Stylistic Features Of Barack Obama's And Donald Trump's Victory Speeches

This essay provides a critical investigation of speech analysis and literary techniques in written form, spoken publicly by ex-President Barrack Obama and Current US President Donald Trump. My research question is as follows; “To what extent does Barrack Obama’s victory speech in 2008 correlate between Donald Trump’s acceptance speech of 2016 in terms of literary devices present?” In order to answer this question thoroughly, I have chosen to narrow my analysis to a few subtopics. The presentation of presidential acceptance and victory speeches are good indications of an individual’s manner and further intentions when in office. Literary techniques and devices such as; alliteration, persona, antithesis, repetition, imagery, metaphors, personal anecdote, and hyperboles are used thoroughly within the two speeches to create a connection and enthuse their audiences to their moral beliefs, views, and future promises with their position in power. Analyzing the similarities and differences between two separate speeches of two very different characters, of different upbringings, encompasses one’s mood and persona towards the job of running the United States of America.

Introduction

Barack Obama and Donald Trump are both renowned speakers who grew up on opposite sides of the wealth spectrum and are of different races. This context has profound implications that influenced both figure heads of state. Both victory election speeches, analysing the language within these texts outlines the character and division of people the two swore oaths to live up to within the parliamentary system.

Barack Obama is of African American descent who won the United States presidential election in 2008. President Obama gave his victory speech to a crowd of 240,000 in his home city of Chicago at Grant park on November 4th, 2008. His speech was viewed on television and via the internet by millions of people around the globe. His speech focused on the major issues facing the world including the United states. He also revealed his past life and his inspirations being that of his grandmother who passed away two nights earlier. Obama promised himself to the people as a president of change and a new hope to the American flag.

Donald Trump is the United States currently elected president of 2019. His victory speech in 2016 was similar to President Obama's speech but personified differently and structured in a more relaxed freestyle sense to that of Obama's speech in 2008. Trump uses pauses, rhetorical, sarcasm, personification, and anaphora to convey and solidify his stance with the American citizens/ community that elected him into presidency over Hillary Clinton.

Both speeches were viewed by the majority of the world during or online after they were presented live to the states. The captivation of these speech’s links to the use of language devices and gestures, which is unique to Obama and Trump in terms of their ability to captivate an audience.

These techniques are made more apparent through the highlight of political themes, mainly

issues that face America in today's society. Although both presidents understand and share similar views on the flaws of western society and civil hypocrisy, their representation of hunger for power differs greatly; however, the implications are the same. Different context and perception of political reigns caused them to differ on the mechanism that focuses on the uprise and downfall of the nation.

Their childhood backgrounds outlines and explains their individual drives within parliament and therefore scripts their actions and intentions. This is easily conveyed within Obamas and Trumps speeches as their slang and use of dialogue differs greatly to the point where it is possible to understand the measures at which they will take to change the nation in the best interest of the American peoples including the world, as the US is the world's leading powerhouse today.

Obama's Speech

Obama's victory speech references and quotes many past presidents such as JF Kennedy, Lincoln, and Martin Luther king to emphasise the passion they had for the leadership roles they were assigned as president and the sacrifices they undertook to bring American citizens of all backgrounds together. This helped solidify the inclusiveness bond he was building with the audience and letting the audience know that he is potentially also one of the greats he is referencing in his favour. Referencing a famous character puts the speaker in a vale of light as it inspires an audience as that quote referenced does already. "We are not enemies but friends. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection." Obama's direct quote of Abraham Lincoln. Obama also referenced an allusion to the Sam Cooke song 'A change Is Gonna Come.' "It's been a long time coming, but … change has come to America." Meaning, America is going to go through positive readjustments now that the presidency position has been filled in 'my' ref; Obama's shoes.

Obama mentions an African American woman who has survived through generations of maltreatment and history through the course of American history. Obama openly shared her story with the audience to make himself clear that he is as equal to everybody else within the crowd in terms of the empowering womanly figure in which Obama looks up to. The example follows an enumeration which displays the courage and strength in which the woman who is 100+ years old stands on behalf of her country to this day without the loss of hope or faith. This sends a message to the audience 'to be a better version of yourself, and to never give up in times of struggle'. The use of repetition of the word "New" shows that Obama wants to create something positive and wants the audience to not just do right by themselves but do right by the campaign and country. With the use of an anaphora "Yes we can'' stabilises the feeling of triumph and builds an emotional atmosphere within the air of the crowd. Obama goes on to talk about Americas history and links his spoken knowledge back to rhetorical questions "what progress will we have made?" getting the audience to momentarily think about their actions and how that reflects upon themselves as a citizen of America. By "they '' Obama refers to the children, to the next generation of Americans in which he embodies as the future leaders of the country.

Barack Obama uses a variety of language techniques and conventions to not just persuade the audience of his arrival within office, but to convince the audience that he will go down as one of the most persistent and respected presidents in American history.

Trump’s Speech

Trump's disdain for political correctness was a staple theme of his campaign and proved popular among his supporters. Many, including some mainstream commentators and some prominent republicans, viewed him as an appealing ambassador to racism, a charge that Trump repeatedly denied. Trump's most polarizing and widely reported proposals were about issues of immigration and border security, and his proposal of deportation of all illegal immigrants, the proposed construction of a substantial wall on the United States/ Mexican border at Mexican expense. Trump idolises other races as that of a problem when it comes to securing America's borders and declining worldwide immigration. Donald Trump begins his speech in a specific tone and manner which deprived his speech of any dignity but made himself to be and look more like a showman, rather than the future president of the United States of America. He quickly made a statement about his position as a ‘non-political’, and referred to his campaign as a ‘movement.’ With the view that Trump may be outrageously unfit for office, his persuasive techniques and especially tonal sentiments within his speeches, underlines him as a highly persuasive and trustworthy individual. Through this Trump exercises long pauses between sentences and adjusts his tonal and gesture configuration to suit the atmosphere, and get his overall message across to the audience.

Trump displays time and time again a substantial amount of ‘sarcasm’ within his speeches. Sarcasm is a sharp expression, remark, or taunt. Sarcasm is not ironic but ambivalent. Easily recognised in spoken word, it is mainly distinguished by the infliction with which it is spoken or written and is largely content- dependent. Within Trump’s acceptance speech of 2016, Trump sarcastically discloses Hillary Clinton’s work in efforts to win the presidency election over Trump with the final vote results being close but in Donald Trump's favour. A quote from President Trump’s speech “Hillary has worked very long and very hard over a long period of time, and we owe her a major debt of gratitude for her service to our country.” This statement reinforces and reminds the general public of Hillary’s loss in the election campaign. Previously in head to head interviews and opposed media questions, President Trump heavily criticised Hillary Clinton, verbally announcing her as a “nasty woman”, “crooked Hillary " and that as running president, he would see her in jail. The accusations made towards Hillary Clinton likely imply Donald Trump's prolonged sarcasm when discussing anything to do with Clinton or other disliked associates or opposed threats towards his overall success. Trump’s relaxed, mocking, but humour-like attitude appeals to his favoured audience and to some he comes across as handsomely entertaining/ amusing. This also creates greater world-wide attention and keeps media broadcasts busy regarding Trump’s historic affairs.

Overall Trump’s speech wasn’t at standard length for a historical presidential victory speech. Trump summed up his thanks to Hilary Clinton for her service and hard fought campaign. He addressed Clinton's voters and promised to be their president as well. He disclosed his future uncontroversial goals, like growing the economy and promising to maintain peace with other nations. Finally he thanked his supporters, majority of which are from the red southern states. The speech lacked the usual digressions and unusual language features and techniques. There was a lack in mention to the recent attacks and troops deployed in the middle east regarding the ISIS incident, nor was there a talk on requiring building a wall to prevent immigrants flocking into the states from Mexico. There was a lack of mention to his campaign’s slogan “Make America Great Again!”

Within his speech, Donald Trump discovered the rhetorical embodiment of the inclusive word “we.” Trump had become infamous for appointing himself to the solution of America’s ills, most notably declaring that “I alone can fix it.” At almost every chance Trump got during his speech, Trump opted for the word “we.’ Striking as many as 30 single uses of the word within his short speech, with many emotion intensifying pauses to claim his power and boldness to his fellow supporters and nations watching through screens.

Similarities and Differences

Barack Obama and Trump share common and not so common forms of written text within their speeches in spoken and written form. Their ways of persuasion and life dreamt ambition to run the United states bleeds through their points and justifications. Through the use of sarcasm, personal anecdote, sympathy, and inclusiveness, the acceptance speeches presented by the two presidents past and present, are clear representations of how these devices are used to persuade and convince the citizens of America the rightful legal actions of empowering their nation.

Donald Trump's first words were, “thank you. Thank you very much everyone.’ “Sorry to keep you waiting.’ “complicated business, complicated. “Thank you very much” “Now it is time for America to bind the wounds of division, have to get together, to all republicans and democrats and independents across this nation I say it is time for us to come together as one united people.’ “It is a movement composed of Americans from all races, religions, backgrounds, and beliefs.” Meaning vaguely that Trump sets out on a mission to unite all Americans of all backgrounds and races together in equality and desegregation.

President Obama spoke of similar things in 2008, when he mentioned democracy appealing to all Americans of different religions and backgrounds. “Young and old, rich and poor, democrat and republican, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, native, American, gay, straight, disabled, and not disabled.’ “Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been just a collection of individuals or a collection of red states and blue states.” This message is highly inclusive as it individually points out races, and sexes. In comparison to Trump's quote, it specifically outlines a list of backgrounds whereas Trump made his list more vague, relatable to a broader audience.

Later within Obama’s speech, Obama went on to thank his family and his campaign team for the support and belief of becoming president. “Sasha and Malia I love you both more than you can imagine.’ “And you have earned the new puppy that’s coming with us to the new white house.’ “He even spoke to his daughters at one point, shortly taking the time to talk about personal family matters, which didn’t relate to the crowd watching- indicating his love and dedication to his family.

Meanwhile, Trump thanked his late parents, specifically his sisters and his brothers. Not mentioning his current family to begin with. “This was tough.’ “this political stuff is nasty and its tough.’ “So I want to thank my family very much.’ “really fantastic.’ “Thank you all.’ “Thank you all.” Without going in too specific, Trump is able to use casual language, and long pauses within his speeches to emphasise the meaning and train of thought behind the messages he conveys with simple ‘slang’ like terminology. Words such as “Really fantastic” dictated as ‘slang’ which are repeated over and over to construct emotion, overexercises his points

without the necessary needs to go into depth about whatever he is talking about/ discussing.

Trump made some big claims about the future of America and the country's economy. "we will double our growth and have the strongest economy anywhere in the world.' "At the same time, we will get along with our nations, willing to get along with us.' "We will be.' "We will have great relationships.' "We expect to have great, great relationships."

Obama's speech was reassuring and hopeful as it reached out to the majority of Americans due to the financial crash at the time '2008'. Despite the lack of job availability Obama promised a brighter future within the United states of America, with the economy going upwards. 'There's new energy to harness, new jobs to be created, new schools to build, and threats to meet, alliances to repair.' "The road ahead will be long.' "Our climb will be long' "our climb will be steep.' "We may not get there in one year or even in one term. "but America, I have never been more hopeful than I am tonight that we will get there."

Surprisingly Trump didn't close his speech with his usual phrase 'motto', "let's make America great again!" And one of the most noticeable differences came in the final words of speech – he didn't thank god, this being the usual tradition, presidents have always acknowledged god.

Obama's closing words were "Thank you.' "God bless you.' "And may god bless the United States of America."

Meanwhile, President Trump's final words were "Thank you.' "Thank you very much.' "Thank you to Mike Pence."

Trump left off with another sarcastic comment regarding Vice president 'Mike Pence', his former associate, whom he was accused of forcibly making him present a few lines of his own at the acceptance speech night.

President Obama's speech contains appropriate higher-level English terminology, whereas Donald Trump's speech has been criticised to have contained the English terminology of a 6th grader. The distinguish between terminology encompasses the audience at which either president desire in targeting for support, whether it be broad or minimal. President trump's dialogue within speeches is unique at a residentiary stature. With trump's mediocre literacy and simple terminology, he is able to conclude and evaluate his justifications greater and on a broader term to a large majority of citizens due to the lack of educational benefits contributed to the distribution of private schools, which the below average person cannot receive in America or anywhere around the world, as a result of income and geographical situation.

Conclusion

President Donald Trump and ex-President Barack Obama's speech contain strikingly different approaches of presenting and nurturing their use of language to a greater audience. Persuasive and rhetorical language techniques such as personal anecdote, symbolism, tone, gestures, and address, aid the speaker to engage with the audience at a personal level which in return serves as a gesture of trust, humility, and sympathy.

Barack Obama's victory speech of 2008 and Donald Trump's victory speech of 2016 correlate

due to specific addressed language features, and their implications to persuade the audience of their compliance as suitable for presidential office of the past 2008 and 2016.