

Persuasion in Social Speeches

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ABSTRACT

The study of the political speeches has drawn the attention of scholars since its revelation up to the present day. Many scholars have attempted to study specific features of it. One of these features that has been at the core of interest is persuasion. This research was aimed to elaborate on the concept of persuasion in the political speeches and to find out the persuasive strategies used in the speeches of queen Rania (queen of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan) The study has confined itself to three main objectives. These are discussing the concept of persuasion as manifested in the political speeches, Identifying the persuasive strategies used, and naming the most common and the least common ones. By using a model based on persuasive communication theory and other related concepts, researcher analyzed the data using quantitative-qualitative research method. The analysis started with a comprehensive reading of queen Rania speech and then identifying the tokens of persuasive strategies. The results were put in numerical form and discussed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The study findings show that persuasion is one of the basic concepts in the political speeches due to the nature of this text which aimed at persuading people to follow the righteous course of action and belief. It is also found that all the persuasive strategies included in the model appeared in the text under study. Finally, the study revealed that metaphor is the most commonly used persuasive strategies while personification is the least.

KEYWORDS: Persuasion, Social Discourse, Persuasive Strategies

1. Introduction

Research interest in persuasion in communication is one of the oldest areas of research. It dates back to Greek philosopher Aristotle in 384 BC - 322 BC. These studies center around the techniques that the communicator uses to render his speech persuasive and obtain the desired response from the receiver. In this sense, persuasion strategies have been employed in a variety of speech situations from advertisements to electoral campaigns. In political texts, as this study is mainly concerned with, various persuasive strategies are used which help the communicator achieve expected and desired response for the message.

In simple words, persuasion can be referred to as the impact of views, attitudes, intentions, motivations, or behaviors. Persuasion is a process to change a person's or a group's behavior or attitude toward some event, idea, object, or another person, by using written or spoken words to convey information, feelings, or reasoning, or a combination thereof. According to Lakhani (2005: 16) "persuasion is about creating an environment that allows two or more people to find common ground and belief." Persuasion is not only about selling, but also about getting agreement and support. Finally, persuasion is hoped to change people's reactions. Keraf (2004) indicates that persuasion is an art of speaking to ensure that someone does something appropriate to the purpose of the speaker at this time or at this time.

Although the study of persuasion in political speeches is not new and that many studies have been introduced so far, this study seeks to add to the available literature on the political speeches by applying modern research frameworks and to analyze this political text through the lenses of modern theories of linguistics. This study strove to investigate which persuasive strategies are used and reveal possible differences between them in terms of the political discourse nature.

This study is expected to make valuable contribution to the study of discourse in general and the study of political discourse in particular. From a practical perspective, the results of this paper are hoped to provide some insights about the nature of persuasion in the political speeches and the type of persuasion strategies used in it. From a theoretical perspective, it is assumed that linguists and rhetoricians in particular will benefit from the theoretical

discussion of the results to further our knowledge about how persuasion is achieved through the use of linguistic tools.

As for the limits of the study, it is only concerned with the one speech of queen Rania Al-Abdullah. Concerning the tools of analysis, the model encompasses the traditional persuasive devices: repetition, rhetorical questions, simile, metaphor, personification.

2. Literature Review

Persuasion

According to the encyclopedia of Britannica, persuasion is the process by which a person's attitudes or behaviour are, without duress, influenced by communications from other people. One's attitudes and behaviour are also affected by other factors (for example, verbal threats, physical coercion, one's physiological states). Not all communication is intended to be persuasive; other purposes include informing or entertaining. Persuasion often involves manipulating people, and for this reason many find the exercise distasteful. Others might argue that, without some degree of social control and mutual accommodation such as that obtained through persuasion, the human community becomes disordered. In this way, persuasion gains moral acceptability when the alternatives are considered.

Persuasion is a technique in which authors use reason and logic to present their thoughts. According to Gass and Seiter (2007), persuasion, or the ability to sway opinions without coercive measures, is one of the universal human tools. Persuasion is something obtained through the use of understanding message sources and recipients, arguments, data, and mediums in order to achieve its goals. Persuasion commonly used in the world of marketing, politics, religious speech. In religious speech oration or politics, persuasive is used by the speaker when conducting a direct speech or oration to convey their idea, purpose, and belief.

Persuasion has been defined differently by a great number of scholars. Hogan (1994), for example, explains that persuasion is providing induction of beliefs and values into someone by means of influencing their thoughts through positive strategy. According to Muholland (1994), persuasion is considered a factor of ordinary everyday life, and it is what can make people feel more or less comfortable, improve or weaken cooperation between colleagues and fiends, and maintain relations with family and the community. Keraf (2004) defines persuasion from a more linguistic perspective. He defines persuasion as a verbal art with the intention to assure someone to do something appropriate to the speaker's purpose for the present time. This means that the purpose of the speaker is to create a certain effect on the hearer to do something. In brief, it could be said that all persuasion is centered on stimulating the hearer in a certain course of action.

Political Discourse

Political speech demands special treatment in a variety of discourse forms. Political discourse is receiving a lot of attention in linguistics right now. Linguists and political scientists, as well as sociologists, cultural scientists, and psychologists, are all interested in political speech. This helps us to better comprehend the nature of the phenomenon and examine it from various corners, resulting in a complete picture of it. Political discourse is the central object of political linguistics research. There are different definitions. starting with Baranov (1991: 64) political discourse is "the totality of all speech acts used in political discussions, as well as rules of public policy, sanctified by tradition and proven by experience". E.R. Levenkova (2011:423) proposes her own definition of political discourse as "a linguistic expression of public practice in the sphere of political culture, which is the professional use of language, which is based on the nationally and socio-historically conditioned mentality of its speakers."

Unlike linguists who support the so-called "narrow" approach to understanding political discourse, A.G. Altunyan, A.P. Chudinov and others are among those who advocate a broad commemoration of political discourse, which includes all forms of linguistic activity in which something connects it with the world of politics (Maslova, V.A., 2008: 43-48). Consequently, the political discourse also includes media products. E.I. Sheigal (2000: 440) defines the media as "an intermediary between politicians and the people" This means that how political events are reported in news feeds, radio, and television affects how ordinary folks see them. As a result, it is undeniable that the same global war might be covered differently in different countries.

A comprehensive approach to political discourse can also be attributed to V.V. Zelensky (1996: 368-380). who distinguishes between two layers of politics: official and personal. The first is based on all types of political expressions in people's social lives in any country. The mass media is also included. The second level of politics is realized when an individual has a relationship with other people or the surrounding world. The differences in the level of policy determine the characteristics of the two types of discourse, which are directly correlated with the above classification. In the first case, the speaker has a specific role clearly assigned to him: he is the bearer of a

certain social status and represents a specific social institution. In the second case, the speaker acts as himself: he is a person with a unique set of traits. For modern political linguistics, it is extremely important to include in political discourse a number of components related to speech activity: these are the political views of the author; and other discourses that can be implicitly or explicitly represented in a particular sample of discourse; and the political situation that determines the content of the discourse; etc. Thus, the study of political discourse presupposes "the study of the degree of influence on this text and on its perception by the addressee of various linguistic, cultural, social, economic, political, national and other factors."

The Language of Persuasion

Ionica (2002:19) states that "what is pleasing is more easily accepted; therefore, the way in which something is said has a persuasive dimension". The employment of the stylistic devices makes what is being interesting, innovative, surprising, and gratifying to the audience, so that it becomes more easily accepted and therefore persuasive.

Aristotle indicates that beyond the basic means of producing persuasion, attention must also be paid to "the style, or language to be used" (Smith, 2009:57). In addition, Sandell (1977:75) maintains that the employment of stylistic devices is used to achieve force, freshness, directness and interest in speeches. He adds that simile, metaphor, repetition, rhetorical question, and personification, among other devices, are the most effective devices aiding persuasion to a significant degree.

In following sub sections, the tools of persuasion is dealt with in details

Metaphor

Abrams (1999: 97) defines metaphor as "a word or expression that in literal usage denotes one kind of thing is applied to a distinctly different kind of thing, without asserting a comparison." Similarly, it is defined as "the phenomenon whereby we talk and, potentially, think about something in terms of something else" (Semino, 2008:10). Or, it is the non-literal use of linguistic forms that are used to draw attention by resemblance or equivalence. For example:

Life is a journey.

Repetition

Fahnestock (2011: 230) mentions that orators since antiquity have drawn on the power of repetition for emphasis and emotional heightening and then have persuasive consequences. Repetition is one of the syntactic devices in which words, phrases, clauses and sentences are used more than one time in order to draw the attention of the reader/listener and to have rhythmic flow of speech (Cuddon, 1998:742). For example:

In order to end a war on many fronts, I initiated a pursuit for peace on many fronts.

Simile

Simile can be defined as an overt comparison between two different things, actions, or feelings which is identified by using the words *as like*, or *as if*, and asserts that it is more tentative and decorative than a metaphor (Baldick, 2001: 237). Through the use of similes, one can entice the imagination of his listener, so that he will be creating a more interesting persuasive speech (McManus, 1998: 63).

She is like a moon

Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is "a question asked for the sake of persuasive effect rather than as a genuine request for information" (Baldick, 2001: 218), in which the addresser implies that the answer is too obvious to require a reply. In effect, a rhetorical question is a statement in the form of a question, (Quinn 2006: 367). In terms of speech act theory, the illocutionary force of this device is not to question but to assert (Abrams and Harpham 2009: 315).

Thus, rhetorical questions are questions in form but are used as an assertion rather to be answered. Rhetorical questions are used mainly to achieve some persuasive functions. Changing an opinion and enhancing the speaker's position are the main aims behind using such questions (Petty and Cacioppo, 1983:5).

Is that a reason for despair? (Surely that is not a reason ...) (ibid.) .

Personification

Baker and Sibonile (2011:90) define personification as the description of abstract concepts and inanimate objects as though they were people. Thus, it is a representation whereby nonhuman objects are ascribed human attributes (as in the first example below) or qualities or to express abstract nouns in human terms (as in the second example below):

1. Out of the fifty odd men left, only about thirty would be required to unload the Russian **ship**, big as **she** was. (ibid.)
2. One thing of which **capitalism** has always been proud, is that it can in a literal sense "**deliver the goods**". (ibid.)

3. Methodology and Procedures

Research Objectives

Basing on the research introduction and problem discussed above, this study aims at:

- a. Describing the process of persuasion in queen Rania speeches in terms of modern linguistic theories and classifying the kinds of persuasive devices used in it.
- b. Identifying the persuasive strategies used in queen Rania speeches.
- c. Identifying what persuasive strategy is most common in queen Rania and what persuasive strategy is the least common.

Methodology

The procedure that will be followed to fulfil this research paper starts with establishing a theoretical background about persuasion and its strategies with reference to political discourse. Then, an eclectic model will be formed depending on the theoretical discussion of persuasive strategies. The data will first be analyzed quantitatively and then qualitatively to relate the results to the available literature. the model through which the data will be analyzed is based on the concepts discussed above. Its main components are repetition, rhetorical questions, metaphor, simile and personification.

Data Description

Queen Rania's Speech at the CogX Global Leadership Summit - London, UK is chosen as a data of the present study. The speech is about how to persuade people around the world on how to use AI (artificial intelligence) as a force for good. The speech consists of 2.274 word. The speech was presented in September 12, 2023. The reason behind selecting this speech is that it is a long speech and deals with very important topic that needs to be tackled and that it manifests a verity of stylistic and persuasive strategies.

4. Results and Discussion

Data Analysis

A quantitative-qualitative method of analysis has been followed in this study. It starts with an in-depth reading of the speech of queen Rania and then careful analysis of the tokens of the targeted persuasive devices. After identifying these persuasive devices, Finally, the tokens have been discussed and elaborated on.

The analysis reveals that there are (29) tokens of persuasive strategies in the speech of queen Rania. The distribution of these strategies is displayed in table (1) below.

Table (1): Distribution of Persuasive Strategies

Strategy type	Number	Percentage
Metaphor	8	27.5
Repetition	5	17.2
Simile	6	20.6
Rhetorical questions	7	24.13
Personification	3	10.3
Total	29	100

It is found that Tokens of metaphor are the most frequently used devices in terms of percentage. They occurred (8) times in the speech of queen Rania. Rhetoricians say that metaphor is one of the strategies by which political speeches manifests superiority over other text. Metaphor is not just a mere manifestation of beautification bot it reflects an intellectual activity to re-establish reality and thought in a more creative and thought-provoking way. Queen Rania uses metaphor to covey clear and intelligent imagery and to covey emotions and impression so that the image she draws would be understood easily by the audience. The use of metaphor in the selected speech is exemplified below.

"Conventional wisdom says **doubt is weak**, but a false sense of security is even worse"

Repetition, which is considered one of the basic components of persuasion, comes third in the analyzed data. It existed (5) times with a percentage of (17.8%) among the other strategies for the sake of emphasis on certain issues. Repetition is one of the important manifestations of persuasive texts. It has invariably been noted by the literary people because repeating each word or phrase has a meaningful purpose and can influence the audience deeply. This is because the structure and arrangement of repetitive words besides adding to the beauty of the arrangement of speech, contributes to the rhetoric of the speech and consequently enriches the semantic system and manifestation of important political concepts. An example of repetition is given below.

Meanwhile, our common challenges grow and spread, until everywhere we turn, they're at our doorstep: **Another** conflict. **Another** city on fire. **Another** deadly virus. Simile, as is mention above, is almost used in the same way as metaphor. It occurred (6) times and counted for a percentage of (21.4) among all the other strategies. Simile is used in this speech to make meaning clearer by comparing things as if they were the same or similar in certain aspects. This case is exemplified in the quoted verse below. And yet, **as humans**, we cling to certainty **as a shield** against vulnerability. When our world goes haywire, we'd rather cast blame than acknowledge that we might have missed the mark.

It is found that rhetorical questions are the second frequently used devices in queen Rania's speech. They occurred (7) times and have the highest percentage (24.13%). It is said that rhetorical questions are used to achieve certain functions in political texts like emphasizing a positive or negative point of view. In the speech below, for instance, queen Rania resorts to rhetorical question to emphasize the known answer and to convince them with an obvious answer to such question.

Are we really so stuck in our bunkers of belief that we could not act to save a drowning child?

Finally, it is found that personification is the least frequently used persuasive strategy in the speech under study. It occurred only three times and has the percentage of (10.3%) among all the other persuasive strategies. Queen Rania uses this technique to bring deeper meaning and to make a connection between an abstract thing and feelings or empathy. Below is an example of personification. People brutalized by **a selfish world**, who still put others' lives before their own.

5. Conclusions and Implications for Further Studies

This study is concerned with the study of persuasion in the speech of queen Rania. The study of persuasion in speeches of politicians has been at the center of attention of scholars from the very beginning of its revelation. In this study, an attempt has been made to study persuasion from the perspective of modern linguistics. Three objectives have been put forward. The first is to elaborate on the concept of persuasion. The second objective is to identify the persuasive strategies employed in the speech under study while the third is to find out the most frequent and the least frequent persuasive strategies in this selected speech.

The current study revealed that persuasion is one of the basic concepts on which politicians built their speeches on. One of the purposes of queen Rania is to persuade and convince people to follow the righteous way in improving life on earth especially concerning what is related to AI. As for the second objective, it is found that repetition, rhetorical questions, metaphor, simile and personification are all used as persuasive strategies in the speech of queen Rania. Concerning the third objective, it is found that metaphor is the most common persuasive strategies in this speech while personification is the least.

Basing on the theoretical discussion and the findings of this study, the researcher may suggest that more comprehensive study of persuasion be conducted in novels. Also, another study may be conducted to investigate other persuasive devices from a pragmatic point of view like speech acts or politeness theory.

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