An Investigation of the Political Discourse of Obama's Selected Speeches ----- A Hallidian Perspective

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Abstract

This paper examines the art of linguistic spin in three popular speeches given by Barack Obama during October 2, 2002 to February 5, 2008. Obama's linguistic spin has been approached through the model of transitivity systems proposed by Halliday. The analysis and interpretation reveal the way he became successful in persuading the people gather around him. These linguistic features have been taken as tools for analysis as these relate closely to the ideational function of language, quite suitable for the analysis and interpretation of a political discourse since political discourse also deals with the ideational function. The results of the study show that Obama uses material processes of action and event as well as mental process of affection to physically gather the people around him. He uses relational processes as well to create his positive image in the minds of people. He seems much interested in using circumstance of location, both spatial and temporal, and circumstance of reason to make his account objective and reliable.

Key terms: Political speeches, Barack Obama, linguistic spin, transitivity.

1. Conceptual Framework

Halliday's Functional Grammar is based on the idea that language performs two major functions. 'It is a means of reflecting on things and a means of acting on things … Halliday calls these two functions the Ideational "Content" function and the Interpersonal function. Both these functions rely on a third, the Textual function … which ensures that the language [of the other two functions] used is relevant. The textual function represents the language user's text forming potential' (Malmkjaer, 1991). Functional Grammar bases on the grammatical systems and considers these systems as a way through which humans interact with each other. "Functional Grammars are used for a variety of tasks. First and foremost they are used for describing languages in functional terms" (Martin, Matthiessen & Painter, 1997). Functional grammarians do not stop at describing a language in its grammatical terms, rather they move on and "do something with what they have found out" (Martin et al. 1997). Although 'the theory behind functional grammar is systemic, Halliday concentrates exclusively on the functional part of grammar, "that is, the interpretation of the grammatical patterns in terms of configurations of functions"' (Malmkjaer, 1991).

IFG provides a general grammar to the analysts working in different areas for the purpose of text analysis and interpretation. Halliday's An Introduction to Functional Grammar (IFG) is, as Martin et al. (1997) write "much richer semantically than either formal or traditional school grammar. This makes the analysis … more insightful when it comes to interpreting a text". IFG provides better information about a person's communication abilities in terms of semantics, discourse and subjectivity than any other grammar (Martin et al. 1997). IFG grammar uses traditional class labels, i.e. noun, adjective, verb etc. in addition to the function labels like Actor, Process, Goal, Theme, Rheme, Deictic, and so on. These functional labels help the analysts in the process of texts interpretation. IFG never prescribes in terms of what one says and what one cannot say. It, rather, offers the tools for understanding texts in terms of why and how they are so.

IFG talks about the phenomenon that the users of a language often choose from different linguistic choices available to them, when they speak or write. For this purpose a functional grammar provides the system of transitivity choices operative at the clause level. While interpersonal function deals with meaning as a form of action in which the transmitter of language does something to the receiver of language by means of language, textual function is the relevance of meaning with the context. In other words textual function is the function of constructing a message. Ideational function concerns with the representation of our experience of the external world (that lies about us) and of our internal world (that of our imagination). The analysis and interpretation of the transitivity systems of the clause of a certain language is concerned with the phenomenon that how the ideational function of that particular clause is structured in terms of processes, participants and circumstances.

Transitivity systems belong to the experiential metafunction (ideational function). These systems analyze the flux of experience. "These are represented as a configuration of a process, participants involved in it, and attendant circumstances" (Martin et al. 1997). Transitivity systems see clause along the "experiential line of organization" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Transitivity systems choose from choices available to them in the three following components:
- The processes
- Participants
- Circumstances

These three elements of a clause are recognized as follows:
- Verbal groups realize the processes
- Nominal groups realize the participants
- Adverbial group or prepositional phrases realize the circumstances

Halliday introduces six types of processes:
- Material processes:
  These are processes of doing, having *actor* and *goal*. *Actor* is one who does something and *Goal* is an entity where process is extended.
- Mental processes:
  These are processes of thinking, feeling and perceiving, having *Senser* and *Phenomenon*. *Senser* is the person who senses, *Phenomenon* is the object involved in the process.
- Relational processes:
  These are processes of being. These processes have two modes, attributive mode and identifying mode. Attributive processes contain two participants, *Carrier* and *Attribute*. Identifying processes also contains two participants, *Token* and *Value*.
- Behavioural processes:
  These processes are "those that represent the outer manifestations of the inner workings" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). These processes have *Behaver* as an obligatory participant.
- Verbal processes:
  These processes represent human experience "in the form of language" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). They have *Sayer*, *Receiver* and *Verbiage* as their participants.
- Existential processes:
  These are the processes through which every kind of phenomenon is considered to 'be', to exist, or to happen. *Existent* is its obligatory participant.

The main elements of circumstance of English clause are: Extent and Location in terms of space and time; Manner (means, quality, comparison); Cause (purpose, reason, behalf); Accompaniment; Role (Malmkjaer, 1991). The present paper analyses and interprets President Obama's three selected and popular speeches in terms of the transitivity choices he makes in the use of his clauses. The purpose of the paper is to investigate his persuasive political discourse through which he succeeds gathering the people around him. The analysis and interpretation is based on the text of speeches provided by Olive (2008) in his anthology, The American Story. The paragraphs have been numbered by us for the convenience of the readers.

2. *Analysis and Interpretation*

2.1 Against Going to War with Iraq (October 2, 2002)

Paragraph 1:

The combination of imperative verb "let" and first person pronoun in accusative case "me" at the very beginning of speech is a wise transitivity choice, as the use of the adjunct "although" at this place would have been unexpected and shocking start for the audience. This adjunct might introduce some conditional situation, hence a shocking effect on the audience, if it had been given the thematic place in the second sentence of the speech. The speaker seems aware of it, prefers to choose at the thematic place the independent clause beginning with the imperative "let" and accusative "me". This deliberately chosen transitivity choice of allowance seeking process "let", without a possible additional agent "you", at the thematic position of the very opening sentence of the speech places the audience at the extreme position of the highest authoritative pedestal. Hence the speaker is successful at winning a prior sympathetic favour of the audience for the views he has not expressed yet.

Paragraph 2

Obama speaks against US invasion of Iraq in this speech but before coming to the point of his anti-war concept regarding Iraq, he wins the confidence of the audience by recounting the event of his own grandfather's joining US army. He tells us about this in a three-clause sentence. The action *(material) processes* of "signing up" and "fighting" show the decisiveness and the absence of hesitation in going for a war for a cause. The speaker by choosing the action *(material) processes* makes an impression that shunning a war is not what he is saying as bravery is in his lineage. The sentence "He saw the dead and dying across the fields of Europe; he heard the stories of fellow troops who first entered Auschwitz and Treblinka" displays a partial syntactic parallelism between its first two independent clauses separated by a semi colon (SPCA in the first clause and SPC-dependent clause). This partial syntactic parallelism provides the force necessary to prove the element of bravery in Obama's lineage, hence wins favours of the listeners at a difficult antiwar speech.

In transitivity systems the verbal elements "saw" and "heard" are *mental processes of perception* (Martin, Matthiessen & Painter, 1997). But Obama uses these verbs as *mental processes of affection* as the verbs " saw " and "heard" convey the feeling of suffering, not of sensory perceptions. The participants involved in the mental clause are *Senser* and *Phenomenon* (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Here *senser* (he) and *phenomenon* (the dead) converts the perception verb "saw" into affection verb, winning the sympathies of the audience for Obama. The circumstance of location is that part of clause which provides information about "when" and / or "where" a certain process took place (Martin et al. 1997). The dependent *material clause of event* (who first entered Auschwitz and Treblinka) serves here as a rank shifted clause, working as *circumstance of location (spatial)*. "Through rank shift it is possible for a unit to include among its constituents a unit of rank equal to or higher than itself" (Berry, 1977). So *material clause of event* (who first entered Auschwitz and Treblinka) serves the clause (he heard the stories of fellow troops who first entered Auschwitz and Treblinka) as one of its constituents, i.e. *circumstance of location (spatial)*. Since "Auschwitz" and "Treblinka" are the names of real places, i.e. Nazi concentration and extermination camps in German-occupied Southern Poland (Olive, 2008), the *circumstance of location (spatial)* in the transitivity system of this clause develops the credibility of speaker.

Paragraph 3

First sentence displays a marked syntactic structure. The *circumstance of location (temporal)* "after September 11th" is given the thematic force, which is followed by another *circumstance of location (temporal)*, "after witnessing the carnage and destruction, the dust and the tears". The *material process of action* "supported" and the *participants* "I", *actor,* and "this administration's pledge", *goal,* are deliberately introduced after a combination of two elements of *circumstance of location (temporal)* mentioned above. This syntactic choice of transitivity in this sentence structure makes the audience believe that the speaker is a true patriot who can never forget 9/11 and the destruction caused by it. So they let open the polite side of their selves for the antiwar views of Obama, next to come in this speech.

Paragraph 4 & 5

The transitivity choice of the first three sentences of paragraph four and first sentence of paragraph five displays an interesting construction:

What I am opposed to	is	a …
S	P	C

What-clause is serving here as a rank shifted subject. Such wh-clause at thematic position serving as subject of the clause is less common than a construction with introductory it (Leech, Svartvik, 2003).

Why Obama prefers a less common what-clause construction to a more commonly used clause with introductory it ? Instead of saying:

"It is a dumb war I am opposed to"

he says:

"What I'm opposed to is a dumb war"
"What I'm opposed to is a rash war"
"What I'm opposed to is the cynical …"
"What I'm opposed to is the attempt …"

The constructions with introductory "it" put the adjectives attached with the word "war" at the thematic position of the subject. Since Obama is speaking against a proposition which is supported by 65% of Americans (Olive, 2008), he employs the strategy to introduce his notion of present war by a postponed subject "a dumb war" / "a rash war" etc, reducing the risk of shocking the people. Moreover, his choice of passive construction "I am opposed to" in the deliberately chosen what-clause subject conveys the feeling that he has to oppose war not because it is he who as a man opposes wars, but because it is the real factors for the benefit of the nation which make him oppose the war with Iraq. Instead of saying:

"What I oppose is …"

he says:

"What I am opposed to …"

These transitivity choices of what-clause instead of introductory "it", postponed subjects at the rheme position, and use of passive construction of a *material process of action* is an example of Obama's art of linguistic spin, and persuasion.

Paragraph 8

See last lines of paragraph eight:

"Those are the battles that we willingly join. The battles against ignorance and tolerance. Corruption and greed. Poverty and despair".

The first sentence is a syntactically complete combination of two clauses: main clause and that-relative clause. That-relative clause is working as the "q" of head word "battles". Rest of the three sentences is without any process. They have been assigned the status of clauses by graphical marks, yet their function is to serve as the "q" part of the noun "battle". This unique transitive choice of omitting the processes of all the three sentences is to put more force at the quantifiers of the noun "battle". Obama consciously splits the head word "battle" from its quantifiers, "corruption and greed", "poverty and despair", and puts them into lime light by using them as full sentences. This distinctive use of quantifiers of a noun phrase as independent sentences highlights the negative aspects of the human civilization, more important to be addressed than the futile phenomenon of war.

2.2 Call to Renewal Keynote Address (June 28, 2006)

Paragraph 1:

After addressing the audience by "Good morning", Obama in the very first sentence reduces the distance between him and the audience and develops intimacy by using the *mental process of affection* (appreciate): "I appreciate the opportunity to speak here at the Call to Renewals Building a Covenant for a New America conference". He uses the nominative case of the first person pronoun "I" before this *affection process* as *Senser*, and the noun phrase "the opportunity to speak" after the process as *phenomenon* of the whole process. This nominative case of first person pronoun displays the affirmation and willingness that it is he only who is appreciating something. The *phenomenon* "the opportunity to speak" is something related to the audience which is appreciated. By using *mental clause of affection* here he is developing his rapport with the audience, but at the same way he is conveying the meaning that he is standing at a higher pedestal than that of the audience, as he is addressing to them. This transitivity choice of the *mental process of affection* by using verb "appreciate" is the example of the linguistic spin he mostly uses to persuade the public in his favour.

See the last sentence of the paragraph:

So I'd like to congratulate you all on the thoughtful presentations you've given so far about poverty and justice in America, and for putting fire under the feet of the political leadership here in Washington.

[Paragraph 1]

The transitivity analysis of this sentence reveals that the phrase "like to congratulate" has two verbal groups, "like" and "to congratulate". While "like" is a finite verb, "to congratulate" is the non-finite verb.

Martin et al. (1997) writes: "in a transitivity analysis, the second (non-finite) verbal group is the relevant one for process type". Thus "so I'd like to congratulate you all on the thoughtful presentations" is a *mental process of affection* (to congratulate). "You've given so far" is the relative clause in which the pronoun / subject "which" has been ellipted: the *circumstance of matter* (about poverty and justice) and *circumstance of location / spatial* (in America). The *material process of action* (putting) has the *Goal* (fire) and the *circumstance of location / spatial* (under the feet of the political leadership) and the *circumstance of location / spatial* (here) and additional *circumstance of location / spatial* (in Washington). The transitivity choices of a clause relate to the ideational function of language (Martin et al. 1997). The political discourse is loaded with ideational function. The transitivity choices of this sentence reveal Obama's sarcasm in the guise of his remarks of congratulations and appreciation. The use of the *mental process of affection (congratulation)* with a clear mention of *circumstance of matter* (about poverty and justice) and circumstance of location */ spatial* (in America) is in fact an element of sarcasm on the political speakers who spoke before him on the plight of poverty and justice in America. Obama's present speech is a shift from the official agenda of his party, i.e. Democrat Party. Democrats are mostly the non-believer, non-religious liberal Americans who are quite opposite to the religiously conservative Republicans. Since Obama might have made his mind by the time of the speech to run for the seat of 2008 US Presidency, he decided to speak on a topic which could draw his image of a religious man in the eyes of the Republican followers among American people.

For this purpose he chooses such a topic to speak on the link between religion and politics. As Short (1997) opines "we combine linguistic, contextual, and general world knowledge, as the basis for inferring and appropriate interpretation", so the contextual overall message of this speech conveys that the ideational function of this speech here is to ignore the topics like poverty and justice and to speak on the connection between religion and politics. So the transitivity choices made in this sentence reveal that he is not congratulating those Democrats who talked on the plight of poverty and justice in the United States, rather mocked them. The element of sarcasm further increases when he uses the *Goal* (fire) of the *material process of action* (putting) and the *spatial circumstance of location* (under the feet of the political leadership). As Short (1997) has described that the evaluation and the interpretation of deeper meanings are possible in the context of a text, the deeper level meanings of sarcasm and disapproval of the policies of the Democrats can be revealed when the meanings of the whole speech on the ideational level are analyzed. This becomes evident even in the first sentence of paragraph two, where he explicitly declares that he wants to talk about the connection, the religion and politics has between them, making his party members realize that they have been ignoring this connection for no reason.

Paragraph 21:

Each day, it seems, thousands of Americans are going about their daily rounds - dropping off the kids at school, driving to the office, flying to a business meeting, shopping at the mall, trying to stay on their diets - and they're coming to the realization that something is missing. They are deciding that their work, their possessions, their diversions, their sheer busyness, is not enough (Olive, 2008).
Obama gives thematic place to *circumstance of extent / temporal* (each day) in this paragraph. This *circumstance of extent* provides the information about frequency of an action. The thematic place given to this transitivity element makes the audience aware and suspicious about something to come after it. It prepares them for further details. Obama is a very careful speaker. He does not impart information in affirmative and declarative tone: the use of *mental process of cognition* (seems) relieves much of the burden of responsibility off him for what he is going to say next. The *material process of event* (are going) makes the *phenomenon* of going as a casual thing happening daily without break. The five non-finite clauses are the *material processes of action*, producing a mental imagery of those actions in the minds of listeners. The transitivity choice of these five processes which are *material / action* is significant: the action of the Americans have been converted into the mental pictures in the minds of the listeners, bringing in the real people and making them and their routine life present at the place of the audience. Such a way of transitivity choice of processes wins favours for the views and ideas of the speaker. The audience gets carried with the speaker by the power of his words.

Paragraph 51:

Almost same parallelism can be drawn between transitivity choices of paragraphs 21 and 51. Sentence opens with the *circumstance of location / spatial* (across the country). "Individual churches" is a metaphor for the human and religious agency. Obama introduces here three non-finite clauses, all are *material processes of action*:

"building senior centers, helping ex-offenders reclaim their lives, and rebuilding our gulf coast in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina"

These non-finite *material processes* are drawing the mental imagery of the real happenings in the minds of the listeners. This way of converting the *material / action processes* into the mental imagery through the skilled spinning art of language makes Obama persuade the public in his favour.

Paragraph 77:

The second last paragraph of this speech is significant for its emotional effect on the audience:

> And that night, before I went to bed I said a prayer of my own. It's a prayer I think I share with a lot of Americans. A hope that we can live with one another in a way that reconciles the beliefs of each with the good of all. It's a prayer worth praying, and a conversation worth having in this country in the months and years to come (Olive, 2008).

Obama introduces the paragraph with the conjunction "and" to produce continuity to his narrative he told the audience in the previous paragraphs. The *verbal process* (said) has been introduced here, for which "a prayer" is the *verbiage* of the process. The use of *verbal process* and the *verbiage* taken from the religious discourse is Obama's very conscious effort to bring the Republicans to his favour. This sentence goes quite in line with the ideational function of the whole speech: he wanted to make his conservative religious opponents his friends. Moreover, the use of such lexemes as, "share", "hope", "reconciles", "beliefs", "good of all" are the mediating expressions as he wants to reduce the friction between him and the conservative believers of religion, at which he became quite successful.

2.3 Remarks on Super Tuesday (February 5, 2008)

Paragraph 1:

Obama opens this Obama stump speech with a very short, two sentence paragraph. This paragraph is not the subject of this speech. Obama makes this explicitly clear by using the circumstance of location *(temporal)*, "Before I begin", at the thematic place of the very first sentence. Although "Before I begin" is a dependent clause having a *verbal* group (NP) "begin", it serves here as a rank shifted clause, becoming the adjunct / *circumstance of location (temporal)* of the independent clause, "I just want to send my condolences to the victims of the storm". The dependent / relative that-clause "that hit Tennessee and Arkansas" is an explanation of the word "storm". The transitivity analysis in IFG model takes the clauses like, "I just want to send my condolences to the victims of the storm" as one clause with a single process, but this process has complex verbal groups (Martin et al. 1997). "Want" and "to send" are two distinctive verbal groups (NPs), but in a functional grammar they refer to one process. In a transitivity analysis what is of importance for the labeling and analysis is the second verbal group, here "to send" non-finite verbal group. So, the whole process is taken as a single transitivity configuration: this independent clause is the *material process of action* as it conveys the action of sending the condolences of the speaker to the victims of the storm. Relative that-clause is conveying the additional meanings regarding the names of the real places where storm struck the victims.

Although, that-relative clause is dependent clause, here, quite like introductory dependent / rank shifted clause, "Before I begin", it is functioning as a rank shifted clause, serving only as an adjunct / *circumstance of location (spatial)*, answering the question "where". More to say, by telling us about the names of the real places (Tennessee and Arkansas), this rank shifted clause / *circumstance of location (spatial)* provides us exact information about the real place of the happening. This transitivity choice of using two rank shifted dependent clauses, both as *circumstance of location*, at the beginning and the end of the very first sentence of the speech is very interesting: Obama might have used the first rank shifted clause "Before I begin" as an adjunct only to use his very less common first person singular pronoun "I", and that at the thematic place of the first sentence of the speech. First person singular pronoun is mostly used by the speakers when the intention is to take the positive credit of something. So, Obama uses this pronoun two times in the very first sentence. He deliberately chooses "I" as the participant of a process which is *material (action)* in nature. This he does to win the favours of the listeners by conveying them that he is not apathetic in his behavior and not forgetful of the pains and sufferings of others. The last sentence of the first paragraph "They are in our thoughts and in our prayers", displays a parallel structure of the adjuncts / *circumstance of location (spatial)*. This *circumstance of location* refers not to some real place; it refers to some abstractions. The lexeme taken from religious register "prayer" can have the ability to arouse the feelings of listeners.

Moreover, the feeling of religious attachment gets strengthened by the music created by the structural parallelism of both the *circumstances of location* (both having pc structure). This sentence is the *relational clause of identifying*, since it displays the *relational process*, "are". The third person plural pronoun "they" refers to the *participants* of the *relational process* involved in the circumstance of location, who are definitely the victims of the storm. So the transitivity choice of the third person plural pronoun "they" with the *relational process* "are", and the *circumstance of location* (abstract locations of religious connotation), in a speech where Obama was about to thank his supporters for his presidency candidature, is an interesting and wise choice: the reference to a national calamity establishes that he is neither a selfish person nor the senseless apathetic one. Rather he is the person having pure concern and genuine emotions for his fellow Americans.

Paragraph 3:

Paragraph three is a six-clause, one-sentence expression of rhetoric. This is a unique expression containing one independent and one dependent clause:
"Only a few hundred miles away from here, almost one year ago to the day, we stood on the steps of the Old State Capitol to reaffirm a truth" (Independent Clause) "that a house divided cannot stand" (Dependent Clause). Obama makes the sentence construction interesting here as he inserts a relative that-clause (that was spoken there so many generations ago) between the independent and dependent clauses just mentioned. Rest of the three clauses are the examples of ellipted dependent clauses; each serving as a substitution to the dependent clause, "that a house divided can not stand". So the clauses:

"That we are more than a collection of Red States and Blue States"
"We are"
"And always will be, the United States of America"

are the ellipted clauses expanding the message conveyed by the persons who swore on the steps of Old State Capitol. Old State Capitol is Illinois' fifth statehouse. It was seat of Illinois state government and hub of the states' political life till 1876. The rhetorical expression starts with a couple of adjuncts.

The *circumstance of extent (spatial)* has been given the thematic place. This bears an important significance; Old State Capitol is a historic building, the seat of Illinois' political government, a monument of Abraham Lincoln. Obama uses the word "only" in the opening *circumstance of extent (spatial)*, despite the fact that the place he is talking about is some hundred miles away from the place he is addressing the people. Since he is well aware of the fact that people have high feeling of reverence for Old State Capitol, he somehow manages to bring in Old State Capitol in his talk to take it as a point of reference to support his rhetorical dependent relative that-clauses as well as the ellipted clauses. To substantiate the effect of his first *circumstance of extent*, he uses, immediately after it another circumstance, *circumstance of Location (temporal)* which refers to the time when the founders of America stood on the steps of the Old State Capitol and swore that they would not let the house be divided, that they would not let the Red States and the Blue States be apart, and that they will always remain the United States of America.

The first clause seems to serve as the verbal clause since to-infinitive verbal group "to reaffirm" works here as a *verbal process*. The subject / agent of this *verbal process* is "we" in the clause "we stood on the steps of the Old State Capitol to reaffirm a truth that was spoken there so many generations ago ----- that a house divided cannot stand". So "we" is the *sayer* of the *verbal process,* and "a truth" is the *verbiage / content* of this process. The dependent clause "that a house divided cannot stand" is the *material process of event*. First ellipted clause "that we are more than a collection of Red States and Blue States" is the *relational (attributive) process*: "we" is the *carrier* and "more than a collection of Red States and Blue States" is the *attribute*. Rest of two clauses are also *relational processes* pointing to the present time as well as to the future commitments. Obama uses this long complex sentence to produce rhetorical effect and to stir the emotions of the listeners, all by using wisely the thematic *circumstance of extent (spatial)* and the adjoining the *circumstance of location (temporal)* as well as the ellipted clauses at the end. These ellipted clauses serve as the variant part of the whole sentence, providing different options of commitment and promise.

The last lines of paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 9 repeat the *relational clause (attributive):*
"This time can be different"   [Paragraph 4, 5, 6]
"This time must be different"   [Paragraph 9]

This is an example of Free Verbal Repetition, PLOCE (Leech, 1989). This repetition of the *relational process* convinces the audience of the hope for a new era.

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This could be the birth of new opportunities for the whole nation.

Paragraph 5:

The independent clause "They reached the coast of South Carolina" takes "they" as its *participant*, which acts as the agent / subject of the *material process of event* "reached". The dependent clause "when people said that may be we don't have to be divided by race and region and gender" is the *verbal process /* clause in which another clause "that may be we don't have to be divided by race and region and gender" is a rank shifted clause which serves as the *verbiage* of the *verbal process* mentioned above. So this rank shifted clause does not work as a clause in this place. The *material process of event* refers in its *circumstance of location (spatial)* to a real place, South Carolina. This reference of a real, proper name / place makes the account of the speaker as reliable and credible. The clauses coming after semicolon seem dependent clauses. But here both that-clauses are also the rank shifted clauses serving as the *verbiage* of the *verbal process* "when people said". These clauses are the ellipted *verbiage* of the *verbal process* conveying that people might be thinking over the future of school going black children and white children. The last ellipted and rank shifted that-clause also serves as the *verbiage* of the *verbal* clause, conveying the message that people of America can provide every child, everywhere, same opportunities, if they come together and join one another.

Paragraph 7:

For a transitivity analysis, this paragraph is an interesting one as it displays some regularity of an explicit pattern: the *circumstance of cause (reason)* has been repeated as a regular pattern for six times. See:

"… because of me"
"… because of you"
"Because you are …"
"Because the lobbyists …"
"Or because politicians …"
"Or because they focus …"

This six-time repetition of the *circumstance of cause (reason)* produces rhythm and musicality in the whole paragraph. Since musicality has the alluring and soothing effect, it softens the emotions and pursues the audience the way speaker likes.

Paragraphs 12, 13, 14, 15:

The *relational process (identifying)* "It is a choice between …" in paragraphs 12, 13 and 14 is the example of the Verbal Parallelism. The initial part of the sentences (it is a choice between) is the invariant part, while the rest of them are the variant parts. It is the verbal parallelism of Anaphora. Anaphora is the initial repetition of the linguistic structures, having the formula (a …) (a …) (Leech, 1989). Here the repetitive unit is the *relational processes (identifying).* The variant part of the first two relational processes (in paragraph 12 & 13) are the non-finite clauses "going into this election with Republicans and Independents already united against us, are going against their nominee with a campaign that has united Americans of all parties around a common purpose", and "having a debate with the other party about who has the most experience in Washington, or having won about who's most likely to change Washington", respectively. The use of non-finite clauses is a wise strategy since it puts no responsibility on particularly who is going to make a choice between the Republicans / Independents and the speaker's party. Similarly, by using "ing" non-finite clauses responsibility on some individuals has been explicitly avoided. This is a very useful persuasive technique; as no one is pinpointed directly, so no fear of offending the audience. In paragraphs 14 and 15 the *relational processes (identifying)* are quite different. Here the variant part of the sentences is not the "ing" non-finite clauses, rather wh-relative clause (who's taken more money from Washington lobbyists than either Republican in this race) in paragraph 14 and *circumstance of location / temporal* (in this election) in paragraph 15. This different kind of the variant parts of these *relational processes of identification* gives variety of expression, and relaxation to the listeners, so as they could be prepared for next coming repetitive / parallel structures in the remaining part of the speech.

Paragraphs 18, 19, 20:

The first sentences of paragraphs 18 and 19 start with the independent clause "I'll be the President". This kind of verbal parallelism is called anaphora, where invariant part comes at the initial place of the sentence and the variant part follows it. It is the initial repetition of a linguistic structure (Leech, 1989).

Here this initially repetitive structure is the *relational process (identifying)*, where first person singular pronoun "I" is the *token* and the noun phrase "the President" is *Value*. In both the paragraphs the variant part of these *relational processes* are the wh-relative clauses elaborating and explaining further Obama's future policy regarding the affairs of the state, he being a future president of America. The parallelism between both the sentences goes further as both the wh-relative clauses use the *material (action) verb*; "ends" and "brings" respectively. But here the difference emerges: the sentence in paragraph 19 uses to-infinitive non-finite structure "to make", while sentence in paragraph 18 uses the prepositional phrase "to companies". Obama seems a skilled rhetorician. He seems to employ every rhetorical technique consciously, being well-aware of what he is doing. These two opening sentences of his two different paragraphs are an example that he tries to use as mush parallel / repetitive structures both verbally and syntactically as possible. Parallel / repetitive structure creates emotional softness, hence a persuasive device.

Paragraph twenty displays a very interesting transitivity choice at the level of *participants* of a process. The opening class is a dependent *relational clause of identifying*, where *participants* remain as the same as in the previous two *relational processes* described above: "I" being the *token* and "the President" as *Value* of the process. The noticeable transitivity choice is at the level of *participants* in the next clause, an independent *material clause of action* ("put" here means "do"), "we will put an end to the politics". The *participants* of this process are first person plural pronoun "we", and "a politics". This interesting shift from the first person singular pronoun "I" (in the previous clauses) to the second person plural pronoun "we" is indicative of Obama's sensibility as a politician. He does not detach the audience from him when he will be the president, rather conveys to them the message that it will be the common masses who will be given the place of supreme authority. It will be the people who will decide for themselves for their betterment. This inclusive "we" conveys sense of oneness and equality as well as unity among American masses and the political personnel.

Paragraphs 21:

The last sentence of this paragraph has two ellipted clauses; "work with us" and "help us prove". Here they have been used as dependent clauses by using conjunction "and" before them. Originally these are all independent clauses like "We need you to stand with us":

     "We need you to work with us"   [1]

(by omitting "and" before it, and joining with the previous clause).

     "We need you to help us prove that together, ordinary people can still do extraordinary things"

             [2]

(by omitting "and" before it, and joining with the independent clause).

"To stand", "to work" and "to help" are the *material processes of action*. Obama prefers using the ellipted clauses with the conjunction "and" instead of using [1] and [2]. "[Ellipsis] is normally used for reasons of economy and in spoken discourse can create a sense of informality" (Beard, 2000). Speaking informally to the masses in a political speech is the demand of rhetorical language of persuasion. It brings the audience closer to the speaker. Moreover, these three *material processes of action* pronounced in the ellipted structures provide economy of words and time, speeding up the pace of action through the use of three successive *action processes*. This provides a sense of urgency for doing something material, appealing the audience to get practically and physically moved.

Paragraphs 26:

All the independent clauses in this paragraph choose the inclusive "we" as the agent / subject of the clauses. This gives sense of we-ness and inclusiveness, a necessary feature in a rhetorical speech. The first sentence is interesting as the clause "we have been waiting for" works here as the appositive to the noun phrase "the ones". So this is a rank shifted clause at this place; a rank shifted clause working as an appositive. The question arises, why a clause has been rank shifted to be used like an appositive noun phrase? It seems that Obama wanted to convey through a verb a feeling that the American people had been keeping with themselves for a long time, and that feeling was that of troubling "wait" for the change. So using an appositive having the additional function of a verb in this context is a very skilled transitivity choice.

     The third sentence has wh-relative clause "who have little". Obama again uses the same technique of ellipting the next clauses. Instead of saying:

     "We are the hope of those boys who've been told that they cannot have what they dream".

     "We are the hope of those boys who've been told that they cannot be what they imagine".

Obama uses these wh-clauses as ellipted ones, conjoined by using two semicolons. This gives economy of expression and informality to his political discourse.

Paragraphs 27, 29, 31, 33:

Paragraphs 27, 29 and 31 are three-words, one-sentence paragraphs, displaying syntactically parallel structures:

"Yes they can"
"Yes he can"
"Yes she can"

These clauses are syntactically identical as they have the structures (interjection, second person pronoun, model verb) common to one another. The status given to these sentences as whole paragraphs puts much emphasis on the persuasive rhetoric of hope and bright future: a typical Obama stump discourse.

The structurally identical declarative clause marks the end of his speech: "Yes. We. Can". It is an interesting clause for the analysis. The use of a period after interjection "Yes", first person pronoun "we", and the model verb "can" is a graphological deviation which makes the last expression of the speech as foregrounded. Syntactically, a period at the end of an expression, and capital letter at the beginning is used to mark the boundary of a sentence. So, here these single lexemes seem as three independent sentences, but functionally this graphological deviation simply means to give much stress on each lexeme. This vocalization at the level of sound as the physical entity increases the impact of the message.
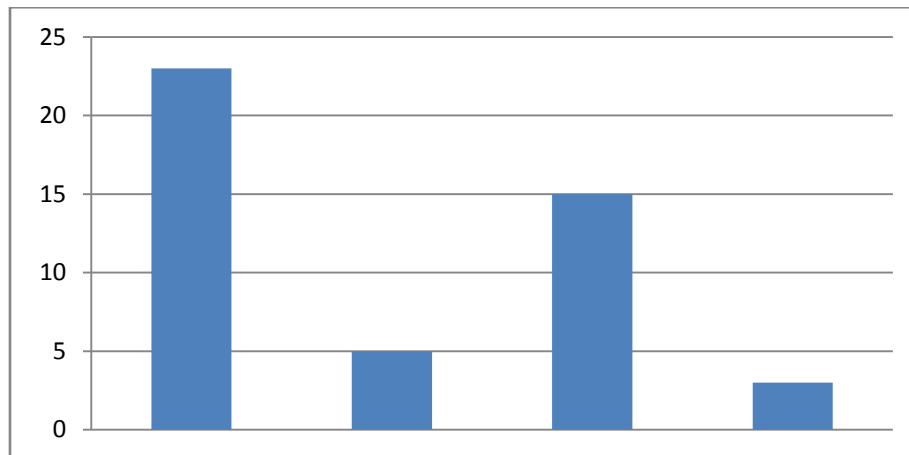
3. Conclusion:

The transitivity analysis of these three speeches reveals that Obama used *material process of action* more frequently than other process types. He used *material process of action* 20 times and *material process of event* 03 times in the analyzed paragraphs of these speeches, while he used *mental process of affection* 04 times and *relational process of identifying* 08 times, and *relational process of attribution* 07 times. Also, he used *verbal processes* 03 times. Regarding his use of types of circumstance in the analyzed paragraphs, it is noticed that he used *circumstance of location (spatial)* 10 times, *circumstance of location (temporal)* 06 times, *and circumstance of cause (reason)* 06 times. See the following tables:

Table 1: Process types and their approximate frequency of use in Obama's analyzed speeches

Process Type	Subcategory	Frequency
Material	Event	03
	Action	20
Mental	Cognition	01
	Affection	04
Relational	Attributive	07
	Identifying	08
Verbal		03

Graphological representation of the process types and their frequency is as under:
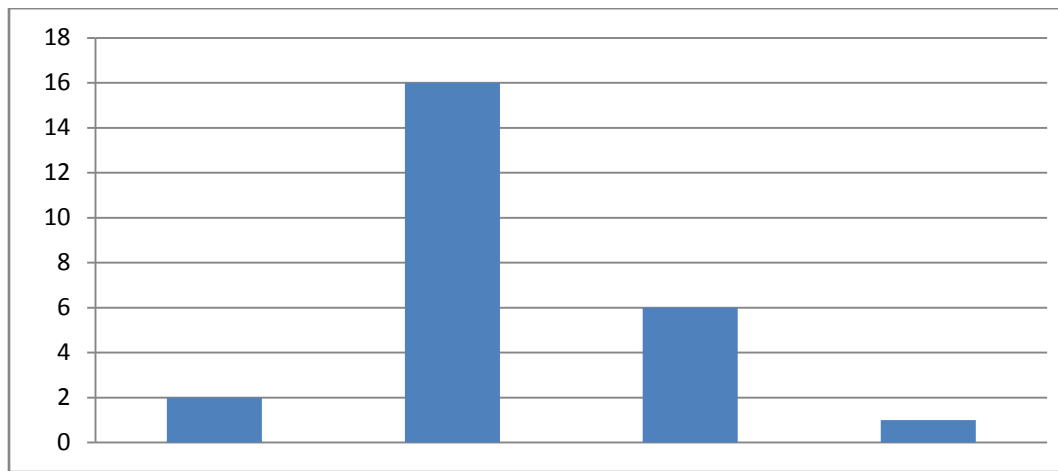

Processes: Material   Mental   Relational   Verbal

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Table 2: Types of Circumstance and their approximate frequency of use in Obama's analyzed speeches

Circumstance Type	Circumstance Subcategory	Frequency
Extent	Temporal	01
	Spatial	01
Location	Temporal	06
	Spatial	10
Cause	Reason	06
Matter		01

Graphological representation of the circumstance types and their frequency is as under:

Circumstances: Extent　　　　　Location　　　　　Cause　　　　　Matter

His frequent use of *material processes* might be as he wanted to motivate the people physically to gather around him. Through the use of his *material processes* he succeeded in arousing the people stand by his side in 2008 elections for American presidency. Moreover, he used *mental processes* to strike to the emotional side of the masses. Obama's use of *relational processes* is an effort to create a very positive image of his self in the minds of the masses. He is interested more in using *circumstance of location*, both *spatial* and *temporal* in the analyzed paragraphs of his speeches. He also used *circumstance of reason*. It seems that he wanted to make his account more objective by providing the information to the audience in *spatial* and *temporal* terms. Same can be said about his use of *circumstance of reason*.

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