A Study on Engagement Resources in Concession Addresses

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Abstract: Drawing on the system of Engagement within the Appraisal Theory, the author carries out an analysis of engagement resources which are used for aligning putative addressee in concession addresses by U.S. presidential candidates. The results show that U.S. presidential candidates tend to close down dialogic space to make their authorial voices more warrantable with Dialogic Contraction resources (60.09%) are almost 1.5 times as many as Dialogic Expansion resources.

Key words: engagement, expansion, contraction, concession address

1. Introduction

Functioning to express statesmen's political views and ideas, political addresses have always been a central concern of discourse analysis. Political addresses, such as campaign addresses, inaugural addresses and victory addresses are much in favor with discourse analysts and many studies have been conducted on them. Nevertheless, the studies on concession addresses which are an integral part of political addresses are rather rare. In effect, concession addresses serve as a great political arena in which the defeated graciously acknowledge the loss and congratulate the winners to show their magnanimity. Since the election of United States of America catches attention around the globe, the significance of concession addresses by U.S. presidential candidates should not be underestimated. Against this background, the author, based on the Engagement system of Appraisal Theory, addresses the engagement resources deployed by U.S. presidential candidates.

2. An Overview of Engagement System

Martin's Appraisal Systems consists of three main systems: Attitude, Engagement and Graduation. This paper focuses on the system of Engagement concerning the diversity of voices in discourse. Originating from Bakhtin's (1981) dialogism that all modes of communication, be it spoken or written, are dialogic, Engagement characterizes the diversity and interplay of voices in the discourse. As two subsystems of Engagement system, Mono-glossia bears no other voices or opinions except the authorial voice (Martin & White, 2005, p. 98); Hetero-glossia invites other voices to carry on a dialogue by means of Expansion and Contraction (Martin & White, 2005, p. 102).

2.1 Mono-glossia

Monoglossia invites no other voice, the typical text of which is Encyclopedia. The statements like "*The*

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humps of a camel are used to store food and fat instead of water." can be seen as monoglossic in that it makes no reference to other voices or viewpoints.

2.2 Hetero-glossia

Hetero-glossia means that writers/speakers invite other voices to interact with putative addressees, directly or indirectly. Two parts constitute Heteroglossia: Dialogic Expansion which is used to open up dialogic space for alternative stances as well as Dialogic Contraction which is used to ward off other voices for argument.

Dialogic Expansion can be realized by **Entertain** which is typically realized by modal verbs and **Attribute** which consists of two strategies: **Acknowledge** and **Distance**. Both Acknowledge and Distance are the introduction of external voices to shift the responsibility to others.

Dialogic contraction closes down dialogue by **Disclaim** which directly rejects other dialogic voices and **Proclaim** which foregrounds the writer/speaker's voice, thus overwhelming other voices.

3. Research Design

This study collects 5 U.S. concession addresses from 2000, Albert Arnold Gore, to 2016, Hillary Diane Rod-ham Clinton as the corpus given that a complete set of data about them is available online. The transcripts of the concession addresses of the defeated presidential candidates are retrieved from official websites of Times and Washington post. This study attempts to conduct an analysis of how engagement resources are strategically deployed to forge solidarity with the audience. Research questions are listed as follows:

(1) What is the overall distribution of engagement resources in concession addresses?

(2) Why are the engagement resources so distributed in concession addresses?

(3) How do defeated U.S. presidential candidates use different engagement resources to forge solidarity with the audience?

4. Results and Discussion

Engagement analyses how authorial voice interacts with other voices in the discourse. There are two ways of realizing Engagement: Monoglossic utterances refer to the undialogised utterances and Hereto-glossic utterances refer to those dialogic utterances which permit the co-existence of diversified stances/voice (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 97–104). As two realization modes of Engagement: **Expansion** allows more space for alternative voices while **Contraction** allows less space for debate (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 102–104). The distribution and proportion of engagement resources of presidential candidates are listed respectively in Table 1.

Table 1　Frequency and Proportion of Engagement Resources

Engagement Resources	Contraction		Expansion			sum
	Disclaim	Proclaim	Entertain	Attribute		
				Acknowledge	Distance	
Total number	100	31	77	6	4	218
Total percentage	45.87%	14.22%	35.32%	2.75%	1.84%	
	60.09%		39.91%			100%

As shown in Table 1, the percentage of contraction resources (60.09%) ranks much higher than that of expansion resources (39.91%). Furthermore, in each concession address, every presidential nominee uses more

contraction resources than expansion resources. It proves that more dialogic contraction strategies than dialogic expansion strategies are used in concession addresses.

4.1 Realization of Expansion in Concession Addresses

Expansion acknowledges diversified stances in the dialogic backdrop by two means: **Entertain** which is typically realized by modal verbs (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 104–105) and **Attribute** which is typically realized by report words (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 111–113). In the five concession addresses, all of presidential candidates use a great number of expansion resources to expand dialogic space.

4.1.1 Entertain

It is evidently showed in the above Table 1, entertainment resources make up the largest proportion in the expansive resources, accounting for 90.59%. In concession address modal verbs are the most frequently-used expressions to show a range of potentially alternative positions. These modal verbs have no bearing on presidential candidates' knowledge but to open the dialogue. In such cases, modal verbs are utilized to construe a dialogic backdrop rather than to convey a sense of uncertainty (Martin & White, 2005, p. 106). See concrete examples of Entertain:

Example 1:

I don't know **[Entertain]** what more we could have done to try to win this election, (McCain's address).

Example 2:

I so wish **[Entertain]** that I had been able to fulfill your hopes to lead the country in a different direction. (Romney's address)

Examples 1 and 2 express presidential candidates' inscribed regretful feelings. By means of inscribed entertainment resources such as I wish or I don't know, the subjectivity of presidential candidates gets strongly and explicitly foregrounded. Entertainment evaluates the internal voice of the author as the source, e.g., I believe, in my eyes (Martin & White, 2005, p. 111). The locutions like I wish or I don't know usually express addressers' hopes or knowledge. Nevertheless, from the point of diaglossia, these mental verbs (think, wish, know, etc.) serve to expand dialogue space for multiple voices. In examples 1 and 2, presidential candidates conveyed their hopes for different outcomes. Henceforth, these locutions acknowledge alternative stances and voices. In effect, presidential candidates invite other voices to engage in to construe a heterglossic setting with the purpose of showing respect for other voices and opinions. Normally the audience at variance over the same issue is theoretically not uncommon. Acknowledgement of alternative stances and voices, to some extent, contributes to showing the audience their value and respect for various voices and stances.

Example 3:

Until the days ahead, we must **[Entertain]** find common cause. We must **[Entertain]** join in common effort without remorse or recrimination, without anger or rancor......we must **[Entertain]** stand together and succeed in Iraq and win the war on terror (Kerry's address).

In the above example, Kerry try to forge solidarity with audience in virtue of first-person plural (we). By using inclusive pronoun "we",Kerry subconsciously assume the audience are in line with them, asking them to participate in the advocated activities. Moreover, Kerry evokes persuasiveness and consent from audience by virtue of a repetition of syntactic patterns ("we must" [three times]) and semantic parallelism.

4.1.2 Attribute

Without obvious indication of alignment or dealignment between authorial voice and external voices,

Attribute can be divided into Acknowledge and Distance (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 111–114). See concrete examples of Attribute:

Example 4:

Almost a century and a half ago, <u>Sen. Stephen Douglas told Abraham Lincoln,</u> **[Acknowledge]**who had just defeated him for the presidency," Partisan feeling must yield to patriotism (Gore's address).

Gore reproduces a previous conversation of precedent presidential candidates, which incorporates engagement features into his answer to his own defeat in the presidency. In this example, Gore deploys an attribution strategy to show a kind of "Authoritative speech" (Gal & Woolard, 1995) through the words of Sen. Stephen Douglas. Two influential historical figures (Sen. Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln) are cited here to talk about partisan feeling and patriotism. Through attribution strategy, dialogue space is opened up, and Gore invites other voices to carry on a dialogue.

4.2 Realization of Contraction in Concession Addresses

Indicated from the Table 1, contraction resources are not less than expansion resources at all. It can be explained that presidential candidates tend to close down dialogic space to make their authorial voices more warrantable. Restriction of dialogic space can be achieved by two options: Disclaim and Proclaim (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 117–118).

Disclaim is realized by two resources: Deny and Counter (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 118–121). Both of them serve to challenge the anticipated reactions and prior positions. Table 2 shows the distribution of Disclaim resources in concession addresses.

Table 2   Distribution of Disclaim Resources

	Disclaim		sum
	Deny	Counter	
Total number	64	36	100
Total percent	64%	36%	100%

4.2.1 Deny

As Table 2 shows, Deny is widely employed in concession addresses. Deny takes up the largest proportion in the disclaim resources, occupying 64% in concession addresses. Dialogically speaking, deny is a resource of opposition to prior proposition that it has been introduced. See concrete examples of Deny:

Example 1:

Americans <u>never</u> [Deny] *quit. We <u>never</u>* [Deny] *surrender. We <u>never</u>* [Deny] *hide from history. We make history.* (McCain's address)

In this example, the parallel construction of denial *never* [three times] is constructive of strengthening emotions. Besides strengthening emotion by parallelism, the denials are also obviously dialogic for the simple reason that it is directly contradicted with the proposition which thinks American quits. An alternative stance is therein engaged in. In doing so, for one thing, McCain could align closely with the audience who assume Americans will move forward. For another, McCain misaligns with the audience who assume Americans will surrender.

Example 2:

Scripture tells us, let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do <u>not</u> **[Deny]**

lose heart. So my friends, let us have faith in each other, let us not **[Deny]** *grow weary, let us not* **[Deny]** *lose heart...* (Hillary's address)

In this example, such denials are presented by much more authoritative voice — Scripture. Denials here serve to put the audience's incorrect conception right.

4.2.2 Counter

Counter replaces the expected proposition with a more justifiable one (Martin & White, 2005: 120), and "but" is the most typical mark of countering in the concession address. See following examples of Counter:

Example 3:

I know that many of my supporters are disappointed. I am, too. But **[Counter]** *our disappointment must be overcome by our love of country.* (Gore's address)

In this example, Gore deploys counter move to introduce a more justified proposition to tell the audience to move on for the greater good.

Example 4:

Now, I know we have still not **[Deny]** *shattered that highest and hardest glass ceiling, but* **[Counter]** *someday someone will and hopefully sooner than we might think right now.* (Hillary's address)

There is often co-occurrence of Counter and Deny which can be illustrated in this example. In this example, Hillary firstly deploys Deny move to admit the loss of shattering the highest and hardest glass ceiling, then she counters the previous proposition by putting forward another proposition that someday someone will shatter that highest and hardest glass ceiling.

4.2.3 Proclaim

Foregrounding the writer/speaker's voice to overwhelm other voices, Proclaim has three ways of realization, namely, Concur, Pronounce and Endorse (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 122–129). Table 3 presents the distribution of Proclaim resources in concession addresses.

Table 3   Distribution of Proclaim Resources

	Proclaim Resources			sum
	Concur	Pronounce	Endorse	
Total number	15	16	0	31
Total percent	48.39%	51.61%	0	100%

From Table 3, it is ostensible that resources of concur and pronounce are most widely used in the domain of concession address. However, none of the endorsement resources appears. It is owing to that Endorsement resources adopt expressions like "*show*" "*prove*" and "*point out*" are usually are coupled with "*study*" "*investigation*" or "*reports*". In concession addresses, it is rather rare for such expressions like "*study*" "*investigation*" or "*reports*" to appear.

Concur seeks agreement with the intended addressee (Martin & White, 2005, p. 122). Expressions like "*of course*" "*certainly*" are its typical remarks. See concrete examples of Concur:

Example 5:

Certainly **[Concur]** *neither of us wanted it to happen.* (Gore's address)

In this example, the locution of "*certainly*" entails Gore's assumption that the audience share the same idea that neither of two president nominees could expect or want the campaign road be that long and difficult. This sentence implies more than two competitors but few people would anticipate the campaign road being that hard

and painful.

Example 6:

No doubt **[Concur]** _many of those differences remain._ (McCain's address)

In this example, with Concur resource, the locution of "_no doubt_" being used here to suppose the audience shares the same knowledge of the remaining of differences Obama and he have had and argued for.

Indicated in Table 3, the Pronounce resources are much more used than Concur resources among Proclaim resources. Pronounce is defined to highlight the interventions of authors in discourses (Martin & White, 2005: 127–8). Concerning the resources of "pronounce", see the following example:

Example 7:

Every candidatemakes mistakes, and I'm sure **[Pronounce]** _I made my share of them._ （McCain's address)

In this example, the formulation _"I'm sure"_ builds an explicit intervention into the text by mentioning McCain himself (with pronoun I), making its subjective role more salient.

5. Conclusion

From the research data, total 218 engagement resource items are found in the given sample. This reflects the defeated U.S. presidential candidates are inclined to adopt a great number of engagement resources to convey the interpersonal meaning in concession addresses. Within Engagement system, Contraction resources which constitute 60.09% are almost twice as much as Expansion resources. This means presidential candidates tend to contract dialogic space to make authorial voice more warrantable.

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