A Critical Study of Selected Political Elites' Discourse in English

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This study explored how political elites can contribute to power enactment through using language. It started with a theoretical overview of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and then presented a corpus consisting of speeches of eight political elites, namely, Malcolm X, Noam Chomsky, Martin Luther King, Josef Stalin, Vladimir Lenin, Winston Churchill, J.F. Kennedy and Adolph Hitler. This study analyzed speeches in terms of figures of' speech, and interpreted them from the point of view of CDA using the framework introduced by Fairclough (1989) as a three-dimensional approach to the study of discourse (Description, Interpretation, Explanation) and van Dijk (2004) as the theory of critical context analysis.. Speech figures are classified in this study into six main categories as Comparison, Grammar, Meaning, Parenthesis, Repetition and Rhetoric. The result of analyses reveals that while there are differences in the type and degree of speech figures employed by our selected individual political elites, there is one striking pattern which is common among all speeches: the frequent use of figures of Grammar, Repetition and Rhetoric

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Figures of Speech, Political Elites, Power, Ideology, Discourse

Critical Discourse Analysis

The aim of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is revealing "how language is used for the exercise of socio-political control" (Widdowson, 2004, p. 89). In other words, the role of CDA is the uncovering of implicit ideology in text or talk (ibid). In van Dijk's (2004) terms, the critical aim of CDA is to investigate the power that contributes to the enactment, reproduction, and legitimation of control and dominance, and even furthermore the ignorance and concealment of social problems. Thus, it can be argued that CDA has a sociopolitical goal.

Discourse, Power and Ideology

Ideologies are the fundamental beliefs, which are the basis of the groups' social representation. They, in fact, are some kind of group-schema that are represented in social memory and defines the groups' identity. These fundamental beliefs (ideologies) control the acquisition of group knowledge and attitudes and indirectly control the personal mental models. In turn, mental models, as social representations, control social practices including discourse production and comprehension. Through this complex network we can link, at the micro-level of social situations and interactions, ideologies with discourses and social practices, and at the macro-level, ideologies with groups, group relations, institutions, organizations, power and dominance.

Some scholars (e.g. van Dijk, 2004) define ideologies as the basis of the social representation shared by the members of social groups. These social representations are general and abstract; thus, it is necessary to become concrete, i.e. they should be used by group members in different situations. Since these representations control discourse and other social practices, ideologies may be implied from the discourses that reproduce them in society. Therefore, based on one's perspective, ideologies may be both 'positive' and 'negative'. In other word, we can identify both dominant ideologies and resistance or opposition ideologies.

Van Dijk (2004) stated, "typically, ideologies may thus function to legitimate domination, but also to articulate resistance in relationships of power. But they may also function as the basis of the 'guidelines' of professional behavior – for instance as journalistic or scientific ideologies" (p. 4).

The main notion in CDA is power, or it is better to say social power. On the other hand the crucial notion concerning the elites is *power*. Power is the capacity to influence others who are in a state of dependence. Moore and Hendry (1982) describe power as: "… the force in society that gets things done, and by studying it, we can identify who controls what, and for whose benefit"(as cited in Thomas & Wareing, 1999, p. 10). In addition, power involves *control*, i.e. the control of one group over the other groups. If power is defined in terms of the *control*, ideologies have the function of as the mental dimension of this form of control. In fact, ideologies, at the macro-level, show group relations such as *power*. In other words, ideologies are the basis and source of the legitimization of different forms of power. Therefore, they help the reproduction of the power of groups.

As was previously said, ideology in modern society is so important since the exercise of power, i.e. social control, is ideological, rather than explicitly by force and coercion. In modern society, social control, as Fairclough (1989) states, is often a matter of integrating people into apparatuses of control, which they come to feel themselves to be a part of. In this type of social control, discourse is the favored vehicle of ideology or the control by consent. Subsequently, the dominant groups, in the discourse of social control, ideologically try to remove surface markers of authority and power and show "simulated egalitarianism", a term used by Fairclough.

It is known that discourse is used (produced and interpreted) in social situations for communicative purposes. In processing discourse we need both the ideological 'texts' and ideological 'contexts'. As van Dijk (2004) mentioned, context consists of different categories such as situation, setting (place and time), social actions (legislating, demonstrating, etc.), participants in different communicative, social or institutional roles (identity,

roles, relationships, etc.), their mental representations: goals, knowledge, opinions, attitudes and ideologies. To produce a situationally appropriate discourse, it is necessary to be aware of these relevant properties of the communicative situation.

Political Elite Discourse

Political discourse analysis is one type (area) of discourse analysis which uses a wide variety of analytic methods. The interesting point in political discourse is that it is more probably ideological. According to van Dijk (2001), "political discourse is not a genre, but a class of genres defined by a social domain, namely that of politics" (p. 6).

Political discourse is the same as scientific discourse that represents the discourse genres of the science domains. Thus, parliamentary debates, political speeches, and so on are among the many genres that belong to the domain of politics. According to Wilson (as cited in Schiffrin, 2001), the term political discourse is an ambiguous term. Political science offers many different definitions of 'politics', ranging from very general characterizations of politics in terms of power or collective decision making, to the much more specific definition of politics as the set of activities politicians engage in (van Dijk, 2001).

The power of the elites is often quite indirect. In fact, the elites have a fundamental role in the production and reproduction of power. We may be so much accustomed to this kind of power that we may not even notice it anymore. It is crucial to mention that different discourses such as news, TV programs, textbooks, debates, and so on are largely controlled by the elites. Admittedly, they give the society the good or bad examples of social practices. Afterwards, their discourse permeates into textbooks, novels, movies, and so on.

Most of the things people know comes from the mass media, and the same is true for their opinions and attitudes, which in turn are the basis of the social practices of discrimination. Therefore, the process of the public production and reproduction of

knowledge, opinions and ideologies should be primarily defined in terms of the discourse practices of the dominant institutions and their elites. The role of language in the reproduction of power is very fundamental. Elites, in fact, exploit power by text and talk. Power, hence, is expressed or practiced by text and talk. It is, accordingly, crucial to study power through the detailed analysis of the discursive practices of the elites and their institutions such as opinion articles, editorials, textbooks, speeches, etc. Thus, based on the developments in Discourse Analysis, we can study the discursive practices of elites in order to detect their ideologies they represent.

Van Dijk (2005) argues that the process of the public production and reproduction of knowledge, opinions, and ideologies should primarily be defined in terms of the discursive practices of the dominant institutions and their elites. According to van Dijk (2001), in the complex system of double power of the elites, namely of class and position in a society and within the dominant groups, the political elites play a central role. They are the ones who ultimately make the decisions on all affairs in a society. "The power of political elites is defined not only by their preferential access to material social resources but also by their preferential access to, and control over, various forms of public discourse" (ibid., p. 33). Thus, the role and influence of elites, especially political elites, are very fundamental.

Figures of Speech

Figures of speech may be defined as "any deviation either in thought or expression, from the ordinary and simple method of speaking . . .", or " . . . a form of speech artfully varied from common usage" (Harris, 2004, ¶5). Speakers try to use figures of speech to create an emphasis, expand a meaning, draw a comparison or contrast, make a rhetorical point, and to add force and power to an expression. The use of figures of speech in texts and talk reveals a great deal about the intentions of the speaker. The speaker may attempt to hide his or her motives, but underlying

the whole process is a basic intentionality. In fact, the speaker wishes to accomplish something (Cronick, 2002, p.5). For example, when a person says, "It's hot in here", his or her listener can take this to mean that he or she would like him or her to solve this problem by opening the door or window. In fact, it is a kind of exercising of power over this person. This kind of interpersonal and implicit negotiation cannot be understood by semantic meaning. As Cronick mentioned (2002, p.6), "this is the intentional use of language for unsaid but interpretable purposes, and, taken together, forms a kind of linguistic ellipse. It also shows how language can be used to get things done in a material, cause and effect sense".

Employing figures of speech in text or talk is concerned with persuasion. Persuasion is a kind of demonstration. When we see a thing having fully been demonstrated, we become persuaded. There are three kinds of persuasion: (1) the persuasion based on the personal character of the speaker; (2) the persuasion based on the audience; (3) the persuasion based on the provided proof. In order to affect persuasion, a person who is in power must be able (1) to reason logically, (2) to understand human character (3) to understand the emotions.

Categories of Speech Figures

Figures of speech may be classified in different ways. The following classification system has divided them (following Sutcliffe, 2004) into small groups according to their characteristics and put them in the order of their importance:: *Comparison, Grammar, Meaning, Parenthesis, Repetition,* and *Rhetoric.* (Definitions and examples mainly taken from Sutcliffe, 2004 and Harris, 2005).

Figures of Comparison

Comparison refers to the comparison of two things. E.g.: *Even so,* husbands *should love their own wives as their own*

bodies. Figures of comparison can be categorized as: *Allegory, Allusion, Analogy, Anthropomorphism (Condescension), Hypocatastasis (Implication), Metaphor, Parable (Illustration), Prosopopoeia (Personification), Simile.*

Figures of Grammar

Grammar figures refer to the rules of a language such as the use of a counjuncture or transposition. E.g.: *They read and studied and wrote and drilled.* Figures of grammar can be categorized as**:** *Asyndeton (No-Ands), Hyperbaton (Transposition), Hysteron Proteron, Polysyndeton (Many-Ands), Zeugma.*

Figures of Meaning

Figures of meaning refer to the special use of words, clauses, phrases or sentences in conveying a meaning. E.g.: *The king proposes, parliament disposes* (Sutcliffe, 2004). Figures of meaning can be categorized as**:** *Antithesis, Eironeia (Irony), Euphemism Hendiadys (Two for One), Hendiatris (Three for One), Hyperbole, Idiom Metonymy (Denominatio), Paradox, Synecdoche , Synonym.*

Figures of Parenthesis

Figures of parenthesis refer to the insertions of a word, phrase, or sentence as a parenthetic addition. E.g. *And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent*.

Figures of parenthesis can be categorized as: *Apostrophe, Parembole (Digression),Parenthesis (Interpositio).*

Figures of Repetition

Figures of repetition refer to the repetition of one word or several parts of a sentence or several sentences in order to produce an emphetic effect. E.g.: *Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice.* Figures of repetition can be categorized as: *Anadiplosis (Like Endings & Beginnings), Anaphora (Like – Beginnings), Chiasmus, Climax (Gradation), Diacope Epanadiplosis (Encircling), Epanalepsis (Resumption), Epistrophe (Like-Endings), Epizeuxis, Paradiastole (Neither-Nor), Parallelism, Synonymia.*

Figures of Rhetoric

Figures of rhetoric refer to the use of a variety of strategies such as the repetition of a word or expression, the inversion of word order, ellipsis, substitution and so on to influence people. E.g.: *Long hours worked the man.* Figures of rhetoric can be categorized as: *Ad Hominem, Amplification, Anastrophe, Antimetable , Aphorism , Aporia, Aposiopesis, Appositive, Axiom, Belittling (Meiosis/ Diminution), Distictio, Enthymeme, Eponym, Erotesis (Rhetorical Question), Exemplum, Expletive, Hypophora, Hypotaxis, Litotes, Metabasis, Metanoia (Correctio), Parataxis, Paroemia (Proverb), Periphrasis (Circulocation), Pleonasm, Praeteritio (Paralipsis/Apophasis), Procatalepsis, Scesis Onomaton, Sententia, Syllogism, Symploce.*

This study attempts to investigate how ideology of power (or ideology AND power) is encoded in discourse with reference to selected political elites' choice of figures of speech.

Method
Participants

The participants whose speeches were selected for analysis are from different countries with different backgrounds and points of view. The selected participants are well-known elites in the

world of politics. According to Wilson (as cited in Schiffrin, 2001)*,* the term political discourse is an ambiguous term. Political science offers many different definitions of 'politics', ranging from very general characterizations of politics in terms of power or collective decision making, to the much more specific definition of politics as the set of activities politicians engage in (van Dijk, 2001). But the focus of this article is on the general definition of politics, that is, politics in terms of power or collective decision-making. Therefore, based on this general definition, we selected the speeches of eight elites who had political activities. The selected participants are:

1. *Martin Luther King*, the national leader of the civil rights movement in America, the Founder of Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC);
2. *Malcolm X*, the leader of the African-American people, the founder of the Organization of Afro-American Unity;
3. *Noam Chomsky*, the leading critic of U.S. foreign policy, a Libertarian Socialist, a sympathizer of Anarcho-Syndicalism;
4. *Vladimir llyich Lenin*, Russian Revolutionary and the founder of Bolshevism;
5. *Josef Stalin*, Soviet Communist Leader;
6. *Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill*, the Conservative and Liberal Member of Parliament, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the United Kingdom;
7. *Adolph Hitler*, the Leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) (Nazi Party);
8. *John Fitzgerald Kennedy*, the Thirty-fifth President of the United States.

The selected participants can be divided into two groups, in terms of the type of their activities and engagement:
1. Those who were politicians, doing political acts in political settings, such as Stalin, Lenin, Kennedy, Hitler, and Churchill.

2. Those who were not politicians, but doing political activities, not necessarily in political settings, like Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and Chomsky.

Procedure

The researchers collected one speech from the aforementioned persons, which will be studied and analyzed in terms of the type and degree of speech figures used. As revealed earlier, figures may be classified into six main groups: *Comparison, Grammar, Meaning, Parenthesis, Repetition,* and *Rhetoric*, and each category consists of different sub-categories. It is noteworthy that the focus of this paper is on the mentioned categories. That is, we did not distinguish between different kinds of each sub-category.

As for the analytic model, within the theoretical framework of CDA, we adopt Fairclough's three-dimensional analytical framework (1989). Analysis in the first dimension, *description*, is more generally the process of identifying and labeling figures of speech, as formal features. The concern of the second dimension of the framework, *interpretation,* is the discourse processes. Fairclough (1989, p. 141) points out that, "…interpretations are generated through a combination of what is in the text and what is 'in' the interpreter, in the sense of the members' resources (MR), which the latter brings to interpretation". He further mentions that, "…from the point of view of the interpreter of a text, formal features of the text are 'cues' which activate elements of interpreters' MR…"(ibid., p. 141). Therefore, the second dimension of this paper focuses on the interpretation of socio-political implications of figures of speech. The concern of the third and last dimension of the framework, *explanation*, is the social context of the discourse, i.e. the relationship between discourses and power relations.

By means of the aforementioned dimensions and also van Dijk's theory of critical context analysis, in fact, the researchers try to illuminate the covered ideologies. Van Dijk (2004) proposes the theory of 'ideological square' and argues that ideologies have a

'polarized structure'. This 'ideological square', applied to all levels of discourse structures: such as meaning, form, action, and interaction, have the following strategies (ibid., p. 22):

- Emphasize '*our*' good things
- Emphasize '*their*' bad things
- De-emphasize '*our*' bad things
- De-emphasize '*their*' good things.

Results

An analysis of the frequency of speech figures and their percentages for each of the selected participants revealed a positive representation of power in political speech of elites by using figures of speech. Table 1 summarizes our descriptive phase of analysis. (A detailed diagrammatic representation of each participant's choices of speech figures can be found in Appendix.)

While the analysis revealed this point that there are remarkable parallels among the mentioned speeches in terms of figures of speech, there is one striking common pattern among them, i.e. the use of three figures, *grammar, repetition,* and *rhetoric* by all speakers.

Table 1
The percentage of speech figure per each speaker

Figures of Speech / Participants	Comparison	Grammar	Meaning	Parenthesis	Repetition	Rhetoric
Stalin	-	% 16.62	-	% 4.34	% 13.46	% 8.27
Malcolm X	% 48.48	% 25.80	% 65.78	-	% 22.62	% 30.65
Lenin	-	% 17.36	-	% 26.08	% 15.08	% 16.30
King	% 34.34	% 3.72	% 7.89	% 8.69	% 5.56	% 5.74
Kennedy	% 1.01	% 13.64	% 2.63	-	% 11.66	% 7.60
Hitler	% 5.05	% 4.21	% 2.63	% 17.39	% 6.28	% 6.67
Churchill	% 11.11	% 12.15	% 21.05	% 26.08	% 17.77	% 17.31
Chomsky	-	% 6.45	-	% 17.39	% 7.54	% 7.77

Apart from some differences, there are some similarties among three participants, *Stalin, Lenin and Chomsky* in the use of

speech figures. These three participants' speeches demonstrate their avoidance of using two types of speech figures: *comparison* and *meaning.* In using other speech figures there are some differences in their speech too, as the table shows.

Another important and interesting point concerning the use of speech figures by the selected participants is about Malcolm X's speech. In terms of the frequency and the variety of speech figures, he stands at the top in contrast to other participants.

Trew (1979, p. 117) has said, "A word or two can often tell you a lot about how a person thinks about things…" He further argues that the differences in thought are expressed in linguistically describable forms. It can be argued accordingly that this relationship is a dual link, i.e. the differences in using words mark a comprehensive and systematic kind of difference in thinking about specific matters. What the findings of speech figures analysis do offer are a reliable grasp of the ideological determinations of discourse, and it shows the marks of its engagement in social processes and of its dynamic role in the reproduction and transformation of ideology. This critical analysis pictures strong and pervasive connections between figures of speech, as linguistic structure, and social structure. The following list presents some discrete results driven out of the analysis of data:

1. An analysis of the frequency of speech figures and their percentages for each of the selected participants revealed a positive representation of power in political speech of elites by using figures of speech.
2. On the whole, apart from the differences in the ideologies behind the speeches, what was interesting was the similar way the speakers perceived themselves. All except Noam Chomsky, in a more or less explicit way, differentiated their position from the rest, and maintained a distance from the others and put the blame on the *others*. Therefore, the dominant pattern that emerges appears to encode a view of polarized world: an *"us / them"* world.

3. A significant point concerning the ideologies behind the speeches is that they can be interpreted as any social policy in a conscious way in the course of the struggle for power.

4. As a critical analysis has the task to make the relations of power explicit, this analysis reveals, notwithstanding some variations among the aforementioned speakers, that the speakers, due to their social roles and positions, are superior and this encodes a relationship in which power is unequal, what Brown and Gilman (1976) term "Power Semantics".

5. As mentioned earlier, the findings of the analysis and their interpretations underline asymmetrical power relations. In some speeches, the relationship of speech to asymmetrical power relations may be a direct one, like those of *Stalin, Lenin, Hitler, and Churchill*.

6. Based on the interpretations, the ideologies behind the aforementioned speeches can be divided into two categories: (a) *dominant ideologies*, (b) *dominated (resistance / opposition) ideologies*. Dominant ideologies belong to the dominant groups who try to force the dominated groups accept dominant ideologies as natural and commonsense. We can put *Hitler, Stalin, Churchill, Kennedy, and Lenin* into this group. On the other hand, dominated ideologies belong to the dominated groups who don not accept dominant ideologies and want to oppose them. We can put *Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Chomsky* into this group.

7. The last point concerning the concept of power, based on the findings, is that power can be divided into two main categories: (a) *negative power,* (b) *positive power.* The main object of stating this category is that having power can be used for different purposes. Sometimes power can be used in order to dominate a group or an individual. On the other hand, power can sometimes be used in order to show the fact or for illuminating the people. In our mind, based on the clues in the speeches, we can put *Stalin, Lenin, Churchill, Hitler* in the first category, i.e. negative

power, but *Malcolm X, martin Luther King and Chomsky* in the second category (positive power).

Conclusions

1. Power in all societies is so implicit, which cannot easily be distinguished. Among different discourse communities within a society, political discourse has an influential effect on people; political elites play a prominent influence on public discourse and hence on public opinion, which in turn leads to the structuring and maintaining of power.
2. According to van Dijk (2004), those groups who can control the most influential discourse can also control the minds of people and , as a result, control their actions.
3. Ideologies are closely linked to power and are a means of legitimizing differences of power, and take these power differences for granted.   Ideologies (commonsense assumptions) are implicit and people are generally not consciously aware of.
4. The exercise of power is increasingly achieved through ideology systems and more particularly through the ideological use of language.
5. Ideology is the prime means of exercising power through the manufacture of consent, so, we tried to examine the ways in which political elites through their speeches can contribute to power and mind control.
6. Different use of speech figures, as subcomponents of language, not only encodes power differences but also is instrumental in enforcing the power.
7. There is a close relationship between discourse, ideology and politics. In politics, ideologies, through discourse, play a significant role. In other words, political ideologies are largely reproduced by discourse, especially by employing a combination of effective strategies in discourse production, like figures of speech.

Implications

As was mentioned before, the link between discourse and language use, as the crucial social practices, and ideology is a dual link. Not only do ideologies influence what we say and how we say it, but also we acquire and change ideologies through reading, listening and watching. Ideologies are not innate, rather learnt. We learn most of our ideological ideas by reading textbooks at schools, advertising, the newspaper, novels, or by listening to other group members like our parents and group peers or by participating in everyday conversations with friends and colleagues and at last by watching television.

Therefore, it is argued that since the connection between language and socio-political context is opaque to the lay person, doing a detalied and ideological analysis of political speeches can lead to two aims: first, to change the underestimation of the significance of language in social relations of power; second, to increase the consciousness that how language contributes to inequality and injustice which leads to power relations and control of people by others.

Furthermore a necessity for learners, especially where English is used as a second or foreign language, is to develop skills to interpret the language used. Learners must realize that language can be used as a powerful tool to control people's beliefs and actions. They should understand how the choice of lexical items, or specific grammatical structure could influence people.

Therefore, CDA, as an approach, helps students become more discerning readers. It helps students to read books critically and use context broadly. In other words, CDA helps students analyze texts in a way that reveal their hidden meanings. In fact, it shows students how linguistic features are important elements in the interpretation of real-world texts.

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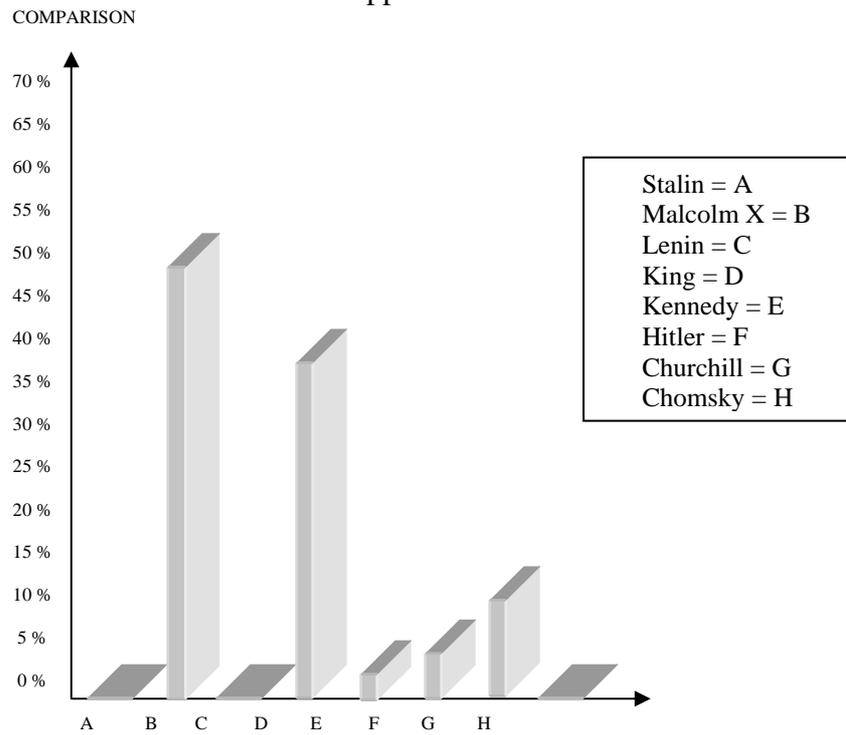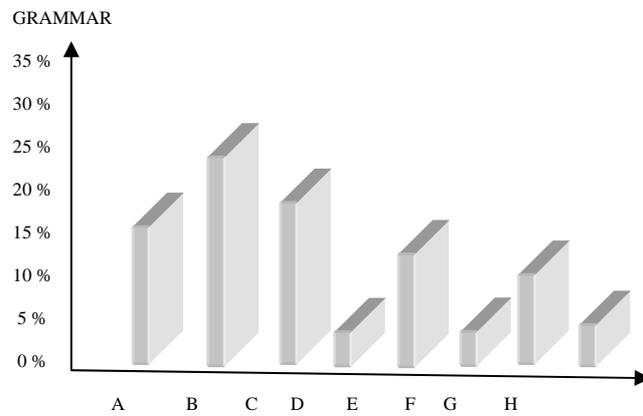
Appendix

COMPARISON

Stalin = A
Malcolm X = B
Lenin = C
King = D
Kennedy = E
Hitler = F
Churchill = G
Chomsky = H

Figure 1. The percentage of comparison

GRAMMAR

Figure 2. The percentage of grammar
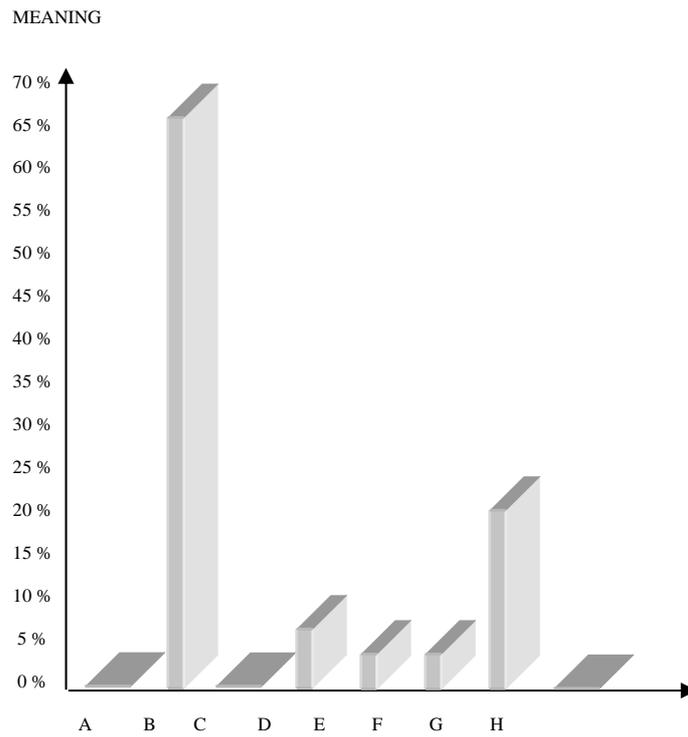
MEANING

Figure 3. The percentage of meaning

PARENTHESIS

Figure 4. The percentage of parenthesis
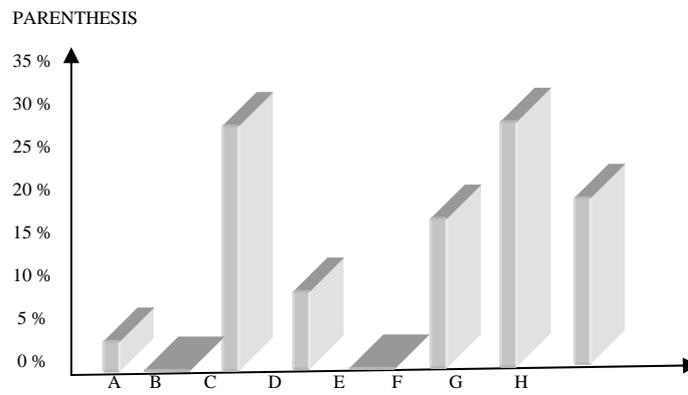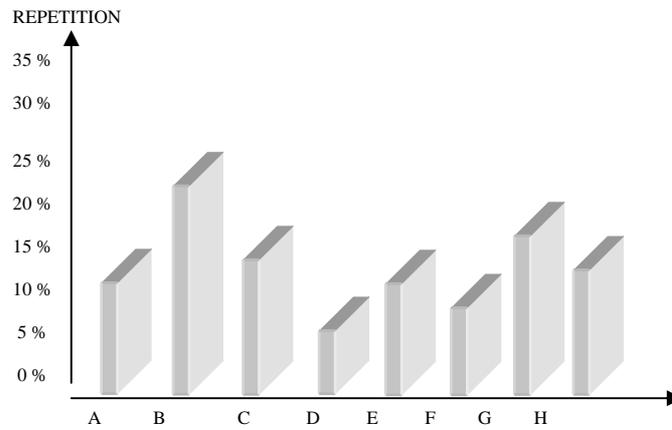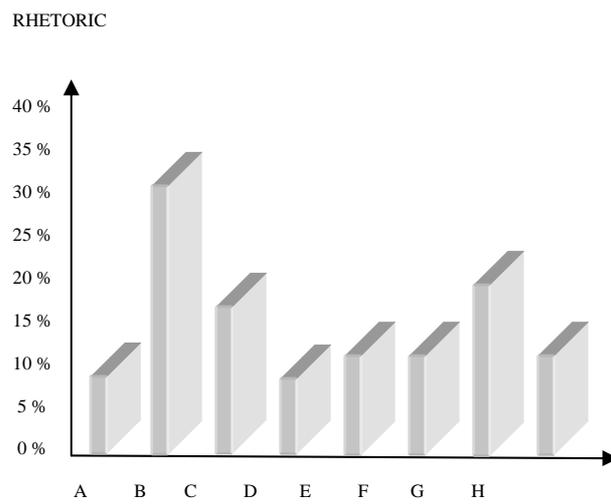
REPETITION

Figure 5. The percentage of repetition

RHETORIC

Figure 6. The percentage of rhetoric