An Analysis of Barack Obama’s Speech ‘The Great Need of the Hour’.

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Abstract
This paper explores the art of the use of rhetorical devices and linguistic spin in Barack Obama’s popular speech, ‘The Great Need of the Hour’ (2008). While Obama’s linguistic spin has been investigated through transitivity systems given by Halliday, the use of his rhetorical devices has been approached through Aristotle’s three-stage model of Ethos, Pathos, Logos. The analysis and interpretation explores the means through which he became successful in persuading the masses assemble around him. These rhetorical and linguistic features have been used as tools for analysis as these are connected to the ideational function, fairly appropriate for the analysis and interpretation of political language. In this speech, Obama stressed the need of brotherhood, personal responsibility, and social justice among the African-American community in the United States of America. Olive (2008) declaring this a remarkable address at Martin Luther King’s Ebenezer Baptist Church opines that Obama wonders if the African community in America sticks honestly to the message of humanity that Dr King preached. This paper shows that Obama uses the elements of Ethos and Pathos in his speech quite recurrently and employs material processes of action and event as well as mental process of affection to physically congregate the people around him. It seems that he is much fascinated in using circumstance of location, both spatial and temporal, and circumstance of reason to make his words more objective and dependable.

Keywords: Political speeches, Barack Obama, Aristotle, rhetoric, ethos, pathos, logos, linguistic spin, transitivity.

Methodology
Since it is a rhetorical and linguistic analysis of a selected speech of Barack Obama, different methodical approaches and devices have been taken from a number of theoretical/ descriptive frameworks to develop an eclectic model. Theoretical procedures are Aristotle’s three stage model of rhetoric and Halliday’s transitivity...
systems. Aristotle’s three-stage model (Ethos, Pathos, Logos) has been adopted from on-line Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy (http://plato.stanford.edu/). The Forest of Rhetoric (Figures of Ethos, Pathos and Logos) is taken from Brigham Young University, America, an on-line source (http://rhetoric.byu.edu/), The concept of personal pronouns and their use in political speeches has been adopted from Beard’s ‘The Language of Politics’ (2000). Leech’s ‘A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry’ (1989) has been used to get the idea of linguistic parallel structures. Halliday’s model of transitivity has been taken from ‘Working With Functional Grammar’ (1997) by Martin, Matthiessen & Painter; and Halliday & Matthiessen’s ‘An Introduction to Functional Grammar’ (2004). As our interpretation of Obama’s speech confines to the art of rhetoric and linguistic spin as a political tool to achieve social effects, this paper is based on the ideational function. The Analysis is based on the text of the speech provided in Olive’s ‘An American Story’ (2008). The paragraphs have been numbered for the convenience of the readers.

ANALYSIS OF “THE GREAT NEED OF THE HOUR”

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Ethos Applied

Story Telling

The very first passage of the speech is an example of storytelling technique exhibiting the figure of Ethos, Epicrisis. Obama underscores the need of faith and national unity in this speech delivered in Martin King’s Ebenezer Baptist Church on the birthday of the great leader. His speech calls for the need of social justice, faith and unity. Obama develops credibility by retelling and quoting a reference from the religious book, Bible. In first three paragraphs, he employs the technique of Epicrisis. It is quoting certain passage, and then making comment upon it (http://rhetoric.byu.edu/). Obama tells us the story of Joshua, the follower of Moses. Joshua is the most famous warrior quoted in Bible. Highlighting the power of faith, Obama tells the audience to
remember the story of Joshua, one of the fiercest events in the Bible. A group of people comes out of desert and destroys the city of Jericho, a heavily fortified indeed, only with the help of faith. Obama tells that it was only due to the united effort of producing a collective voice at a selected moment that could generate enough power to destroy the walls of Jericho. First two paragraphs recount the story from Scriptures. Third paragraph is the speaker’s own comment in the form of conclusions. He draws lot of conclusions and finds lessons from this episode, and comments that the series of the lessons directed his mind to the beginning of modern civil rights era. This technique of telling a story from Bible and Obama’s own comment on that develops Obama’s credibility among the audience. So, in the very beginning Obama gets audiences’ favour through Epicrisis.

Paragraphs five to eight underline the dire need of unity among Americans, referring to the historical event of the bus boycott in Montgomery. Obama refers to the daring decision of Rosa Parks, and mentions Luther King’s dictum “Unity is the great need of the hour”. He mentions that what Rosa Parks could only initiate, a united power of the whole people could end too easily, and too early. In paragraph five Obama refers to the event of Montgomery Bus Boycott started in 1955. It was a movement against racial segregation. Martin Luther King was also involved in that boycott. It seems an example of Anamnesis. Anamnesis is calling to memory past matters (http://rhetoric.byu.edu/). Obama develops credibility by referring to a recent past event of Montgomery bus boycott and the role of Rosa Parks in this movement. The boycott became the reason of the economic deficit for the city transport system as the Black Community, who were the main boycotters, were also the huge part of the system’s customers. The movement started on December 1, 1955, when an African-American woman named Rosa Parks was arrested when she did not surrender her seat to a white person. The movement ended on December 20, 1956 when a federal ruling declared Montgomery and Alabama Laws regarding segregated buses unconstitutional (http://en.wikipedia.org). Obama develops credibility when he refers to this historical event and insists that it is unity only which can solve all their problems.
‘We’ Pronoun

Beard (2000) considers the analysis of first person singular pronoun ‘I’ and first person plural pronoun ‘We’ interesting. The use of the first person plural pronoun is always advantageous as it spreads the responsibility during bad state of affairs. Moreover, it reduces the distance between the speaker and the audience, hence builds rapport. This pronoun gives a sense of inclusiveness: the feeling that the speaker and the audience are not divided entities, developing an unconscious pride in the listeners. They, consequently, admire and take side of the speaker. This strengthens ethos. Halmari opines that a pronoun that can be interpreted as inclusive is the key persuasive feature (Halmari, 2004). Following are Obama’s use of inclusive first person pronoun in nominative, accusative, and possessive case (Olive, 2008):

1. The Scripture tells us that when Joshua and the Israelites arrived at the gates of Jericho, they could not enter. [Paragraph 1]
2. As I was thinking about which ones we need to remember at this hour, my mind went back to the very beginning of the modern Civil Rights Era. [Paragraph 3]
3. … King inspired with words not of anger, but of an urgency that still speaks to us today [Paragraph 5]
4. Unity is how we shall overcome [Paragraph 6]
5. Not because it sounds pleasant or because it makes us feel good, but because it's the only way we can overcome the essential deficit that exists in this country. [Paragraph 8]
6. … to recognize ourselves in one another; to understand that we are our brother's keeper; we are our sister's keeper; … we are all tied together … [Paragraph 10]
7. We have an empathy deficit when we're still sending our children … [Paragraph 11]
8. We have a deficit when CEOs … [Paragraph 12]
9. We have a deficit in this country … when our children see … [Paragraph 13]
10. We have a deficit when homeless veterans sleep on the streets of our cities … [Paragraph 14]

11. And we have a deficit when it takes a breach in our levees to reveal a breach in our compassion … that God calls on us to feed … calls on us to care for … that we treat as our own. [Paragraph 15]

12. So we have a deficit to close. We have walls … we know that unity … [Paragraph 16]

13. Unfortunately, all too often when we talk about unity … we've come to believe … We've come to believe … then all our problems would be solved. [Paragraph 17]

14. … we seek to ignore the profound institutional barriers … We long for unity … [Paragraph 18]

15. --------- a broadening of our minds, and a broadening of our hearts. [Paragraph 19]

16. … to see past our differences. We've all encountered this in our own lives … we have a politics in this country that seeks to drive us apart ---- that puts up walls between us. [Paragraph 20]

17. We are told that those who differ from us … are different from us … our problems are the fault of those who don't think like us or look like us or come from where we do. The welfare queen is taking our tax money. The immigrant is taking our jobs. [Paragraph 21]

18. … we in the African-American community … And all of us understand … in our health care system, and in our criminal justice system. [Paragraph 22]

19. … if we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that none of our hands are entirely clean. If we're honest with ourselves, we'll acknowledge that our own community … [Paragraph 23]

20. We have scorned our gay brothers and sisters … in our community. For too long, some of us … [Paragraph 24]

21. … our politics fuels and exploits … the critical choices we face as a nation. [Paragraph 25]
22. So let us say … each of us carries with us the task of changing our hearts and minds. The division … with which we blame our plight on others -------- all of this distracts us from the common challenges we face - war and poverty; injustice and inequality. We can no longer afford to build ourselves up by tearing someone else down. We can no longer afford to traffic in lies or fear or hate. It is the poison that we must purge from our politics; the wall that we must tear down … [Paragraph 26]

23. … then surely we can look past what divides us in our time, and bind up our wounds, and erase the empathy deficit that exists in our hearts. [Paragraph 27]

24. But if changing our hearts … we cannot stop there … and remain unwilling to push our elected officials to provide the resources to fix our schools … It is not enough for us to abhor the costs of a misguided war, and yet allow ourselves to be driven … [Paragraph 28]

25. The Scripture tells us that we are judged not just by word … And if we are to truly bring about the unity … we must find it within ourselves to act on what we know. [Paragraph 29]

26. … we are having today. The changes … will not come if politicians simply tell us what we want to hear. All of us will be called upon to make some sacrifice. None of us will be exempt from responsibility. We will have to fight to fix our schools, but we will also have to challenge ourselves to be better parents. We will have to confront the biases … but we will also have to acknowledge … violence that still resides in our own communities … [Paragraph 30]

27. … we will bring about the change we seek. [Paragraph 31]

28. He led by challenging our economic structures … that we would have to earn it through … [Paragraph 32]

29. … we need right now [Paragraph 33]

30. … where we begin [Paragraph 34]
31. … enough of our voices join together, we can bring those walls tumbling down … That is our hope --------- but only if we pray together …

[Paragraph 36]

32. … we cannot walk alone. 

[Paragraph 37]

33. … we cannot walk alone. 

[Paragraph 38]

34. … we cannot walk alone. 

[Paragraph 39]

35. … we cannot walk alone. 

[Paragraph 40]

36. … together we will sing the song … that divide us. 

[Paragraph 41]

All the illustrations above are the examples of the inclusive first person plural pronoun. Obama uses the nominative plural pronoun ‘we’, accusative plural pronoun ‘us’, and the possessive plural pronoun ‘our’ numerous times in the speech. This produces effect of inclusiveness, unity and sense of oneness with the listeners.

**Appeal to Authority**

Ethos renders the orator convincing and believable for the audience who in turn takes his plans and intentions as accurate and factual. Referring to famous persons and to acknowledged facts, to authenticate his version is Obama’s preferred means of persuading the public. Obama by referring to the authority of ‘God’ in the very first paragraph, and then of ‘Martin Luther King’ makes his dictums credible. As he desires to give the lesson of ‘togetherness’ to his public, so he gives Biblical instances of God’s help of Joshua’s army which got succeeded only due to unity as unity was the lesson, given to them by God. He then refers to Martin Luther King and quotes his words in the inverted commas to increase the elements of ethos in his account:

"Unity is the great need of the hour"

This style of rhetoric increases Obama’s credibility.
Pathos Applied

Emotion Stirring Narratives

In the very first paragraph Obama recounts the Biblical account of ‘Joshua’ and ‘Israelites’ to move the addressees’ emotions. In a crowd of multitude, his narration regarding the God’s aid and support to the united and cohesive force helps Obama in presenting his firm faith in the supremacy of ‘unity’. His emotion stirring narrative of the Jericho city, where the insurmountable walls came tumbling down only at the chorus of the voices, persuades the people that ‘unity is the need of the hour’. By using phrases like ‘stand together’, ‘march together’, ‘speak with one voice’, chorus of voices’, ‘cried together’, he makes the spectators sentimental and augments his emotional appeal.

To enhance the momentum of emotion-oriented environment, Obama names ‘Rosa Parks’, a woman of extraordinary courage and fortitude who stood for her rights and boycotted the Montgomery buses. At the same point he makes a reference to Martin Luther King also to emotionally rouse the mob. The people get convinced that united they stand and divided they fall. They realize that only with the power of unity the Americans can be undefeatable and can destroy the wall of oppression.

Free Verbal Repetition and Verbal / Syntactic Parallelism

Pathos, as Halmari (2004) points out, is a procedure of generating ‘positive emotions’. Obama at many places deliberately awakes the emotions of the populace. First sentences of the paragraphs twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen and sixteen are the examples of verbal parallelism. Verbal parallelism is not a full or exact repetition of a linguistic structure. It is a partial repetition. It is the combination of invariant part and the variant part. ‘Anaphora’ is an initial repetition of an item. Its formula is (a … ) (a …). (Leech, 1989). The paragraphs twelve to sixteen have anaphoric parallelism. The clause, “we have a deficit” is exactly repeated as an invariant part in paragraph twelve to fourteen. While in paragraphs fifteen and sixteen it has been introduced with a slight change. The use of this invariant part of anaphoric parallelism strikes the minds of listeners that they have some serious problem: a real deficit of empathy, equality,
justice, equal distribution of rights, and truth. Epistrophe is the repetition at the end of successive stages (Leech, 1989). Both techniques; Anaphora and Epistrophe are used to create an emotional appeal as repetition makes an impact on the subconscious of the listeners. Obama employs the art of repetition and becomes the master of the situation. See:

Brothers and sisters, we cannot walk alone

In the struggle for peace and justice, we cannot walk alone

In the struggle for opportunity and equality, we cannot walk alone

In the struggle to heal this nation and repair this world, we cannot walk alone

**Emotionally Charged Phrase Selection**

Obama --- the orator knows all the wonders which emotionally charged words, phrases and clauses can perform. In the speech, he stirs the public with his emotional sentences. See:

Justice would flow like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream

[Paragraph 7]

Opportunity for all children

[Paragraph 18]

Decent jobs for all people

[Paragraph 18]

Health care for those who are sick

[Paragraph 18]

The public comprehends that all this is possible only if they master the art of standing together.

Throughout the speech, the speaker provides numerous striking examples to evoke the passions of the crowd and to make them realize that racial discrimination only distracts the people and hampers their way to progress. Here Obama categorically
criticizes the American Politics and the role of American politicians. He states that the politics in USA drives the people apart and puts up walls among them. His stance is that the unity is a force that can conquer all. And to achieve that unity a ‘change’ is desired in the minds and hearts of American people.

The Figure of Pathos ‘Epimone’

EPIMONE is a “persistent repetition of the same plea in much the same words” (http://rhetoric.byu.edu/). In the speech, Obama’s plea is ‘change is needed’ and this change is possible only when none feels himself exempted from the responsibility of making sacrifices. The speaker uses EPIMONE very adeptly to create an emotional atmosphere. See:

“We will have to fight to fix our schools” [Paragraph 30]

“We will have to challenge ourselves to be better parents” [Paragraph 30]

“We will have to confront the biases in our criminal justice system” [Paragraph 30]

“We will have to acknowledge the deep-seated violence that still resides in our own communities and marshal the will to break its grip” [Paragraph 30]

The repetition of the same claim of feeling the need for change heightens the emotions of the audience.

Logos Applied

Logical Selection of Lexical Expressions

Logic is a strong tool to influence someone adequately. Obama knows this knack and employs it astutely to plead his case. In this speech, he uses logical and credible lexemes and verbal expressions to elucidate his point of view. The logical undercurrent of the present speech is to convince the Americans that he is the only choice; the only hope, they have in post-Bush era of war, pain, inequality and economic deficit. The speaker convinces the public quite logically that if they desire to proceed on
the road of progress they will have to be hand in hand with Obama, as only Obama can materialize their dreams of national unity and racial tolerance. He utilizes cautiously selected logical data to prove that merely Obama can be trusted and believed in promoting the ‘unity’ among Americans, the ‘unity’ which King desired throughout his life.

The following table shows all the connotative expressions which support the logic of desiring ‘unity’ among Americans.

Table: Agenda word and list of connotative lexemes / phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical Items / Phrases</th>
<th>Paragraph No.</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unity [Agenda Word]</td>
<td>06,08,16,17,18,19,29,33</td>
<td>2+1+1+1+1+1+1+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand together</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March together</td>
<td>02, 36</td>
<td>1+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak with one voice</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A chorus of voices</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cried together</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity is the great need of the hour</td>
<td>06, 08, 16</td>
<td>1+1+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity is how we shall overcome</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few more</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few more women</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White folks</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If enough Americans</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If they join together</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North and South</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich and poor</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian and Jew</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our brother’s keeper</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our sister’s keeper</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All tied together</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We long for unity</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True unity</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A broadening of our minds</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A broadening of our hearts</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of us</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In our health care system</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In our criminal justice system</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We must admit</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we are honest with ourselves</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We shall acknowledge</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let us say</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each of us carries with us</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We can no longer afford</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The wall that we must tear down</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We can look past what divides us</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And bind up our wounds</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing our hearts and minds</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fix our schools</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Scripture tells us</td>
<td>01, 29</td>
<td>1+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are judged</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within ourselves</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of us will be called upon</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of us will be exempt from</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will have to fight</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will also have to challenge ourselves</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will have to confront</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will also have to acknowledge</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will bring about the change we seek</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity cannot be won on the cheap</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That is the unity</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hard earned unity</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Agenda word of the speech is “unity”. The table exhibits all the connotative expressions which support Obama’s intention to bring unity among all the communities of American people and to diminish the racial prejudices. These connotative expressions are surely the repetition of the same idea, “unity is the great need of the hour”. The notion of unity through different connotative expressions logically convinces the audience of the urgency of faith, brotherhood, justice, righteousness, and truth. They begin to realize that they should be supportive for Obama who is bringing the positive change.

#### Transitivity: Analysis and Interpretation

**Paragraph 1:**

The first sentence of the first paragraph consists of three clauses. First and third are independent and the second dependent. The first clause is verbal clause having “The Scripture” as sayer and “us” as receiver. The dependent clause “that when Joshua and the Israelites arrived at the gates of Jericho”, and the independent clause, “they could not enter”, seem verbiage of the first independent verbal clause. Obama gives thematic position to the sayer, “The Scripture”, the noun phrase belongs to the religious register, to maximize the credibility of his account, and make his words emotionally acceptable to the audience. The verbal process is the most suitable one for the religious register as it is always the process of telling and conveying something directly from God to His
human beings. In divine religious books God talks to His people directly. It is the process of ‘telling’ and ‘listening’ in which we humans are involved during the reading of a divine religious book. Obama very wisely employs the same process, the verbal process, while using the verb ‘tell’ in the very opening sentence of the speech. This makes him God-like figure, the most reliable one. The second sentence is a relational clause of attribution. “The walls of the city” (carrier) were “too steep for any one person to climb” (attribute), and, “too strong to be taken down with brute force” (attribute). The analysis shows that this attributive relational clause consists of two attributes just mentioned. The use of two attributes regarding the degree of difficulty in climbing the wall refers to the fact that it was much difficult to climb the steep walls of Jericho.

**Paragraph 2:**

The first sentence seems a mental clause of cognition, as the verb “had” in this clause belongs to the verbal clause of “fabricate”, “thought out”, etc. Once again the thematic position has been assigned to the proper noun “God”, hence a reference has been made to the omnipotent, only to arouse the emotional acceptance of speaker’s account before the audience. Again, as has been noticed in the first sentence of the first paragraph, verbal process has been introduced in the second sentence of the second paragraph. This time the cataphoric “He” refers to the proper noun “God”, and God (sayer) “told” the Israelites (receiver) “to stand together and march together” (verbiage).

The introduction of the verbal process here with noun which stands for a noun belonging to the religious register is indicative of God’s direct communication with His people. This verbal process reduces the distance between God and His people, and creates a sense among listeners that God is always near to those, and helpful for those who obey Him. He is omnipotent and omnipresent. The independent clause “and on the seventh day He told them” once again employs the verbal process involving the same religious sayer (God). This continuous use of verbal clause brings home the concept that God is the authority and doer of all things. Subdue before His powers and accept His supremacy. The mention of His authority makes Obama a firm believer before the audience, hence credible. Next dependent clause, “that when they heard the sound of the ram’s horn”, shows mental process of perception (hear). This transitivity choice is the most appropriate one at this place, as in a process of active and direct
communication the sender is sending (telling) through a verbal clause, and the receiver is receiving (hear) through a mental clause of perception. Again, they respond through a verbal process (speak) in the independent clause, “they should speak with one voice”. Another example of verbal process in the clause, “and a chorus of voices cried out together”, can be noticed. The analysis shows that the whole paragraph consists of verbal and mental clauses. The use of these processes produce resonance and active communication between the speaker and the listeners.

Paragraph 5:

The whole paragraph is one sentence, seems material clause of event, as the process of ‘inspiration’ seems an event, a happening here. Dr King materially and physically evoked an event through the realization of an urgent need of unity. This ‘happening’ was the result of the inspiration he evoked. The thematic position has been consciously given to the circumstance of location (temporal) in the opening line of this paragraph, “And on the eve of the bus boycotts in Montgomery”. Three successive pieces of circumstance of location (temporal) has been used ahead: ‘At a time when many were still …’, ‘a time when those in the black community …’, and ‘at times mistrusted each other’. These are clauses but serve as the circumstance of location (temporal) for the main clause of material process of event (King inspired with words…). This successive use of four times circumstance of location (temporal) before the main clause is meant to let the listeners recollect the past history. The history of the bus boycotts, the history of the fears of the black community and their apprehensions about the possibility of change and the history of their mutual (mis)trust. The presence of circumstance of location provides necessary context to speak out Dr. King’s dictum: “unity is the great need of the hour”.

Paragraph 9 & 10

Paragraph nine consists of three identical verbal processes in which the sayer and the process remain the same: “I” as sayer, and “am not talking” as the process. The verbiage shows a slight difference in all these three processes. The repeated use of the same process here convinces the audiences of his intention and real message, i.e. the
deficit of justice, truth, equality, and righteousness. In paragraph ten he uses three verbal processes employing the same sayer and the same process. The verbiage of the third process, “about an inability to recognize ourselves in one another”, has mental process of cognition (recognize). Another mental process of cognition (understand) can be traced in the to-infinitive (to understand). This persistent use of verbal and mental processes of cognition convey that Obama’s words should be processed and given some weight by the audience.

**Paragraph 25**

The first sentence bears material process of event. Verbs “fuel” and “exploit” show some happening. The thematic position has been given to the circumstance of extent (temporal) by using the adjunct “Every day”. Last part of the clause shows two examples of circumstance of location (spatial), “across all races and regions”, and, “across gender and party”. Thematic position of the circumstance of extent (temporal) provides information about the frequency of the occurrence of the material process of event. Hence the gravity of the matter is touched upon through the thematic use of the adjunct, “Every day”. Fourth sentence, again, starts with circumstance of location (temporal): adjunct “last week” has been introduced after the conjunction “And”. The circumstance of location introduces material process of event through the use of lexeme “crept”. This transitivity analysis shows similarity of the structure of his linguistic expressions: sentences open with adjunct, and introduce material processes of event. This persistence indexes towards his consistency of thinking.

**Paragraph 29**

The opening sentence bears verbal clause, of which “The Scripture” is the sayer and “us” is the receiver. The dependent clause, “that we are judged not just by word, but by deed”, serves here as the verbiage of the verbal process “tell”. Through this verbal process, of which the divine authority is the sayer, Obama religiously binds the listeners to “act” something physically in order to bring change. This demand of the action indirectly refers to Obama’s appeal to the listeners to gather around him and support
him in his cause. Moreover, this brief reference of “The Scripture” recalls to mind the whole story of Joshua and Jericho, mentioned in the very beginning of the speech.

**Paragraph 32**

Material process of action, second form of lead, has been used six times almost in the same type of sentences. Obama consciously uses material clauses of action here in abundance to bring home to the audience his idea of physical action. He, in previous part of his speech, has already opined forcefully that it is not words only through which God judges the faith of a person, rather He judges the faith through actual deeds. The recurrence of material clause of action is the linguistic manifestation of the very content / message of his whole speech: support Obama actively and help him openly in his cause. In fourth sentence, while talking about Dr. King’s stance against war, and about his knowing that his antiwar stance could end his political career, Obama indirectly is referring to his own anti-war stance and the vulnerability of his own political career. But by using material process of action, he succeeds in developing an unconscious sympathy of the audience as he equals himself with Dr. King and his political vulnerabilities.

**Paragraphs 37 to 40**

These four paragraphs are similar in structure as they are one-sentence paragraphs. Paragraphs thirty eight to forty start with the circumstance of cause (purpose), “in the struggle for peace and justice” (paragraph 38), “in the struggle for opportunity and equality” (paragraph 39), and “In the struggle to heal this nation and repair this world” (paragraph 40). All these paragraphs have same structure as all consist of one material clause of action, having the process of “work”. Again, all clauses in paragraphs thirty seven to forty end at same circumstance of contingency (condition): the adjunct “alone” is the lexeme all the paragraphs end at. This similar structure of four paragraphs repeats the content of the speech and displays the urgency of the unity, faith, and co-operation. Transitivity analysis describes the similar structure of these paragraphs, hence the context of the speech has been delivered through the repetitive pattern of the clauses.
Paragraph 41

The last paragraph has two verbal processes (verbs ‘ask’ and ‘sing’) and six material processes of action (verbs ‘walk’, ‘march’, ‘join’, ‘lift up’, and two times ‘bless’). This consistency of the same class of processes reveals that Obama urges his audience to listen to him and do what he asks them to do, sing the hymn of unity, coordination, faith, and make him successful in achieving his cause. The six material processes of action in the last paragraph are the linguistic embodiment of his message, i.e. action, positive and healthy action indeed.

Conclusion

This study reveals that Obama employs the elements of Ethos and Pathos in his speech quite too often. He seems motivating and persuading the people’s emotional side, not the intellectual side, as it is not difficult to convince people emotionally. Obama used material process of action and event more frequently than other process types. He used mental process of affection and relational process as well. It is noticed that he used circumstance of location (spatial), circumstance of location (temporal), and circumstance of cause, also. His recurrent use of material processes might be as he required to motivate the masses physically to gather around him.
References


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