The Rhetoric of American Politicians

Butković, Maja

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku

Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti; smjer: nastavnički (dvopredmetni)

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Zadar, 2016.

Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

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Zadar, 7. lipanj 2016.

1. Introduction

Language is one of the main means for our understanding of reality and our comprehension of the world that we are surrounded by. It is often argued that perception cannot exist without language and vice versa; that they are in a co-dependent relationship. We use the language we speak to express our emotions, thoughts and ideas; it is our primary medium for establishing communication.

Although communication can be nothing more than a mere interaction between two or more individuals, this term can also be applied to describe an attempt for demonstrating attitude or power. In this MA thesis an attempt will be made to demonstrate and explain how language can be used as an instrument in establishing power in politics, i.e. how it can become a means to achieve a certain political agenda or to establish an ideology and precisely which rhetorical devices (language in use) are proven to be the most useful in doing so.

This MA thesis is primarily concerned with the combination of the ideology, pragmatics and linguistics within the rhetoric, i.e. how certain linguistic choices (figures of speech, rhetorical figures) affect the extra-linguistic. They are of great importance not only in the everyday discourse, but also in its greater areas of impact, such as politics and, more precisely political speeches. This is an area where rhetoric is of great importance because one of the prerequisites for a successful career as a politician is the ability to be a sovereign public speaker. This concern with the notion of control and power acquisition and maintenance is one of the intersections of politics and rhetoric, and the point of interest of this MA paper thesis.

2. What is rhetoric?

Rhetoric is not a young phenomenon, and most of us are familiar enough with this term to give an educated guess about what it stands for: it is seen as the ability of the speaker to persuade or incline their audience to behave or react in a specific way in a given situation. It was given significant attention already in the ancient history, when philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle contemplated the ideas and notions connected to it. The interest in rhetoric never faded. Furthermore, it remained an interesting topic in the subsequent historical periods, and from different points of view: philosophy, sociology, linguistics are just some of the scientific approaches to rhetoric. A well-rounded definition of rhetoric is given by Jennifer Richards: "Traditionally, rhetoric is concerned with the affective power of language, and with describing and classifying the devices that produce emotion, or develop a logical proof, and so sway the judgement of an audience" (122). A critical factor for achieving this is, naturally, the speaker (or, in our case, the politician) who is required to be a skilled spokesperson, i.e. to be able to successfully use a number of linguistic and extra-linguistic devices to achieve consent by the audience.

This person is supposed to impose himself or herself as the leader; as a person with a vision: "Leaders satisfy and express their own psychological needs as well as those of their followers and therefore leadership equally concerns the inner values of leaders and the social values of followers" (Charteris-Black 16). As we can see, not only does the persona of a leader have to include their own vision, but it also has to correspond with the vision of their potential followers. This agreement between the vision of the dominant individual and the vision of the group of followers is established, naturally, through ideology, while ideology is established primarily through rhetoric.

2.1. Rhetoric, politics and ideology

To begin with, it must be stated that we live in a world where everything is underpinned by politics. Even the most simple and everyday actions can be interpreted in a political way, e.g. choosing between genetically modified or organically grown food. We are also consumers who are given the choice to choose what we will, and what we will not consume. Not only can we consume certain products and services, but also ideologies offered to us by political institutions and their representatives.

"Politics is inevitably concerned with power: the power to make decisions, to control resources, to control other people's behaviour and to control their values" (Thomas 36). To gain power and to practice it is the main objective of the politicians. This can be achieved in many ways, but two of them are the most obvious: coercion and consent. These two types of establishing power very frequently occur in many different combinations, depending on the degree of obedience and the motives for being obedient.

Coercion is basically the forcible imposition of one's set of beliefs to another person. This is what, for examples, military rules or dictatorships make use of to establish power. Less extreme variants of coercion can be found everywhere, for instance in democracies: if you break a law, you will be fined – and if you disobey to that, a harsher punishment follows.

However, it is proven that coercion is not as effective an instrument for achieving political agenda as consent is. It is in fact the act of persuading someone to act voluntarily in a specific and desired way. When people agree with the corpus or codex that they are supposed to obey, there is a much smaller chance that it will come to a downfall. We most frequently refer to these principles and ideas as ideologies, and when they have become an integrated part of our own set of ideas and beliefs, we say that those rules have become common sense. Furthermore, "institutional practices which people draw upon without thinking often embody

assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimize existing power relations. Practices which appear to be universal and commonsensical can often be shown to originate in the dominant class or the dominant bloc, and to have become naturalized" (Fairclough 33).

What Norman Fairclough proposes here is the idea that in order to become widely accepted, an ideology has to be natural and 'the only right thing' for the people to obey it, i.e. it has to be common sense. When we use the terms like normal, natural or common sense, we know what they mean, but upon a closer look it becomes difficult to define them; how do we explain what is common sense and what is not? We cannot, we just "know" it; it "feels right". This means that our common sense is not simply a logical equation, but that our commonsensical behaviour is embedded on a much deeper mental level: "Our deepest convictions are not simply or primarily products of logical thought. Rather, they arise out of our having lived particular lives and are inescapably tied to those lives. (...) The fact that these values are not easily altered by a reasoned discourse suggests the depth at which the emotions operate and argues that they are rooted in sources anterior to reason" (Olmsted 236). The awareness of this fact allows orators, politicians, policies and ideologies to incorporate their own values into our own.

This is where the role of language, and within it the role of rhetoric, becomes important because it is, as we know, the primary human means for socialization, expression and performing influence. According to John E. Joseph, "the 'speaker' and the 'hearer' are not polarly opposed roles. For any utterance, the hearer is not merely a passive recipient, but is "partly responsible for the actual form the utterance takes, since speakers normally adjust what they say to suit the social–political reaction they anticipate from their audience" (Joseph 43). As the theory of linguistic determinism argues, the speaker and the hearer speak the same language, which is invariably connected to perception: „Language is, and has always been, the means by which we construct and analyze what we call *reality*" (Lakoff 20). In order to

convince the hearer into his own set of beliefs, the speaker uses their common language as a tool.

2.2. Language ideology and language as a part of an ideology

By this point, we are already (to some extent) familiarized with the notion of ideology and with the role that language and rhetoric play within it. However, although all of these terms are closely related and exist in interdependent relationships, there should be a clear distinction between what an ideology is and what a linguistic ideology is: "Linguistic or language ideologies have been defined most broadly as 'shared bodies of common sense notions about the nature of language in the world'" (Schieffelin, Woolard, Kroskrity 3-4). This statement emphasizes the crucial distinction which needs to be made in relation to the topics elaborated in this paper. Seeing as the main concern of this MA thesis are notions such as power, politics, policies and ideologies, it is necessary to know how to discern the meanings of these terms from one another. When we speak of power relations and ideologies, especially in a linguistic context (as is the case with this paper), the first thing that comes to mind are language ideologies. However, as we can see from the statement at the beginning of this chapter, language ideologies are concerned primarily with the language itself, and not with the language as a medium for establishing (political) power. Although the meanings of these terms are very similar and, in fact, akin to a certain extent, language ideology is not to be confused with language in ideologies, where it plays an important role, but is not the subject of the given ideology. Rather, it is only one of the main means for establishing a desired ideology.

This is the type of language-related ideology that is the main concern of this paper. Ideology as a broader term is seen as "ideas, discourse, or signifying practices in the service of the

struggle to acquire or maintain power" (Schieffelin, Woolard, Kroskrity 7), and by that, it can also be related to language ideology, where these ideas, discourse and practices are undertaken so as to achieve 'power' of a certain language, i.e. to reach a higher status level of this language. However, language ideology is not to be mistaken for this broader and more political sense of ideology, which is also the topic of this MA paper.

2.3. The ethics and morality of elaborated rhetoric in politics

By using certain linguistic devices in their speeches, politicians bring themselves and the policies they represent closer to the audience, i.e., blatantly stated, to the common people who will, hopefully, vote for them. In order to achieve that, they are required to 'accommodate' themselves and their policies to the audience, i.e. to their potential voters.
Here arises the question of morality and ethics: is it fair to 'tell the people what they want to hear' in order to get their votes, and to which extent should it be allowed? As Wayne Booth states, the answer to this question is plainly up to just how much is accommodated: "The boundary between defensible accommodation and waffling, catering, sucking-up, shoddy spinning, or plain unforgivable lying is always hard to draw" (68). While, on the one hand, accommodating oneself completely to the audience's beliefs is bound to bring a great number of votes, it is actually a prescription for an 'ideological disaster' once the politician (or, as Booth says, "the winning hypocrite") gains power and stays true to none of their words. On the other hand, being blatant and honest can also lead to a great number of followers, because such openness and honesty can be perceived as noble and even heroic. However, there is also a thin line of good taste and tacticism which has to be respected in order to obtain and retain the voters' support, or as Booth states, "if any nation's leaders refused to 'accommodate' to particular audiences on particular occasions, they would soon fail, and they would often harm the nation as a whole" (68). Christina Schaffner agrees: "Politicians do not deliver speeches

as individuals, but rather as representatives of political parties, governments, or nations. In these conditions, they are limited as political actors as to what they can do and say and how“ (3).

Therefore, a successful politician is, of course, supposed to be a successful spokesperson, but also (even more importantly) a competent and sensible leader. There is much more to being a successful politician than being a successful spokesperson, but the fact remains that it is precisely the speeches, i.e. the language, that is most commonly used as a means of expression. It is not enough to have an idea or to decide to carry it out, but also to achieve it through consent of the voters, and to constantly be careful not to betray their own principles or the principles of the voters who decided to give them their trust: “A vision is unlikely to be successful unless it complies with the values of a particular group. Followers will only believe in visions that are compatible with their value system” (Charteris-Black 21).

3. Linguistic devices commonly used in political speeches

What politicians most frequently make use of is subtle use of refined rhetoric and elegantly persuasive language. This language must be impartial and unbiased and respect the rules of what is known as political correctness. Examples of applying political correctness are terms such as "*visually impaired, blended family* (households incorporating children from several relationships) and ethnic origin terms such as *African-American*" (Thomas 40). Although it does not represent an attempt to control or limit us in a radical way, it still replaces old terms for certain concepts with new ones and thus changes our perception of them. This is a proof that language actually does serve a role for steering people in a desired way.

As J. Joseph states, "man is by nature a political animal, but some take it to extremes and become politicians" (13). As he later argues, one of the qualities that a politician has to possess in order to be successful is the ability to speak well; to know how to express him or herself. It is important to be able and competent to perform not coercion, but consent; to make the listener think or believe what the speaker wants him to. What most politicians frequently resort to, and to which this MA thesis gives most of its attention, are presupposition, implicatures, rhetorical figures and (last but not least) extralinguistic means of communication.

3.1. *Presupposition and implicature*

The main characteristic of presupposition and implicature is that we assert a certain state of affairs without actually asserting it directly, or as Jones and Stilwell Peccei regard it, "presuppositions are background assumptions embedded within a sentence or phrase, these assumptions are taken for granted to be true regardless of whether the whole sentence is true"

(Thomas 41). For example, in the sentence *I like it that John is gone* the main presupposition is that John went somewhere and that he is not here anymore. However, if the sentence is negated and states *I don't like it that John is gone*, the speaker's attitude towards to presupposition is changed, but the presupposition that John left stays the same. This can be very useful in political speeches when politicians cannot avoid mentioning a certain event or problem, so they assert it, but in a way that does not put the emphasis on the problem itself, but on speaker's attitude towards it, their desire to approve it, etc. and many politicians do in fact use presuppositions very often.

Similar to presuppositions are implicatures, however they are not the same thing. To use a presupposition, the speaker does not have to have any shared knowledge with the speaker, but it is not the case with implicatures: "unlike presuppositions, implicatures operate over more than one phrase or sentence and are much more dependent on shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer and on the surrounding context of the discourse" (Thomas 44). In order to clarify implicature, here follows an extract from an interview with Tony Blair:

> "Journalist: The question is what freedom he has under the current inspection regime but we've discussed that already, I want to explore a little further about your personal feelings about this war. Does the fact that George Bush and you are both Christians make it easier for you to view these conflicts in terms of good and evil?
>
> Blair: I don't think so, no, I think whether you're a Christian or you're not a Christian you can try perceive what is good and what is, is evil.
>
> J: You don't pray together for an example?
>
> B: No, we don't pray together Jeremy, no.
>
> J: Why do you smile?

B: Because – why do you ask me the question?

J: Because I'm trying to find out how you feel about it."

3.2. Rhetorical figures

Rhetoric is commonly defined as the skill of elegant and persuasive speaking. Among implicatures and presuppositions, rhetoric figures (figures of speech) are one of the most commonly used tools in shaping political speeches in a way that is clear, but still subtle enough to lead the listener to the conclusion that he or she really believes and supports what they just heard.

The most popular figures of speech include metaphors, metonymy, analogy, euphemisms, parallelisms, and the famous "rule of three".

Both metaphor and metonymy are frequently used in the language of politics. As Adrian Beard simply explains it, "metaphor refers to when a word or a phrase is used which establishes a comparison between one idea and another" (30). This is the reason why they are particularly useful when politicians have to talk about some concepts about which their audience knows nothing about, or, if they do, their knowledge is often very poor. So, as Jones and Stilwell argue, it is very common to refer to economy as a machine ("That vast wealth-producing engine of the south..."), an argument as a war ("His criticism was right on target"), people as plants ("He is still green"), company as a ship ("I'm learning the ropes"), etc.

Although metaphor and metonymy are similar in nature, they are frequently mistaken for one another. The main difference is that, while metaphor is based on comparison, metonymy, on the other hand, is based on substitution, i.e. on substituting one element of a whole with the whole in total: "Metonymy involves replacing the name of something with something that is

connected to it, without being the whole thing" (Beard 30). So, for example, when referring to the President of the United States and members of his staff, it is common to use the term *The White House* (although it is clear that we are not referring to the building itself, but to the group of people who work there). The same rule goes for examples such as *The Crown* (when we are referring to a monarchist) or *The New York Times* (when we are actually referring to the journalists who write for the newspaper and not the newspaper itself), etc.

Although the second sentence does not imply that the interest in ancient cultures is the reason for travelling to China, the analogy which connects it with the first sentence does. In other words, it is redundant to repeat it because the analogy connecting the first and second sentence implies it. Because analogy is simple and brief, it is very convenient for politicians to use in their long speeches to achieve succinctness, but also to avoid saying or imply something that they choose not to be overt about.

Euphemisms are extremely popular with politicians, in relation to what was earlier described as 'political correctness'. Although they can come down to being the same thing, euphemisms are slightly different because they are more widespread than the political correctness terms and are used more freely; political correctness terms are used as the optimal terms that are supposed to be used instead of the derogatory ones, and euphemisms, on the other hand, are terms used to tone down the impact of the optimal term: e.g. we will say that our President passed away, and not that he died, or that the opponent army was disarmed instead of saying that they surrendered. This is very useful for politicians because they are aware of the fact that they do not represent just themselves, but frequently whole parties, policies and ideas, so they are required to connect themselves and everything they represent with the audience: "No rhetorical effort can succeed if it fails to join in the beliefs and passions of the audience

addressed, and that almost always requires some 'accommodation,' 'adjustment,' or 'adaptation' to the audience's needs and expectations" (Booth 67).

Parallelisms in political speech are almost self-explanatory: they reinforce the message being conveyed, e.g. Winston Churchill stated in his speech to the House of Commons in 1940: "We shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island..." This continuous repetition of certain words or phrases is purposed to reinforce the message which is being said. We could almost say that, while euphemisms weaken and moderate the statement, parallelisms do the opposite; they intensify it. Parallelisms are also known to be one of the most successful clap traps, a term about which more will be said at the end of this chapter.

The so-called 'rule of three' is basically the act of using trinity of terms as being the most pleasing in the aesthetic sense. As it is the case with the most of here mentioned rhetorical figures the rule of three is also not confined only to the sphere of political speeches; it is used in everyday communication, in student essays, in seminar papers, etc., simply because the three consecutive and semantically similar words 'seem nicer'; "The three-part list is attractive to the speaker and listener because it is embedded in certain cultures as giving a sense of unity and completeness" (Beard 49) .For instance, when wanting to leave a more positive impact on the hearers, the speaker (the politician) will more likely say that the new reform in the educational system is "useful, refreshing and positive" instead of simply saying that "it is a positive change". By doing so, the politician reinforces the idea and the emotion he or she is trying to convey.

The usage of pronouns is proven to make a difference in attitude of the listeners towards the speaker: the exchange of *I* to *we* and *we* to *I* (depending on the degree of involvement that the speaker wants to convey), usage of *us* and *them* (to reinforce the sense of unity), etc. To

exemplify this serves the speech of the former President of the USA, George W. Bush: “Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger, we have found our mission and our moment”. By using the pronouns we and us, he achieves a greater level of involvement and hence greater level of compassion and unity among the members of the audience. Although this rhetorical figure is quite obvious to notice and read out, it is nevertheless very potent and frequently used.

3.3. *Extralinguistic means of communication*

In order for the linguistic elements of rhetoric to operate, they have to be presented with credibility and authenticity. This is where the ‘special skills’ of the orators come to light. Even the best political speech is worthless if the person presenting it is unable to carry it out properly. A skilled spokesperson is, of course, required to possess some traits in character which are bound to give them more credibility, such as powerful voice, high eloquence, perceptiveness, highly developed social skills, etc. The best example for powerful orators could be Martin L. King or Adolf Hitler who possessed all of the above mentioned characteristics, which enabled them to connect to wide mass audiences. These audiences later became their supporters and followers, not just because their beliefs corresponded with Luther’s or Hitler’s, but because they were properly guided into consent. Those men spoke with passion and assurance, which was recognized by their audiences.

Although there is no doubt about the importance of the orator’s charisma, there are also some ‘tricks of the trade’ employed by them which enable them to significantly better their performances.

There is an aspect of public speeches of which the orators are aware: the (oral) communication is unidirectional; the only person speaking is the orator. In order to give the orator feedback, the audience either claps or protests; that is their way of showing that they are listening. Even the individuals who are not listening or paying any attention whatsoever will also join in the applause or the booing because of the basic human tendency to be 'a part of the team': "We tend to feel very uncomfortable when, as members of a collectivity, we fail to co-ordinate our own behaviour with that of everyone else. (...). At public gatherings, there is thus considerable pressure on all those present to conform and 'go along with the crowd'" (Atkinson 37).

What Atkinson suggests is that, being aware of this, public speakers are very interested in getting feedback from the audience, whether positive or negative. This is understandable, because the whole point of their speech comes in question if no one is even listening. To make sure that they are receiving the desired attention from their audiences, the speakers take not only linguistic measures to capture the audience's attention, but also some purely extra-linguistic ones. Although they can be said to prove as quite transparent in their purpose, they are nonetheless proven to be very helpful. Just to name a few, we are all aware of the speakers' scanning of the audience, dramatic intonation, or even an elaborated garment which can serve as their "trademark". Jonathan Charteris-Black agrees with Atkinson: "Many orators also like to use their facial expressions and body gestures to reinforce what they are saying. Leaders internally design a unique communicative style that differentiates them from rivals and is a prelude to leadership performance" (35).

Last, but not least techniques to be elaborated here are the already mentioned, so-called 'clap traps'. Although they cannot be said to be a subcategory of rhetorical figures, they are nonetheless very important and a very commonly used means of capturing the audience's

attention by politicians. Atkinson's newly introduced theories and concepts were not unnoticed by his fellow scholars and other scientists in this field of scientific research; they were in fact (mainly) approved of and adopted in the subsequent works of, Adrian Beard, who uses Atkinson's terminology in the clarification of the phenomena in question in his own work: "A clap trap is a trick, device, or language designed to catch applause" (49). A successful claptrap, as he further explains, is supposed to provide the audience with signals which signalize both that they should applaud and when they should start doing so and it is always constituted out of more simultaneous techniques. This is partially achieved by the content of what an orator says, and partially in combination with the timing of what he says, as well as with other rhetorical figures, like metaphors, metonymy, intonation, etc. For example, George W. Bush combined the usage of the pronouns we and us with dramatic intonation and slower pronunciation (timing), which ultimately lead the audience to applause.

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4. The Politics of George W. Bush and Barack Obama

In order to acquire a full comprehension of not only the rhetorical devices used in the speeches of George W. Bush and Barack Obama but also of the reasons why those particular rhetorical figures were used, it is necessary to be familiar with these politicians. It is useful to have knowledge of the characteristics of the political parties they belong to, but above all, it is essential to have the knowledge of the policies which these two politicians advocated. The political position which a politician decides to advocate is the result of the above mentioned factors: the individual views and the views of their party. As already noted, a politician chooses the rate and degree to which he or she gravitates to each of the factors; a successful political leader is supposed to be able to achieve a balance between personal desires and inclinations, the views of the party and the desires of the (potential) voters. In this chapter, the policies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama will be presented and described so that a basis is provided for the analysis of their linguistic choices in the subsequent chapter.

4.1. *George W. Bush: The Republican*

After having won the elections for the 43rd President of the United States of America, George W. Bush and his staff opted for a more conservative, Republican manner of running the state in comparison with his predecessor Bill Clinton (although the democratic view predominated again eight years later with the victory of Barack Obama). This meant, of course, a less liberal political atmosphere.

However, within a party there is also always more than one political stream, and these different streams are united ‘under the wing’ of one more general party whose principles correspond more or less to the principles of these streams. In much a similar manner, there are

also individual politicians as separate personalities, who differentiate themselves from one another by their own sets of beliefs. This leads to the conclusion that, when a Republican wins the elections for the US Presidency, this candidate will, of course promote the values of their party, but also their respective political agenda and beliefs. According to Shareef, for George W. Bush this meant, along with promoting the values of his Republican Party, employing a harsher foreign policy, not only to demonstrate the dominant position of the USA in the world, but also as a preventive act of intimidation to the terrorist circles in the Middle East (69).

The sphere of international relations was the one which marked his presidency, although he and his staff were also active in some areas of internal affairs, such as education and economy. However, when we look back on the time when George W. Bush was the US president, the first associations that come to mind are the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, as well as the subsequent war in Iraq, and the horrific aftermath of the hurricane Katrina in 2005.

It has to be noted that George Bush Jr. won two mandates, which implies that the people of the USA were not dissatisfied with him. However, it seems that Americans were not completely satisfied with his way of running the state, either, and that this dissatisfaction accumulated for a longer period of time before it reached the point of deciding that they were not so happy with him after all. This dissatisfaction is understandable. Firstly, many lives were extinguished in the attack at the World Trade Centre in 2001, and even more lives were affected by this attack. It was an event that shook up not only the United States of America, but the entire world. The Government of the USA decided to react swiftly and to declare a war on Iraq and Saddam Hussein; US troops were summoned and sent off to fight in Iraq.

These events raised enough questions and scepticism already and George W. Bush and his staff were under more pressure by the American citizens, journalists and political opposition. Firstly, many asked themselves how it was possible that the Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization that was known to be active for years, was in the state of performing such a well-planned international terrorist attack. The suspicion and distrust that arose concerning these matters came to be major stepping stones in the relationship between the American people and America's governing bodies. A further question, which widened this chasm, asked not only by Americans, but also by many people around the globe, was: if it was Al-Qaeda and its leader Osama Bin-Laden who attacked the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001, then why did George W. Bush proclaim war on Saddam Hussein and Iraq? Jonathan Schell, a respected political journalist, states that, although the war in Iraq was named as 'War on Terrorism', it had other hidden agenda as well, and not only to repress terrorism: "It was to be both act and warning—both removal of a concrete danger and demonstration to the world of what awaited governments that sought WMD in defiance of American wishes or that otherwise displeased the United States (6)". The distrust and suspicion further grew into resentment and antagonism as many American soldiers were subsequently ordered to leave their homes in order to fight in a war in Iraq and Afghanistan; a war in which they themselves were not even sure who the enemy was and what the purpose of this war was. It was understandable for Bush and his staff to take such measures, if not because out of sense for righteousness or anger, then out of fear of being seen as lenient or lacking initiative. Leffler agrees: "they had reason to think that nothing they could have done could have averted the attack, but this did not mean that they could escape a sense of guilt over their own culpability (194)". This implies that this invasion in Iraq was an act of fear, a fear of being seen as indifferent to the suffering of the people of the USA. However, as is the case in other similar situations, it would have been advisable for Bush and his government to take into

consideration that, while Americans were undoubtedly outraged by this terrorist attack, it was in no one's interest to bring even more deaths and misery to the people of the USA.

George Bush's popularity among Americans was in steady decline, ultimately solidified by the hurricane Katrina in 2005 and its aftermath. The backlash of the hurricane was daunting, victims were many and George Bush and his government failed to atone for this. The people of the United States of America were struck hard by affliction within five years, which is a short time period. They felt they were in need of change, of something or someone who could restore their hope, peace and unity, and this is where Barack Obama came into the picture.

4.2. *Barack Obama: The Democrat*

After an eight-year-long mandate of George W. Bush, marked by sternness and a high mortality rate, Barack Obama and his promoted policy seemed like 'just what the doctor ordered'. He was everything Bush was not: a Democrat, a pacifist, a man of multiracial heritage, 'one of their own'. He has won Americans over by "opposing to the war in Iraq from the start" (Go 18) and by promising them balance and unity, which was exactly what they lacked. In his presidential campaign (and even before it) he repeatedly emphasized his multicultural and multiracial background, his deep faith and Christian religion, his ascent from a middle-class boy to a Harvard-graduate (Pedersen 24), and finally to a politician and a candidate for the President of the USA. He presented himself as the embodiment of the American dream, as a representative of so many people in the USA who are chasing this same dream; he has shown them through his own example that 'if there is a will, there is a way'. He inspired them to be one nation made out of many different races, cultures, races and religions.

Of course, Obama's campaign was not successful only because of the fact that the Americans saw 'their savior' in him; he naturally proposed some crucial reforms and changes in the economy, foreign policy and social issues which Americans felt were needed. Many of these promises were kept when he came into power, and that is something the people of the USA remembered and recognized. However, it can be said that he owes most of his popularity to the way how he chose to represent his policy and himself, which was admittedly a very intelligent choice. Whether he was truly representing himself and his views or just creating an illusion, a picture of this loveable 'everyman', we will never know, but the fact is that he was credible enough in it to ensure himself eight years in the White House and provide United States of America a wholly different political atmosphere from the one George W. Bush promoted.

In the following chapters we will see that these two presidents were in fact very different in the way they governed their country, and just how deep these different policies go: they are represented in their public speeches, too. The statistics behind the analysis of the speeches by Bush and Obama show that it cannot be accidental that some linguistic choices are incorporated in these speeches and that the represented policies and politics are even incorporated in the way they speak and in their linguistic choices. Politicians build their reputation and recognizable persona not only upon the policies they promote, their reforms and political moves, but also upon every other imaginable level, which includes even the way they speak and express themselves.

This is the point where the initial statement that politics is present everywhere comes into a much more specific context: just as we (consciously or not) make a political choice in the grocery shop or in the choice of our television programme, so do politicians make political choices in every move they make and in every word they say.

This chapter has showcased the political agenda and programmes which George W. Bush and Barack Obama promoted. It also suggested that there is a connection between the promoted policies and the linguistic choices being made as a means of promoting these policies. In the following chapter an attempt will be made to show this premise as true.

5. The Rhetoric of George W. Bush and Barack Obama

As noted in the introductory part of this paper, rhetoric is one of the most commonly and most frequently used means of reaching political agreement through consent. To achieve this, the rhetorician (or in our case, the politician) has to be able to reconcile the interests of the audience (i.e. the potential voters) and the interests of their political party, and, of course, their own individual interests. The extent to which the speakers fall under the influence of their party or tend to adjust their views to the views of the general public dictates how much they will be seen as honest or dishonest, truthful or deceitful etc.

The key word to rely upon here is trust. Whole ideologies, political parties, politicians and their personalities are created upon it. Trust is the main tool of achieving political consent. It is the notion of trust that evokes hope, optimism and sympathy among broad audiences. These broad audiences later become the voters supporting these ideologies and policies, and most frequently not because they are completely satisfied with their current situation or because the proposed reforms and programmes meet their needs and wishes to the fullest, but because there has come to establishment of trust and these people are thus ready to 'work on the relationship' and compromise: "Trust arises when those who sacrifice are confident that in the long run their interests will be addressed. Because no political decision can serve everyone's interests, the losing group needs to be shown that their turn will come" (Olmsted 130). The reason why one of the parties in this "relationship" is ready to compromise is exactly the established trust, which is established because of the integrity, reliability, and good will of the politician to make changes. All of these qualities are best showcased in their political speeches, i.e. in their competence in rhetoric. Rhetoric is the corner stone to the establishment of ideologies, and ideologies are the corner stone to the establishment of legitimacy and righteousness. Johnstone and Eisenhart are of much the similar view: "An important tool in

achieving legitimacy is the reliance upon well established ideologies – those beliefs and representations that are shared by the members of a community and that act as providers of meaning for their everyday practices" (34).

5.1. *Methodology*

Seeing as George W. Bush and Barack Obama promoted different ideologies and engaged themselves in different areas of the political life of the USA, it is interesting to see just how much this corresponds with their rhetorical styles and linguistic choices. In order to support the claims made in this paper, a corpus of twenty speeches has been retrieved from online databases presidentialrhetoric.com and americanrhetoric.com; ten speeches by George W. Bush and ten by Barack Obama. In these speeches, special attention was given to the identification of the rhetorical figures described in the third chapter of this paper. Seeing as metaphor and analogy can be considered as 'a separate case' (being the most commonly and elaborately used linguistic device), all the metaphors, analogies and implicatures found in these twenty speeches have been divided into thematic groups which are related to different notions, such as war and peace, time and history, life and death, light and dark, etc.

The reason why this paper elaborates metaphors and implicatures not as separate rhetorical figures, but together, is that there have been many cases during the analysis of the speeches where it was very difficult to tell whether the speaker was using metaphor or implicature. The difference, although clear-cut in theory, is not such in practice: rhetoricians (and politicians especially) like to take one concept and then permeate it through the whole paragraph, or through the whole speech. This is why it seemed more reasonable and more purposeful to regard metaphors and implicatures as the same body. The purpose of this paper is to show how rhetorical devices affect the listeners and how they represent the speakers, and not

simply to state which rhetorical devices are most commonly employed in political speeches. To accomplish this, it is more important to focus on the purpose of the utilized conceptions and their semantic domains than on their distinction.

The extent to which these different conceptions are represented in Bush's and Obama's speeches is the most significant indicator in the linking of rhetorical choices and political leadership styles of these two statesmen.

5.2. *George W. Bush's Rhetoric*

To begin with, it must be stated that there are some rhetorical devices that are so common and often made use of by politicians, but which have no specific ideological background; the purpose of these rhetorical devices is simply to make the speeches 'sound better'. The rhetorical devices in question, which are also described in this paper, are euphemisms, parallelisms, the 'rule of three' and the pronouns (i.e. the exchange of the singular and plural forms in order to increase or decrease the level of involvement in a certain state of affairs: *I*, *we* and *us* for a higher degree of involvement and *you*, *your*, *them* and *their* for less involvement). Although these figures of speech are certainly very potent and powerful when precisely inserted within a given context, they are not ideologically 'coloured'. These devices are all used to reach the same objective: to reinforce the message being conveyed. That is why they are most commonly referred to as 'intensifiers'. It could be stated that even clap-traps belong to this group, even though they are somewhat different in nature (if we consider that they are closely related to intonation and pronunciation, we could state that the clap-traps are extralinguistic, whereas the rest of the intensifiers are not).

It is almost self-explanatory why these intensifiers are so represented in political speeches: they help the politicians, i.e. the rhetoricians, to reinforce their message without having to sacrifice the style and coherence of the speech to the content and information. That being stated, it is not surprising there have been seventeen euphemisms, twenty-nine parallelisms, forty-eight utilizations of the 'rule of three' and twenty-seven pronoun swaps in Bush's speeches, which results in the average of almost thirteen intensifiers per speech. It is even more fascinating that, while reading a speech (or listening to it), these intensifiers are never dominant or even noticeable; they are so 'well-packed' within the speech itself that it is highly unlikely that the common listener (without any deeper knowledge of rhetorical devices) will detect the simple 'mechanical' insertion of a needed intensifier. It is far more likely that the listener will subconsciously recognize that more emphasis was given to a certain argument, but not because it was plainly and clearly stated, but because of the successful persuasion. These speeches are flooded with parallelisms such as:

> "*We look forward to* rewarding teachers who are not only lending their hearts, but their talents, to make sure no child gets left behind. *We look forward to* a culture in America that understands every child can learn. And *we look forward to* the day that no child in this country is ever left behind" (Bush: "No Child Left Behind"),

or use of the pronouns *I, me* or *us* when referring to the American government, or the USA as a whole:

> "That is not the America *I* know. That is not the America *I* serve. *We* refuse to live in fear. (Applause.) This nation, in world war and in Cold War, has never permitted the brutal and lawless to set history's course. Now, as before, *we* will secure our nation, protect our freedom, and help others to find freedom of their own" (Bush: "The Iraqi Threat").

As it is lucidly shown in this example of only five sentences, the clever swapping of different pronouns serves as a perfect tool for reaching a higher level of compassion, agreement and sympathy, all of which serve as a tool for establishing trust. It is small, at the first glance almost insignificant "little words" like this that make all the difference in the end. The appeal of them is exactly how small and seemingly insignificant they seem. Pronouns are, in fact, words that do not normally carry much meaning (when compared to nouns, adjectives, or verbs), but when they are properly placed within a context and within the syntax, they become very significant to the overall meaning and the conveyed message.

The mention of the notion of syntax leads us to the other, ideologically and politically 'coloured' linguistic devices: syntax, metonymy and metaphor: "It is through metaphor, metonymy, and syntax that linguistic references evoke mythic cognitive structures in people's minds. This is hardly surprising, for we naturally define ambiguous situations by focusing on one part of them or by comparing them with familiar things" (Edelman 30). Written sentences can only convey some meaning when they are materialized, i.e. when they are spoken, uttered. The written analysis and explanation of the extra-linguistic dimension is difficult because there is no written basis upon which conclusions can be made, but we are left to analyze such complicated phenomena as political speeches only based on our personal and highly subjective impression. The way in which sentences become materialised, i.e. how it is spoken, however, can also be indicative of the parts of the speech which were intended to be emphasized: how words are uttered and intonated is a major indicator of the message behind these words. Furthermore, facial expressions and bodily gestures also serve as an extralingustic intensifier of the interlinguistic words and sentences on the paper. This leads us to the point where we could again mention clap-traps as intensifiers. Regrettably, there is not a way to prove a claim of a clap-trap in a written text, simply because they are purely extralinguistic. However, we do live in the age of modern technologies, modern mediums of

communications and the Internet. There are platforms on the Internet that make audio and video recordings of many of these speeches available to anyone. It is possible to see how syntax becomes materialized; how the utterances are intonated and how tactical pauses between utterances are made in strategic points. These tactical pauses are, in fact, clap-traps. It is almost a certainty that just about every applause in the political speeches is planned, or at least predicted. For example, in the following excerpt from Bush's "State of the Union" speech, the clap-traps can be anticipated even in the written version of the speech:

> "We last met in an hour of shock and suffering. In four short months, our nation has comforted the victims, begun to rebuild New York and the Pentagon, rallied a great coalition, captured, arrested, and rid the world of thousands of terrorists, destroyed Afghanistan's terrorist training camps, saved a people from starvation, and freed a country from brutal oppression. *(Applause.)*
>
> The American flag flies again over our embassy in Kabul. Terrorists who once occupied Afghanistan now occupy cells at Guantanamo Bay. *(Applause.*) And terrorist leaders who urged followers to sacrifice their lives are running for their own. *(Applause.)*"

Even though we cannot hear exactly how it sounded, it is visible from the syntax, from the emotional language that evokes personal suffering and national pride (people suffering and starving, American flag flying), that such statements "call for" applause.

Another very successful, in fact, the most successful rhetorical device, is metaphor, and, very commonly linked to it, also metonymy. Although they are in no case the same thing, metaphor and metonymy are seen almost as akin because they both take one part of a larger concept and use it to denote another concept. The difference between them, however, is that, while metonymy does relate one concept to another, it is not nearly as powerful and potent to

build up meaning and emotion as metaphor. For example, when Bush states that the "Government spends a lot of money, but it doesn't build factories, it doesn't invest in companies, or do the work that makes the economy go" (Bush: "Economic Policy"), he certainly does not mean to state that all the employees in the Government are not doing their jobs, but that some areas of work are lacking. However, when stated like this, it can seem more meaningful than it actually is and entail some parties that were not initially intended to be entailed. This is the most common case of the use of metonymy; a whole institution or organization is mentioned when it actually stands only for some of its elements. It can lead to appending of meaning and this appending can be politically and ideologically 'coloured', but it entails much less 'room for manoeuvre' than metaphors or implicatures.

Metaphors and implicatures can be said to be the favourite means of conveying meaning, especially the connotational meaning. They are highly convenient for clearly describing one's opinions and views without having to actually say it, i.e. without having to sacrifice style and sublimity of the text to the clarity of the meaning. In the speeches of George W. Bush, there have been found as many as two hundred and eighty-six metaphors and implicatures, which gives us the average of almost twenty-nine per speech, admittedly a high number. Their semantic domains which were the most represented in the speeches of George W. Bush were 'America = civilized world' (thirty-four), 'America = person' (twenty-eight), 'progress = journey' (twenty-three), 'Islamic world = children' (also twenty-three) and 'war and peace' (twenty-one). The others highly represented domains of metaphor and implicature were 'terrorists = animals', 'friendship and hostility', 'building and machinery' and 'business and finance'. When we take into consideration the previous chapter, in which the political agenda of George W. Bush was described and analysed, it does not surprise that it is exactly these metaphorical conceptual domains that are most represented in his speeches. As we know, he was a war-time president and he had to concern himself precisely with the questions of

Islamic world, terrorists, war, hostility, peace and friendship. At the same time, he was active in terms of economic and social reforms, so that could explain the metaphors concerning business, finance and building.

However, it is evident from the speeches that, even though some of these metaphors and implicatures are actually used within the context they belong to (i.e. that the metaphors concerning war and peace are used within the context of discussing terrorism and war), it is often found that some of them, such as those concerning business and finance, are used not only when President Bush talked about business and finance, but also when he discussed some other issues. For example, when he talks about the 9/11 terrorist attack, he states that "Americans understand the *costs of conflict* because *we have paid them* in the past" (Bush: "Message to Saddam"). It is interesting to see how some covert meanings can be found within the reference to a subject that has no direct link to that covert meaning. Perhaps this was intentional and a way for George W. Bush to highlight the importance of these concepts to him and his office, or maybe it was unintentional, but it can still be seen as an indication of what was seen as a matter of high importance.

On the other hand, he uses these concepts when referring to the subjects that really are semantically related to them, e.g. in his "Remarks to the U.N." speech he draws from the semantic domain of construction when referring to the creation of a new, better government in Iraq:

> "If all these steps are taken, it will signal a new openness and accountability in Iraq. And it could open the prospect of the United Nations *helping to build a government* that represents all Iraqis -- *a government based on respect* for human rights, economic liberty, and internationally supervised elections."

In much the same way, he does not refrain from indirectly stating that the United States of America is the leading force of the present civilised world: "But the stakes for America are never small. *If our country does not lead the cause of freedom, it will not be led*" (Bush: "Inaugural Speech"). The previous sentence showcases quite clearly that Bush and his office feel that America is the leader of the civilized world, and the same can be seen in the following example: "But some governments will be timid in the face of terror. *And make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will (Applause)*" (Bush: "State of the Union"). It is also interesting to see how some rhetorical devices are used very closely and almost directly right after one another: in the first example of the concept of America as leader of the Civilized world, we can see a finance-related metaphor in the preceding sentence. In the second example, we can see this concept followed by another clap-trap. It is this way of using rhetoric that is the most useful and most effective to reach consent.

Another interesting field of metaphors and implicatures are, of course, those regarding war and peace. We can thus see in many examples in Bush's speeches that he does not refrain from making hostile statements: "Tonight I want to take a few minutes to discuss a grave threat to peace, and *America's determination to lead the world in confronting that threat*" (Bush: "The Iraqi Threat"), from (indirectly) referring to terrorists as animals: "(...) *we are hunting down al Qaeda killers*. (...) I pledged that the *terrorists would not escape* the patient justice of the United States. (...) *nearly one-half of al Qaeda's senior operatives have been captured or killed*" (Bush: "End of Major Combat in Iraq"), or from referring to the Islamic world as a helpless and unknowing child, desperate for help from the USA: "*To all of the men and women of the United States armed forces now in the Middle East, the peace of a troubled world and the hopes of an oppressed people now depend on you"* (Bush: "War Message").

What can be drawn from these examples is an affirmation of the initial claim that the political agenda of a politician and a policy is represented in its entire communication media, and especially in the language. We can also see that even the rhetorical devices used by George W. Bush and the concepts from which he drew his metaphors and implicatures are implicative of the US-policy: we can draw a slightly dominating, even patronising attitude toward other countries, especially toward the countries of the Middle East. The examples showcased in this paper (although there were many more found) that there in fact really is a connection between the rhetorical choices of politician and the political agenda they represent.

5.3. *Barack Obama's Rhetoric*

As was the case with his predecessor, Barack Obama also frequently utilizes rhetorical devices in his speeches, even more so than George W. Bush. It could even be argued that Obama relied more on the power of his speeches and of language as a means of persuasion, whereas Bush, although his speeches were also elaborate and intricate, did not rely as much on the power of words, but rather let his actions speak for themselves. As this paper will hopefully show, the wiser choice was made by Obama, simply because there is less room for misunderstandings and mistrust if everything is communicated in the proper manner, and more room for persuasion and reaching consent. Having this in mind, as Charteris-Black explains (286), Obama himself participated in the creation of his speeches along with the members of his office, whereas Bush revised the already written speeches and made changes and corrections where he felt were needed. This, too, indicates that Obama was much more concerned with the power of persuasive language and rhetoric than Bush was.

That being stated, it does not surprise to establish the total of average fourteen intensifiers per speech in the Obama corpus, which is not much more than was found in Bush's speeches, but

he seems to have advantage even in this area. The way in which he uses intensifiers is actually quite similar to the way Bush used them, e.g.: "...the young woman in East St. Louis, and thousands more like her, *who has the grades, has the drive, has the will*, but doesn't have the money to go to college" (Obama: "Democratic National Convention"). This is a classic example of the use of the 'rule of three', which is actually the only possible and accurate way to use it.

However, a difference has been noted in Obama's and Bush's use of parallelisms: whereas Bush's parallelisms take up to two to three sentences, or a paragraph in the best case, Obama's parallelisms spread over more paragraphs and can even be threaded through the whole speech or some of its parts. For example, the following paragraph taken from the same speech by Obama is one large parallelism cluster:

> "*If there is* a child on the south side of Chicago who can't read, *that matters to me*, even if it's not my child. *If there is* a senior citizen somewhere who can't pay for their prescription drugs, and having to choose between medicine and the rent, *that makes my life poorer*, even if it's not my grandparent. *If there's* an Arab American family being rounded up without benefit of an attorney or due process, *that threatens my civil liberties*."

Another example of his extensive use of parallelisms is found in Obama's "Adress to the People of Berlin":

> "Now the world will watch and remember what we do here -- what we do with this moment. *Will we* extend our hand to the people in the forgotten corners of this world who yearn for lives marked by dignity and opportunity, by security and justice? *Will we* lift the child in Bangladesh from poverty, and shelter the refugee in Chad, and banish the scourge of AIDS in our time?

> *Will we* stand for the human rights of the dissident in Burma, the blogger in Iran, or the voter in Zimbabwe? *Will we* give meaning to the words "never again" in Darfur?
>
> *Will we* acknowledge -- Will we acknowledge that there is no more powerful example than the one each of our nations projects to the world? *Will we* reject torture and stand for the rule of law? *Will we* -- *Will we* -- *Will we* welcome immigrants from different lands, and shun discrimination against those who don't look like us or worship like we do, and keep the promise of equality and opportunity for all of our people?"

There are more and even lengthier examples for Obama's use of this intensifier, which proves that he (and the members of his staff) felt that parallelisms are one of the best ways to build up emotionality and suspense in his speeches. Apart from his specific use of parallelisms, Obama used intensifiers in much the similar way as Bush did. For example, it is enough only to remember the slogan of his presidential campaign, "Yes we can", to see how much impact only one word, one small pronoun can have. Not "Yes you can", not "Yes I can", but "Yes we can", was the slogan by which the responsibility and the sense of involvement was transferred onto the people of the USA.

As was already mentioned, Obama liked to involve the common, 'ordinary' people in the creation of his political persona, and thus in his speeches. He repeatedly emphasized his multiracial and multicultural heritage and connected it with the multicultural history of the USA; he also repeatedly invoked the idea of the American Dream and took himself as an example that it is possible to achieve it: an ordinary boy from an ordinary family made his life by hard work and honesty; he also repeatedly connected the notion of believing in the American Dream with the notion of faith and religion – his religious views are highly represented in his speeches and in his campaign. It becomes obvious at this point what Obama's methods for reaching sympathy and compassion and for establishing trust were:

through his presentation of himself as the 'guy next door', a likeable personality, he earned the sympathy of the people of the USA. To prove this claim are the concepts from which he drew the metaphors and implicatures which he used in his speeches: in his ten speeches, we have identified four hundred conceptual metaphors and implicatures – forty per speech, which is much more than Bush's twenty-nine. The main domains out of which he drew his concepts are: 'progress = journey' (seventy-eight concepts), 'religion and faith' (forty-seven concepts), 'building and machinery' (forty-six concepts), and 'time and history' (thirty-four concepts).

As we can see, just like with George W. Bush, it is the cornerstones of Obama's policy and ideology that are the most used domains of metaphors and implicatures. In other words, both of these politicians draw their metaphors and implicatures from the semantic domains which are highly linked with the most prominent elements of their policies; for Bush, it is terrorism, war and peace, whereas Obama uses metaphors linked with journey, faith, unity and optimism. The numbers, i.e. the frequency of the utilization of the concepts from these domains cannot coincidentally be in such a strong correlation with these most represented aspects of Obama's campaign. Another similarity with Bush's metaphorical expression is that Obama also uses these concepts when they are not thematically related to the subject being addressed, e.g.:

> "*Washington has a long way to go, and it won't be easy*. That's why we'll have to set priorities. We'll have to make hard choices. And although government will play a crucial role in bringing about the changes that we need, *more money and programs alone will not get us to where we need to go*" (Obama: "Official Announcement of Candidacy for US President")

Here Obama uses the concept of journey and progress and threads it through the subject of the needed and planned reforms that would take place if he was elected for the President of the

USA. In the following excerpt we can see a clear example of how Obama makes use of the 'history and time' domain to reinforce the message being conveyed (which is, in this, case, paired with the parallelisms of his slogan "Yes we can").

> "It was a creed written into the founding documents that declared the destiny of a nation: Yes, we can.
>
> It was whispered by slaves and abolitionists as they blazed a trail towards freedom through the darkest of nights: Yes, we can.
>
> It was sung by immigrants as they struck out from distant shores and pioneers who pushed westward against an unforgiving wilderness: Yes, we can.
>
> It was the call of workers who organized, women who reached for the ballot, a President who chose the moon as our new frontier, and a king who took us to the mountaintop and pointed the way to the Promised Land: Yes, we can, to justice and equality." (Obama: "New Hampshire Primary Concession")

Another crucial conceptual domain from which he drew his ideological fortitude was 'faith and religion':

> "My parents shared not only an improbable love, *they shared an abiding faith in the possibilities of this nation*. They would give me an African name, Barack, or "blessed," *believing that in a tolerant America your name is no barrier to success*. They imagined -- *They imagined me going to the best schools in the land, even though they weren't rich, because in a generous America you don't have to be rich to achieve your potential*." (Obama: "Democratic National Convention Keynote Address")

This passage conveniently depicts not only the high saturation of faith-related concepts, but also the previously described Obama's 'storytelling' manner of speaking: in his speeches, he

repeatedly shares with the listeners the story of his origins and of his family and how it was their high hopes and dreams that helped Barack Obama succeed. We can see from this example that, when he mentions his personal life, he does not refrain from also speaking in a more personal, warm-hearted way, as if he was not the President speaking to his audience, but a friend sharing his life story with another friend.

As we can also see from the comparison of the excerpts of Bush's and Obama's speeches, the quotations concerning Obama are much longer. It is almost impossible to extract a smaller word cluster because all of his rhetorical devices are so 'well-fitted' into the speech as a whole and very often these devices permeate the whole speech, or at least its greatest part. We can say that Obama has in fact put himself into these speeches, or at least he has put in them the persona he was trying to be seen as.

5.4. *Comparison of Bush's and Obama's Rhetoric*

Although the argument from the beginning of the paper is hopefully proven, i.e. that Bush's and Obama's speeches differed in the same way that their ideologies did, and that the reason why their rhetoric was different was precisely because of the pursuit of establishing these different ideologies, the following comparisons can demonstrate some of the metaphorical and implicational domains and the extent to which they were represented in Bush's and Obama's speeches, respectively.

Firstly, there are, of course, some similarities in the speeches of these two presidents, especially in the domains concerning the constant issues of the American domestic affairs, such as building, creation, business and finance. Both presidents were concerned with the issues of social and economical growth, so these analyses results do not come as a surprise.

However, we could also state that there are more differences than similarities in their rhetorical styles. Whereas in Bush's speeches we can find a lot of concepts concerning war, hostility, danger and destruction, in Obama's speeches there are almost none, except when he refers to the time period when he was not yet the president. Furthermore, Obama most frequently uses the concepts related to progress, common journey, faith, learning from the history and the past, etc. These differences in their rhetorical style perfectly reflect their presidential endeavours: whereas Bush, the Republican, was concerned with the prescription and formation of a sound political system, Obama took on the role of a leader rather than of the commander. It can be stated, then, that their leadership styles were also represented in their rhetoric, and that politics is represented in language.

6. Conclusion

The main objective of this MA paper was to investigate whether there is a connection between the rhetorical devices that politicians use in their speeches with the policies and ideologies that they represent. Politics and power relations are present in every aspect of our social existence and are even a major part of it, and our social existence would be impossible without language. Language is the primary means of human communication and it shapes our minds and mindsets just as we shape language.

If we state that language is a crucial part of social relations, then we imply that every social organization and hierarchy is achieved and accomplished by the utilization of language. This implication was considered already in the ancient history and given the name of rhetoric; the art of the speaker to persuade or incline their audience to behave or react in a specific way. This means that language is political and that our linguistic choices are also political choices. This premise was tested on the example of speeches given by two Presidents of the United States of America: George W. Bush and Barack Obama. The positions they held as statesmen are the highest political level an individual can reach, so their language is even more underpinned by politics.

In order to understand politics and power relations, the terms of political agreement and consent were introduced: politicians use their power and the power of language to get their audiences to consent and reach a state of agreement, so that these audiences become their supporters and voters. To accomplish these goals, politicians make use of persuasive language and rhetorical devices; metaphors, implicatures, parallelisms, euphemisms, clap-traps are just some of them, but they are most broadly and commonly utilized ones. All of these rhetorical devices and the way they function were described in order to be able to analyze the speeches given by George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

The following step in understanding their persuasive language was to identify their political views and principles; the political currents they belong to, the values they represent, the historical and social context of their mandates, etc. The analysis and naming of sole rhetorical devices in their speeches would be pointless if we did not know what their purpose was, i.e. what Bush or Obama were trying to accomplish or which impression to leave by the use of a specific rhetorical device in a specific context.

In the analytical part of the paper, twenty political speeches (ten given by George W. Bush and ten by Barack Obama) were gathered and examined with regard to the mentioned criteria. The rhetorical figures were identified and analyzed in relation to the semantic field they belonged to, and these semantic fields were then linked to political agendas of these politicians. In other words, the linguistic choices of Bush and Obama were linked to their political choices. It was found that these politicians mostly relied on the domains concerning the notions they most valued and concerned themselves with: for Bush, it was the concepts of war and peace, hostility and friendship, domination and obedience, and Obama mostly used concepts of progress and journey, dreaming, good faith and religion.

This MA paper has thus supported its claim that the politicians' political choices dictate their linguistic choices, that politics affect every aspect of social interaction and that power relations and power hierarchies are established by means of the basic human interactive tool: language.

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Summary

This MA thesis deals with the relationship between language and politics. Language is the primary human means of communication. It is also incorporated in social relations, which is where power relations and politics come into question. The main premise of this MA thesis, which was presented in its theoretical part, was that the language used by politicians in their political speeches is not only a means of political agenda, but also a result of it, i.e. that there is a close relation between politicians' linguistic choices and their desired impacts. To prove the thesis of the theoretical part of this paper, a corpus of twenty political speeches (ten given by George W. Bush and ten by Barack Obama) was analyzed in order to identify and examine the rhetorical devices used by politicians in general, and George W. Bush and Barack Obama, respectively. The results of the analyses have shown that their linguistic choices were highly related to their desired power relations, as well as with the policies which these politicians promoted.

Key words: ideology, politics, rhetoric, language, linguistics

Sažetak

Retorika američkih političara

Ovaj diplomski rad se bavi odnosom između jezika i politike. Jezik je primarno sredstvo ljudske komunikacije. Također je sastavni dio društvenih odnosa, gdje dolazi u pitanje odnos moći i politike. Glavna premisa ovog rada, koja je prezentirana u teorijskom dijelu, bila je da jezik koji političari koriste u svojim govorima nije samo sredstvo političkog programa, već i njegov rezultat; tj. da je odnos između jezičnih izbora političara i njihovih željenih učinaka vrlo blizak. Kako bi se dokazala teza predstavljena u teorijskom dijelu ovoga rada, korpus od dvadeset političkih govora (deset Georgea W. Busha i deset Baracka Obame) je analiziran

kako bi se identificirali i istražili retorička sredstva političara uopće, ali i Georgea W. Busha i Baracka Obame zasebno. Rezultati analize pokazali su da su njihovi jezični izbori vrlo povezani s njihovim željenim odnosima moći, kao i politikom koju su ovi političari zastupali.

Ključne riječi: ideologija, politika, retorika, jezik, lingvistika