



ATTITUDIAL MEANING IN HILLARY CLINTON'S CONCESSION SPEECH: AN APPRAISAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to describe and analyze Hillary's Presidential Concession Speech made on November 9th, 2016 with a view to know how Hillary construed attitudinal meanings in the speech. The framework used for data analysis is the Appraisal theory of Martin and White (2005). The study only focuses on Attitude which is one of the three subsystems within Appraisal Theory. The results show that Hillary made use of different kinds of attitudinal meanings in the speech: Affect, Judgement and Appreciation in order to achieve her aim of connecting effectively with her audience.

Keywords: Appraisal theory, attitude, affect, judgement, appreciation.

TÓM TẮT

Ý nghĩa thái độ trong bài phát biểu nhượng quyền của Hillary Clinton:

Phân tích theo Thuyết Đánh giá

Mục đích của nghiên cứu là mô tả và phân tích bài phát biểu nhượng quyền của Hillary vào ngày 09 tháng 11 năm 2016 nhằm biết được Hillary đã thiết lập thái độ như thế nào trong bài diễn văn. Khung lý thuyết được sử dụng cho việc phân tích dữ liệu là Thuyết Đánh giá của Martin và White (2005). Nghiên cứu chỉ tập trung vào thái độ, là một trong ba hệ thống trong Thuyết Đánh giá. Kết quả cho thấy Hillary đã sử dụng các ý nghĩa thái độ khác nhau trong bài phát biểu: Ảnh hưởng, Nhận xét, Đánh giá để đạt được mục đích kết nối hiệu quả với khán giả.

Từ khóa: Thuyết Đánh giá, thái độ, ảnh hưởng, nhận xét, đánh giá.

1. Introduction

For writers, one of the main functions of language is to express and construct solidarity and alignment with readers. For this kind of evaluation and interaction, there were different studies for different purposes with various terms, such as Attitude (Halliday, 1994), Stance (Biber & Finegan, 1989) Evaluation (Hunston & Thomson, 2000), Metadiscourse (Crismore, 1989) and Appraisal (Martin, 1997). Appraisal was a further development of interpersonal meaning in systematic functional linguistics, focusing on the various ways in which people use language to express their attitude, evaluation, stance, and meanwhile, establish a personal relationship or strengthen ties with the audience. Since

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language is central to all human actions, including politics, it also becomes largely implicated in the electoral processes as politicians and the electoral umpires use language to achieve their desired results. Therefore, language use in relation to electoral matters constitutes an important aspect of political discourse, which broadly refers to all talks and texts in the domain of politics (Van Dijk, 1998). In “*Appraisal devices realizing attitudes in Barack Obama’s inaugural speech*”, Rohmawati (2016) analyzed Obama’s attitudes towards phenomena happened in America and in the world. Ademilokun (2015) studied aspects of attitudinal meaning in Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari’s inauguration speech. There exist different studies on presidential speeches from various linguistic perspectives. However, in spite of the rich literature on presidential speeches, the writers realized that presidential concession speeches have not received much attention. Furthermore, even though most studies have analyzed political speeches from different theoretical perspectives, the language of evaluation in political speeches has been largely neglected. This study evaluates the operability of Appraisal Theory but focuses on Attitude resources applied into Hillary’s Presidential Concession Speech made on November 9th, 2016. There are two aspects analyzed in the study: What are the types of Attitude elements used by Hillary in her concession speech? How does the attitudinal positioning function to convey Hillary’s perspective?

2. Theoretical background

Appraisal theory has its roots in Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) but it only focuses on the interpersonal function of language. SFL views language as a meaning-making. Appraisal as a framework under SFL focuses on the ways the speakers construct particular identities and how they position themselves in front of people whom they are addressing. Martin (2000, p.145] argues: Appraisal refers to the linguistic resources used to negotiate emotions, judgements and evaluation, alongside resources for amplifying and engaging with these evaluations. White (2003) mentions that Appraisal is concerned with the linguistic resources by which texts/speakers come to express, negotiate and naturalize particular inter-subjective and ultimately ideological position. Martin and White (2005) describe Appraisal as the writer’s subjective attitude towards the semantic meaning. The Appraisal framework is hinged on two major resources: evaluation (attitudinal values) and stance (interpersonal meanings).

The resources of Appraisal involve three aspects of analysis, which are “*concerned with evaluating: the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned.*” (Martin & Rose, 2003, p.22). These three aspects are called Attitude, Graduation and Engagement each with their own sub-systems.

Engagement is concerned with how writers convey their point of view and how they

align themselves with respect to the position of others. In White's (2003) view, this system covers all the resources that the language offers for speakers to express their interpersonal positionings in the texts they produce. White (2003) and Martin and White (2005) clarify this system by saying that Engagement focuses on the linguistic means by which writers "enter into a dialogue" with their readers in order to present a stance towards a particular evaluation or attitude, and to instruct (or position) readers either to align or disalign with this stance. The second subtype of Appraisal is Graduation which is concerned with the expressions that are used to intensify or soften an opinion. It affects both Attitude and Engagement because they can be up-scaled and down-scaled. Martin and White (2005) observe that Graduation is essential in the process of construing meanings in that almost every attitudinal meaning is characterized by its gradability. The third subtype of Appraisal is Attitude which is designed to categorize the different ways in which attitudes and feelings are expressed. White (2003) says that attitudinal positioning or Attitude in Appraisal value can be considered as "praising" or "blaming". Here, writers or speakers indicate either positive or negative assessment of people, places, things, happenings and state of affairs.

Martin and White (2005) denote that Attitude is used to communicate three types of meaning: **Affect**, **Judgement** and **Appreciation**.

2.1. Affect

Affect concerning emotions is an evaluation of human emotional reaction to something. It is how people as human beings react emotionally to things, conditions and state of affairs. "Affect is concerned with registering positive and negative feelings: do we feel happy or sad, confident or anxious, interested or bored?" (Martin and White, 2005, p.42)

White (2003) demonstrates that values of Affect provide one of the most obvious ways that speakers can adopt a stance towards some phenomenon they provide or the resources by which they can indicate how that phenomenon affected them emotionally.

2.2. Judgement

Judgement is a norm concerning positive or negative judgement of human behaviors. It means that the parameter of how people should or shouldn't behave. It provides evaluations about people and their behavior. Droga and Humphrey (2002, p.79) mention that Judgement is used to evaluate "what people do, say or believe according to institutionalized values".

2.3. Appreciation

The final of subsystem of Attitude is Appreciation which typically deals with the evaluation of products and processes and consists of meanings related to the intrinsic qualities of something, when speakers refer to their composition, their value, or a reaction

they produce. It has positive and negative dimensions. As White (2003) states Appreciation is an assessment of the form, appearance, composition, impact, significance, etc of human artifacts, natural objects as well as human individuals (but not human behavior) by reference to esthetics and other systems of social value.

3. Research methodology

This study is aimed to analyze how Hillary used the Attitude System to establish solidarity and communicate with her audience in her Presidential Concession Speech. The study is a descriptive and qualitative approach in nature. The writers only explain and describe the phenomena which exist in the data by employing the subtypes of Attitude in the Appraisal System. The units of analysis are Attitude devices which focused on the realization of interpersonal meanings. In analyzing the data, firstly the sentences or words/phrases which display the phenomena of Attitude System were identified and classified according to the Attitude System as proposed by Martin and White (2005). The next step was to calculate the frequencies of each type of the Attitude system and the frequencies of the quality of feeling: positive or negative. The last stage was to explain how Hillary employed these features to communicate with her supporters.

4. Findings and discussions

After being broken up into several clauses, the speech was analyzed to find out the types of Attitude used in each clause and the quality of feeling: positive or negative. The next stage was to classify kinds of Attitude and to count them. The result can be seen in the tables below:

Table 1. Attitude resources in Hillary's concession speech

No.	Appraisal system	Sub-systems	Frequency	%
1	Attitude	Affect	78	60,5%
2		Judgment	22	17,1%
3		Appreciation	29	22,4%
Total			129	100%

Table 2. Quality of feeling: positive or negative

	Positive	%	Negative	%
Affect	63	80.7%	15	19.3%
Judgment	16	72.7%	6	27.3%
Appreciation	18	62%	11	38%

Table 1 showed that the three types of Attitude were used in the speech. There were a total of 129 Attitude resources adopted in Hillary's concession speech. The Affect instances appeared 78 times, making up 60,5%. The Judgement resources appeared 22 times, accounting for 17,1%. The Appreciation elements occupied 22,4%, appearing 29

times. Table 2 showed that the speaker made the preference of using positive resources than negatives ones. It was surprising to note that nearly all clauses had Attitude elements indicating that the speaker wanted to make an emphasis on each clause. By employing different kinds of Attitude, Hillary seemed to choose flexible ways to express her feelings, attitudes, stances and beliefs. In consideration of the figure, the Affect resources had by far the highest number. The use of more Affects dominated in the speech denoted that the speaker emphasized on expressing her gratitude, her appreciation towards her supporters.

4.1. *Affect*

As indicated earlier, Affect is the linguistic term in Appraisal analysis that denotes the expression of the feelings of a writer in relation to a particular subject matter or emotional trigger. A close reading of the speech indicated that the speaker could not conceal her emotions in the speech as it was laden with affectual meanings by conveying through various linguistic features such as adjectives, verbs and adverbs. Some significant examples are provided below:

1. *Thank you, my friends. Thank you. Thank you, thank you so very much for being here and I love you all, too.*

2. *We -- we thank you for your graceful, determined leadership that has meant so much to so many Americans and people across the world.*

3. *I am so grateful to stand with all of you. I want to thank Tim Kaine and Anne Holton for being our partners on this journey.*

4. *I will always be grateful to the creative, talented, dedicated men and women at our headquarters in Brooklyn and across our country.*

5. *To everyone who sent in contributions as small as \$5 and kept us going, thank you. Thank you from all of us.*

6. *But I feel pride and gratitude for this wonderful campaign that we built together...*

7. *I'm sorry that we did not win this election for the values we share and the vision we hold for our country,...*

8. *I know how disappointed you feel because I feel it too, and so do tens of millions of Americans...*

9. *We have seen that our nation is more deeply divided than we thought.*

In excerpts 1, 2, 3, 5, the Affect was realized through the verb of emotion “**Thank**”. This word presented Affect as process and it was often used in Hillary’s speech. She thanked her staff for their hard work, along with her family for their support and her supporters for their encouragement and contributions. In excerpts 3 and 4, the Affect was realized through the adjective of emotion “**grateful**”. This word showed Affect as “quality”. It also meant that Hillary wanted to express her gratefulness to her supporters. In excerpt 6, the Affect was realized through the nouns of emotion “**pride and gratitude**”.

These words showed Affect as “quality”, attributed to participants. They were positive Affect resources. By using these words, Hillary wanted to express her gratitude to her supporters who helped her in the campaign. In excerpts 7 and 8, the Affect was realized through the adjectives of emotion “**sorry**” and “**disappointed**”. They were negative Affect instances. These words showed Affect of “quality”. By using these words, Hillary apologized to her supporters for not being able to win in the campaign. Her apology was perhaps an appropriate message to supporters who reacted to her shocking loss with grief. And she admitted that she understood the disappointment of her supporters, since it was the same one that she felt. In excerpt 9, the Affect was done through the adverb “**deeply**” and the verb “**divided**”. These words showed Affect as “quality”. The sentence was the example of Implicit Negative Affect realized through Metaphor. It meant that there existed a division in American society which was reflected in the election. Hillary showed that was a subject that deeply concerned her.

It can be concluded that in Hillary’s concession speech Affect was realized both directly (Emotional State) and implicitly (Metaphor). Positive Affect resources took control of Clinton’s message. Especially, the words expressing gratitude and sorry were usually used in the speech. These resources were totally coherent because she wanted to express her gratitude for those who worked so hard to make her the first female party nominee and she also apologized to her supporters for not being able to pull off a victory.

4.2. Judgement

Judgement refers to the act of judging people’s character in Discourse. In the speech, the meanings pertaining to Judgement related to Hillary’s family, her supporters, the new president: Donald Trump and the ex-president and his wife: Barack and Michelle Obama. In the speech, there were instances of positive and negative Judgement expressed through different linguistic features and structures such as adverbials, adjectives, nominal expressions and verbs. Below are some significant examples of expressions with the value of judgement in the speech:

10. You represent the **best** of America and being your candidate has been one of the **greatest** honors of my life.

11. I want each of you to know that you were the **best** campaign.

12. I will always be grateful to the **creative, talented, dedicated** men and women at our headquarters in Brooklyn and across our country.

13. And -- and to all the **little** girls who are watching this, never doubt that you are **valuable** and **powerful** and **deserving** of every chance and opportunity in the world to pursue and achieve your own dreams.

14. To Barack and Michelle Obama, our country owes you an **enormous debt of gratitude**.

15. *Donald Trump is going to be our president. We owe him an **open** mind and the chance to lead.*

16. *And to Bill and Chelsea, Mark, Charlotte, Aidan, our brothers and our entire family, my love for you means more than I can ever express. You **crisscrossed** this country on our behalf and **lifted me up** when I needed it most...*

17. *Many of you are at the beginning of your professional public and political careers. You will have **successes** and **setbacks**.*

In excerpts 10 and 11, the Judgement was realized through the adjectives “**best**” and “**greatest**”. They showed the examples of positive Judgement (praise). The speaker used these judgements to appreciate her supporters who were considered as the best Americans and she meant the election outcome wasn’t what she wanted, but she felt proud of the campaign. In excerpt 12, the value of Judgement was expressed through the adjectives “**creative, talented, dedicated**” which were also positive Judgements used to praise her partners. Excerpt 13 was also the example of positive Judgement. She wanted to encourage girls to continue reaching for their dreams. This was also considered as an implicit judgement which had a dual purpose; to reassure her supporters despite her loss, and also to subtly criticize Donald, and perhaps the electorate, for their attitude toward women. In excerpt 14, the value of Judgement was shown through the adjective “**enormous**” and the nominal phrase “**debt of gratitude**”. She wanted to remind the audience about Barack and Michelle Obama’s contributions to the country. In excerpt 15, the adjective “**open**” was used as a positive Judgement. Hillary encouraged her audience to accept Trump’s impending presidency. She underlined the importance of respecting the country’s constitutional democracy and a smooth transition of power. In excerpt 16, through the verbs “**crisscrossed**”, “**lifted**”, she gave a positive evaluation of her family and her colleagues who were always beside her. In excerpt 17, the noun “**successes**” was carrying a positive Judgement. Nevertheless, the noun “**setbacks**” was carrying a negative meaning. By using these words, she urged her supporters to continue participating in the political process and advancing the causes they believed in.

4.3. *Appreciation*

Appreciations are interpersonal resources used by writers for expressing positive and negative evaluations of entities, processes and natural phenomena. The following examples are some typical examples showing how Hillary used Appreciation resources in her speech.

18. *But I feel pride and gratitude for this **wonderful** campaign that we built together, this **vast, diverse, creative, unruly, energized** campaign.*

19. *Our campaign was never about one person or even one election, it was about the country we love and about building an America that's **hopeful, inclusive and big-hearted**.*

20. *Our responsibility as citizens is to keep doing our part to build that **better, stronger, fairer** America we seek.*

21. *This is **painful**, and it will be for a long time.*

22. *This loss **hurts**,...*

23. *Now I know we have still not shattered that **highest** and **hardest** glass ceiling, but someday someone will, and hopefully sooner than we might think right now.*

24. *Our **best** days are still ahead of us.*

25. *The American dream is **big** enough for everyone - for people of all races, religions, for men and women, for immigrants, for LGBT people, and people with disabilities-for everyone.*

Excerpt 18 showed the example of positive Appreciation. It was realized through the adjectives: “**wonderful, vast, diverse, creative, unruly, energized**”. The sentence meant that Hillary appreciated the campaign that she and her supporters realized. In excerpts 19 and 20, Appreciation was performed through the adjectives: “**hopeful, inclusive, big-hearted, better, stronger, fairer**”. They were all positive resources. By using these words, she talked about what her campaign tried to do, and placed it in subtle contrast to the kind of campaign her opponent ran. She also urged her supporters to continue the work of building a better America. The words “**painful**” in excerpt 21 and “**hurts**” in excerpt 24 were considered as negative resources in Appreciation. Hillary wanted to say that the campaign was not easy. She said the loss of the campaign was painful and would last for a long time. In excerpt 23, Appreciation was realized through the adjectives: “**highest**” (positive Appreciation) and “**hardest**” (negative Appreciation). She acknowledged that not only did she not break the campaign, which meant a great deal to her and to women across the world, but she also didn’t break it because she was trounced by a man who repeatedly demeaned women. She also wanted to express her confidence that another woman would be able to do so in the near future. In excerpt 24, the adjective “**best**” was considered as a positive Appreciation. She wanted to express a positive outlook on the future. In excerpt 25, the adjective “**big**” showed a positive Appreciation. She insisted on the importance of unity, inclusivity, and hope for people of all races, religions, genders, sexual orientations and abilities.

In short, Hillary made use of a variety of Appreciation resources to appreciate the campaign that she and her supporters realized. The campaign brought her the pride, the gratitude and also the sadness. In fact, no one who lost a presidential election could escape from the sadness and the disappointment. There were millions of dollars spent, an untold number of events and speeches. The matter was deeper for her, who had tried this once before and had lost.

5. Conclusion

This study attempts to find out what linguistic elements in Attitude were used to reveal the features and realize the goals of Hillary's concession speech and especially which resource was the weighting given to in her speech and analyze how the values of Attitude strategies were used to negotiate and align with readers to achieve her purposes. The analysis revealed that the speaker used all of the types of Attitude in her concession speech, which were Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation. The most dominant type of Attitude in the speech was Affect, the second one was Appreciation, and the least one was Judgement. Hillary mostly used positive Attitude in her speech. By using these different resources, it can be noted that Hillary found a really great, subtle balance in her concession speech between offering words of support for Trump, and veiled criticism too. She was gracious in the way she thanked her supporters, the way she congratulated Trump, and the way she encouraged girls and women to continue reaching for their dreams. It can also be seen that she couldn't hide her sad and depressed feelings after failing the campaign even though she made use of many positive resources because she has left everything in the campaign but her efforts have not been compensated. She lost the opportunity she had been waiting for her life.

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