speaker's choice of words and especially words of ideological nature. Therefore, a successful politician is an expert in public speech writing skill. There is no shadow of doubt that Barack Obama is regarded as such an expert in this skill which is proved by his demonstration and combination of words, phrases, and excellent oratory skills in his political speeches. The prime example of this is his Presidential Inaugural Address attracting many linguists to do research on different aspects. His very first political speech was delivered on January 20th, 2009 to express his ideas of national unity in times of crisis and to make American people believe in a new era of hope. This article is conducted to identify the grammatical and lexical

cohesion in Barack Obama's first half Inaugural Address and analyze how these two cohesions contribute to this political speech's rhetorical effects.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Previous Studies

So far, there have been many researches on cohesions in discourse and rhetoric effects of political speeches. Zhang Liping (2009), and Hu Mingxia (2009) outline underlying grounds why Obama makes excellent speeches in terms of stylistic devices (as cited in Fengjie, Jia and Yingying, 2016). As for rhetoric effects, there are certain researchers namely O'Connell et al. (2010) affirming Obama's expertise in wording. According to Guerra (2013), the contribution of the way Obama combines vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structures to the success of his public speeches is undeniable. These previous studies set some light to help the researcher have profound knowledge of political speeches in

general; and cohesion and rhetorical effect in particular.

2.2. Rhetoric

Edward and Robert (1971) defines that "Rhetoric is the subject that is concerned with the employment of the discourse, whether spoken form or written form to motivate the hearer, whether the hearer is just a single person or is composed of a group of people." (p.3). Charteris-Black (2005) argues that the effect of rhetorical strategies in political speeches is often a result of being combined to appeal to attitudes and emotions that are already within the listeners. In general, rhetoric can be defined as the art of speaking in an elegant and forceful but hidden way to influence, impress and persuade the audience.

2.3. Cohesion in Discourse

There have been various definitions of cohesion in discourse given by a number of linguists. According to Riana (1985), cohesion is a tool to assert the existence of coherence in a discourse or a paragraph, and the paragraph is above the level of the sentence. Gutwinsky (1976) states that cohesion, as the formal cohesion of language in syntactic discourse organization composed to sentences, is coherent and solid and produces speech (as cited in Ma'wa, 2010). This also means that cohesion is the relationship among sentences in discourse in terms of both grammatical and lexical strata in particular. Cohesion is the use of language forms to indicate semantic relations between elements in a discourse. It is grammatical and lexical relationship within a text or sentence. It can be defined as the links that hold a text together and give it meaning. Halliday and Hasan (1976) define cohesion as "a semantic relation between an element in the text and some other element that is crucial to the interpretation of it." (p.8). Cohesion in English specifies five major classes of cohesive ties, nineteen subclasses, and numerous sub-subclasses. There are two main types of cohesion: grammatical, referring to the structural content, a lexical, referring to the language content of the piece.

2.3.1. Grammatical Cohesion

a. Substitution

A linguistic element is not repeated but is replaced by a substitution item; in other words, it is the replacement of one item by another. Different types of substitution are defined in grammatical terms rather than semantically including nominal (one, ones, same), verbal (do), and clausal (so, not).

For example: (1) The words didn't come easily as they used to do.

(2) Is there going to be an earthquake? It says so.

b. Ellipsis

It is defined as "the omission of an item" or "that form of substitution in which the item is replaced by nothing", and is related to the notion that it is "something left unsaid" where there is no implication that what is unsaid is not understood. It is grouped in two categories namely nominal ellipsis and verbal ellipsis.

For example: (3) He ate four oysters and yet another four.

(4) Have you been running? Yes, I have.

c. Conjunction

It is a relationship which indicates how the subsequent sentence or clause should be linked to the preceding or the following sentence or parts of sentence.

d. Reference

It is defined as "the case where the information to be retrieved is the referential meaning, the identity of the particular thing or class of things that is being referred to; and the cohesion lies in the continuity of reference, whereby the same thing enters into the discourse a second time". Its types are entitled as anaphora, cataphora and deixis.

2.3.2. Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion does not deal with grammatical or semantic connections but with connections based on the words used, which is achieved by selection of vocabulary, using semantically close items.

a. Repetition

It is the most direct form of lexical cohesion. Repetition is a literary device that repeats the same words or phrases a few times to make an idea clearer and more memorable.

For example: (5) Agly met a bear. The bear was bulgy.

b. Collocation

Collocation relation exists without any explicit reference to another item. It is used to describe two terms which are routinely found in conjunction with each other, and which may in fact be joined by a conjunction.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Approach

This article is a descriptive study making use of qualitative approach. Bogdan and Biken (1982) state that a qualitative research is a research procedure which brings about the descriptive data in the form of written or oral data from the research's subjects instead of in numbers or statistics (as cited in Morehouse and Maykut, 2002). Therefore, the descriptive qualitative research design is used to identify what types of grammatical and lexical cohesions in the data and examine how these two cohesions affect Barack Obama's tones regarding to rhetorical effects in his first half inaugural address.

3.2. Data Collection

The text is the first half of Presidential Inaugural Address, given by US President, Barack Obama, on 20th January 2009. The data were extracted online from the website of <http://obamaspeeches.com/>, in the length of 1055 words.

3.3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this paper relies on the classification of cohesion in discourse by Halliday and Hasan (1976) because it provides a detailed theoretical framework that the researcher would comprehend compared to other models of lexical cohesion. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), since cohesion is expressed partly through the grammar and vocabulary, we find two main types of cohesive devices considered as general

categories of cohesion namely grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. The former includes substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and reference while the latter consists of repetition, and collocation.

4. Results and Discussion

Defeating McCain in the general election to be elected President of the United States, Barack Obama delivered his inaugural address in front of thousands of his supporters. Being created to convince the American people to trust his commitment of renewal for the better United States, the new president's political speech is usually expected to highlight the spirit of conciliation and hope to the whole union. He is expected to address not only domestic issues but also problems abroad. He also has to be capable of drawing a clear-cut distinction between his new administration and his predecessors'. To contribute to the profound speech, one of the factors is cohesion in this discourse that shows his power through his utterances so as to persuade his listeners. Rhetoric is also a useful strategy to utilize in speech making. Obama uses rhetoric to achieve presenting his message of creating hope and change together in America while fixing the economic and social challenges and issues left behind from the previous president.

4.1. Grammatical Cohesion and Its Contribution to Rhetorical Effect

Substitution, conjunction, reference, and ellipsis are taken advantage of in Obama's inaugural address.

4.1.1. Substitution

First of all, substitution of a descriptive phrase is employed. Meaning connections are reinforced by repetitions of words and phrases, or by repeatedly using words from the same semantic field "Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath. The words gave been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace."

4.1.2. Conjunction

Another grammatical cohesion is conjunction by using complex sentences to express overloaded ideas in the speech; therefore, to avoid

disassociating some related important ideas and unavoidably rendering them to sound more loosely fragmented and less interesting to audience, Obama makes use of coordinating conjunction “and” quite intensively with the aim at connecting some clauses of equal rank in compound sentences. Also, ideas expressed in phrase levels including nouns, noun phrases, verbs, and verbs phrases may be coordinated by the use of this coordinating conjunction. In general, the use of coordinating conjunctions are plentiful both at the clause and phrase levels among other things.

4.1.3. Reference

What's more, reference is noticeable in this political speech in which pronouns as co-reference appears intensively as grammatical cohesive devices to create the link in discourse when the speaker especially favors the third person plural pronoun “we”, “us”, and “our” in his first half speech occurring 21, 8, and 25 respectively to refer to their shared heritage “We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together.” It is obvious that the speaker and his people will unite and will act together for their common goal. Besides, he guarantees and guides the listeners into the action that results in the development of America's infrastructure to support the capacity and productivity of America in the future time.

The speaker is aware that he and his people are facing difficulties; however, he affirms that by uniting and taking action together, it leads to the development of America in the future.

That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age. Homes have been lost; jobs shed; businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly; our schools fail too many; and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet.

In addition, pronoun “they” as shown in the below excerpt is also intensively used. This pronoun appears four times in a short passage comprising only four sentences shows the speaker would like to emphasize the challenges which American are facing. He reminds American citizens to be aware of the existence of challenges.

Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America - they will be met.

4.1.4. Ellipsis

Last but not least, ellipsis is also used as cohesive devices as in “Homes have been lost; jobs shed; businesses shuttered” and “For they have forgotten what this country has already done; what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose, and necessity to courage.” There are 3 ellipsis out of 49 ones throughout the speech. These are forms which refer to a sentence where for the reasons of economy, emphasis or style, a part of structure has been omitted, which can be recoverable form the scrutiny of the context.

4.2. Lexical Cohesion and Its Contribution to Rhetorical Effect

4.2.1. Repetition

The primary lexical cohesion which is most employed to help the speaker to get his persuasion is repetition. The first example should be “day” in the following passage.

Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America - they will be met. On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn out dogmas, that for far too long have strangled our politics.

It can be referred that the new president today plays an important role for himself, for all American people and for their while nation because today he becomes a president of the United States and ever

seen the day they are ready to choose hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord.

Another word that should be taken into consideration is “nation”, repeated five times in the first half where the speaker emphasizes all American people have a share nation which they need to pride in and work together for.

I thank President Bush for his service to our nation, as well as the generosity and cooperation he has shown throughout this transition...Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred...We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things...In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given...This is the journey we continue today... We remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth.

4.2.2. Collocation

An additional lexical cohesion analyzed is collocation which contributes effectively to unveil the speaker's power through his language which could be clarified through some collocations in the first half of his speech. He shares his attitudes with “I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors.” The words “humbled, grateful, mindful” emphasize on the speaker's feeling for the new responsibility he will take and show his appreciation for the American when electing him as the 44th President. Furthermore, he wants to show his happiness for the trust from his people choosing him as their national leader.

The second collocation appears in the following extract.

For us, they fought and died, in places like Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sahn. Time and again these men and women struggled and sacrificed and worked till their hands were raw so that we might live a better life.

Collocation “fought, died, struggled, and sacrificed” relates to sacrifice that American ancestors did for their nation; hence, it means that

Obama reminds his people at this time of what and how their forbearer's tried, and he also encourages this generation to follow them to do everything for American people and nation.

The paper gives another case to show his profound use of collocation.

But our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions - that time has surely passed. Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America.

Collocation namely standing pat, protecting narrow interest, and putting off unpleasant decision which relate to calling for action show that the speaker intends to forbid or to warn listeners to put off their unpleasant decision, which can be also referred that he is trying to remind his people to the importance of changing the attitude since their capacity is not undiminished. Other words such as pick ourselves, dust ourselves off, remaking America are collocations relating to calling for action too. In detail, he encourages his people to gain their self-confidence to build their future together.

Collocation, indeed, is his good choice to make his speech more understandable and persuasive “For the world has changed, and we must change with it”, “Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward, where the answer is no, programs will end”, or “We made ourselves a new and vowed to move forward together”. The speaker convinces the listeners to together be willing to confront with difficulties, to adapt to new changes and to develop their American people and nation.

As some examples analyzed above, it is shown that the speaker succeeds in using collocations from which his power is revealed. There are many collocations in different categories taken advantage of namely natural phenomena, happiness, grievances and so on used in this public speech.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the grammatical cohesion namely conjunctions, reference, ellipsis and substitution plays its important role in creating the cohesion of his first inaugural address and in revealing his

power when making use of them properly. Lexical cohesion including collocations and repetition are used to express his promises, and wishes for Americans. By the used of these two cohesive devices, Obama reveals his power to his people.

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Appendix: Obama's First Half Inaugural Address

My fellow citizens:

I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors. I thank President Bush for his service to our nation, as well

as the generosity and cooperation he has shown throughout this transition.

Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace. Yet, every so often the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms. At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because We the People have remained faithful to the ideals of our forbearers, and true to our founding documents.

So it has been. So it must be with this generation of Americans. That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age. Homes have been lost; jobs shed; businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly; our schools fail too many; and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet.

These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics. Less measurable but no less profound is a sapping of confidence across our land - a nagging fear that America's decline is inevitable, and that the next generation must lower its sights.

Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America - they will be met.

On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord.

On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn out dogmas, that for far too long have strangled our politics.

We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring

spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.

In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of short-cuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted - for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things - some celebrated but more often men and women obscure in their labor, who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom.

For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life.

For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West; endured the lash of the whip and plowed the hard earth.

For us, they fought and died, in places like Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sahn.

Time and again these men and women struggled and sacrificed and worked till their hands were raw so that we might live a better life. They saw America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions; greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction.

This is the journey we continue today. We remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth. Our workers are no less productive than when this crisis began. Our minds are no less inventive, our goods and services no less needed than they were last week or last month or last year. Our capacity remains undiminished. But our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions - that time has surely passed.

Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America.

For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act - not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We will restore science to its rightful place, and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age.

All this we can do. And all this we will do.

Now, there are some who question the scale of our ambitions - who suggest that our system cannot tolerate too many big plans. Their memories are short. For they have forgotten what this country has already done; what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose, and necessity to courage.

What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them - that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply. The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works - whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified. Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end. And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account - to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day - because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government.