

## Original Paper

# Doublespeak: The Empowerment of the Self and the Dis-Empowerment of the Other

Taher Ben Khalifa<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Sfax, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Department of English, Sfax, Tunisia

\* Taher Ben Khalifa, University of Sfax, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Department of English, Sfax, Tunisia

Received: August 16, 2019    Accepted: September 6, 2019    Online Published: September 11, 2019  
doi:10.22158/assc.v1n2p154    URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/assc.v1n2p154>

### **Abstract**

*Regarding the ability doublespeak offers to its users to distort and mislead, the question about how power is (re)produce, distributed, and enacted becomes of great concern. Within this context, the present paper seeks to study how the use of doublespeak serves for the empowerment of the self and the dis-empowerment of the other. The study of this topic consists in the analysis of some examples that are taken from political speeches delivered by the US presidents; Bush, Obama, and Trump. To analyze these examples, a combination of three theories—theories of discourse analysis, theories of power, and theories of politics—is used. The application of this theoretical combination is based on the use of a simple method of research. This method follows three successive steps. First, the traces of doublespeak are detected and classified. Second, interest is given to the study of how each of the traced uses of doublespeak serves for empowerment. Third, interest shifts to the interpretation of the obtained results to highlight the political ends standing behind any struggle for power. The paper ended by offering a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of empowerment in the political uses of doublespeak as well as a simple method of research. Also, it proved that the use of doublespeak represents a strategy of empowerment that the speakers resorted to while seeking to get more power to dominate and to achieve personal goals. The paper might show as well some limitations like the uses of examples from other political contexts. However, this did not affect the quality of the research nor the results that are sought to be reached, instead, it represents a good start for future researches to look into other contexts.*

### **Keywords**

*Doublespeak, politics, empowerment, dis-empowerment, and political ends*

## 1. Introduction

Pretending to communicate but it does not (Lutz, 1989); doublespeak is frequently used today in the world of politics. It is mostly used in that it helps politicians to manipulate the truth in the way that best serves their personal interests. For instance, the new world of politics is characterized by such fierce struggles over power and interest which means that the speaker's ability to control his addresses is the first step towards achieving the desired goals. Here, the critical investigation of control is based on the study of how political language is used to deceive, disguise, and distort reality in order to defend a given political plan. Hence, the study of how language is used to empower the speaker and give him the ability to defend the undefendable.

In reality, the study of how doublespeak is used to justify the non-justifiable is at the cross roads of many research projects and papers. Since the articulation of the term which is traced back to Orwell's doublethink and newspeak (Orwell, 1949) till today's time, doublespeak is frequently searched and from a variety of theoretical and analytical perspectives. For instance, syntactic perspectives are used to show how constructions like nominalization, passivization, etc. (Constantinescu & Lesenciuc, 2015; D'Angelo, 1989; Penelope, 1989) and how complex sentences (Luntz, 2007) serve to hide the truth. Semantic based approaches are also used to highlight how vocabulary (word choice) is manipulated to convey the meaning that the speaker seeks to convey and to obscure what he wants to hide (Gibson & Lutz, 1991; Gambino, 1974). The examination of the role that rhetoric (metaphor, exaggeration, etc.) plays in the distortion of reality and the falsification of the truth is central too (Fredal, 2011). Thus, these works made clear the role that people's linguistic choices play in the mystification of reality.

Moreover, the pragmatic perspective is explored to show how politicians use implicitness and explicitness to persuade their public and maintain control over them (Bull & Simon-Vandenberg, 2014). This implicitness/explicitness strategy helps speakers to re-shape reality in the way they want it to be through hiding and revealing depending on their planned goals. As far as theories of style are concerned, Kharitonova and Ufimceva (2013) highlighted the triumph of style over content while speakers are seeking to deceive their public in modern political contexts. Politeness, the other, is targeted to differentiate between the use of polite language to show respect and its use for the sake of deception and mis-leading (Klotz, 1999). In addition, speakers' mis-representation of the facts they knew is another way of deceiving the public to control their ways of thinking (Tsvetkov & Amudzhieva, 2013). Smarr (2001) argues that the mis-representation of information is a form of distortion in which language is not used with its full intent of honesty. In brief, these works highlight the role of speakers' manipulations of the contents of their messages to maintain power over what is going on in the social and political context.

Also, the anthropological method is employed in the study of doublespeak (Lempert, 2015). This method is concerned with the study of the origin and development of the meaning of words to show that the mis-use of such terms is a discursive strategy that is used to create ambiguity and make the messages difficult to understand. Equivocation theory is devoted to show that speakers' resort to speak

in such a clumsy and an unclear way is intended to avoid and hide a given truth (Bull & Simon-Vandenberg, 2014). Indeed, the difficulty the addressees face to understand the speaker's message signals the lack of intelligibility. This lack of intelligibility reflects the peak of the speaker's power to control his addressees. Thus, these works on anthropology and equivocation shed light on the power that language gives to its users to use words out of their context of meaning in order to deliver ambiguous messages that are meant to hide a given truth. The power that the speaker gives himself through the use of doublespeak to control the addressee is what matters in this paper.

This background of literature highlights that doublespeak is a multi-disciplinary phenomenon that researchers explored from different perspectives. Though the theoretical approaches are diverse, the results are unique: the distortion of the truth for the sake of justifying what the speakers want to justify. This ability to justify is the outcome of the asymmetry of power that language creates between the speaker and the addressee: the empowerment of the speaker and the dis-empowerment of the addressee. Indeed, by highlighting these conclusions this course of literature can be a good start for more advanced researches on how the language of doublespeak serve for the empowerment of the self and the dis-empowerment of the other. This duality of empowerment/dis-empowerment is at the cross roads of this research paper due to the specific features characterizing the politics of the current era. It is the era in which the speakers' ability to get power over his addressees gives him the right to put into practice all his plans for action.

So, to determine how doublespeak contributes to the empowerment of the self and the dis-empowerment of the other, this paper needs putting together three different theories: theories of discourse analysis, theories of power, and theories of politics. First, theories of discourse analysis are required to trace the different manifestations of doublespeak in the selected texts. Second, the need for theories of power is justified by the theoretical need for such tools that are adequate to understand how the traced uses of doublespeak serve for the asymmetrical distribution of power between the speaker and the addressee. Third, theories of politics are integrated in the framework of the study in that they serve for the holistic understanding of the features of the political language we are dealing with. This is important and necessary because our understanding of how doublespeak is used to control the addressees via the power that language gives to its users requires going deep into how things work in the world of politics. The way these three theories will work together for the critical investigation of the topic under study will be carefully dealt with in the section that is devoted for conceptual analysis.

The combination of the three theories introduced before seeks to find logical answers to three main research questions. These answers represent the main findings of the study of the way doublespeak contributes to the empowerment of the self and the dis-empowerment of the other. They will also bring contributions to the field of study that is interested in the critique and the fight of the spread of this dishonest use of language, especially by politicians.

- 1) What are the traces of doublespeak in the selected corpus?
- 2) How does it serve for the asymmetrical distribution of power?

3) To what extent can we say that doublespeak is used to serve political agendas?

To answer these questions, several theoretical and analytical concepts will be analyzed and discussed in the following section. The analysis of these concepts seeks to build a workable framework that is adequate for a detailed study of the topic.

## 2. Conceptual Analysis

Before embarking in the analysis of the selected speeches, it is required to start with the analysis of such theoretical concepts. The analysis and discussion of the required concepts seeks to make clear their need for the study of the topic, to determine their theoretical ties to each others, and to describe the way they will be applied in the analysis of the selected texts. These concepts will be discussed under three main titles: theories of discourse analysis, theories of power, and theories of politics.

### 2.1 Theories of Discourse Analysis

As it is noticed before, doublespeak is a multi-dimensional concept which has been dealt with from different perspectives. This multi-disciplinary nature of the concept makes the study of how doublespeak works in political discourse to empower the self and to dis-empower the other requires using a multi-dimensional theory of discourse analysis. Indeed, using a multi-dimensional framework to the study of the manifestations of doublespeak represents the first step towards the critical investigation of the topic under focus. It seeks mainly to determine the different discursive strategies that politicians use to manipulate reality while seeking to defend personal agendas. The determination of these strategies entails highlighting what sort of theories of discourse analysis we should use to reach a well-detailed understanding of the topic.

During the last few decades, the study of discourse witnessed a great tendency towards the use of a multiplicity of theoretical approaches and a variety of research methods. A reading across the works of the existing literature shows that scholars and researchers across the globe borrowed theories from different disciplines (Slembrouck, 2003; Huckin et al., 2012). They resort to various disciplines—such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, pragmatics, rhetoric, stylistics, face saving theories, etc.—to find answers to the problematics that gave raise to their studies. Also, they might resort to the combination of various theories if the understanding of their problematics requires that (Jorgensen & Philips, 2012). For instance, while dealing with the study of many topics related to discourse and language in use, researchers might find themselves in such difficult situations. They are facing difficulties because the existing theories and methods do not serve the purposes of their researches (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). Having this in mind, they might resort to the combination of theories from various disciplines seeking to reach a convincing explanation of the topics they are studying. Hence, the multi-disciplinarity of the new approaches to the study of discourse is there.

These combinations do not happen at random. However, these are monitored by the main points and ideas that the researcher seeks to highlight while deciding to go on researching on a given topic as well as the sorts of conclusions he seeks to achieve. These requirements offer the researcher the logical

proves to borrow such theories and to make combinations as long as the arguments he built are strong to justify the need for a given theory. Once the borrowing and the combination of such theories, in a given context of research, is proved, the next issue the researcher will face immediately is how to apply the theories adopted for use. Indeed, the method to be used in the application of the selected theories should be designed in accordance with the need of how the data should be collected and processed to answer the problematics of the ongoing research project. In other words, the preparation of the theories and the methods that the researcher will use in the investigation of the topic he planned to study remains a matter of deciding upon what is meant to achieve by undertaking a given research project. Thus, doing discourse analysis becomes open to multiple theoretical and methodological variations that are context dependent.

The fact that doing discourse analysis is open to a continuous theoretical and methodological development makes the selection of the theories and the methods to be used in this paper based on three main criteria. These are: a) the nature of the concept of doublespeak; b) the relation between language and power; and c) the characteristic features of political language. First, the fact that doublespeak works at various levels of discourse makes any trial to the tracing of its manifestations requires using a multi-disciplinary theoretical background. In other words, this entails working out the traces of doublespeak and then classifying them to facilitate their analysis. Second, the relation between the use of language and the distribution of power among participants is needed to understand how speakers use doublespeak to control the audience. The understanding of the theoretical connections between language and power is required in that it serves to explain why agents use doublespeak in a given communicative context. Third, the recapitulation of the main features of political language is an important task too. It helps us draw strong conclusions concerning why speakers resort to deception in such social contexts (for what purpose?). Thus, the theoretical framework we need here is the one that is adequate to connect these three requirements.

To sum up, the study of how politicians use doubletalk to promote power to the self and to reduce the public's power to act against their plans will use a multi-disciplinary theory of discourse analysis. This multi-disciplinary theoretical framework finds its ground in the CDA movement of discourse studies, especially Van Dijk's framework (Van Dijk, 2000). Here, the use of a variety of theoretical conceptions will be applied mainly through the outlining of the different traces of doublespeak, the classification and the analysis of the collected examples, and then the discussion of the results. We need to follow these steps in order to work out how reality is being distorted to serve such political interests. However, to do this we face a strong need for the involvement of both theories of power and theories of politics. These are to be explained in the following two sections.

## *2.2 Theories of Power*

Since long time ago, the question of power is central for debate among thinkers and scholars from different disciplines. These elites' eagerness to know the way power works to affect relations between people in a given society makes the concept open for multiple discussions and from a variety of

theoretical perspectives. These are ranging from various fields of study such as social science, psychology, philosophy, etc. For instance, critical discourse analysis, since its establishment as a field to the study of language in use, was interested mainly in the examination of how power is produced, re-produced, distributed, and abused. Hence, the need for a workable theory of power, in the study of this topic, is highlighted.

According to French and Raven (1959) power refers to one's ability to influence the others to believe, behave, or value in the way he likes or to make them strengthen, validate, or confirm already existing beliefs, behaviors, or values. Thomas Hobbes argues that man's power is his present means to have some future apparent good (Hobbes, 1946). He explains that power, which is a means to an end, is an end by itself (ibid). Van Dijk (1989) defines power as "a form of social control" (p. 18). Weber (1978) points that power refers to the chance of a person or a group of people to realize their own will even against the resistance of the others, who are participating in the action. Emerson (1962) defines power as the potential influence an actor A might have over an actor B. Banfield (1961) highlights that power is one's ability to establish control over another. Parsons—quoted in (Litterer, 1969)—refers to power as an actor's ability to induce or influence another actor in order to make him comply with his directives or any other norms that he supports. Bierstedt (1950) emphasized that power is such "a latent force". To sum up, these works highlight that researchers wrote various definitions of the concept of power. This implies that there is no single definition of the term. However, all these definitions revolve around a common idea which is the control of one party over another party who has less power than the previous one.

Regarding the complex nature of the notion of power, it has become of crucial significance to formulate a workable definition of the term. It is workable in the sense that it paves us the ground to understand how the speaker uses doublespeak at such moments to give more power to his person and to limit the power of the other. In other words, it is a definition that enables us to reach an in-depth comprehension of how power is produced, re-produced, and unjustly distributed via the use of doublespeak. It is, hence, the definition that takes into consideration the characteristics of the topic under exploration and the goals that the paper seeks to achieve. However, this does not mean that it is a definition that will cut with the definitions developed in the existing literature. Instead, it is the one that has its roots in the existing trials to the determination of the meaning of the notion which is resulting from a careful reading of many works related to this issue. Therefore, it is a definition that underlines the main concepts and ideas required for the analysis of the way the process of empowerment/dis-empowerment works to control the public.

The understanding of this discursive issue, in our context of study, relies on three main tasks: tracing the use of power, working out its types, and capitalizing the goals standing behind its use. First, power is exercised by means of language. Hence, we need to determine how each traced stance of political doublespeak serves for the (re)production and the unequal distribution of power between the speaker and the addressees. Second, power is of different types. In other words, to facilitate the analysis and the

discussion of how power is generated and enacted, we need to make clear the sorts of power that the speaker activated along his narrative. Third, power is always activated to serve such specific goals. While they are addressing their public, speakers might activate many sorts of power in order to be able to control and/or reduce the resistance of the addressees so that they can put into practice their planned actions. These actions are the ends (goals) behind speakers' empowerment of the self. So, our understanding of the notion of power should take into consideration these three major points.

These three major points to the definition of power represent the cornerstones of the theory of power to be used for the analysis of the issue of empowerment and disempowerment in the political use of doublespeak. However, these three ideas are connected to other key concepts that are related to the notion of power such as context, knowledge, access, etc. These concepts are required in that they give an insightful analysis and discussion of how power is activated, enacted, and oriented to serve the speaker's desired goals. However, the discussion of these issues in the selected corpus needs exploring the connection between the features of doublespeak and the characteristics of the language of politics. The distinctive properties of political discourse will be reviewed in the coming section to build a holistic theory of politics that is adequate for the study of the topic.

### *2.3 Theories of Politics*

Political discourse has its own features that distinguish it from any other form of language use such as everyday conversation, media discourse, etc. These characteristics will be determined through the discussion of three major axes. The first axis focuses on the discussion of 'what is political discourse?' This task is required in order to write down a workable definition of the term. It is the definition that we need to reach a detailed critique of how doublespeak works in the realm of politics. The second axis seeks to outline the structure of political discourse in that this facilitates the analysis of the selected speeches. This axis is involved because it will help us examine the traces of doublespeak in the structures that the speakers used to serve such political agendas. The third axis is devoted to the discussion of the specific features of political discourse. The outlining of these features seeks to clarify the tendency of political language to deceive and to distort reality in the way that serves one's personal interests. These axes will be analyzed and discussed to connect the different dimensions of the theory.

First, the question—what is political discourse?—is what matters in this axis of discussion. The answer to this question involves highlighting two sorts of definitions: one simple and the other complex. At the simplistic level, political discourse refers to speeches and texts that are produced and/or delivered by political actors such as presidents, members of parliaments and governments, Prime Ministers, party leaders, etc. At the complex level, political discourse denotes a distinguished use of language that is meant to persuade and to promote control. While speaking about persuasion and control, it is important to introduce a second party to the scene of politics. This party consists of the public, the citizens, the people, the masses, etc. (Van Dijk, 1997). The fact of having two parties concerned with the definition of political discourse requires making clear the relation between both. In reality, these two parties have two opposite functions: first, the political speaker is the deliverer of the speech and he is the party

seeking for the justification of such claims and policies. Second, the addressee is the receiver of the delivered speech. He represents the party who can show resistance if not convinced. Thus, the speaker's resort to doublespeak to promote power to the self (to be able to convince) and to reduce the other's power (to avoid resistance) should be dealt with using a theoretical framework that takes into consideration the ideas stressed by this definition.

Second, political discourse has its own structures that can distinguish it from other forms of discourse. For instance, Van Dijk (1997) argues that discourse structures can serve different functions in different contexts and genres and that some structures are reserved for the political genre and context (p. 24). Therefore the analysis of doublespeak in the context of political discourse should be dealt with in the way that is quite different from other discourse genres and contexts. In other words, the analysis of the discursive constructions of doublespeak, in this paper, should be carried while taking into consideration the political contexts of the speeches under investigation. The idea that doublespeak works at various levels of discourse such as linguistics, rhetoric, pragmatics, etc., will be explored in the analysis of the manifestations of doublespeak in the selected speeches based on the features of these speeches and the contexts in which they are delivered. Moreover, the analysis of how these structures are selected to promote power for the self and to reduce the power of the other will take into consideration the goals the speakers seeks to achieve in that political context. Goals are also involved in that political discourse is always goal-oriented. It always seeks to justify policies and actions on the ground. Hence, the analysis of the discursive traces of doublespeak needs taking into consideration the properties of the political contexts that are under question.

Third, the capitalization of the characteristic features of political language is required because it helps us understand speakers' high tendency to use doublespeak in the realm of politics. The discussion of these features revolves around two axes: highlighting the specificity of the domain of politics and shedding light on the properties of the language used in it. On the one hand, politics is the realm where: a) power is activated, enacted, and legitimized; b) policies and decisions are produced and justified; c) reality is re-constructed and manipulated; d) truth is falsified; and e) meaning is distorted. These proprieties are activated by means of language to serve future political calculations. On the other hand, the language of politics is a sort of language in use that is characterized mainly by: complexity, vagueness, elasticity, deception, propaganda, imagery, bias, symbolism, etc. Characterized by these features, the language of politics becomes difficult to explore unless we contextualize it in its context of use (politics) and we offer the tools required for decoding its hidden messages. In brief, the study of how doublespeak is used to empower the self and to dis-empower the other entails taking into consideration the properties of both politics and the language of politics.

So, an adequate theory of politics to the study of how doublespeak is used to promote control should highlight all the above three points. Hence, the analysis of the corpus should take into consideration: the distinctive nature of political discourse, the specificity of its structure, and the main properties of politics and the characteristics of its language. The cornerstones of this theory will be used within the



discipline of discourse analysis, specifically the CDA approach, where the theoretical conceptions to the study of how power works among social groups are involved. Therefore, the framework to be used in the study of the topic under focus will be formed of a combination of three sorts of theories: theories of discourse analysis, theories of power, and theories of politics.

### 3. Method

The examples selected for the discussion of the topic under focus are taken from several US presidential speeches. These speeches are delivered respectively by Bush, Obama, and Trump. They are taken from different political contexts. Moreover, they are selected at random to create a kind of variety at the level of the corpus and the results to be worked out during the analysis of the explored examples. The analysis of the collected data will be based on a well-detailed method to the application of the theories discussed before.

The application of the theoretical conceptions described before in the analysis of the selected speeches is based on the use of a purely qualitative method of research. This method of data processing consists of three successive tasks. The first task seeks to trace the speakers' uses of doublespeak through the scrutiny of each text of the corpus as well as to classify the collected data into different categories. The second task is concerned with the determination of the way each traced use of doublespeak contributes to the asymmetrical distribution of power between the speaker and addressee. The third task aims at highlighting the different political agendas lying behind any resort to the empowerment of the self and the dis-empowerment of the other. Finally, the results of the analysis will be discussed and conclusions will be recapitulated to highlight the contributions of the paper as well as to shed light on its limitations so that we can leave the doors open for future debates on the issue.

### 4. Example Analysis

The examination of the texts of the selected speeches shows that doublespeak manifests itself at various levels of the speakers' language. These traces are explored via the analysis of the following examples to shed light on how Bush, Obama, and Trump used doublespeak to empower the self and to dis-empower the other while seeking to serve such personal interests. The detected strategies are dealt with using an alphabetical order.

#### 4.1 Analogy (Argumentation)

It is a reasoning strategy that politicians might resort to while seeking to highlight similarities between two things or situations by comparison. Politicians attempt to find resemblances to show to their public that a given result is inevitable if their plans for action will not be put into practice. This fact is a conclusion that the speakers reach by inference. While using inference, they follow a logical way of thinking that aims at proving a given reality or course of action. This act of proving represents a cognitive trial through which they seek to control the public's minds. This wish to control the public's ways of thinking works basically via the creation of mental images. For instance, the images that the

speakers create in the hearers' minds are designed to remind them about something real so that they can easily believe what to be said. In other words, making the public believe in the easy way implies limiting their reactions to resist the speakers' decisions. Thus, the speakers' use of analogy represents a wise strategy of reasoning that enables them to promote power to the self and to limit the power of the other. To make this result closer to the reader's mind, we cite and analyze the following example which is extracted from Bush's speech on Iraq on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

(1) [...] *I said that those who harbor terrorists are as guilty as the terrorists themselves. Saddam Hussein is harboring terrorists and the instruments of terror, the instruments of mass death and destruction, and he cannot be trusted.*

In this example, President Bush used an analogy to prove that the Iraqi President is a criminal. In reality, it seems that Mr. Bush has no proof that the Iraqi regime committed an act of terror against the US. Also, he stood unable to prove this fact to both his nation and the world so that he can go into war against this sovereign country. However, to make this fact acceptable, he resorted to the reasoning by inference. With reference to some information by the US intelligence, he highlighted that the Iraqi regime has ties with terrorists like Al-Qaeda. Based on this information, he claimed that President Saddam is guilty too. Here, Mr. Bush used this analogy to make his argument more plausible and to show that he is a sound speaker who is acting based on the use of specific information. In other words, by making his argument sound and plausible Bush gives himself more power to convince and to continue leading his plan to invade Iraq. Moreover, he succeeded to limit the public's power to resist his claimed plans for action. In other words, Bush's use of this analogy, as a means of deception, enabled him to promote more power to himself and to limit the power of the addresses on the contrary. Therefore, his trial to create an asymmetry of power between the self and the other is goal-oriented. It is goal-oriented in that it sought to prove a course of action, going into war against Iraq.

#### *4.2 Association (Equivocation)*

It is a communicative strategy that a speaker might use to create a connection between two distinct things like concepts, ideas, views, events, etc. (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; Bull & Simon-Vandenberg, 2014). In reality, this connection is at the heart of the speaker's rhetoric while arguing to prove that a given conclusion is true. This means that it is a logical way of processing ideas that the speaker resorts to so that he can convince his public to believe in what he is saying. To reach persuasion the speaker manipulates this connection in the way that enables him to highlight what he seeks to make of very prominent and more remarkable to his public. In contrast, he will leave unremarkable what might not serve for the defense of his choices. Here, the prominence that the speaker aims to create is an implicit way to demonstrate that a given fact is true. By proving the truthfulness of a given conclusion, the speaker can maintain control over his public's minds and make them ready to implement and to defend what he is planning for. In fact, the public's adherence to the speaker's decisions does not mean that what he is arguing for is logically sound. However, it is rhetorically persuasive. This persuasiveness is the result of the power of manipulation through which he

succeeded to control their thinking and to limit their tendency to resist. Thus, association becomes a strong strategy of empowerment in which the speaker manipulates the connection between distinct things to deceive his public so that he can get more power to dominate. To make this explanation closer to the readers' minds, we cite and analyze the following example which is taken from Obama's address on the UN Security Council sanctions against Iran on Jun 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

*(2) [...] So let me repeat: We recognize Iran's rights. But with those rights come responsibilities. And time and again, the Iranian government has failed to meet those responsibilities. Iran concealed a nuclear enrichment facility in Qom that raised serious questions about the nature of its program. Iran further violated its own obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions to suspend uranium enrichment. Instead, they're enriching up to 20 percent. It has failed to comply fully with IAEA's requirements. [...] That's why the international community was compelled to impose these serious consequences.*

Here, Obama made a connection between rights and responsibilities to prove that Iran's non-compliance with the UN laws compelled the world community to impose sanctions on it. On the one hand, he highlighted the international community's recognition of Iran's rights. By emphasizing this recognition, Obama sought to convey that the international community is fair, just, democratic, and respects the others' rights. On the other hand, he emphasized the need that Iran should assume its responsibilities. His insistence on the need to comply with this moral value is meant to imply that who does not assume his responsibilities should be aware about the negative consequences. Having said this, Obama moved to the statement of some examples where Iran failed to meet its responsibilities. First, he claimed that Iran is not serious about concealing its nuclear program. Second, he added that Iran violated its own obligations to suspend uranium enrichment. Third, he stressed that Iran has failed to comply fully with the IAEA's requirements. While stating these examples, Obama aimed to prove that Iran failed to assume all its responsibilities. In other words, Iran missed all opportunities to flee possible sanctions. Therefore, the association between both rights and responsibility is used to show that Iran failed to assume its responsibility and it should be punished. To defend this conclusion, Obama made a contrast between the "we" (responsible) and the "Iranians" (ir-responsible). This contrast is meant to polish the image of the world community and give it the right to impose sanctions and to distort the image of Iran to restrict its allies' power to vote against the UN decision to sanction it. Briefly, the analysis of Obama's manipulation of the connection between rights and responsibilities showed that association is a strong means of empowerment that enables the speaker to reach his ends.

#### *4.3 Binarities (Meaning)*

It is a communicative strategy based on the use of pairs of related concepts that are opposite in terms of meaning. In politics, speakers might resort to the use of binarities to give a portrait of the self and the other. In other words, they use sets of binary oppositions to represent who we are and who the other is. This lexical-based strategy of representation seeks mainly to shed light on the positive description of the self and the negative depiction of the other. While they are praising the self and minimizing the

other, the speakers are trying to get public legitimacy in a given political context. Indeed, the legitimacy they are seeking to acquire in that context is needed to prove a given course of action against the other. This means that they are looking for more power to dominate the public's minds. It is the kind of domination that they need to limit the public's tendencies to resist their choices. In brief, the use of binarities is a strategy that some speakers might find fruitful to give power to the self and to limit the power of the other. To give a concrete justification of this explanation, we cite and analyze the following examples which are taken from Bush's speeches.

(3) [...] *Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom - the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time-now depends on us.* (Bush's speech on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2001)

(4) [...] *America believes that all people are entitled to hope and human rights, to the non-negotiable demands of human dignity. People everywhere prefer freedom to slavery, prosperity to squalor, self-government to the rule of terror and torture.* (Bush's speech on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001)

(5) [...] *And the greatest power of freedom is to overcome hatred and violence, and turn the creative gifts of men and women to the pursuits of peace.* (Bush's speech on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003)

In these three examples, Bush used couples of opposite concepts to represent both the self and the other. He referred to the in-group people using words such as freedom, prosperity, self-government, and peace. In contrast, he used their opposites to refer to the out-group people. These are words like fear, slavery, squalor, rule of terror and torture, and violence. By using these binarities, Bush sought to highlight that the in-group nations are good, democratic, and successful. These characteristics have their opposites highlighted while he attempted to show that the out-group nations are savage, violent, and terrorist. In other words, Bush used this opposition of characteristics to emphasize the positive character of the self and the negative character of the other. As far as Bush's struggle to get more power is concerned, his positive representation of the self and his negative representation of the other worked to give him the right to act while reducing the public's chance to resist his claim to go into war. Indeed, by creating a negative mental image of the other on the public's minds, Bush succeeds to promote more power to himself in order to manipulate the current political context. This result is associated with the public's fear to face future possible threats, which might imply their surrender to the president's choice. To sum up, the manipulation of meaning via the use of binarities could be a wise communicative strategy that speakers might use to give more power to the self and to limit the power of the other.

#### 4.4 Contrast (Syntax)

It is a communicative strategy used to show difference between two things, people, situations, etc. Using such a syntactic structure to convey the meaning of contrast, the speaker seeks to deny a given reality in order to emphasize another reality that is more important for the pursuing of his course of action. In other words, the negation of the reality claimed in the first part of the sentence and the highlight of the reality claimed in its second part is a rhetorical strategy that the speaker uses to convince his public that the second reality is inevitable. Indeed, the inevitability of this conclusion represents the peak of the speaker's rhetoric. It is the moment during which the speaker can get control

over the public's minds and their ways of thinking about what is going on in their social context and what the speaker is planning to do. This kind of control is goal-oriented because it serves and defends only one way of thinking and acting. Hence, it is a strategy that enables the speaker to get more power to plan and to act while it reduces the public's chance to resist his plans and actions. In order to explain the theoretical conception of how contrast is manipulated to empower the self and dis-empower the other, we cite and analyze the following example which is extracted from Bush's address to a joint session of congress and the American people on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2001.

(6) *The course of action is not known, yet its outcome is certain.*

In this example, Bush created a contrast between the course of his action and its outcome. The linguistic analysis of the relation between the two parts of this statement shows that he denied the certainty of his course of action while emphasizing the certainty of its result. In reality, the binarity of 'denial vs. emphasis' he used represents a rhetorical strategy he resorted to in order to convince his public that victory should be taken for granted. The claim that the result of the action to be taken – victory – is guaranteed makes the public feel less agitated about the bad consequences of the war. Hence, it serves to reduce their tendency to face and resist Bush's decision to go into war. This act of reducing the other's desire to resist will give Bush more chance to dominate the public sphere and to materialize his decisions on the ground. In other words, by shedding light on this positive result, Bush gave himself more power to prove his claim for war. Instead, he showed a strong intension towards the reduction of his people's chance to resist his claim. Briefly, the manipulative use of contrast is a political strategy to extend the gap of power between the speaker and the hearer.

#### 4.5 Direct Address (Rhetoric)

It is a communicative strategy that a speaker uses to convey a direct message to the hearer. To address his hearer directly, the speaker might use a name, a nickname, a pronoun, or etc. This resort to direct address seeks to serve many functions such as attracting the hearer's attention, creating intimacy between the speaker and his addressees, etc. By serving these functions, the use of direct address enables the speaker to get control over his public through making them listen carefully to what he is saying. Indeed, having the addressees listen with attention to what is going to be said helps the speaker to persuade them easily, mislead them, and make them share and defend his opinions and actions. Moreover, while trying to create intimacy with his addressees, the speaker seeks to reduce their tendency to react and resist his claims to act. In other words, the speaker is struggling to get more power so that he can control his public's reactions, their ways of thinking, and their behaviors. Therefore, while being used to persuade and mislead, direct address is used to promote more power to the speaker to dominate the public and to reduce the power of the hearer in order to limit the degree of their resistance. To explain how direct address works in political discourse to give more power to the speaker and to reduce the power of the hearer, we cite and analyze the following example which is taken from Bush's war ultimatum speech from the cross hall in the white house on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

(7) [...] *Many Iraqis can hear me tonight in a translated radio broadcast, and I have a message for them.*

*If we must begin a military campaign, it will be directed against the lawless men who rule your country and not against you. As our coalition takes away their power, we will deliver the food and medicine you need. We will tear down the apparatus of terror and we will help you to build a new Iraq that is prosperous and free.*

Here, Bush addressed the Iraqi people directly via the use of the noun “Iraqis” and the pronoun “you”. In this direct call he sought to achieve two different but complementary communicative functions. First, he aimed to create a division between the Iraqi regime and his people by highlighting that America is going into war against the regime and not the people. Second, he tried to get intimacy with the Iraqi people by denying the fact that he will attack them, promising to deliver the food and medicine they need, and claiming to remove fear and help them build a free and more prosperous state. These two objectives are complementary in that they help Bush manipulate the Iraqi people in order to convince them not to defend a regime that he depicted lawless and to welcome his project of freedom, democracy, and prosperity. The main objective of his misleading is to polish the image of the colonizer and make of him the savior and to tarnish the image of the colonized and make of him the cause of all bad deeds. By doing this, Bush sought to give more power to himself as a speaker in order to maintain control over the Iraqis’ opinions and behaviors. Also, he tried to reduce the power of the regime by misrepresenting it and that of the Iraqi people by making of them friends of the US in order to reduce the degree of their reactions and may be to reduce their resistance to the coalition’s forces later on. Hence, Bush’s use of direct address is a rhetorical strategy through which he sought to mislead the Iraqi people for the sake of getting more power to dominate the scene and to destabilize the other’s power to resist.

#### *4.6 Implication (Pragmatics)*

It is a communicative strategy that the speaker might use to convey indirectly what he does not like to state in a direct way for a purpose or another. For instance, by implying meaning the speaker seeks to protect himself from the reactions of the addressees that might take place in case of delivering the message directly. In other words, while stating what can please his addressees and mystify what cannot please them, the speaker seeks to draw a positive image of the self on the hearers’ minds. This positive image is required to communicate the hearers’ feelings and make them feel closer to the speaker. By reducing the space between himself and his hearers the speaker aims to get more power to control his public so that he can easily convince them and affect their opinions and behaviors. This control of the mind works mainly to reduce people’s tendency to resist the speaker’s decisions and his claimed plan to act in a given context. Therefore, the speaker’s manipulation of what to say and what to imply is a strategy to get power over the public and to reduce their power to say no for his choices to act. To show how implication is used to deceive the audience for the sake of dominating them and make them surrender to the claimed decisions, we cite and analyze the following example which is extracted from Bush’s war ultimatum speech from the cross hall in the white house on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

(8) [...] *the world has engaged in 12 years of diplomacy. We have passed more than a dozen resolutions in the United Nations Security Council. We have sent hundreds of weapons inspectors to oversee the*

*disarmament of Iraq. Our good faith has not been returned.*

Bush resorted to the use of implication to convey to his public that going into war against Iraq has become an inevitable action. By highlighting the inevitability of the action, Bush sought to convince his public that he did not choose to go into war, yet he found himself obliged to face the threat of the Iraqi regime. In other words, going into war has become a national duty and not a political choice. Having reached this conclusion, Bush aimed to falsify reality as well as to deceive his public for the sake of maintaining control over their minds. This attempt to reign over the public's minds is a political strategy that aims to re-shape their opinions about the war against Iraq and to affect the way they will respond to his political claim. In reality, Bush's struggle to affect the public's ways of thinking and behaving via the use of deception represents a political desire towards domination. His desire to promote more power to the self works simultaneously with his eagerness to limit the power of the public to resist and to react harshly against his choice. To limit his public tendency to face his decisions, Bush resorted to the deception of reality and the mystification of the truth. Therefore, the use of implication served to hide the double standard nature of Bush's language while seeking to justify his claim to invade Iraq in 2003. Also, it enabled him to promote more power to the self to succeed to lead the war and to reduce the power of the other in order not to vote for the rejection his claim to act.

#### *4.7 Incorrect Terminology (Anthropology)*

The phrase incorrect terminology is the opposite of that of correct terminology. While the use of the correct definitions of terms means conveying clear messages, the use of the incorrect meaning of terms represents a conscious way to deceive and mislead. For instance, politicians usually resort to the use of incorrect terminology to falsify reality and to mislead their public. The speaker's desire to mislead is an attempt to hide the messages that might violate universal values, laws, etc. It is a way to hide one's ideologies and agendas for the sake of fleeing harsh critique and may be punishment. In other words, what the speaker seeks to convey and the goals he aims to achieve are there; however, these are expressed in such a deceptive way. Here, deception is a strategy that the speaker might resort to in order to make their choices more acceptable on the part of his public and to reduce any possible chance for confrontation or resistance. This means that the use of incorrect terminology becomes a strategy to save one's face by making the inappropriate seem to be appropriate. If he succeeded to do so, the speaker will get the adequate power that enables him to maintain control over his public's minds. Also, it is the power that will enable him to put into practices his choices and plans for action. Having this in mind, we can say that the use of incorrect terminology represents another strategy of empowerment in the discursive practice of language. To prove the validity of this conclusion we cite and analyse the following examples which are extracted from Trump's speech to the UN General Assembly in September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

(9) [...] *We 've started the construction of a major border wall, and we have greatly strengthened border security.*

(10) [...] *We had highly productive conversations and meetings, and we agreed that it was in both*

*countries' interest to pursue the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Since that meeting, we have already seen a number of encouraging measures that few could have imagined only a short time ago.*

(11) [...] *We ask all nations to isolate Iran's regime as long as its aggression continues. And we ask all nations to support Iran's people as they struggle to reclaim their religious and righteous destiny.*

(12) [...] *The United States has just announced tariffs on another \$200 billion in Chinese-made goods for a total, so far, of \$250 billion. I have great respect and affection for my friend, President Xi, but I have made clear our trade imbalance is just not acceptable. China's market distortions and the way they deal cannot be tolerated.*

In these examples, things are not named by their correct terminology. However, Trump made use of incorrect terminology to defend his choices in such local and international matters that are related to the US security, talks with North Korea, tension with Iran, and war trade with China.

In (9), he referred to the 'border wall' that the US started constructing on its borders with Mexico using the expression 'border security'. His use of this expression is meant to hide his ideology of bigotry and hatred towards the other. In reality, Trump's bigotry was at the cross roads of many critiques and platform debates since the start of his electoral campaign. Being aware of that and of its impact on his personal image as a president, Trump resorted to the use of his America first rhetoric. Border security, which is one of the sensitive issues in the US, is being used as a euphemism to empower Trump's claims to stop the entry of foreign nations. By using this expression, he will get the legitimacy to stop migration from other countries under the cover of his duties, as a president of the US, to do whatever can protect his citizens from foreign threat. In other words, he will get the adequate power that enables him to convince his public that the construction of the wall is the right choice to protect the US from any potential danger. Hence, Trump resorted to the use of the incorrect definition of words to defend the construction of the wall. It is under the name of border security he did so in order to be away from being accused by hatred. This takes place through the distortion of reality and the mystification of the bigoted ideology lying behind his claim to build the wall.

In (10), he used the expression 'productive conversations' as a euphemism for 'productive summit'. In reality, these two expressions serve two different meanings the determination of which could reveal the deceptive nature of using one phrase instead of another. First, the phrase 'productive conversations' means that Trump succeeded to maintain a good relation with the Korean leader and to convince him to give up his nuclear program. Second, the phrase "productive summit" means that the summit was well-organized and that all parties have participated in its success. This gap of meaning between the definitions of these expressions highlights that Trump used the first expression instead of the second to attribute the success of the summit to his person. However, he could have said a "productive summit" to reward the collective efforts of the organizing community. This implies that Trump has used the incorrect terminology to serve such political ends. His use of the incorrect expression is goal-oriented in that it is meant to glorify his person and to show his ability to deal with such problematic issues that the previous US presidents did not succeed to deal with. This desire to praise the self is an attempt to



manipulate the public and to convince them that he is the leader who puts America's interests first and then acts in the way that can preserve these interests. Therefore, Trump's use of the incorrect terminology represents an attempt to get more power. It is the power that will enable him to put his political views about local and international issues into practice.

In (11), Trump called the "interference" in Iran's local affairs as the "support" of the Iranians who are "struggling to reclaim their religious and righteous destiny. Trump's call to support the Iranians to defend their rights is the explicit message. However, the implicit message is to provoke the Iranians and to make them revolt against their state. This message represents an indirect attempt to remove a regime that the US and its allies viewed as an aggressive one and they failed to convince it to stop Uranium enrichment. By hiding the illegal meaning of the message (intervention) and expressing its legal one (support), Trump sought to create a kind of division between the Iranian regime and its people without being accused by the fact of calling for the instability of a sovereign state. Here, Trump succeeded to convey what he is seeking to convey by using the incorrect definition of the term of "support" while saving face from being accused by the violation of the UN laws. In other words, Trump's use of one term instead of another is a strategy to manipulate what to convey and what to imply (implicitness/explicitness) for the sake of serving such political goals. This manipulation of meaning seeks mainly to enable the speaker to affect the political scene in Iran. Also, it seeks to reduce the power of the regime to resist the US power by widening the gap between it and its people. Thus, by using 'support' instead of 'intervention' Trump got the power and the legitimacy to address the Iranians to defend their rights with the support of the world community.

In (12), Trump used the phrase 'market distortion' instead of 'market invasion' to highlight the impact of China's violation of the WTO's principles on the US trade imbalance. In reality, his change of one expression by another is meant to prove the legitimacy of the new tariffs that the US announced on Chinese-made goods. Indeed, China has invaded markets across the globe with its various goods and proved to be competitive and able to invade more markets. This is something legal and each state has the right to be competitive and to invade more markets. However, what is illegal is to violate the trade principles of the WTO. In order for Trump to show that what China is doing is not legal, he resorted to the use of the expression "market distortion". In other words, China is not invading the markets in such a legal way. In contrast, it is doing so in an illegal way that according to Trump violates the trade agreements. This implies that imposing more taxes on its goods is a legal political decision to protect the US economy. This ultimate conclusion that Trump sought to reach is worked out through the investigation of the huge gap of meaning between both concepts "invasion" and "distortion". While the first is legal, the second is illegal. Therefore, Trump emphasized the illegality of China's practices to get the sympathy of the world community and the support of his public to prove the validity of the need to apply the newly announced tariffs. Also, he sought to reduce China's ability to resist and to react against his taxes as well as to reduce its chance to get supporters from the world community since it is accused by the fact of violating the WTO principles. Hence, Trump made use of the incorrect

expression to get the adequate power that enables him to put into practices his plans for new tariffs on the Chinese products.

To sum up, the analysis of these examples proved that Trump made use of incorrect concepts each time to distort reality. His distortion of reality was meant to make of the context serve for the adoption of the claimed decisions. Indeed, the analysis of the huge gap of meaning between the expression that should be used and the one he used instead of it showed that changing meaning was one of the strategies he relies on to justify a given claim. It is a way to save his face from harsh critiques and resistance while claiming such claims that might seem to be unacceptable. His attempt to save his face works mainly by means of the implicitness/explicitness technique. For instance, he conveys what he views as legal and polite; however, he implies what he views as illegal and can bring him a possible harm. In other words, by fleeing confrontation and avoiding the fact of being charged with the violation of the UN laws, Trump got the power to convince and to act. Hence, the use of incorrect terminology is another way of empowering the self while reducing the harm of the other.

#### *4.8 Mis-Representation (Representation)*

It is a strategy that the speaker might resort to in order to highlight the negative side of the other's character. In general, it is about giving false and misleading information to depict the counterpart. This act of giving deceptive and misleading ideas about the other is ideologically monitored in that it seeks to tarnish the other's image. By distorting the image of the other, the speaker seeks to reduce his admission on the part of the public. In contrast, it works to give more prominence to the speaker's character so that he can receive more admission on the part of his public. Also, it aims to reduce the public's tendency to face and resist the decisions that the speaker made against the other. In reality, the speaker's attempt to minimize the image of the other and to amplify the image of the self seeks mainly to give more power to the self in order to control the public's thinking and behavior. This kind of control works mainly through the creation of mental images on the minds of the public. These images are used to re-shape reality in the way that serves the speaker's personal and political objectives. Therefore, mis-representation represents a communicative strategy that the speaker might use while looking for domination. In order to explain how misrepresentation serves for the empowerment of the self and the dis-empowerment of the other, we cite and analyze the following example which is extracted from Trump's CPAC speech at the conservative political action conference on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018.

(13) [...] *Just for the media, the fake news back there, they took very good care of him. They were very gentle. He was very obnoxious. It was only one person. So we have thousands of people here. So, listen, tomorrow the headline will be protesters disturb the Trump—one person, folks. Doesn't deserve a mention. Doesn't deserve a headline. The headline tomorrow, disrupters of CPAC. One person. And he was very nice. We looked at him, he immediately left. Okay. Now, I've heard it too often.*

While addressing his public in this speech, Trump attacked the media by using some negative expressions such as “fake news” and “very obnoxious”. He used these expressions aiming to draw a

negative image of the media on the minds of his public. This image is required to reduce the impact of the media on the Americans' thinking about him and his policies. In reality, the media attacked Trump for the sexist, bigoted, and xenophobic statements he made in his speeches and interviews. For this reason, he resorted to the negative qualification of the media to show its alignment and its dishonesty in reporting and depicting reality. His trial to distort the picture of the media highlights his strong desire to polish his personal image on the part of his public. By doing this Trump aimed to show to his public that he is a good leader who is the victim of the biased reports of the conspiring media. Being in the position of the victim gives Trump the power to deny what the media reports about his racist ideologies and his hatred of the other. This implies that he is seeking to make of himself a good patriot whose goal is to re-build America away from being racist or aligning to one race and not another. In other words, Trump's minimization of the image of the media and his amplification of the image of the self represent a personal struggle to limit its power to guide the public minds and to increase his power to materialize his policies. So, Trump resorts to the misrepresentation of the media to convince his public that what they read as headlines and news are biased and have no ties to reality. Hence, he tried to defeat the media by getting control over his public.

#### *4.9 Softening Meaning (Politeness)*

By softening the meaning of words and expressions, the speaker seeks to be less aggressive. In reality, the speaker's attempt to reduce the aggressivity of his language in a given context is a way to show politeness. Here, politeness is not that of showing respect, instead, it is that of saving face. It is a way to save one's face in that it helps the speaker to avoid such possible confrontation with his hearers, especially in difficult situations where the hearer's tendency to react and to resist is high. For instance, in the context of crisis, where effective decisions should be taken to overcome the existing difficulties, the speaker might resort to the use of a soft language in order to make his decisions welcomed on the part of his public. At this level, language is softened; however, the content the speaker seeks to convey is the same and the actions to be performed are the same as well. This means that using a soft language is a way to distort reality without changing one's plans and objectives. It is a way of deceiving and misleading in that the softening of language is meant to manipulate the hearers' minds and to make them accept what they might not accept if it is expressed in such an aggressive way. Hence, the softening of meaning becomes a way of polishing and making what is viewed as aggressive and unwelcomed seems to be polite and acceptable. In Brief, by changing the public's views towards reality and giving the speaker the chance to dominate, the softening of meaning becomes a good strategy of empowerment. In order to make the way the strategy of softening meaning works to empower the speaker and dis-empower the hearer for the sake of achieving such personal objectives, we cite and analyze the following example which is take from Obama's address to the nation on Libya on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

(14) [...] *And so at my direction, America led an effort with our allies at the United Nations Security Council to pass a historic resolution that authorized a no-fly zone to stop the regime's attacks from the*

*air, and further authorized all necessary measures to protect the Libyan people.*

(15) [...] *I refused to let that happen. And so nine days ago, after consulting the bipartisan leadership of Congress, I authorized military action to stop the killing and enforce U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973.*

In these examples, Obama softened meaning to prove to his public that the US's interference in Libya is a response to humanitarian duties to save people and to stop Gaddafi's aggression. His change of aggressive words and expressions with soft ones served to distort reality for the sake of controlling the public's thinking about his decisions to act and limiting their power to criticize. This falsification of reality is detected, analysed, and interpreted as follows.

In example (14), he used the expression "a no-fly zone" instead of saying "air strikes". Here, he softened meaning to show to his public that the US is there to protect the people from the regime's attacks from the air and not in war against the regime. The false and distorted reality that he created by using politeness becomes more effective with his emphasis on the leading role of the US. This emphasis works to serve two main functions. First, the US is not the only nation to respond to the Libyan people's appeal for rescue. However, it works in consistence with its allies and friends under the UN laws. This implies that the US is not acting illegally, but it acts in a legal way. Second, the US will not take the burden of the costs of intervention. Instead, it leads the world community's efforts to save the innocent people of Libya, which means that there are other nations who will pay the bills of this intervention. By conveying this message, Obama aimed to reassure his public, who are against bearing any further costs of military intervention, that the US will not pay. This reassurance is meant to calm the public and to make them less motivated to resist. Having the reality that the public are less agitated to confront his decision gives Obama more freedom to act and to pursue his political interests in the region. To sum up, these two functions proved that Obama used soft language to save his face from the harshness of the critiques of his public. This means that he changed a word or an expression with other, which is less aggressive, to manipulate his public for the sake of dominating them, affecting their ways of thinking, and limiting their power to resist.

In example (15), he replaced the aggressive concept of "war" by a less aggressive expression "military action". This softening of meaning was meant to convince the public that the US's intervention in Libya will not take much time, yet it will take just few days to end Gaddafi's aggression. The deception that Obama sought to create on his public's minds by using a soft language becomes more persuasive with his emphasis on the goals of his intervention which are: to end killing and to enforce the UN laws. This implies that the US is not invading Libya nor killing its citizens. However, it works to enforce what the world community voted for. By emphasizing these ends, Obama succeeded to distort reality and to hide the US's political interests in Libya as well as its elites' desire to remove an old enemy from power. It is the enemy that the Americans sought to remove since years before. In other words, there exists a big gap between what Obama sought to convey and what reality is. This implies that language is softened in the way that serves to completely change reality. It is a change that aims to reduce the

degree of the other's critique and to offer a better image of the self. I mean an image that is able to give him the power to continue acting and to reach his desired political ends. Thus, Obama used a soft expression to save his face from being accused to lead an imperial act in Libya and to deny the existence of any political goals more than saving lives and enforcing the UN Security Council resolution 1973. His highlight of this noble aim was meant to reduce the public's power to clash his interference in an independent state.

To recapitulate, the analysis of these two examples proved that softening language is a good communicative strategy to distort reality. It is the kind of distortion that aims mainly to save the speaker's face by reducing the other's motivation to resist and giving the self more chance to dominate. Here, domination works through controlling the social context by means of re-shaping reality in the way that makes the other believe in what the speaker is saying and gives the speaker the power to carry on working on his plans. Hence, once being used to save face and not to show respect, politeness could be viewed as a strong means of empowerment.

#### *4.10 Stretching Meaning (Style)*

The stretching of something refers to the act of making it longer. In the same sense of the term, the stretching of the meaning of words refers to the extension of their definitions to make of them floating and fuzzy. In reality, some speakers might resort to the extension of the meaning of some concepts while seeking to make their addressees puzzled and unable to grasp what is meant by what they are saying. For instance, Lynch (2006) showed that by extending the meaning of the notion of 'warfare' it has become difficult to define what actions a person might engage in without constituting warfare. This fuzziness of the borders between what constitutes warfare and what does not is ideologically monitored to deceive and to mislead the public. In other words, by making his public unable to differentiate between what is false and what is true, the speaker seeks to make of them believe easily in what he is saying since he became the only part who possess the truth in that context. The fact of putting one-self in the position of a decider who knows about what the right action is gives the speaker the power to reign over his public. In contrast, it limits the public's power to criticize and resist what the speaker said or what decisions he will take. To sum up, the stretching of meaning is another manifestation of double-speak that the speaker might resort to while seeking to get more power to dominate his public and make them adhere to his claims. To make clear how the stretching of meaning serves as a means of empowerment in political discourse, we cite and analyze the following example which is taken from Obama's Address on ISIS in September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

*(16) [...] So ISIL poses a threat to the people of Iraq and Syria, and the broader Middle East — including American citizens, personnel and facilities. If left unchecked, these terrorists could pose a growing threat beyond that region, including to the United States. While we have not yet detected specific plotting against our homeland, ISIL leaders have threatened America and our allies. Our Intelligence Community believes that thousands of foreigners—including Europeans and some Americans—have joined them in Syria and Iraq. Trained and battle-hardened, these*

*fighters could try to return to their home countries and carry out deadly attacks.*

In this example, Obama resorted to the extension of the meaning of the notion of “threat” to prove his claim for the need to confront the ISIS. He started from the basic definition of the term to reach its extended comprehension. On the one hand, he expressed the basic meaning of the term by stating directly the ISIS’s threat to America and its allies (threatened). On the other hand, he stretched the definition of the term to cover the acts of: plotting, welcoming foreigners, training fighters, and carrying out deadly attacks. First, the fact that these terrorists are plotting against the nations of the region implies that they will threaten the US’s homeland one day if they are left unchecked. Though Obama denied the existence of any plot against the US, he insisted that the US should confront the growing threat of the ISIS. Second, by saying that these groups are welcoming more people from across the globe, Obama aimed to show that their threat is growing and that there should be a collective act to stop it. Third, these groups are training more and more fighters which means that their ability to act becomes higher. In other words, if there will be no plan to check them, we might not be able to predict their ability to harm and when they can act. Fourth, the fear that these fighters will get back to their countries and carry deadly attacks before being confronted and defeated will increase the degree of their harm. In brief, Obama extended the notion of “threat” in the way that makes the Americans unable to check if they are threatened or not. By creating this confusion, Obama sought to get more power to convince his public to go into war against ISIS and to reduce their power to resist his claim.

## **5. Concluding Remarks**

This paper offered a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of the issue of empowerment in the political use of doublespeak. It made use of three different theories—theories of discourse analysis, theories of power, and theories of politics—in order to: first, trace how doublespeak manifests itself in the three speakers’ speeches. Second, show how speakers use doublespeak to promote more power to the self and to reduce the power of the other. Third, determine the political ends which stand behind any traced use of doublespeak. Indeed, these three theories are combined in accordance with the nature of the topic and the needs of the problematics it raises to be answered. Taking into consideration these two reasons, a combination of all these three theories has become a theoretical need for an effective approach.

The theory of discourse analysis we used here is defined while taking into consideration the nature of the concept under question. According to the existing literature, doublespeak is a multi-disciplinary phenomenon that could be traced at various levels of the language in use. Therefore, the theory to be used for its study should be multi-disciplinary in nature otherwise it will not be adequate to analyse the selected speeches and to reach such good results. We said a multi-disciplinary theory of discourse analysis so that we can detect all the traces of this multi-disciplinary phenomenon at the various levels of the selected texts. It is also aimed to guarantee that we will end up having a well-detailed critique of the issue. This theory finds its ground in the CDA approach to language. It is the approach in which the

combination of theories across disciplines is allowed at any time we feel that the existing approaches will not be adequate to solve a given problematic and that we need to add such a new theory. Hence, the application of this theory entails going through out the texts to trace the manifestations of doublespeak. This task represents the first step of the method we used in this study.

The theory of power we used takes into consideration three main points of the definition of the term: power is enacted through language, power is of different types, and power is enacted to serve different goals. These points dictated a three-step strategy to the examination of how power works in a given text: on the one hand, we determined how each example of double-speak served for the asymmetrical distribution of power between the speaker and the hearer. On the other hand, we highlighted the sort of power the speaker activated in each example. Then, we made clear the goals any activated sort of power served to achieve. Moreover, these three points are related to other concepts—such as context, knowledge, and access—that are crucial in the study of how power works in languages use. Therefore, the application of this theory needs scanning each example of doublespeak apart to reveal how power is distributed, what sort of power is activated, and for what purpose. This task represents the second step of the method we used in this study.

The theory of politics we used in this combination takes into consideration the distinctive characteristics of political discourse. First, we recapitulated the basic conceptions forming the definition of political discourse (simple and complex). We also questioned the nature of the relation between both the speaker and the addressee to understand how doublespeak works in the world of politics. Second, we focused on the discussion of the specificity of the structure of political discourse to show how speakers use such structures in a given context to defend a specific end. In other words, the exploration of political discourse structure needs taking into account the properties of the political context of that discourse. Third, we capitalized the characteristic features of political language by emphasizing the specificity of the domain of politics and shedding light on the properties of the language used within this domain. These two axes helped us understand how to decode hidden messages in a discourse of falsification, distortion, legitimization, etc. where meaning is complex, elastic, vague, biased, etc. In brief, the application of this theory serves to make clear where bias manifests itself to shed light on the political propaganda it works to defend. This task represents the third step of the method we used in this study

The application of the combination of these theories showed that speakers, in the domain of politics, usually use doublespeak to create an asymmetry of power between them and their hearers. This unjust distribution of power takes place through the distortion of reality. It is by re-shaping the social context and making of it serves for the adoption of the speaker's choices. This manipulation of power works through promoting more power to the self in order to reign and control and limiting the power of the public to reduce their tendency for resistance. This attempt to dis-empower the hearer works mainly to make of him easily convinced and adhere directly to what the speaker is saying. Here, convincing the hearer does not mean that the speaker's argument is logically sound; however, it is rhetorically

persuasive. The fact that the speaker uses doublespeak to make the illogical seem to be logical and convincing proves that it is a strong means of argumentation. Indeed, persuasion works mainly through the domination of the other's mind for the sake of legalizing what the speaker seeks to legalize while aiming to achieve a such given political objective. Briefly, doublespeak is proved to be a political tool of empowerment, legalization, persuasion, and justification.

By highlighting these theoretical and practical conclusions, it becomes clear that the present paper brought such valuable contributions. These contributions can be fruitful for researches in politics, political discourse analysis, theories of power, face saving theories, pragmatics, argumentation theories, etc. It is fruitful in that it offers them a good theoretical background to the study of power and empowerment in the discursive use of language. It also offered them a simple method of research to trace the uses of doublespeak, explaining how it works to create an asymmetry of power between the speaker and the addressee, and determine the objectives it serves. However, despite bringing these valuable contributions, the paper might suffer some limitations like the diversity of the sources of the examples. Here, we used US presidential speeches delivered by Bush, Obama, and Trump. Instead, we could have used speeches from other political contexts in the world. Though limitations are there, they haven't affected the quality of research in this paper since the study has reached valuable conclusions on how doublespeak works to empower the self and dis-empower the other. In brief, the limitations are limited in comparison with the paper's contributions. But, their statement could be a good step for the stimulation of future researches on the topic.

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