

## **Representation of the Syrian Crisis in the American Political Speeches: A Critical Discourse Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper deals with Critical Discourse Analysis of the Syrian crisis in the American political speeches and its representation in these speeches. It tackles the role of political speeches in reflecting ideological manipulation at different levels such as political, social, and so on. It derives its results from a discourse analytic study of three American speeches delivered by Barak Obama, J. Kerry and Hillary Clinton. It has been found out that The American politician's speeches have not been neutral; rather, they have been manipulatively employed to express negative ideology towards the political crisis in Syria. Besides, different strategies have been used to show negative other-representation and positive self-representation. The most important linguistic and discourse strategies utilized in these speeches are: negative lexicalization, polarization, argumentative move, compassion and implication.*

**Key Words:** ideology, critical discourse analysis, Syrian crisis, political speeches.

### **1. Rationale**

The current paper rests itself upon a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to shed light on how the American politicians convene to negatively represent the Syrian crisis. It aims to investigate the various linguistic and rhetorical strategies that are manipulated by those politicians to alleged claims about the disseminating and diffusing the Syrian crisis. Furthermore, the paper addresses itself to such an analysis of and how the speeches are critically represented. It highlights the role of these speeches in reflecting the partial ideological manipulation at different such levels as political, social and so on.

This study is driven by the blueprints of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in its attempts to dismantle the fittings of three American speeches delivered by Barak Obama, J. Kerry, and Hillary Clinton. It has been found out that these speeches haven't been neutral; rather, they have been adroitly manipulated to fondue negative ideology towards the political crisis in Syria. On the one hand, these speeches have tailored different strategies to the requirements of the negative other- representation and positive self-representation. On the other hand, the apparition of negative lexicalization, polarization, argumentative move, compassion and implication are the most sober linguistic and discourse strategies skillfully planned and utilized in these speeches. Specifically, it tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the surrounding local (minor) and major ideologies and themes which construct the American political representation of the Syrian crisis?
2. What are the linguistic markers of this representation?
3. Is this representation manipulative and ideological or neutral?

## 2. CDA

CDA does not see linguistics as a theoretical abstract knowledge outside the domain of life; rather it envisions linguistics as an evaluator of the social change and its impact on the lives of individuals and groups. CDA has emerged over the last four decades as an interesting and promising school within discourse analysis. Fowler (1991:66) points out that the major purposes of critical discourse analysts is to expose manipulation and deception that exist 'below the threshold of notice' in text and not immediately identifiable to average readers, thus raising them in a new critical realization, particularly, to the modern and elusive form of racism and other topics. CDA motivates many scholars and researchers since the 1980s suggestively to the works of the British sociolinguist Fairclough (1995:134-135), who asserts that CDA aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

In the same baseline, Wodak (1995: 204) formulates the definition and the aims of the concept in a similar way. She argues that CDA can be defined as "fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as manifested in language". In another research, Wodak (2001:2) illustrates that CDA attempts "to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, and legitimized, and so on by language use (or in discourse)". Nonetheless, CDA analysts state that discourse is socially constructed as well as "socially conditioned. Furthermore, discourse is seen as an opaque power object" (Blommaert, 2001:14). CDA thus overtly takes a strong vow to change and stand against domination and inequality (ibid: 15).

It is obvious that most scholars agree that CDA is a field that is concerned with studying and analyzing written and spoken texts as a social practice to decode and encode the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and racism. It examines how these discursive sources are sustained and reproduced within specific social, political, economic, and historical contexts. For the same reason, Van Dijk (2001:352) defines CDA very clearly: as "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context".

Although people have their own shared ideas and attitudes which can be somehow firm and deep-rooted, yet elite discourse has a special influence on modifying or enhancing such attitudes through the process of language abuse. Bayram (2010: 24) asserts this fact by affirming that "language is closely bound up with our social and cognitive development from childhood, and our identity formation". Similarly, Fairclough (2006) states that language can represent and misrepresent the world around us. Thus it can also "rhetorically obfuscate realities, and construe them ideologically to serve unjust power relations" (Fairclough, 2006: 1).

Van Dijk (1984: 4-5; 1993) asserts that the influence of media and political discourse is rather complicated, but it should be assumed that the effect is complex when topics "(a) are found relevant and salient, and (b) about which people do not have direct information from other sources." On the other hand, he (1984) thinks that racist topics are mentioned without any critical comment in the press.

In sum, the aim of CDA is to discover the interrelation of discourse structures and ideological structures. In other words, how ideology constructs the discourse, and how discourse formulates one's ideology, where ideology is a set of mental beliefs shared by certain group or institution about a given phenomenon or any social concept. It, then, represents the socially identified or mutual opinions. It is generally concerned with the biased mental models that are reflected in the strategic use of language such as lexical choices at the semantic level or the denial of good aspects in others at the argumentative level (see Van Dijk, 1995a; 1998). It is "an interlocking set of ideas and doctrines that form the distinctive perspective of a social group. Through such ideas and doctrines, ideology represents ... individuals' relationship to the real conditions of their existence" ( Waitzkin, 1989: 2; cf. Fasold and Connor-Linton, 2006). Ideologies are the basic beliefs which constitute " the social representations of a group. They are represented in social memory as some kind of 'group's chema' that defines the identity of a group" (VanDijk, 2000a: 65).

According to Van Dijk (1995b: 139-140), ideology is characterized by the following features:

1. Ideologies need not be "false" all the time.
2. Ideologies are not related to dominant powers under conflict only, but also to other groups such as journalists, institutions and so on.
3. Ideologies should not be detailed or complex structures such as 'capitalism' or 'socialism'. Thus, they may have simple principles.

Ideological discourse analysis deals with the use and abuse of language. This (ab)use requires a multi or interdisciplinary approach which involves a variety of factors and dimensions such as social, cognitive and political ones (Van Dijk, 2006b). Moreover, the participant of the text in ideology analysis is special in the sense that it represents the elite. For instance, a politician or church preachers who write or talk about a social idea are expected to reflect ideological opinions other than a boy or a carpenter who talks about his job (VanDijk, 1998: 265).

Another important notion in ideology analysis is that of power and solidarity. Language has a role in creating and maintaining power in the sense that ideologies are deeply reflected in the peaks of the struggles over power. Thus, power, domination and hegemony are one of the fundamental questions in the arena of critical and ideological discourse analysis (see Fairclough, 1995: 34).

### **3. Model of Analysis**

This study draws upon an eclectic model for analyzing the political speeches delivered by three American political figures. It consists in bringing to light how the speeches under scrutiny uphold themselves to implement equivocal ideology biased to misrepresent or mislead which is the major aim of this study. The model is adopted from Van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework with some elaboration on its linguistic realizations and strategies (1995b; 2006a). The basic elements of the model are presented as follows:

- Overall interaction strategies
  - Positive self-presentation
  - Negative other-presentation
- Macro speech act implying our 'good' acts and their 'bad' acts, e.g. accusation, defence.
- Semantic macrostructures: topic selection
  - (De-) emphasize negative/positive topics about Us/Them
- Local speech acts implementing and sustaining the global ones, e.g. statements that prove accusations.
- Local meanings our/their positive/negative actions
  - Give many/few details
  - Be general/specific
  - Be vague/precise
  - Be explicit/implicit
  - Etc.
- Lexicon: Select positive words for Us, negative words for Them
- Local syntax
  - Active vs passive sentences, nominalizations: (de)emphasize Our/Their positive/negative agency, responsibility
- Rhetorical figures
  - Hyperboles vs euphemisms for positive/negative meanings
  - Metonymies and metaphors emphasizing our/their positive/negative properties
- Expressions: sounds and visuals
  - Emphasize (loud, etc.; large, bold, etc.) positive/negative meanings
  - Order (first, last: top, bottom, etc.) positive/negative meanings. (Van Dijk, 2006a: 373)

It is noted here that the main objective of the politicians is to manipulate a variety of linguistic and rhetorical strategies to assert the positive features of self and underestimate others'. To unfold on these strategies, the following discussion is presented.

**3.1 Compassion:** It means “showing empathy or sympathy for (weak) victims of the other actions, to enhance the brutality of the other. For example, (destroy the real lives of American working people; traumatize actual American children; mercy for their own people)” (Van Dijk, 1995b:154).

**3.2 Disclaimer:** It is used to depict the positive description about somebody, then denying it by using coordinating conjunctions *'but'* in the second sentence. Disclaimers briefly save face by mentioning his/her own positive characteristics, but then focus rather exclusively, on other negative attributes to avoid being described of racism by the recipients, as is the case for the well-known disclaimers such as the *Apparent Denial* “*I have nothing against X, but...*” (Van Dijk, 2006c: 67).

**3.3 Implication:** Implications are defined as “meanings (propositions) that are not explicitly expressed in the text, but may be inferred from words or sentences in the text, social knowledge, as well as from the mental models constructed during understanding” (Van Dijk, 1993:256). Indeed, it is sometimes more important to make it clear what is left implicit in the text than what is actually expressed. In many respects, political discourses are “ideological icebergs, of which only the tip is visible to the reader” (ibid)

**3.4 National Self-glorification:** The Presidential debates are the prime opportunity of nationalistic rhetoric. This is particularly true when a speaker indulges in glorifying or praising his own country's norms and values, such as democracy, equal rights, hospitality, and tolerance to create positive self-representation (Van Dijk, 2006c:78). For instance, “*Our nation is the hope of the earth*”, implicates that the negative information about their nations involving colonialism meant to be ignored or mitigated. (Van Dijk, 2002:155)

**3.5 Polarization:** This strategy is utilized for separating, sorting out and conflicting of the parties involved into a positively represented ‘us’ and a negatively represented ‘them’. Polarization could also apply to ‘good’ and ‘bad’ sub-categories of out-groups, as is the case for friends and allies on the one hand, and enemies on the other to be rhetorically enhanced when expressed as a clear contrast” (Van Dijk, 2006c: 80).

**3.6 Presupposition:** According to Jones and Peccei (2004:35), presuppositions are contextual assumptions embedded within a sentence or a phrase. It is further defined in the words of Beard (2000: 118) as “a thing that is assumed, but not stated, at the beginning of a line of argument.” It is an indirect semantic technique used to emphasize self-good properties and other bad ones. “That is, these properties are simply assumed to be known, as if they were common sense, and hence need not be specifically asserted” (Ibid).

Discourse is incomplete and implicit, in a sense that much information is not expressed, only understood to be *implied* or *presupposed*. That is, the common shared knowledge among people or ideas are taken for granted and unchallenged in propositions (Van Dijk, 2006c: 82).

**3.7 Vagueness:** This strategy is depleted by debaters to create uncertainty and ambiguity, as in talking about delicate issues like immigration and the expressions of possibility. Controversial opinions about ethnic groups typically call for hedging and other forms of vagueness. Van Dijk (2000b: 94) argues that vagueness “characteristically functions as a form of the impression management: protecting our own face (when being vague about racism for instance), and where possible being vague about the positive properties of the others”. Quantifiers that have vague meanings such as “(‘few’, ‘a lot’), adverbs (‘very’) nouns (‘thing’), and adjectives (‘low’, ‘high’), among other expressions may be typical in such discourse”. (Van Dijk, 2006c: 84).

**3.8 Generalization:** This strategy is one of the most effective strategies in political discourse. It means “generalizing from one person or a small group to a larger group or category.” (VanDijk, 1995b: 155).

**3.9 Negative Lexicalization:** This category can be considered as an overall ideological strategy for negative other-representation through the semantic features of “the selection of (strongly) negative words to describe the actions of the others”: *terrorism, destroy, extremism, jihadist*, etc. (Van Dijk, 1995b:154). It means “the selection of (strongly) negative words to describe the actions of the Others” (Van Dijk, 1995b: 154).

**3.10 Argumentation Moves:** These are manipulated to persuade the audience of one's own ideas and conclusions (see Van Eemeren, 2010: 22). Van Eemeren *et al.* (2002:23), define argumentation classically as “an ideal of a challenging discourse aimed at resolving a difference of opinion by determining whether the standpoints at issue ought to be accepted or not”. Theoretically, ideological interference and powerful signals of the underlying structures of attitudes and manipulation may be encoded in argumentation (Van Dijk, 1995b: 57).

**3.11 Nominalization and Passivization:** This is a kind of grammatical metaphor. As such, nominalization gives texts some type of the quality of an entity; it becomes more thing-like. This might be the reason why it is extensively practiced in scientific discourse (Bank, 2001: 7).

As far as passive-voice verbs are concerned, it seems that they often make a text hard to understand because it cloaks responsibility. For example, " He is being kidnapped ", we are not told who is doing the kidnapping. Consequently, it is postulated that in *trenches* of politics passive voice constitutes a vivid rhetorical tool. A famous striking example in this arena is the former president Regan's assessment of the Iran-Contra- affair: " Mistakes were made " (Fowler et al, 1991). Likewise, they sustain that utilizing nominalization and passivization in political discourse results in ideologically smart charged effects.

#### 4. Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

The text under analysis is represented by three long speeches by the American President Obama, the American Secretary of State Kerry and the Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. Their speeches are carefully selected to be concerned with one of the hectic topics relating to the political crisis in Syria. In the following lines, a CDA is conducted depending on the model sketched in section 3 above:

##### Analysis of Text (1):

*My fellow Americans, tonight I want to talk to you about Syria -- why it matters, and where we go from here. Over the past two years, what began as a series of peaceful protests against the repressive regime of Bashar al-Assad has turned into a brutal civil war. Over 100,000 people have been killed. Millions have fled the country. In that time, America has worked with allies to provide humanitarian support, to help the moderate opposition, and to shape a political settlement. But I have resisted calls for military action, because we cannot resolve someone else's civil war through force, particularly after a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan.* (Obama, 2013: Web (1))

In this extract, President Obama starts his speech by presenting a motivation for the justification that underlies his involvement in the political crisis in Syria. He begins his justification by manipulating a **negative lexicalization** and description of the other. By describing the regime of Bashar al-Assad as 'repressive', he negatively presents and represents others. Additionally, his expression of the war as a *civil war* does not reflect the whole picture as it is in fact a war between some factitious war mongers, Moslem extremists, war fare, guerrillas armed forces and the official army of the Syrian state. It is not a war between ordinary people and laymen. This strategy involves the use of **vagueness** as it misleads the listeners.

Moreover, Obama continues his manipulation of other strategies when he says: "*Over 100,000 people have been killed. Millions have fled the country*". Here, he utilizes the strategy of **nominalization** and **passivization**. He does not explicitly refer to the performer of killing or murder. In this case, he likes to make listeners blame Bashar of all killing crimes that have happened in the war. Besides, he mentions millions of refugees who have left the country due to the war. This strategy includes the use of **compassion** by showing his sympathy to the Syrian civilians, whereas in fact he does not even stretch a hand to contribute positively to their tragic suffering. Instead, they have been left vacillating between hope and fear.

Then, Obama employs the strategy of **national self-glorification** which implies positive self-representation and negative other-representation in his saying: "*America has worked with allies to provide humanitarian support.*" Here, he praises self and, as such, he eliminates the actions of others. This act would marginalize the other parties like the United Nations and the non-government organizations, which sincerely endeavor to put an end to the crisis by availing themselves of this crisis to do whatever they could and not standing hesitated as does the United States.

He goes on to assert his good will by using the **argumentative move** which involves an explanation of his interference in the political crisis: "*to help the moderate opposition and to shape a political statement*". Again, president Obama recurses to vagueness strategy when he mentions the expression *the moderate opposition*. In real terms, there is a world unanimity that this opposition is nothing but the other facet of *Jihadists* heritable of extremist doctrines .Yet, Obama wants to prove that his will is positive and his standpoints are acceptable since they are humanitarian for political and social settlement in the region.

Obama, then, utilizes a mistaken **generalization** strategy. His saying: "*I have resisted calls for military action, because we cannot resolve someone else's civil war through force, particularly after a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan*" is not well-grounded. Who says that a forceful interference is not a good solution for a civil war?

Analysis of Text (2):

*Now, Syria as we know it is not just another country. In fact, it is one of the first places that most of us learned about when studying history in school. Damascus and Aleppo are among the oldest continually inhabited cities on the face of the Earth. They are part of Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization. For 4,000 years, empires have risen and fallen, but Syria has remained a commercial crossroads. And this has contributed to a rich cultural mix of ethnicities, customs, and creeds.*

*But the story of modern Syria has been a grim one. In 1970, a Baathist military leader, Hafez al-Assad, seized power, ushering in an era of limited modernization accompanied by unlimited repression. In the year 2000, Assad was succeeded by his son, Bashar, raising hopes for the possibility of greater political openness – hopes that the new leader chose not to fulfill.*

*It was little wonder, then, that when the sparks of Arab Spring began to ignite, demands for change were heard in Syria. The protests were actually quite modest at first, and they were driven not by sectarian or religious differences, but by the lack of freedom and jobs. The violence only began when Assad responded to peaceful demonstrations by sending in thugs to beat up young people. And when the parents of those young people objected – they took to the streets themselves, the regime replied with bullets and then with bombs. Having made peaceful change impossible, Assad made war inevitable. And this war gave rise to Daesh – ISIL – the gravest extremist threat faced by our generation and the embodiment of evil in our time.*

*The result, as we know, has been four and a half years of nonstop horror. One Syrian in twenty has been wounded or killed. One in five is a refugee. One in two has been displaced. The average life expectancy dropped by 20 years. Eighty percent of the electricity has been knocked out, plunging much of the country literally into darkness. And the burden of the conflict falls most heavily on the smallest shoulders. (Kerry, 2015: Web (2))*

In this part of Kerry's speech, he starts his talk on Syria by centralizing the history of the Arab region, particularly Syria, in ancient times. He wants to invoke that he knows Syria well. This introduction on Syria is followed by a **disclaimer** strategy: "*But the story of modern Syria has been a grim one.*" This disclaimer is accompanied by a **negative lexicalization** to describe the modern political position of Syria 'a grim one'. This is a strongly negative other-representation. This strategy is fostered by additional negative descriptions of other: 'military leader', 'limited modernization' and 'repression'. All these features are manipulated to **imply** that the protesters have the right to change the political regime in Syria. But, American foreign policy does not apply this rule to other countries such as Bahrain and Saudi Arabia where there are many manifestations of limited or no freedom in press and suppression of human rights as well as political oppression, imprisonment, beheading and lack of democracy. Here, Kerry deliberately deforms the situation in utilizing a failed **fallacy** in his **argumentative move** since he does not criticize the repression in allied countries.

Then, he negatively represents Bashar al-Assad: "*Bashar, raising hopes for the possibility of greater political openness – hopes that the new leader chose not to fulfill.*" This strategy can be viewed as an instance of **presupposition** asserting that the job of a new president is to give more freedom to people. After that, he uses the strategy of **polarization** where he employs the term *Arab Spring* to describe the protests in the Arab world. This label is suggested by the Western media. As such, it does not represent the Arab ideology itself, but it also misrepresents the volatile that is brought about by the toppling down of some Arab regimes. Instead of establishing and starting new democratic regimes, these Arab states that have witnessed the so-called Arab spring have started to collapse and have been plunged into chaos, anarchy and non-ending civil wars. This may involve some kind of marginalization of other. It ignores the Arab media's ideology concerning such changes in the area.

Furthermore, Kerry tells his version of the story. He believes that the regime rejects these demonstrations that are freely and innocently flown up. He describes the military force members in Syria as 'thugs'. This **negative lexicalization** attempts to enhance the listeners' belief in his story whereas the Syrian administration would have its own version of the story.

Kerry accuses al-Assad of being the real reason of the war: "*Assad made war inevitable*". The strategy represents an **implication** that other sides of opposition and terrorists have no intention to raise war in the area. Fighters in the Syrian war are mainly represented by three opposing forces: the Free Syrian Army, Al-Nusra Front and ISIS. These military forces cannot be seen as surprising emerging fronts in the war. This is hidden by Kerry's story. He manipulatively tells part not whole of this story.

Then, he explicitly blames Bashar al-Assad of giving rise to ISIS: “*And this war gave rise to Daesh – ISIL – the gravest extremist threat faced by our generation and the embodiment of evil in our time.*” Interestingly, this is the first time that an American politician describes ISIS using an Arab acronym *Daesh* which has a negative connotation for Arabs and for members of the so-called “Islamic State”. When Arabs come across this term they will be smitten with fear due to outspoken atrocities committed by those barbaric extremists.

Additionally, members of the so-called Islamic State repel this term either. They believe that this term is based on fallacies; it doesn't represent them any longer and it is replaced by the expression of the “Islamic State” since their objectives transcend the political boundaries of Iraq and Syria to overarch and invade all countries whether Arab or not. As such, they crookedly and deceitfully insist on trying to revive the Islamic Caliphate fifteen hundred years ago. Their misleading way of dealing with Islam should have been debunked by these speeches instead of playing prank on the public opinion.

In addition, Kerry utilizes the strategy of compassion to raise emotion and sympathy in his listeners: “*One Syrian in twenty has been wounded or killed. One in five is a refugee. One in two has been displaced.*” He starts to tell things that arouse pity and felling for the suffering of others. Moreover, these topics are **manipulated** to show compassion for what has happened in Syria. Kerry seems to contradict himself by forgetting to mention that his own state supports fighters of the Syrian opposition (which is described by the American office as *moderate*). The question that could be raised here “Who could ever tell that those fighters’ shots do not attack innocent civilians or do not lead some people be homeless”? Kerry’s office policy is waging war against Syria now, willy-nilly.

### Analysis of Text (3):

*On the Syrian side, the big obstacle to getting more ground forces to engage ISIS, beyond the Syrian Kurds who are already deep in the fight, is that the viable Sunni opposition groups remain understandably preoccupied with fighting Assad who, let us remember, has killed many more Syrians than the terrorists have. But they are increasingly under threat from ISIS as well.*

*So we need to move simultaneously toward a political solution to the civil war that paves the way for a new government with new leadership, and to encourage more Syrians to take on ISIS as well. To support them, we should immediately deploy the special operations force President Obama has already authorized, and be prepared to deploy more as more Syrians get into the fight. And we should retool and ramp up our efforts to support and equip viable Syrian opposition units.*

*Our increased support should go hand in hand with increased support from our Arab and European partners, including Special Forces who can contribute to the fight on the ground. We should also work with the coalition and the neighbors to impose no-fly zones that will stop Assad from slaughtering civilians and the opposition from the air. Opposition forces on the ground, with material support from the coalition, could then help create safe areas where Syrians could remain in the country, rather than fleeing toward Europe.*

*So far, however, Turkey has been more focused on the Kurds than on countering ISIS. And to be fair, Turkey has a long and painful history with Kurdish terrorist groups. But the threat from ISIS cannot wait. As difficult as it may be, we need to get Turkey to stop bombing Kurdish fighters in Syria who are battling ISIS, and become a full partner in our coalition efforts against ISIS. (Clinton, 2015: Web (3))*

In this extract, Clinton utilizes several strategies to manipulate her own ideology concerning the political situation in Syria and the surrounding territory. She uses sectarianist terminology and **polarization** through which she categorizes the fighting groups in Syria. She explicitly labels the Syrian opposition as ‘Sunni’. Another device used by Clinton is presupposition where she presupposes that the opposing fighters are not terrorists: “...*is that the viable Sunni opposition groups remain understandably preoccupied with fighting Assad who, let us remember, has killed many more Syrians than the terrorists have.*” These strategies are accompanied by the strategies of lying and **vagueness** since she indicates that Assad kills more than terrorists did. She does not present her sources and or well-grounded figures for such claims.

In addition, she employs the strategy of **implication** in her saying: “...*that paves the way for a new government with new leadership, and to encourage more Syrians to take on ISIS as well.*” Here, she implies that there is no solution for ISIS fighters unless Assad regime is destroyed. Then, she contradicts her introductory assumption of a political solution for the civil war in Syria by suggesting more military aid for the opposition: “*And we should retool and ramp up our efforts to support and equip viable Syrian opposition units.*” Such an **argumentative move** weakens her critical discussion and persuasion.

In the same vein, it seems that her speech and other speeches flow in the same stream in that they all endeavor to black out the whole scene and would not shed light on the real causes behind the Syrian crisis. Instead, they all have fabricated false reasoning and purport to be unbiased but in fact they are in pursuit of statements based on fallacies. In so doing, Clinton structures her discourse by using a form of bigotry and discrimination to arouse hatred between subdivisions within Syrian society. Surprisingly, her ideological underpinnings may aggressively seek converts from other groups and as such the warring factions believe that for the achievement of their own political or religious project their internal opponent must be converted or purged. Furthermore, the speaker displays how cunningly she picks up her lexicon as she speaks of Turkey in a demagogic style. She speaks of Turkey countering the Kurdish rebels using the adjectives "painful" and the noun "terrorist". It is not unclear that she exhibits her prejudice and her stand which, in turn, represents her government stand towards Turkey and the Kurds. She implies that Turkey is an ademocratic state that is targeted by Kurdish "terrorism", in a way, forgetting or trying to forget the Turkish continuous slaughtering of the Kurds who are merely defending their linguistic and cultural rights which Turkey always deny and refuses to listen to Kurds.

Another manipulative strategy of **negative other-representation** is seen in her statement: "...fly zones that will stop Assad from slaughtering civilians and the opposition from the air." In this extract, Clinton feels pity for those people killed by the Syrian government rather than by ISIS or other terrorist groups such as al-Qaida or Al-Nusra. Besides, her speech involves an employment of the strategy of **compassion** when she talks about the innocent victims and civilians. After a while, she expresses a drastic bias and prejudice towards Turkey over the Kurds. She clearly employs a negative lexicalization strategy to describe the Kurdish fighters: "Turkey has a long and painful history with Kurdish terrorist groups." Then, she returns to her **vagueness** in the evaluation of the terrorist groups. She wants to say that we should deal with terrorism to fight terrorism: "As difficult as it may be, we need to get Turkey to stop bombing Kurdish fighters in Syria who are battling ISIS..."

In the same stance, Keefe (2000) maintains that when someone argues of action to take, to persuade us to do something, our future action is not only determined by s/he says, but also by the impression we have of the speaker. Research has shown from earlier times that we are persuaded not only by the rational arguments carried out by the speaker, but also through the emotions s/he makes us feel. When a speaker is vague in his discourse but the rational part of his argument and the image we make up of him would be at risk. On the one side, his vagueness may obscure the clarity of his arguments subtracting consequentiality to their logical chains. On the other side, it may be felt as reticence- we may suspect he is vague on purpose- hence spoiling his image of sincerity and honesty. In both cases, this makes the argument less effective and to a greater extent inducing deceit.

### **Conclusions:**

In the light of the analysis above, the following concluding remarks can be presented:

1. The American politician's speeches have not been neutral; rather, they have been manipulatively employed to express negative ideology towards the political crisis in Syria.
2. Different strategies have been used to show negative other-representation and positive self-representation.
3. The most important linguistic and discourse strategies utilized in these speeches are: negative lexicalization, polarization, argumentative move, compassion and implication.



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