AN ANALYSIS OF PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES IN BARRACK OBAMA'S KEYNOTE ADDRESS IN THE 2004 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the language used by Barack Obama as a keynote address in the 2004 Democratic National Convention. The speech is considered as a successful political speech in America and a milestone in his political career. Moreover, how he uses particular persuasive strategies makes audience believe that he should be the next American president. The objectives of this study are to identify the types of persuasive strategy, to elaborate the factors of motivating audience, to describe the topic choices, and to explain the social values in Barack Obama's speech.

This research used descriptive qualitative method with the researcher as the primary instrument and the data sheet as the secondary instrument. The method included the description of the data in the form of words, phrases, and utterances delivered by Barack Obama. In conducting this study, the researcher downloaded the speech transcript and the video. In order to have correct data and to achieve more understanding of the textual and contextual meaning of the speech, the accuracy of both transcript and video were checked. Then, the data were selected based on theories of persuasive strategy. The discussion of the selected data is presented in descriptive way. Also, this research employed a discourse analysis as a tool of inquiry to explain forms and functions in the speech event.

The results of this research show that the dominant types of persuasive strategy are association, maximization, inclusion, disassociation, and simplification. Moreover, the factors of motivating audience's attention are used more prominent than factors of motivating audience's emotion and of speaker's credibility. Audience's attention is reached through employing extended examples, extended comparison, serial example, and isolated comparison. Furthermore, Obama raises audience's emotion by applying figurative languages such as parallelism, repetition, alliteration, metaphor, and simile. Also, he demonstrates his credibility by indicating his similarity, good will, competence, trustworthiness, idealism, and dynamism. Then, there are some issues chosen by Obama as his topic such as political issue, geographical issue, economical and professional issue, age and gender issue, racial and ethical issue, and religious issue. However, as an American citizen, he reflects American social values. Those values are equality and egalitarianism, individualism and privacy, action and work, future orientation, change, and self-help concept.

Keywords : Discourse, persuasive strategy, factors of motivating audience, topic choices, American social values, Barack Obama's keynote address, the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

BACKGROUND

Speech as a formal talk means a form of public speaking or delivering an address to mass audience (Hart, Friedrich, & Brummet, 1983: 12). Speech, as an act of one way communication, is usually to persuade, to inform, to convince, and also to share a certain message to the audience. It exists in many events like lecturing, inauguration, ceremony, congress, or convention.

In order to address a successful speech, one can apply persuasive strategy. Moreover, it helps a speaker to construct an effective language for easing and appeasing the audiences in understanding the content or message he conveyed. Talking about persuasion is like a method of influencing and an effective communication (Hart, Friedich, & Brummet, 1983). Besides, the use of persuasion can easily be found in a political speech. In a political event, speech plays an important role to evoke audience perception. A good message in a speech needs a good speaker to be delivered. This is reflected in the 2004 Democratic National Convention where Barrack Obama, as a senator, stands up in the stage as a keynote address or speaker to promote John Kerry and John Edward.

The phenomenon in Democratic convention is that what Obama delivers to audience reveals his personality and his own understanding about the factual issues in American society. In this case, Obama's popularity rapidly raises more than John Kerry and John Edward's.

During the speech, Obama uses persuasive strategy to address his message successfully. The strategy provides how to persuade audience's emotion and perception. In the speech, Obama's credibility and attitudes are displayed through his words and actions. Also, The way how he promotes John Kerry and John Edward in solving factual issues shows his well understanding and experience about the issues. His speech is considered as a typical African-American speech because of its topic choices.

There are several problems in Barrack Obama's speech in the 2004 Democratic National Convention from linguistic perspectives. As a political speech, it contains issues dealing with language, power, society, and action that are able to be analyzed through discourse analysis. Discourse study is an analysis of language beyond the sentence or utterance that affects those meaning. (Schriffin, 1994).

In addition, persuasive discourse is one of discourse types that primarily concerns with the framework of persuasion on transforming and signaling meaning by addresser to addressee (Kinneavy, 1971:61). Besides, meaning and function of utterances or sentences in persuasive discourse need to be delivered in a good way so that audience may obviously be able to interpret the intended meaning. Therefore, persuasive strategy can be a good tool for delivering the speech.

In this case, as in an campaign event, Obama must be able to inform audience about the message and persuade them to vote by using a persuasive strategy. The establishment of good persuasion may be obtained and required through the logic of persuasion, presenting factors of motivating audience, showing credibility, and choosing the right topic (Hart, Friedich, & Brummet, 1983: 234).

In addition, this research focuses on analyzing the types of persuasive strategy, factors of motivating audience, the topic of speech, and the social values found in Barack Obama's keynote address in the 2004 Democratic National Convention. The objectives of this research are to identify the types of persuasive strategy (1), to elaborate the factors of motivating audience (2), to describe the topic choices (3), and to explain social values in Barack Obama's Keynote Address in the in the 2004 Democratic National Convention (4).

Related to the first objective, Hart, Friedrich, and Brummet identify some types of persuasive

strategy such as as inclusion, maximization, minimization, association, dissasociation, simplification, unification, involvement, gradualism, overkill. projection, elimination. idealization. legitimization, self-depracation, and apprehension. The Types of persuasive strategy deal with how to arrange a persuasive message in public communication.

In the second objectives of this research, researcher attempts to provide an audience analysis by seeing from the speaker's utterances. However, a political speaker has to know audience background in order to persuade them. According to Hart, Friedrich, and Brummet (1983), there are some factors should be applied in political speech so that the message will stick on audience's mind. Those are factor of speaker's credibility, audience's attention and emotion. First, the credibility of a speaker is crucial to keep audience stay listening. There are seven points to show a good credibility: power, competence, trustworthiness, good will, similarity, idealism, and dynamism.

Second, factors of audience's emotion can be reached by addressing fashionable message through figurative language. Some figurative language, which is considered motivating audience's emotion, are metaphor, simile, rhetorical question, irony, antithesis, synecdoche, alliteration, repetition, and parallelism.

Lastly, factor of motivating audience's attention are using serial example, extended example, quantification, isolated-comparison, extended

comparison, testimony, pictorialization, definition, and contrast.

Related to the third objective of this study, the topic choices in Obama's speech become an interesting part to be analyzed. According to Hart, Friedrich, and Brummet (1983), some topic choices reflect the issues in the society where the speaker live in. In this case, there are some issues which every country in the world face on: political issues, racial or ethnical issues, religious issues, economic or professional issues, geographical issues, and age or gender issues.

The last objective of this research reveals how Obama considerably presents some typical American social values. According to Kohl (1984), there are thirteen code of American social values with which Obama lives such as personal control over environment, change, time and its control, equality or egalitarianism, individualism and privacy, self-help concept, competition and free entreprise, future orientation, action or work orientation, informality, directness, openess and honesty, practicality and efficiency, and materialism.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed qualitative approach. The approach is used as providing a descriptive analysis related to the phenomena in Obama's keynote address in the 2004 Democratic National Convention. The data of this research were words, phrases, utterances considered persuasive strategy in the speech transcript. The context of the data was a monologue. Furthermore, the researcher was the main instrument in this research. Besides, the data sheet was employed to support, classify, and describe the analysis of the study.

To gain the trustworthiness of the study, triangulation method was conducted. To be more specifically, the peer debriefing was used by asking three students of English language and literature study program to evaluate the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Findings

Table 7. Types of persuasive strategy in BarackObama's keynote address in the 2004 DemocraticNational Convention

No.	Types of Persuasive Strategy	Frequency	Percentage	
1.	Inclusion	14	14.14%	
2.	Maximization	15	15.15%	
3.	Minimization	2	2.02%	
4.	Association	32	32.32%	
5.	Disassociation	10	10.2%	
6.	Simplification	8	8.08%	
7.	Unification	3	3.03%	
8.	Involvement	3	3.03%	
9.	Gradualism	0	0%	
10.	Overkill	1	1.01%	
11.	Projection	2	2.02%	
12.	Elimination	0	0%	
13.	Idealization	5	5.05%	
14.	Legitimization	3	3.03%	
15.	Self-depracation	1	1.01%	
16.	Apprehension	0	0%	
otal		99	100%	

In table 7 above, there are five types of persuasive strategy which have become more dominant than any other types in Obama's speech. They are *inclusion*, *maximization*, *association*, *disassociation*, and *simplification*.

Table 8. The factors of motivating audience inBarack Obama's keynote address in the 2004Democratic National Convention

No.	Factors of Motivating Audience	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Factors of Audience's Attention		
	a. Serial Example	14	5.14%
	b. Extended Example	42	15.44%
	c. Quantification	2	0.73%
	d. Isolated	11	4.04%
	Comparisons		

	e. Extended	15	5.51%
	Comparison		
	f. Pictorialization	0	0%
	g. Definition	4	1.47%
	h. Contrast	10	3.67%
	i. Testimony	3	1.10%
		101	37.13%
2.	Factors of Audience's Emotion		
	a. Metaphor	3	1.10%
	b. Simile	1	0.36%
	c. Rhetorical Question	1	0.36%
	d. Antithesis	0	0%
	e. Irony	2	0.73%
	f. Synecdoche	0	0%
	g. Alliteration	13	4.77%
	h. Repetition	25	9.19%
	i. Paralellism	32	11.76%
		76	27.94%
3.	Speaker's Credibility		
	a. Power	0	0%
	b. Competence	13	4.77%
	c. Trustworthiness	9	3.30%
	d. Good Will	25	9.19%
	e. Similarity	34	12.50%
	f. Idealism	8	2.94%
	g. Dynamism	6	2.20%
		95	34.83%
Total		272	100%

In table 8 above shows that Obama has primarily motivated his audience by using some factors of audience's attention more than the other factors of motivating audience such as by showing his credibility and by raising audience's emotion. Factors of attention are used to maintain audience's attention so that his idea can be delivered in appropriate way.

In the second rank, the applied factors of showing a speaker's credibility found in Obama's speech are similarity, good will, competence, trustworthiness, idealism, and dynamism. Addressing credibility aims to show Obama's personality. Then, the less dominant aspect of motivating audience is the factor of emotion such as parallelism, repetition, alliteration, metaphor, irony, simile, and rhetorical question.

No.	Topic Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Political Issues	21	35.00%
2.	Racial and Ethical Issues	5	8.33%
3.	Geograpichal Issues	14	23.33%
4.	Religious Issues	2	3.33%
5.	Age and Gender Issues	7	11.66%
6.	Economic and Professional Issues	11	18.33%
	Total	60	100%

Table 9. The topic choices in Barack Obama'skeynote address in the 2004 Democratic NationalConvention

In table 9, it can be seen that Obama reflects American *political issues, geographical issues, economic and professional issues, age and gender issues, racial and ethical issues, and religious issues.*

Table 10. The social values implemented inBarack Obama's keynote address on 2004Democratic National Convention

No.	Social Values	Frequency	Percentage
Ι.	Personal	0	0%
	Control over the		
	environment		
2.	Time control	0	0%
i.	Indivualism and Privacy	5	6.32%
	Competition	1	1.26%
•	Action and Work	12	15.18%
	Directness, Openness, Honesty	0	0%
	Materialism	0	0%
	Change	11	13.92%
	Equality and Egalitarianism	24	30.37%
).	Self-help concept	8	10.12%
1.	Future orientation	13	16.45%
2.	Informality	0	0%
3.	Practicality and Efficiency	5	6.32%
	Total	79	100%

The table 10 indicates the most occurring American social values reflected in Obama's address in the 2004 Democratic National Convention is *equality and egalitarianism* (30.37%). Furthermore, the value of *future orientation* (16.45%) is the second dominant values. Then, in the third rank is *action and work orientation* (15.18%). The values of *change* is considered in the fourth rank (13.92%). Moreover, the value of *self-help concept* occurs in 8 data (10.12%). Then, the value of *practicality and efficiency* (6.32%) and *individualism and privacy* (6.32%) are less showed by Obama.

B. Discussion

1. Type of Persuasive Strategies

1) Maximization

John Kerry believes in energy independence, so we aren't held hostage to the profits of oil companies or the sabotage of foreign oil fields. (Datum 42)

Obama supports John Kerry's view in term of having *energy independence* in United States. In this case, he signifies that the idea of John Kerry's *energy independence* may secure America from many negative perceptions in term of depending on other countries

2) Inclusion

Inclusion means bringing audience into a part of particular valuable group. In datum 1, Obama realizes that the audience mostly comes from Illnois where the Democratic National Convention occurs. In this case, he mentions the meritorious service of Abraham Lincoln, one of the great American presidents, to connect with the history of Illnois.

On behalf of the great state of Illinois, crossroads of a nation, land of Lincoln, let me express my deep gratitude for the privilege of addressing this convention. (Datum 1)

3) Disassociation

Disassociation strategy is employed when a political speaker disassociates himself from the negative values in his society. In datum 31, Obama indicates that African Americans still experience racial segregation in having equality of education. In this case, he deviates himself from the *slander*'s idea, *a black youth with a book is acting white* (Datum 31).

4) Simplification

Simplification strategy is used to hold the extension of a topic and to assert the urgency of a speech event.

Tonight, we gather to affirm the greatness of our nation, not because of the height of our skyscrapers, or the power of our military, or the size of our economy. (Datum 13)

Datum 13 shows how Obama limits his previous life story (datum 12) and how he illustrates the urgency of the 2004 Democration National Convention. Likewise, uttering *tonight* functions as a transition to move to other topics without distracting other important ideas. He demonstrates the way how *to affirm the greatness* of America in a simple way.

2. Factors of Motivating Audience

1) Factors of Attention

a. Extended Example

Hart, Friedrich, and Brummet (1983) statethat an extended example presents a detail picture of an event or someone's experience.

A while back, I met a young man named Shamus at the VFW Hall in East Moline, Illinois. He was a good-looking kid, six-two or six-three, clear-eyed, with an easy smile. He told me he'd joined the Marines and was heading to Iraq the following week. (Datum 50)

Obama directly explains his first impression about Shamus. Basically, he creates a mini narrative of Shamus to audience to reach audience's perception about the negative impact of war.

b. Extended Comparison

The extended comparisons focus on describing the similar functions between two different things.

If there's a child on the south side of Chicago who can't read, that matters to me, even if it's not my child. (Datum 60)

Obama compares how he looks after children's problem of illiteracy in Chicago like children of his own. Although children in Chicago are different with his own, they have the same right and equal position.

c. Serial Example

According to Hard, Friedrich, and Brummet (1983), using a serial example is helpful for a persuasive speaker to maintain audience's attention. In this research, Obama adds more description of Illnois as *crossroads of a nation* and a *land of Lincoln* (Datum 2). In this case, he portrays Illnois as a historical state in the US of America. Mentioning more description of Illnois, where the convention took place, is to prove that he knows a lot about the state.

d. Isolated Comparison

For alongside our famous individualism, there's another ingredient in the American saga, a belief that we are connected as one people. (Datum 59)

Obama addresses the spirit of American individualism in his speech. He indicates that American spirit of *individualism* can be connected with the concept of the unity of American people.

e. Contrast

Contrasting two ideas makes up audience's mind. In this research, Obama clearly utteres two kinds of patriots: the one who supports and another who opposes Iraq war. By mentioning those different patriots, he focuses to bridge between individuals who

have different opinions about war in Iraq.

There are patriots who opposed the war in Iraq and patriots who supported it. (Datum 72)

2) Factors of Speaker's Credibility

a. Similarity

"E pluribus unum." Out of many, one. (Datum 59)

Obama utters one of *de facto* mottos in the United States of America to show his regard to his nation. The phrase means there is no America without the unity of the fifty states. The phrase also supports the idea about how to pursuit American Dreams as *a single American family*.

b. Good Will

John Kerry believes in America. And he knows it's not enough for just some of us to prosper. (Datum 52)

Obama shows John Kerry's idea about prosperity. Moreover, he describes that one of John Kerry's future plans, preserving equal prosperity for every American citizen, proves the understanding of the ideal society for audience.

c. Competence

John Kerry understands the ideals of community, faith, and sacrifice, because they have defined his life. (Datum 36)

Obama reveals John Kerry's competence in order to get audience's vote. He supports John Kerry, indeed, to be the next president of the US who competently maintains the ideal values in American society.

d. Trustworthiness

In 2004 Democratic National Convention, Obama indicates that he can be trusted by his consistent plans, actions, and attitudes. They stand here, I stand here today, grateful for the diversity of my heritage, aware that my parents' dreams live on in my two precious daughters. (Datum 12)

Obama talks to audience about his parent's dream. In this case, he exemplifies that his multiracial parents' *dreams* reflects American Dreams. When he explains his *parent's dreams*, he actually stresses that the racial equality in pursuing life, liberty, and happiness should be maintained as imperishable dreams for the next generation.

e. Idealism

Idealism represents the way how a speaker characteristically solves certain problems by his particular ways.

Do we participate in a politics of cynicism or do we participate in a politics of hope? John Kerry calls on us to hope. John Edwards calls on us to hope. (Datum 70)

3) Factors of Emotion

a. Paralellism

Obama explains the implementation of being *one people*. He conditionally treats the problems experienced by *a child, a senior citizen,* and *an Arab family* as his own problem, concern, and responsibility. By mentioning their problems, he represents egalitarianism. The parallelism exists to stress and to connect the three major points.

If there's a child on the south side of Chicago who can't read, that matters to me.... If there's a senior citizen somewhere who can't pay for her prescription drug and has to choose between medicine and the rent, that makes my life poorer, If there's an Arab American family being rounded up without benefit of an attorney or due process, that threatens my civil liberties. (Datum 31)

b. Alliteration

We coach Little League in the Blue States and have gay friends in the Red States. (Datum 37)

In Obama's statement above, alliteration exists in the word *Little League* in its consonant /li/.

c. Repetition

Repetition of John Kerry's name is to create a perfect image of John Kerry to be the next president of the US.

John Kerry believes in an America where hard work is rewarded....John Kerry believes in an America where all Americans can afford the same health....John Kerry believes in energy independence...John Kerry believes in the constitutional... And John Kerry believes that in a dangerous world,.... (Datum 24)

d. Metaphor

We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes, all of us defending the United States of America. (Datum 38)

Accordingly, Obama uses a metaphor of *the stars and stripes* to refer to the United States of America. The stars and stripes are derived from the pattern of the US national flag. Also, he explains the similar feeling of being *one people* by exploring the metaphor *we are one people*. This metaphor functions to depict the unity of America.

e. Simile

By uttering *shone as a beacon of freedom and opportunity*, Obama intensely employs simile. The function of delivering a simile is to create a more vivid description of America.

f. Rhetorical question

But then I asked myself: Are we serving Shamus as well as he was serving us? (Datum 26)

Obama asks audience about caring a soldier like Shamus in an appropriate way. His question can be defined as rhetorical question because the answer is already implied in the following utterance.

3. Topic Choices

1) Political Issues

Well, I say to them tonight, there's not a liberal America and a conservative America there's the United States of America. (Datum 32)

Obama explains the importance of the unity of America. He states that no matter what kind of people's political interest, the United States of America is the priority. He mentions both different political interests of American people because the difference itself forms the unity of America.

2) Geographical Issues

On behalf of the great state of Illinois, crossroads of a nation, land of Lincoln... (Datum 1)

Mentioning the 16th American president's name is useful for Obama to attract audience. Seemingly, he would like to do what Abraham Lincoln did in Illnois.

3) Economic and Profesional Issues

In datum 17, he explains his experience when he met the *workers* in Illnois. He criticizes US government to solve the problem of unemployment. Second, he criticizes the *healh-care* benefits for a middle-down economical background people like the *father* he met. Lastly, he also states that the US government should be more aware of one's educational problem experienced by a young woman from East St. Louis.

More to do for the workers I met in Galesburg, Illinois... More to do for the father that I met who was losing his job.... More to do for the young woman in East St. Louis...doesn't have the money to go to college.

4) Religious Issues

He (John Kerry) will never sacrifice our basic liberties nor use faith as a wedge to divide us. (Datum 24)

Obama demonstrates John Kerry's personality towards the idea of constitutional freedoms.

5) Age and Gender Issues

We can tuck in our children at night and know they are fed and clothed and safe from harm. (Datum 12)

Obama shows his awareness of children's basic needs. He implies that children are a vulnerable American generation and they have an important role in the future. He suggests that people should take care of them.

6) Racial and Ethical Issues

There is not a black America and a white America and Latino America and Asian America; there is the United States of America. (datum 33)

Obama mentions the difference color and ethnics of people. He emphasizes that the power of the United States of America is in its multicultural race. By mentioning assorted races in America, he basically states that all races have the equal position to define themselves in America.

4. Social Values

1) Equality and Egalitarianism

My parents shared not only an improbable love; they shared an abiding faith in the possibilities of this nation. (Datum 6)

Obama exemplifies that black and white people have the equal right as presented in his *parents*' marriage. Also, he implicitly states that a marriage is a symbol of freedom and unity for different persons.

2) Future Orientation

So instead of offering tax breaks to companies shipping jobs overseas, he'll offer them to companies creating jobs here at home. (Datum 33) In this case, Obama illustrates how John Kerry, the 2004 presidential candidate from Democratic Party, will increase US economy and decrease the unemployment by giving *tax breaks* for the *companies creating jobs*. This is to strengthen the companies' life so that they could employ more workers.

3) Action and Work

The almost willful ignorance that thinks unemployment will go away if we just don't talk about it, or the health care crisis will solve itself if we just ignore it. (Datum 59)

Obama explains that the unemployment will not be solved if there is no action. Furthermore, he states that the issue of health-care crisis is a crucial problem which should be solved by all Americans. Later, those issues are still being a distress on his ways to be the 2008 presidential candidate.

4) Change

We can participate in the political process without fear of retribution, and that our votes will be counted? At least, most of the time. (Datum 16)

Obama presents how the next government should be. His utterance is clearly defined to remind the audience about the presidential election in 2000. he emphasizes that such an issue will not happen again in the 2004 presidential election. The results of election became the big issues in United States as the process of counting in Florida did not show the real numbers.

5) Self-help Concept

They would give me an African name, Barack, or "blessed," believing that in a tolerant America your name is no barrier to success. (Datum 7)

Obama describes the definition of his name as

an unusual name for western people. Explaining the

definition of his name can be regarded as an attempt to show how he has pride of his name, race, culture, and country.

6) Individualism and Privacy

We can say what we think, write what we think, without hearing a sudden knock on the door. (Datum 14)

Datum 14 shows that the values of individualism will be manifested in the freedom of thinking and of sharing the idea without any fear of being sentenced. In this case, Obama illustrates the values of democracy in the US government system.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, there are some points that can be concluded in this research. First, the most frequent type of persuasive strategies used by Obama is association strategy. By using association strategy, he relates his own experiences to audience's experiences in order to deliver his message. Maximization strategy, as the second frequent type of persuasive strategy, is used as an implication of supporting John Kerry's and John Edward's best values for American society and government. Furthermore, to build a connection with audience, he employs inclusion strategy to put audience within a privilege society. One of the dominant persuasive strategies is disassociation. By using disassociation strategy, he avoids addressing the negative values existed in audience's society.

Second, in this research, Obama pervades many factors of motivating audience through catching their attention rather than raising their emotion and showing his credibility. To sum up, he requires audience to pay attention so that he may catch their emotion and finally show his credibility.

Third, there are several topic issues addressed by Obama: political geographical issue. issue. economical and professional issue, age and gender issue, racial and ethical issue, and religious issue. By choosing those issues, he provides the problem solving and is deemed recognizing what kind of problems audience actually has in their society. In this case, the most dominant issue is political issue. The issue is reflected as he focuses on supporting John Kerry and John Edward to stand as the next president and vice-president of the US. By exploiting the political issues in America, he may solve other issues.

Last, this research is to display what kind of American social values implemented in Obama's speech. As an Afro-American, Obama represents several American social values. In his speech, he focuses on maintaining the values of equal and egalitarianism in term of racial reconciliation. The future orientation values refer to the way how he shows his futuristic idea for the betterment of the US. Besides, action and work values are demonstrated through the way how he emphasizes hard work for a better life. Hence, the action and work values are the implementation of the values of change. In this case, he simplifies the values of change into his idea of hope. Last, he merges the values of *individualism* as the principal of self-help concept. The values of individualism is characteristically similar to the idea of self-help concept in term of how people struggle to get what they deserve by their own effort.

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