POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND INTERTEXTUALITY (B. OBAMA CASE-STUDY)

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Abstract. The paper presents the discussion of intertextuality in political discourse, namely B. Obama speeches. B. Obama creates political discourse around two main sources: American history and American civil religion. With means of intertextuality Obama establishes links with his audience outlining common values with the support of history, cultural traditions and religion.

Keywords: political discourse, intertextuality, vertical and horizontal analyses, transtextuality, architextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, American history, American civil religion

1. Introduction

Research into the public use of language is one of the staples of linguistics investigated since the 1960-s. The relations of language to power, politics and culture were thoroughly studied and further developed by the prominent critical thinkers of the XX century – Jurgen Habermas (Habermas, 1984), Stuart Hall (Hall, 1980), and Pierre Bourdie (Bourdieu, 1999).

The language both establishes the socio-political environment and determines the implicit and explicit pattern of mediating the discourse between state and society (Macleavy, 2006). According to the groundbreaking notion of discourse given by Michel Foucault, discourses are much more than just ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern. Discourses deal with the patterns of knowledge, present in any disciplinary structure, and function by the means of connecting knowledge and power (Foucault, 1972).

There is a major body of research focused on political discourse in theory and practice (Dijk, 1997; Wilson, 2001; Chilton, 2004; Lakoff, 2009); parliamentary (Ilie, 2003; Ilie, 2006; Bayley, 2004; Alvarez-Benito, 2009; Dijk, 2004) and presidential discourses (Carpenter, 1982; Kendall, 1995; Gilmore, J., Rowling, 2018). In the core of political discourse lies an intention to establish necessary links, in order to influence the recipient of the text/speech, and public opinion in general. The essence of political discourse is to employ the power of persuasion and various rhetoric strategies to verbalize political intentions and produce new meanings. The language is a powerful tool for shaping the political thinking and political "mind", enabling the actors and recipients of the political activity to acquire a certain political vision.

The genre of public political speech is one of the key elements of the political discourse (Chernyavskaya, 2006). Political speech is known to be a powerful source of influence for the state institutions, that determine political and social processes in the society (Fairclough, 1989). Political speech can take various forms, such as political monologue and political polylogue/dialogue (Chudinov, 2012). Considering all the interrelations that are persistent between language and politics, politics and culture and culture and language there is little doubt that political discourse is rich in context.

So far, it seems, that intertextuality issues have escaped the researchers' attention while analyzing linguistic content of political discourse; however, it seems well worth looking into the issue, as intertextual implementation can shape the peculiarities of the political message and establish "special" relations with the audience.

2. Objectives/Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to analyze the role and functions of intertext in public speech, namely in B. Obama's speeches (https://americanrhetoric.com/barackobamaspeeches.htm). To

achieve this, it was necessary to reveal and identify types of intertext inclusions in Obama speeches, to outline tendencies in selecting intertext inclusions, to evaluate functions of intertextuality in political discourse and its effect on the audience.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. *Material*

All key speeches delivered by B. Obama during his presidency were analyzed both in audio and script versions available at https://americanrhetoric.com/barackobamaspeeches.htm:

A More Perfect Union, 2008;
Victory Speech (1), 2008;
Obama Inaugural Address What is Required: The Price and the Promise of Citizenship, 2009;
Martin Luther King Jr. Remembrance Speech, 2010;
Together We Thrive: Tucson and America' Memorial, 2011;
Victory Speech (2), 2012;
Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings in Newtown, 2012;
Obama Inaugural Address, 2013;
Selma Speech (Bloody Sunday), 2015;
Farewell Address, 2017.

Including audioversions into analysis enhanced the possibility not only to identify intext inclusions into the speech, but also to assess speaker's public response.

3.2. *Methods*

Since the goal of this article is to reveal the mechanisms of intertext usage in public speech and to unveil the functions of intertext, a decent empirical analysis is needed. Several models of intertextual analysis exist that offer some evaluative criteria for intertextuality put in practice.

Gerard Genette's model of text analysis sees intertext as one of the five types of "transtextuality"- a way of text-to-text communication. Genette analyses textual relations across struc-

turalism, post-structuralism and semiotics, and eventually defines five basic types which are architextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality and intertextuality. Genette makes further distinctions between explicit (in forms of quotations), non-explicit (termed as plagiarism when no reference or clue is given as an homage to the source text) and implicit intertextuality (hidden intertexts and allusions) (Mirenayat, Soofastaei 2015).

Although Genette's model of textual analysis provides a grounded theoretic framework it is difficult to operate within this model because of many limitations present. The most dramatic limitation is cutting down the intertext prevalence to three forms (quotations, plagiarism, allusions) only.

Another model belongs to Thomas Bloor and Meriel Bloor, who proposed to account for intertext across all text genres, opposing to the "literary intertext" dominating concept. According to Bloor & Bloor, intertext is a form of adaptation that can be found in scientific papers, journalist articles, etc. Intertextual inclusions are perceived as existent on two levels: the intrastructural level of text (lexicon, grammar, style and semiotics) and interstructural level (elements and internal inclusions of textual and intertextual dimension) (Ahmadian, Yazdani, 2013). Still the model almost omits literary intertext, overlooking the importance of cultural background/allusive inclusions in the text and the role of pre-text thus making it problematic to carry out the empirical analysis.

The following model of intertext analysis performed across two dimensions- the horizontal and the vertical one proves to be more empirically applicable with the minimum of limitations.

The horizontal axis of the text encompasses the author-reader relations, firstly, the creation of the text in terms of design, construction and production; secondly, the interpretation of the text by a reader. The horizontal layer is both about the integrity of the constructed text and reader's perception of the text as a whole. A text may be an adaptation or imitation of another text;

or simply have intertextual inclusions leading to other texts inviting for the horizontal type of text comparison.

The functions of intertext when being analyzed on the horizontal axis can be defined as following:

– develops on the first level of the author/narrator- reader/listener relations;

– provides grounds for further communication;

– shares the notion of integrity both of a text as a construct and text's perception provided by a reader;

– allows for genre mirroring/adaptation/imitation of another text- features interdiscursivity;

– is explicit and recognizable (the pre-text is a major source for the text; we may say that sometimes a pre-text overwhelms the new text);

– leads to other texts and invites for text-to-text comparison;

– denotes references of the same level;

– allows for "manifest" forms of intertexts that carry the old context to perform new meaning.

The vertical axis deals with text in context of all the previous and current texts present. The intertextual inclusions are mostly hidden and refer not to the surface structure of the text, but to its more implicit meaning. Intertext can be represented in various forms of allusion, adaptation, indication and quotation; intertextual references and allusions that come from the pre-text acquire new meaning in the text and become connected to the "global" intertextual net, thus creating new "vertical" context.

Intertextual functions revealed on the vertical axis are:

– embeds the text into a global net of multiple contexts;

– historical, cultural, political;

– deals with texts in context of all the previous and current texts present;

– carries the old meaning to the new contexts;

– is more implicit, may not refer to surface structure of the text.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. *Intertextuality*

Traditionally, context is viewed not only as an immediate continuity, but as a dense tissue of cultural patterns, ideas and views that extend present to the past in a broader cultural sense (Lotman, 1998). Intertext employment proves beneficial to intra-cultural discourse construction, creative and recreative potential of references and their meanings in the text. Studying political discourse in terms of context and intertext allows to reveal key implicit messages that are embedded in the discourse and purportedly determine the interaction between the audience and the speaker (Lakoff, 2004). Intertextuality allows for the basic principle of political discourse – its dialogism, and hence performs as one of the major mechanisms of discourse production. Intertextuality can be viewed as means of reference to other cultures, bridging context to context, highlighting the inherent dialogicity of culture and text. Thus, intertextuality contributes to the field of cultural integration reaching beyond cultural boundaries if any.

The concept of intertextuality originates from the M. Bakhtin's works, where he developed the notion of dialogicity and addressivity (Bakhtin, 1986), and was coined as a term by Julia Kristeva (Kristeva, 1986). J. Kristeva sees intertextuality as the continuity of texts referring to one another and producing other texts/discourses. Intertextuality has two dimensions – the horizontal (syntagmatic text link) and the vertical (paradigmatic text link) one. Texts are immersed into other texts, and it creates the context in its all diversity. G. Genette defines intertextuality as a relationship of copresence between texts (Alfaro, 2016); N. Fairclough states that all texts are inherently intertextual, constituted by elements of other texts (Fairclough, 1992). Eventually intertextuality has the power to produce and reproduce discourse over time.

Another crucial notion on intertextuality according to M. Bakhtin, is that a text is always produced for someone to perceive it – a reader, a listener. Thus, text becomes a channel/a model of communication. Political speech itself is a specific genre of addressing the audience and has its particular features. It is performed to a large audience, it is prepared and non-spontaneous, and what is most important, the listeners have to process the speech interactively, i.e. just when the speech is being delivered. Pragmatically successful accomplishment of discourse strategies includes addressing the target group at both cognitive and emotional levels. Politicians exploit intertexts multidimensionally while conducting their discourse.

Talking about intertext inclusions in political speech, it is necessary to remember, that the foremost aim of politician address to the public is to establish rapport with people, to affect people's minds for them to believe and support him/her. Intertext inclusions create a specific environment that can unite participants of a "dialogue".

As it was mentioned above, methods allowing to analyze intertextuality include various approaches. The model of intertext analysis implementing the horizontal and the vertical axes seem to be the most comprehensive one.

4.2. *Intertext inclusions in Obama's speeches*

American political discourse tends to emphasize the interrelation of presidential speeches in terms of institutional inheritance and predecessors' influence. The issues of identity and self-representation given by every political figure, namely President of the United States is at the core of any political action/speech. The presidential discourse is "a complex intertextual phenomenon" (Austermühl, 2014: 41).

As the analysis shows, the former President of the United States Barack Hussein Obama creates his political discourse around two main sources: American history and American Civil Religion. Referring to American History, he enables the best of

presidential rhetoric examples, that of Abraham Lincoln and J.F. Kennedy. When he employs the American Civil Religion, the inspiration comes from the hero of the American Civil Rights Movement and a Preacher – Martin Luther King.

B. Obama combines two discourses. Thus, he explicitly states that he speaks not only as a powerful authority, but also as a man close to his nation and to his people.

The multiple and diverse employment of intertextual inclusions in Obama's speeches allows for horizontal or vertical types of comparison.

4.2.1. *Horizontal axis*

The horizontal axis is represented by *architextuality* (according to G. Gennet's classification), the most prominent of which is The Sandy Hook Prayer Vigil national eulogy, given by Obama. The *interdiscursivity* in this case is obvious for the genre's blend of political speech given to a nation and a prayer for a nation. Obama says: "*I come to offer the love and prayers of a nation"*. Moreover, he succeeds to sound like a preacher, because of the expression structures used, such as pitch, rhythm, sentence parallelism, contrast and metaphors, uses biblical lexicon *«carnage», «evil», «despair», «resilience», «love», «shield».*

B. Obama starts his pray with the quote from Scripture: "*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal"*. This is a part of the Second Letter to Corinthians (4: 16-18), where the major focus is made on the ability to present weaknesses and to resurrect life.

B. Obama constructs the discourse filling each part of the speech with biblical quotes, following the structure of a prayer. He starts with the Scripture words, then intimately and trustfully refers to those gathered, speaking of the loss and sorrow, then confronts the sin – the perilous massacre at the Sandy Hook Primary school, and admits that the efforts of the nation are too humble to prevent that from happening again and a lot more has

to be done. Obama says: "*No single law – no set of laws can eliminate evil from the world, or prevent every senseless act of violence in our society. But that can't be an excuse for inaction"*, highlighting two law systems – the Godly single law and a set of laws, made by people. Then he goes deeper for the meaning of life, a preacher "conversationalist style" is employed: *"Why are we here? What gives our life meaning? What gives our acts purpose? We know our time on this Earth is fleeting*" and responds mirroring the main message of the prayer, that love wins over anything: "*There's only one thing we can be sure of, and that is the love that we have"*. B. Obama says that love is the basic staple of human life, love is «*fierce and boundless*», inspirational and kind. The climax of the speech is introduced with the quote from Matthew 19: 14: "*Let the little children come to me," Jesus said, "and do not hinder them — for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."* And then he calls out the names of the children who died during the shootings, concluding "*God has called them all home".*

B. Obama closes the speech with a blessing "*May God bless and keep those we've lost in His heavenly place. May He grace those we still have with His holy comfort. And may He bless and watch over this community, and the United States of America"*. He offers people not only his presidential guidance, but consolation in the name of God.

Obama's Inaugural Address is another type of *political architextual discourse*. It relates both to the horizontal (in terms of genre and text structure) and the vertical (in terms of historical, cultural and Biblical allusions that constitute the discourse) axes. Inaugural speech is a highly institutionalized genre of formal speech that aims at setting a tone for the Administration and speaking to the nations' concerns and hopes. At that moment of triumph, the speech is loaded with deep pragmatic function, i.e. to deliver the message on presidential vision of the nation and the world.

Usually the focus of the speech is on thematic intertextuality: sites of national memory, unity and traditional American values. This is when B. Obama uses the type of political discourse that is known as American Civil Religion.

This field is traditionally represented by the body of vertical reminiscence and allusions that attach to the American History, the Founding Fathers and main documents of the American Nation: the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. It echoes Protestant values and assumptions, sanctifying the Founding Fathers, Puritans, and all those who fought for America on the battlefield. The nation provides honors to its martyrs: Presidents and the common people. As Obama delivers: «*They have something to tell us, just as the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington whisper through the ages*».

Americans share a common Civil Religion with certain fundamental beliefs and values. The idea of American Exceptionalism, featured by such quotations as *"one nation under God"* and "*the city on a hill"* are also widely introduced in the American civil religion.

In his first Inaugural speech B. Obama uses historical intertext listing himself as one of the Presidents to show the link with the predecessors and pay homage to them. He says: *"Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential Oath"* and counts himself demonstrating that he now has inherited the great responsibility and honor from the nation. He addresses the audience using quasi-religious language (which itself is an interdiscursive device and intertextual inclusion) in his journey through American history, touching upon all the sacred symbols of the Nation. He quotes Scripture (The First Letter to Corinthians 13:11) saying: *"the time has come to set aside childish things"*, thus postulating that American nation is still young but has already grown up in terms of deeds and values. One of the key intertextual inclusions that Obama employs from the Constitution is the form of appeal to the audience as *"We, the people"* – a direct quotation of its first line; He refers to the Founding Fathers reminding us of

their great deeds for the Nation and Liberty: **"***Our Founding Fathers, faced with perils that we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations"*.

The diversity of intertextual inclusions is great. For example, the President uses metaphorical intertext in historical context speaking of making of a nation: *"In the year of America's birth, in the coldest of months, a small band of patriots huddled by dying campfires on the shores of an icy river. The Capitol was abandoned. The enemy was advancing. The snow was stained with blood. «Let it be told to the future world...that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive...that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet [it]"*. After referring to the cold winter of the Revolutionary War, B. Obama enables the nation's spirit: *"America: In the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these timeless words"*. Obama reminds: «*passing through a hard winter. we've weathered some hard winters before "<...>Together, we shall make a way through winter, and we're going to welcome the spring"*.

The references are made not only to the staples of American nation and its highest values, but also to the moments of greatest sorrow, the major of which is slavery and consequential racial discrimination. So, he alludes to history: "*and because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation, and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united"*. The intertextual inclusion here plays a role of connector. A line is drawn across generations, linking the past to the present like this: "*a man whose father less than sixty years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred Oath"*. Thus, he personifies his story and mirrors it in the moment of American history timeline.

The horizontal axis of intertext highlights the intermingling of genres, creating the architext, that lies within the context of the past. Deeply rooted cultural heritage of the American nation,

namely the culture of prayer and preaching gets reflected in the new discourse tissue. Explicit references to the text (Holy Scripture), genre (prayer and Inaugural address), and nation's fundamental values (American civil Religion) provide the well-known and recognizable context and help to establish the speaker-audience connection (and further- to unite, to educate, to project a vision of common future, to alarm, to support, to give hope, to revive national spirit, etc.).

4.2.2. *Vertical axis*

There is a great number of intertextual references with pretexts rooted in global and American culture. One of the key vertical allusions in Barack Obama's text and talk is the motto of his presidential campaign, "Yes, we can". It is widely exploited throughout all his speeches and serves for topical coherence and pragmatically successful message delivery.

"Yes, we can" is a three-part classical rhetoric slogan that creates a mini-story of opportunity for positive change and success. This slogan is a translation of "Si, se puede" – a slogan of César Chávez, the leader of Hispanic United Farm Workers Union (1970-s), therefore it provides for substantial resonation with the Hispanic community.

By saying "Yes, we can", Obama tells a story constructed by the metanarrative (intervening elements of American history and its founding documents) and the underlying sense of challenge fulfilled that he himself implies into it. Thus, he authorizes his rhetoric, making all the ideas easily understood and recognizable.

The notion of sharing common history and shaping common future accounts not only for the best, but for the wish-for-better days when America had to grow stronger through sacrifice and pain. Speaking of racial issues, he employs Scripture quotations, but most of all he uses the Martin Luther King's words. Obama cherishes the King tradition of preaching; and thus, he acquires the prophetic style of talk.

He implants biblical intertexts (words and phrases) into the speech very often. Still the intertextual connection and meaning may be not that obvious/hidden and sometimes need further explanation: *"the fruits of prejudice and bigotry", "the seeds of its own demise", "responsible stewards of God's blessing"* [Remembrance Speech], "*When the trumpet call sounded ... the people came"* [Bloody Sunday speech]; "*to pick up the torch and cross this bridge", "a beacon of opportunity", "the foundation stone of our democracy", "the culmination of so much blood and sweat and tears", "the product of so much sacrifice"* [Bloody Sunday speech]. Obama's rhetoric emphasizes a multitude of antagonisms of the American society, at the same time giving hope and maintaining the significance of bonding American values.

B. Obama extensively uses metaphoric language and relies on metaphoric intertexts creating powerful images. His rhetoric offers transformation, he uses the image of the road, a journey, a march: "*they would stay true to their North Star and keep marching toward justice", "We know the march is not yet over";* he addresses the nation as *«Fellow marchers"* [Bloody Sunday speech] and calls them to *"continue the long march",* stating *"Here we are, once more marching toward an unknown future";* quoting King *"Let's take a victory, he said, and then keep on marching*" [Remembrance Speech]. The goal of this march is to pursue a Dream, therefore Obama tells us about "a young preacher from Georgia" who spoke of "his dream". This is the way how B. Obama introduces his signature discourse of hope that calls for unity and common future. The intertextual image of Martin Luther King serves both as a historical anchorage and as a temporal deictic marking the American timeline.

The vertical axis serves to connect American culture to the whole spectrum of world culture; It helps to promote American outlook (Yes, we can) and create an enriched metanarrative; introduces American heroes that portray major humanistic ideals

and values (Martin Luther King Jr figure). Biblical allusions of a subtler, still inherently persuasive nature contribute to creation of dense metaphorical language and build to the decent historical anchorage of the discourse.

So, the study shows that all functions of intertextuality revealed through both horizontal and vertical axes analyses are performed in B. Obama's speeches.

5. Conclusion

The study of intertextual inclusions in political discourse created by B. Obama shows that he redefines the spectrum of political speech providing for dialogue with the audience by means of intertexts.

He extensively employs horizontal intertexts that are easily recognizable in order to establish relations with the audience and convey new explicit meanings in the talk. Obama voices hopes and concerns of the nation customizing the American civil religion pathos to his signature interdiscursive rhetoric. He uses the prophetic style of talk mirroring the structure of a prayer, embedding quasi-religious words and preacher's conversationalist techniques.

The number of historical intertexts in their metaphoric form play the role of the connector. B. Obama highlights the basic American principles and beliefs alluding to the historical context of the past, reviving the historical timeline and bringing it to the America of now.

His vertical intertexts originate from the pretexts rooted in global and American culture.

In the heart of Obama's rhetoric lies the dense metaphoric tissue filled with Biblical intertexts and language.

The core words of Obama's Presidential campaign – the motto "Yes, we can" – is a three-part intertextual motto of the Hispanic farmers in USA of the 1970-s. Thus, he unites the future and the past, cherishing the multiethnic nature of his country.

B. Obama speaks to American values raising issues of race and national unity. His metanarrative is centered around the powerful figure of Martin Luther King, the hero of present and the past and creates a powerful intertextual link to Obama himself.

Biblical intertexts belong to both horizontal and vertical axis of analysis. Still, major differences exist. Horizontally-wise, the architextuality allows to transplant another genre of speech (a prayer) to political discourse. As a result, civil quasi- religious prayer emerges. It mirrors the structure of a prayer in terms of semantic base, syntax, stylistic and rhetoric tools. Thus, a religious address morphs into a prayer vigil, (a civil one); therefore, it provides for larger audience, uniting the nation as one. Horizontal intertext is explicit and purportedly recognizable by nature; it speaks to the national cultural heritage, namely the culture of worship. Horizontal intertext tends to reproduce a text within "old manner" but with a new meaning. Biblical intertext of horizontal nature provides a paradigm for understanding current events within the framework of a familiar pre-text. Horizontal intertextual inclusions can be viewed as production-oriented; Vertical intertexts are reception-oriented ones. The vertical axis refers to global cultural roots and tends to establish links to global culture and produce implicit meanings that do not face the surface of the narrative. According to its dynamic nature, vertical intertext not only creates new meaning but puts all the meaning in a new vertical (diachronic) context. Horizontal intertext serves as a framework for reproduction of meaning in today's context. Vertical intertext is rather a framework for understanding and developing the link to one's culture. Vertical intertext doesn't aim at recreating the whole body of pre-text.

All in all, the results of the study show that intertextuality generally structures B. Obama' speeches creating rapport environment, which characterizes his style of communication with the audience. Moreover, it is possible to say that intertextual structure can characterize a linguistic persona, his/her way of conveying political messages and establishing connections with the audi-

ence. The study shows that further researches can cover analyses of intertextuality in political discourse comparing various political figures from different cultural background.

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