This journal provides immediate open access to its content under the Creative Commons BY 4.0 license. Authors who publish with this journal retain all copyrights and agree to the terms of the above-mentioned CC BY 4.0 license

DOI: 10.2478/seeur-2022-0067

# A COMPARATIVE CORPUS-BASED STUDY ON THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF THE U.S. PRESIDENTS: OBAMA AND TRUMP

Enes Ismeti
Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication,
South East European University, Tetovo, North Macedonia
ei29702@seeu.edu.mk

Arta Toçi
Associate Professor, Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication,
South East European University, Tetovo, North Macedonia
a.toci@seeu.edu.mk

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to analyze the political discourse and the language they used in public addresses provided by two former presidents of the United States, specifically, President Barak Obama and President Donald Trump. This research reflects on the material that has been collected for several months which aimed to contribute on the analysis of the corpus, distinctions and similarities, as well as their attitudes towards the public opinion. The objectives of this study are mainly empirical and theoretical. Considering the empirical objectives, this study seeks to explore, identify and categorize the most used words in a political speech according to the categories, form, function and meaning, whereas, the theoretical objectives of this study are to provide a description of the language that is used in major events from well-known politicians when aiming to capture people's attention. Their rhetorical habits were examined, in every delivery of Mr. Obama's political speech; his speeches were carefully and well-articulated throughout his 8 year political service in the oval office, portraying him as

a kind person. On the other hand, Mr. Trump's, as a non-politician, more as a businessman, political speeches throughout his campaign and 4 years in the office were very often seen as aggressive, unforeseen, and nonetheless straight to the point.

This study covers the linguistic level analysis as well as semantic and pragmatic levels. Initially, the selected corpora were analyzed using the Ant Conc software regarding frequency of usage and then move into detailed analysis.

**Keywords**: discourse, politics, public speech, Trump, Obama.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most important concepts in contemporary sociolinguistic scholarship is speech style. More specifically, speech style has been studied as "attention devoted to speech," which indicates that the degree to which speakers pay attention to monitoring their speech is what determines how much style shifts along the informality axis occur. Considering the fact that US is part of NATO, Obama traveled to Greece and later to Germany, in every speech, always beginning his talks by addressing and greeting his audience in their native language, in this case, in Greek language.

> *As many of you know, this is my final trip overseas as President of the United States, and I was Determined, on my last trip, to come to Greece – partly because I've heard about the legendary hospitality of the Greek people – your filoxenia. (Applause.) Partly because I had to see the Acropolis and the Parthenon. But also because I came here with gratitude for all that Greece – 'This small, great world' – has given to humanity through the ages* - Theodoropoulou, I. (2020) Speech style as political capital: Barack Obama's Athens speech.

In the society that we live in, we are directly involved in the political system that governs the country. In spite of the fact that nowadays people have more freedom when it comes to choosing their representatives and people who will rule the country for the time of their mandate, the impact that politicians and politics in general have towards us remains at high levels. Previously, people gained power from winning wars or being economically stronger; whereas today, one of the most powerful 'weapons' for the politicians is through political speeches to build bridges between the political platform and the decision makers. For example, Trumps speeches were mostly targeted for working-class and white voters. He continuously pours gas on the fire, which aimed to highlight the disparities between them and everyone else

in order to win their support, going straight to the point. It also highlighted the perceived flaws of groups that white working-class voters believe are below them on the social and economic pecking order immigrants, Muslims, African Americans, and Latinos, as well as those perceived to be above them, coastal elites, and other cosmopolitans like political progressives, academics, and professionals with special expertise. Moreover, he went ahead and discussed and convinced that LGBT community need "protection" from immigrants overseas, especially, Muslims. His slogan 'Make America Great Again' coincides with the indirectly hate speech towards Muslims throughout his campaign. Therefore, being mindful towards the political language is the best armor in use. With that in mind, the general aim of this study is to analyze selected political speeches in order to investigate the language that is used by famous politicians and the message that is conveyed. Moreover, the analysis will then focus in exploring the similarities and differences between selected corpora as well as exploring in detail the main features of the language in use. In achieving this aim, this study will cover the linguistic level analysis as well as semantic and pragmatic levels. Initially, the selected corpora will be analyzed by using the Ant Conc (Anthony, 2019) software regarding frequency of usage and then move into detailed analysis. This study will include a literature review for the topic in discussion, the results section where the data will be presented figuratively through charts and tables, followed by a detailed discussion. Furthermore, by the end of the research, the conclusion for the generated data will be drawn based on the arguments.

This study is built upon corpus linguistic approach which includes the analysis of words and phrases in the contexts. There have been many definitions regarding what corpus includes the way it is built, what the factors that impact a corpus are. Diving back on the historical origins of corpus linguistics, Michael McCarthy and Anne O'Keeffe (2010) have made a good point by comparing today's linguistics corpus with the way that scholars of earlier times have added detailed explanations manually on every page of the bible in order for it to be understood. Likewise, the development of methods that were used for collecting corpora or as it was seen back then, analyzing words in their meaning via alphabetical order or via keyword in context did not start being used only lately or after the well-known rising period for corpus linguistic known as post-Chomskyan but it has been developing before that and, continuously have been perfectionated. That is the reason that nowadays, instead of analyzing manually, several online databases have been developed that aid the process of collecting and analyzing corpora. McEnery & Hardie (2012) point out that 'the process of corpus linguistic analysis is a little more complicated than it seems because it is based upon a set of procedures for the study of the language' (p.5).

For the purposes of this study which aims to analyze political speeches, based mainly on the word choice and other linguistic features, a considerable number of other similar works have been reviewed. In the presentation of the results from this research, the authors have chosen a method of comparing and contrasting. First of all, it is important to note that the issue of public speaking has been a matter of discussion for a long period of time. In terms of Obama's global perspective, Theodoropoulou (2020) states that "Obama utilizes his speech in Greece, more precisely, in Athens, to provide moral and consoling support to Greeks as well as indirect financial assistance through indirect promotion of Greece" (p.6).

Rhetoric, else known as the art of speaking, has been practiced even before the language studies were taking place. One of the main scholars that pointed out the importance of rhetoric and its usage was by no doubt, the greatest philosopher of all times, Aristotle, for whom 'the beauty of speaking and having an impact on the audience while you speak to them, meaning that you convey through that speech much more than words uttered from the speaker, conveying feelings and being impactful'(Dearnell, 2018, p.2) Usually, the latest is achieved when speakers use a more persuasive language towards the audience that they refer to. Therefore, rhetoric has been one of the most studied subjects of that time; however, today most studied topic is in relation with public speaking and its specific forms.

Moreover, in a study about the art of persuasion, Triadafilopoulos (1999) has reflected upon numerous works of early and contemporary scholars who spoke up about the politics and speech; according to her "it is still very convincing and applicable the way that Aristotle argued the fact that engaging the audience's emotions while one gives a speech, is the most important thing in public speaking (p.9). "Some people sound naturally more convincing than others", explains Carnes Lord (2013, p.1). Speaking of persuasive language on politics, Nelson & Garst (2005, p.3) have supported the idea that "the power of political speeches is heavily depended on shared values of the speaker and audience as well as their shared beliefs". Going back to Aristotle once again, what truly makes a speaker's speech persuasive or, influential is mainly related to the knowledge and reasonability of the topic. Likewise, Habermas (Allen, 2012) argues that "a good speech should be built upon reason and defended by argumentation" (p.2). Thus, as it has also been presented in this section of the study, the importance of speech in politics has been argued for years. Furthermore, the most important points to be considered when analyzing a political speech are intentions, emotions, word-choice, and sympathy between audience and the speaker.

**METHODOLOGY**

The aim of the study is to depict the differences and similarities of the linguistic corpus used by two former USA presidents, Barak Obama and Donald Trump. For the purposes of the study, there have been applied both, qualitative and quantitative methods. With the qualitative method has been analyzed and interpreted the linguistic corpus in the public addresses of two former presidents of the United States, Barak Obama and Donald Trump. With the quantitative method the results which aimed to explore, identify and categorize the most used words in political speeches founded on their form, function, and meaning have been interpreted.

**Research questions**

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Are there similarities between the public addresses delivered by two Presidents?
2. Are the linguistic units and lexical features ordinary for both the Presidents?
3. Did the Presidents' public speaking have any impact on their reputation?

**The research hypotheses**:

1. There are differences as well as similarities in the public addresses delivered by two Presidents.
2. The political corpus for both the Presidents is overloaded with pronouns which strengthen their speeches.
3. The Presidents' speeches had a large impact on public opinion and their reputation

**Methods and Instruments**

This study will be using a corpus-based approach in order to research the selected corpus. The main points that seek to be covered by this research are categorized as empirical data which would classify this research as quantitative. But also, the description of the language that will yield from semantic and pragmatic level analysis, will add the features of a qualitative research which according to Dawson (2007) aims to explore the beliefs and attitudes towards the topic of the research.

For the purpose of this study, the corpus has been chosen and selected after deep analysis for each speech individually. Having in mind that political speeches are used on daily basis by politicians around the world, this study will be limited to a smaller size which includes selected speech transcripts of the two American presidents that have ruled during the last decade, Barack Obama (2009; 2013; 2008; Obama, 2012) (2017) and Donald Trump (2016; 2017; 2021). The reason that these two presidents have been chosen, yields from the impact that both of them have had in the society and in the world.

In order to construct a corpus for analysis, the selected speech transcripts have been collected from official websites and converted to the required format to be used in the software. The

transcripts have been analyzed each of them individually and revised from a technical point of view which means that any name that points out the speaker, laughs or background speech transcriptions have been omitted from the text. As mentioned earlier, this corpus is based upon selected speeches and therefore it has been limited to significant event speeches like that of the victory announcements, inauguration and farewell speeches from the presidents. Additionally, due to the fact that Obama has been a president for two mandates, consequently the corpus consisting of his language is slightly larger in comparison to that of Donald Trump, therefore the results of the study may differ according to that percentage which will also be stated for every report for the sake of transparency and reliability.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Using the methods that have been mentioned earlier, the most impactful speeches of the two best-known politicians have been analyzed thoroughly in order to answer the research questions. Having in mind that the research takes place from a linguistic point of view, the results will be shown in the most detailed form using tables of comparison. Initially, this section will include tables that show results for each speech individually and their most common features. In addition to that, after the general and specific analysis of the data; specific tables will be used to show the similarities and the differences between different speeches of the same person as well as between the two presidents. This corpus has been carefully analyzed in order to generate the results that will be shown below and shall be discussed in the next chapter.

| | Victory speech 1st elections | Inauguration speech 1st elections | Victory speech 2nd elections | Inauguration speech 2nd elections | 1st speech as a President of USA | Total number of vocabulary items used |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barack Obama | 1943 | 2402 | 2099 | 2110 | 4266 | 12820 |
| Donald Trump | 1616 | 1464 | ----- | ----- | 1279 | 4359 |
| Difference | -327 | -938 | | | 2987 | 8461 |

*Table 1. Introducing the corpus of the study*

Starting with the table above, the corpus has been translated into numerical data in order to understand the general differences easier. As it is seen and have been mentioned above, there are two speeches from the former President Obama, for the reason that he has been elected

twice from the American people. By incorporating these speeches into the study, the main focus is to see the difference between his own speeches in the time period of 8 years. More specifically, how his language has been alternated due to his political experience in the beginning and by the end of his political career in the position of the president. On the other hand, the differences and similarities between Trump and Obama will be drawn carefully using their speeches of the same momentum i.e., the first victory speech, the first inauguration speech and the last speech. By using this comparison, there is no tendency for one person to surpass the other in any form that will lead to biased results for the present study.

Furthermore, with the help of the AntConc software, a list consisting of the top ten words that have been used the most in each speech individually, has been generated. This data will be used to deepen the analysis of this corpus in attempt to answer the research questions posed at the beginning. Based on the results generated through the software, the most overt linguistic features will be explored for each speech individually as well as in comparison to one another. These linguistic features include the frequency of usage, word choice and how these two have an impact on the overall meaning of the speech.

| **First Victory Speech** | **Freq.** | **Second Victory Speech** | **Freq.** | **First Inauguration Speech** | **Freq.** | **Second Inauguration Speech** | **Freq.** | **Final Speech** | **Freq.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. the | 95 | 1. the | 111 | 1. the | 136 | 1. the | 104 | 1. the | 196 |
| 2. and | 93 | 2. and | 68 | 2. and | 111 | 2. and | 89 | 2. and | 161 |
| 3. of | 54 | 3. to | 66 | 3. of | 82 | 3. our | 76 | 3. of | 144 |
| 4. to | 53 | 4. what | 64 | 4. to | 71 | 4. of | 69 | 4. to | 122 |
| 5. we | 47 | 5. we | 51 | 5. our | 67 | 5. we | 68 | 5. our | 105 |
| 6. that | 41 | 6. a | 49 | 6. we | 62 | 6. to | 66 | 6. that | 88 |
| 7. a | 38 | 7. of | 49 | 7. that | 50 | 7. that | 57 | 7. we | 84 |
| 8. in | 32 | 8. you | 42 | 8. a | 46 | 8. a | 37 | 8. a | 75 |
| 9. this | 30 | 9. in | 38 | 9. is | 36 | 9. for | 28 | 9. in | 68 |
| 10. our | 28 | 10. -s (inflection) | 35 | 10. in | 26 | 10. is | 25 | 10. you | 63 |

*Table 2. The list of top 10 words used by Obama on his speeches*

| **First Victory Speech** | **Freq.** | **First Inauguration Speech** | **Freq.** | **Final Speech** | **Freq.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. and | 76 | 1. and | 76 | 1. we | 57 |
| 2. to | 54 | 2. the | 73 | 2. the | 48 |
| 3. I | 51 | 3. we | 51 | 3. and | 46 |
| 4. you | 39 | 4. our | 49 | 4. you | 35 |
| 5. the | 37 | 5. of | 48 | 5. a | 34 |
| 6. we | 37 | 6. will | 43 | 6. to | 33 |
| 7. is | 33 | 7. to | 37 | 7. I | 28 |
| 8. a | 31 | 8. America | 20 | 8. that | 27 |
| 9. of | 29 | 9. is | 20 | 9. have | 26 |
| 10. will | 28 | 10. a | 15 | 10. it | 25 |

*Table 3. The list of top 10 words used by Trump on his speeches*

Another table will be used in order to show how all these words and their frequency fit into one ranking list if, as mentioned earlier in the study, the similar situation speeches are considered as a whole i.e., the first speeches of two former presidents and their last speeches have been combined as a single corpus and then the software aided the process of generating the data based on frequency. The top 15 words that have been used the most are listed in table 4 below.

| **Rank** | **Frequency** | **Word** |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 585 | The |
| 2 | 562 | And |
| 3 | 382 | Of |
| 4 | 370 | To |
| 5 | 338 | We |
| 6 | 287 | Our |
| 7 | 241 | That |
| 8 | 239 | A |
| 9 | 184 | You |
| 10 | 167 | in |
| 11 | 157 | I |
| 12 | 146 | Is |
| 13 | 140 | It |
| 14 | 138 | For |
| 15 | 130 | Will |

*Table 4. The general frequency of words used in speeches as one corpus*

In addition to the frequency of usage, these top used words have been analyzed further in terms of category, form, and function and meaning. After reading the speeches and analyzing the impact of the most used words, some of them appear to be very impactful on the message that is shared. Below, on table 5, the most used expressions or collocations of these top words

will be presented separately for each president and then a brief description of the similarities and differences will be added on the following chapter of discussion of the results.

It has been brought to attention that the most used pronoun by both presidents is the first person plural pronoun "we"; to specify, the former president Trump has been over-using this pronoun that it ranks from top five on his first speech, it becomes the number one most used word at his last speech as a president despite the differences in the length of these two speeches of his. Similarly, this pronoun has been frequently used on President Obama's speeches, however not as much as the other one, and obviously the meaning of the word itself is very different when compared in both speeches.

Another word that has been helpful on analyzing the general meaning and the impact of word choice on political speech is the frequent usage of prepositions such as "to" and "of". Again, using the features of the software, the analysis of the corpus has been focused on the collocations of these two words. The results of this specific search have been helpful on analyzing tense and the tone that has been used.

It appears that, from the first public speech as a winner to the last speech as a president of the United States, the top ten most used words on the political speech has not been altered a lot when we consider president Obama, and, it has been slightly changed when considering President Trump. The changes are mainly about frequency of usage / ranking and little about new words that have been added to the top ten.

| WORD | Frequency | WORD | Frequency | WORD | Frequency | WORD | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| we | 145 | to | 124 | of | 102 | it | 56 |
| We + will | 43 | To + verb | 90 | Of + DP | 102 | It + is | 11 |
| We + have | 15 | To + NP | 34 | | | It's | 9 |
| We + have + to do | 3 | | | | | Its | 4 |
| | | | | | | It | 32 |

*Table 5. The use of collocations by Donald Trump*

The tables that will be shown below, aim to present the findings from both presidents' language in use during that time. The main emphasis has been put on the usage of nouns, adjectives and verbs as the main categories. Therefore, below the tables have been divided in three different sections that show the top five words of each category used by each president

individually. According to these results shown here, in the following chapter a more detailed discussion will follow.

| WORD | Frequency | | WORD | Frequency | | WORD | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| that | 62 | | great | 40 | | will | 77 |
| it | 56 | | American | 14 | | is | 62 |
| people | 45 | | right | 11 | | have | 50 |
| thing | 39 | | hard | 10 | | thank | 40 |
| they | 39 | | incredible | 10 | | be | 35 |

*Table 6. Most frequently used words by category in Donald Trump's speeches*

| WORD | Frequency | | WORD | Frequency | | WORD | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| You | 142 | | New | 40 | | Is | 122 |
| It | 117 | | American | 24 | | Are | 86 |
| This | 109 | | Long | 23 | | Will | 82 |
| Us | 94 | | Common | 16 | | Have | 76 |
| Who | 86 | | Hard | 16 | | Be | 69 |

*Table 7. Most frequently used words by category in Barack Obama's speeches*

## DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

In this chapter, the discussion will be focused mainly on the subjective interpretation of the findings that have been presented on the previous chapter through multiple illustrations. Despite the general analysis of the data, here will be added a more in-depth analysis of each speech individually and, the questions that have been raised will be answered and supported with facts. As per research questions of this study; special attention has been given to the word-choice and its effect on the meaning of a speech.

Generally speaking, the corpus of this study consisting of **12,970 words** in total, shows that political speeches can be very complicated at times. The main reason that stands behind the complication of speech are by no doubt words that have been chosen. In this case, two personalities who seem to be very different to one another despite the fact that they share the same title, have also impacted the results of this study. Therefore, for the sake of clarification and honesty, this discussion will be divided in two sections covering the details of each speaker and the details of their speeches individually.

It is worth mentioning that it has been testified that, a person does affect the speech he/she is giving due to personal background. For instance, the language that has been used by both presidents when they address someone, is very different. While Obama sees everyone with kindness, respect and generosity; his speech towards the people, his family or his colleagues displays a lot of appreciation which made him get 51.3% of the voting's (69,498,516 votes) at his first election. While he finished the mandate, he congratulated Trump for winning the elections against Hilary Clinton and wished him luck. On the other hand, the language that is used by the former president Trump, while addressing his family, friends, colleagues and employees; the tone of his speech itself gives no reputation to the people behind his back and shows lack of respect, even went abroad calling out Clinton for fraud and asked her to be in jail. Back in 2016, Mr. Trump won the elections against his rival Mrs. Clinton with 306 to 232 Electoral College votes. However, during his time in the office, one of the reasons why he lost to his rival Joe Biden is that he was aggressive, out of context, and used vulgar context toward someone who broke Obama's record for most votes ever received (81,283,098 votes or 51.3%) for presidential candidate in the United States. Comparing his winning year by 306 in Electoral College votes, Trump received only 232 Electoral College votes in 2020. His speech after Joe Biden won the elections, resulted on the attack of the United Stated Capitol:

> *"We fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore,"* he said. - (wrote NPR)

To add to these findings, as it has been shown in the table 7 and 8 above; there have been identified the top five words used by the speakers according to the categories. Therefore, the word choice illustrates the tone of the speech and most significantly, it represents the nature of the speaker to some extent. That because when compared to one another, we realize that President Trump is mainly focused on himself and the small circle around him. Moreover, he uses the indefinite pronouns or neutral words such as the word "thing", when he wants to refer to very important issues of the time of speech. A few examples of the way that the word is used in his speeches are: (text can be found here: https://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/09/politics/donald-trump-victory-speech/index.html)

> *"It is going to be a beautiful thing."* – referring to the previously used word: *country*
> *"It's a horrible thing that was put onto the world"* – referring to *coronavirus*
> *"We are going to dream of things for our country"* – reference not defined

In addition to this, a few examples of the use of the indefinite pronoun "it" will also show the lack of transparency and importance given to the work he does. There must be no such process that is not worth mentioning its' real name when we talk about the country we are ruling.

*"We've left it all in the field"* – referring to *hard work done by his team as a president*
*"We put it in a position like it's never been before"* – referring to the *administration of the country*
*"This political stuff is nasty, and it is tough"* – referring to *responsibilities of being a president*

In terms of the verbs, we see that the most used tense is that of future with the auxiliary verb "will" which then changes to the past tenses with the auxiliary verb "have/has". This speaks for itself as it sets a more selfish tone on his speeches.

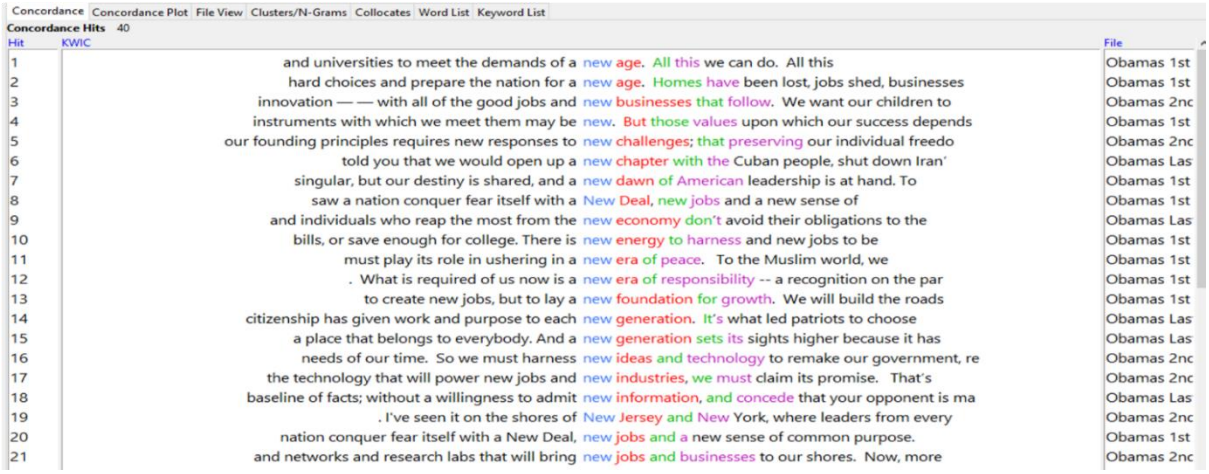
The most used adjective in all his speeches is the adjective "great", that being said, it represents the motto of the campaign that brought him the victory. Trump has been relying on the ideal of "making America great again", therefore he described every process and every work that he either promised or had done, as of great importance in comparison to the previous administration. On the other hand, when we review the speeches of Barack Obama, his top five when analyzed in context, show that the main idea behind each of his speeches that have been analyzed for this research, is being close to the audience and making them realize how important their vote and their presence is. Therefore, the most used noun other than the first top ten is the pronoun "you." In order to illustrate that his use of the pronoun represents respect and appreciation, there are few examples from his speeches:

*"But I will always be honest with **you** about the challenges we face. I will listen to **you**, especially when we disagree. And, above all, I will ask **you** join in the work of remaking this nation the only way it's been done in America for 221 years — block by block, brick by brick, callused hand by callused hand."*

*"That's what **you** did. **You** were the change. **You** answered people's hopes, and because of **you**, by almost every measure, America is a better, stronger place than it was when we started."*

*"I know **you** didn't do this just to win an election, and I know **you** didn't do it for me. **You** did it because **you** understand the enormity of the task that lies ahead."*

As for the descriptive language that is used by Obama, the most used adjective on the selected corpus was "new". The picture below, shows the combinations in which the adjective was used by him.



Concordance | Concordance Plot | File View | Clusters/N-Grams | Collocates | Word List | Keyword List

**Concordance Hits** 40

| Hit | KWIC | File |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | and universities to meet the demands of a **new age**. All this we can do. All this | Obamas 1st |
| 2 | hard choices and prepare the nation for a **new age**. Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses | Obamas 1st |
| 3 | innovation — — with all of the good jobs and **new businesses that follow**. We want our children to | Obamas 2nc |
| 4 | instruments with which we meet them may be **new**. But those values upon which our success depends | Obamas 1st |
| 5 | our founding principles requires new responses to **new challenges**; that preserving our individual freedo | Obamas 2nc |
| 6 | told you that we would open up a **new chapter with the** Cuban people, shut down Iran' | Obamas Las |
| 7 | singular, but our destiny is shared, and a **new dawn of American** leadership is at hand. To | Obamas 1st |
| 8 | saw a nation conquer fear itself with a **New Deal, new jobs** and a new sense of | Obamas 1st |
| 9 | and individuals who reap the most from the **new economy don't** avoid their obligations to the | Obamas Las |
| 10 | bills, or save enough for college. There is **new energy to harness** and new jobs to be | Obamas 1st |
| 11 | must play its role in ushering in a **new era of peace**. To the Muslim world, we | Obamas 1st |
| 12 | . What is required of us now is a **new era of responsibility** -- a recognition on the par | Obamas 1st |
| 13 | to create new jobs, but to lay a **new foundation for growth**. We will build the roads | Obamas 1st |
| 14 | citizenship has given work and purpose to each **new generation**. It's what led patriots to choose | Obamas Las |
| 15 | a place that belongs to everybody. And a **new generation sets its** sights higher because it has | Obamas Las |
| 16 | needs of our time. So we must harness **new ideas and technology** to remake our government, re | Obamas 2nc |
| 17 | the technology that will power new jobs and **new industries, we must** claim its promise. That's | Obamas 2nc |
| 18 | baseline of facts; without a willingness to admit **new information, and concede** that your opponent is ma | Obamas Las |
| 19 | . I've seen it on the shores of **New Jersey and New** York, where leaders from every | Obamas 2nc |
| 20 | nation conquer fear itself with a New Deal, **new jobs and a** new sense of common purpose. | Obamas 1st |
| 21 | and networks and research labs that will bring **new jobs and businesses** to our shores. Now, more | Obamas 2nc |

*Figure 1. Results taken from AntConc Software regarding the use of adjective "new" in Obama's speeches throughout his mandates*

**Analysis of Barack Obama's speech**

Considering the speaker and his influence on the world, the initial assumption of him being more careful on public speaking has been proved with this study as well. In a general note, Obama's speeches are very well-constructed, they incorporate adequate grammar and level of professionalism as well as formality. The tone that portrays his speeches is friendly, caring and full of appreciation. In times when the former president, Obama wanted to criticize something that has been previously done in a bad way; he would use a calm tone and a specific word choice that sounds nothing like hate but more like a lesson to be learnt.

For what it is worth, the length of his speeches is much more in comparison to Trump in this case. Obama had very long speeches characterized with fluency, little repetition, righteous word choice of a higher level that really gives the audience the feeling of a powerful person speaking in front of them. Other than that, it is important to note that the sentence structure used on Obama's speech is a more complex one, hence it makes the message sound more powerful and thoughtful. Considering the power of speech, it has been proved that Obama's speeches tend to be more powerful because they are very descriptive and detail oriented. The most overt features of this kind are the large number of adjectives in use, synonyms, antonyms, metaphors, more complex verb phrases and the continuous use of determiners that put emphasis on each and every detail that has been mentioned by him.

Also, when going through his speeches as he has been elected twice a president of USA; there is no much difference in the word choice, length of his speech, tone and form. The list of the top ten words remains the same with minor changes on the frequency of specific words.

**Analysis of Donald Trump's speech**

On the other hand, while going through the speeches of Donald Trump, however subjective it may sound; his speeches do not sound very professional in response to his former title and responsibility. The reason for this nuance on his speeches is lack of adequate vocabulary, explanations and the fact that his speeches are very short. In terms of sentence structure, Trump's sentences are more simple sentences of the structure Subject + Predicate + Object (SPO) and rarely do we encounter embedded clauses or sentences of a more complex structure. In addition to that, if we compare the speaking processes as well, the differences are huge; especially on the tone of the message that reflects completely the way the speaker sees the audience.

Trump is known for his short speeches and lack of professionalism because of a poor choice of words which then makes the speech sound like a common conversation rather than a political speech. Trump also uses a lot of interjections and repetition while speaking which affects the recipients of the message. What needs to be considered specifically regarding the vocabulary is the way that some words like "people, nation, it, we, thing" seem to be very formal due to the high frequency of usage on the selected corpus. However, the same words, when analyzed in a deeper context turn out to be very informal and wrong by all means. These words sound like an indirect judgment and separation of society while talking for equality and peace. Instead of using "it" or "thing", it would have been better to specify the subject of the sentence. Another feature that caught the attention was the hate speech that was used from former president Trump towards previous and future politicians, other countries and religions by prioritizing his own beliefs and thoughts.

This word choice and sentence structure, makes him seem a more self-centered person and less appreciative in comparison to President Obama. In comparison to his own speeches, seems that Trump also has a strong top ten words that he has used while speaking to the audience in the role of the president of United States of America. However, as it has been shown above in table 3, the top ten of most used words by Trump include the pronoun "we" and the modal verb "will" as the most impactful words on his message. It is worth mentioning that Trump has been using first-person plural and modal verb "We will" way too much that, from top ten these words have been ranked on his top five most used expressions. This is a reflection on his personality and how he always wanted to share information that were important only to him.

Word-choice on Donald Trump's speech is not so rich in comparison to Obama; the sentences are very simple, consequently less descriptive and appreciative. The fact that he uses

a lot of repetition on his speech, decreases the power of words, sincerity and honesty. Hence, Trump's public speaking skills are seen less attractive, rather more selfish.

## CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, this study has investigated the language used by the best-known politicians on certain times during their common career. The corpus has been collected individually and consists of specific public speaking transcripts of both former presidents such as, the first speech when the victory has been announced, the first inauguration speech and the farewell speech. The initial aim of the study was to depict the differences and similarities of the language used in this corpus; therefore, the analysis has been mostly focused on this issue. As it is shown in the results section, the political language has a lot in common in terms of top words that are used by politicians to emphasize their speech; yet there were many differences on terms of how these words have been used in context and their structure. Due to these differences, the meaning of these speeches has been altered and has shown different impact on the audience. Other than word choice, the length of the speech seems to be very impactful as well.

On a general note, the most overt linguistic features that have been noticed in this study are the use of future tense, first-person plural and action verbs. In addition to that, what seems to have a huge impact on the general meaning of the speech is the right vocabulary – using more synonyms and other descriptive words as needed, avoiding repetition and egocentricity. All these features make up the tone of the speech that according to this study, one of the presidents, Obama, conveys a more realistic and grateful nuance on his speech whereas Trump, shows less altruistic features on his speech. Due to the limitations of this study, other studies that use a larger corpus and more detail-oriented analysis are considered an important addition to the field.

**REFERENCES**


1. Allen, A. (2012, December). The Public Sphere: Ideology and/or Ideal? *Political Theory, 40*(6). Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/41703105
2. Anthony, L. (2019). *AntConc Computer Software*, 3.5.8. Retrieved from https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software
3. Darnell, A. (2017). A Philosophy of Music Education according to Kant. *Journal of Aesthetic Education 51* (2), 33-39
4. Dawson, C. (2007). *A Practical Guide to Research Methods: A user-friendly manual for mastering research techniques and projects* (Third ed.). How To Content.
5. McCarthy, M., & O'Keeffe, A. (2010). Historical perspective: What are corpora and how have they evolved? In A. O'Keeffe, & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *TheRoutledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics* (1 ed., pp. 3-13). Routledge.
6. Theodoropoulou, I. (2020). Speech style as political capital: Barack Obama's Athens speech, Journal of Multicultural Discourses, 15:3, 325-339, DOI: 10.1080/17447143.2020.1800715
7. McEnery, T., &Hardie, A. (2012). *Corpus Linguistics: Method, Theory and Practice.* New York: Cambridge University Press.
8. Nelson, T., &Garst, J. (2005, August). Values-based Political Messages and Persuassion: Relationships among Speaker, Recipient and Evoked Values. *Political Psychology, 26*(4), 489-515. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3792572
9. Obama, B. (2009). President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address. (M. Phillips, Ed.) Retrieved from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inauguraladdress
10. Obama, B. (2012). Audio And Transcript: Obama's Victory Speech. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/2012/11/06/164540079/transcript-president-obamas-victory-speech
11. Obama, B. (2013). Inaugural Address by President Barack Obama. Retrieved from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/21/inaugural-addresspresident-barack-obama
12. Triadafilopoulos, T. (1999). Politics, Speech, and the Art of Persuasion: Toward an Aristotelian Conception of the Public Sphere. *The Journal of Politics, 61*(3), 741-757. doi:https://doi.org/10.2307/2647826
13. Trump, D. (2016, October 9). Donald Trump's entire election victory speech. CNN Politics. Retrieved from https://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/09/politics/donald-trump-victory-speech/index.html
14. Trump, D. (2017, January 20). Donald Trump inauguration speech transcript. Washington D.C.: Politico. Retrieved from https://www.politico.com/story/2017/01/full-text-donald-trump-inaugurationspeech-transcript-233907
15. Trump, D. (2021, January 20). Donald Trump's final speech as president: Full transcript. Maryland: Al Jazeera. Retrieved from https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/20/trumps-final-speech-aspresident-full-transcript