A Critical Discourse Analysis of Some Persuasive Strategies of Ashton Carter's 2016 Political Speech on Iraq and Syria Unrest

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 Abstract
Political discourse contains features that should be understood by the audience, but it must fulfill the purpose of persuading the audience. This study examines three of Ashton Carter's discourse strategies of persuasion in his 2016's political speech on Iraq and Syria unrest, as well as the implicit ideologies. These discourse strategies are repetition, metaphor and appeal to logic. The model adopted to analyze the speech is critical discourse analysis under the impact of Van Dijk's perspective. The study hypothesizes that Carter's political speech is emotionally and logically expressive and that his speech is ideologically structured. The results have shown that Carter was so impressive in persuading his listeners due to the use of the three persuasive strategies. The results have also shown that the strategy of appeal to logic was the most frequent among others, through which he resorted to speaking logically and stating facts to make his listeners believe him and drive them at his stance.

1.   Introduction:
Critical discourse analysis (henceforth: CDA) is a field that is concerned with studying and analyzing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. It examines how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced within specific social, political and historical contexts (Van Dijk, 2008: 85). For Wodak (2002: 1), CDA is "fundamentally analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relations of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in

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language as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)".

Political discourse, as a vivid area of research within CDA, refers to the set of linguistic activities that politicians engage in. That is, most political activities are exercized by the use of discourse (Muralikrishnan, 2011: 25-26). Muralikrishnan adds that political discourse is a class of genres defined by a social domain, namely, politics. Political discourse analysis is both about political discourse, and it is also a critical enterprise. In the spirit of contemporary approaches in CDA, this would mean that critical-political discourse analysis deals especially with the reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination through political discourse, including the various forms of resistance or counter-power against such forms of discursive dominance. In particular, such an analysis deals with the discursive conditions and consequences of social and political inequality that results from such domination (Van Dijk 1993; Fairclough 1995).

Political discourse has been equated with the term "rhetoric" for thousands of years, since one of the first subjects for the study of communication in rhetoric has been political discourse, and since one of the original uses of the term was to describe particular forms of persuasion within political assemblies and practices. Studies on political discourse and persuasion have gone alongside, and one finds a focus on the political and an emphasis on language, and the essential nature of the exercise is the study of the persuasive effects. Hence, the "political" becomes one genre to show rhetorical forms of persuasion or performance, rather than an analysis of linguistic selection and production which also constitute a definition of what is "political" (Wilson, cited in Schiffrin, Tannen and Hamilton, 2015: 775). Consequently, one of the core goals of political discourse analysis is to seek out ways in which language choice is manipulated for specific political effects. All language use can in a sense be regarded as persuasive. Halmari and Vertanin (2005: 3) define persuasion as a linguistic choice or as a behaviour of using language by a speaker in a way to either alter an audience's point of view and emotions, and accept the speaker's newly suggested

attitudes, or to reinforce the beliefs they already have or the way they think. Persuasive communication is an argument by a speaker which is intended to make people consciously change their behavior. Politicians prefer to make people act voluntarily by using their ability, i.e. by exploiting the power of language. This power is the result of persuasion. For Van Dijk (2008, 212, 213), persuasion is the practice of a legitimate influence through text or talk in which the audience are given true and reasonable information without any distortion, and they possess knowledge and information, and are left free to process information and believe in the way they like. Thus, they can either go along or not with the persuader's argument. Moreover, Charteris-Black (2011: 7) indicates that according to Aristotle, persuasion depends on three types of appeal that successful influencers adopt in their speech in order to make the audience follow certain attitudes and beliefs desired by the influencers: ethos, logos, and pathos. Ethos refers to the reliability and credibility of the speaker, logos to rational argumentation, and pathos to emotional appeal.

The study is an investigation of Ashton B. Carter's 2016 political speech, the former Secretary of USA Defense, during ISIL's control over Iraq and Syria. It should be mentioned that Carter has been chosen in particular for the reason of being in support of President Obama's strategy in defeating ISIL and in charge of the coalition military operations that showed how ISIL had been dealt with and targeted.

2.   Research Questions and Hypotheses:

The study tries to investigate the ideological themes, mind control and power involved within the speech through which Carter influenced and shaped the public emotions and attitudes for the purpose of persuading people of his beliefs and accomplishing his intended meanings. America's former Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter is so impressive in his linguistic expressions and is of good support to the coalition forces in their role to defeat ISIL. His political speech, then, has unique linguistic features so as to persuade people of the operations against ISIL and move them in his direction. Thus, the study raises questions and tries to know how Carter is logically and/or emotionally expressive through the use of

three persuasive discourse strategies, and what are the ideological intended themes aimed at for persuading people of his beliefs and goals.

It should be mentioned that the analysis tackles in particular three persuasive rhetorical strategies, viz, repetition, metaphor and appeal to logic since Carter is emotionally and logically expressive. This is best realized through the three strategies tackled.

Hence, the study hypothesizes that:

1.Ashton Carter's political speech is emotionally and logically expressive.

2.Carter's political discourse is ideologically structured.

3.Data Collection and Methodology:

The data is collected from downloading Secretary Carter's speech from the internet (U.S. Department of Defense). The speech was delivered on January 13th, 2016 before the 101st Airborne Division ( ) at Fort Campbell, KY, and lasted for 30 minutes.

The analytical procedures are as follows:

1.Categorizing the speech as far as the three persuasive strategies are concerned.

2.Identifying the hidden ideological implications of such discourse strategies based on the modal selected.

3.Making a statistical analysis for the aim of calculating the frequency and percentage of each strategy.

4.Limits of the Study:

The study restricts itself to describing the text in terms of the persuasive process and of the implicated meaning of using such a process. Thus, no description and analysis will be made to the grammatical, phonetic and phonological features of the text, nor to non-verbal communication.

5.Model of the Study:

        The study adopts a socio-cognitive analysis as proposed by Van Dijk's (2000). In this approach, discourse structures are related to social structures via a complex sociocognitive interface. That is, the relations between discourse and society are cognitively mediated. Thus, cognition is the necessary interface that links

discourse as language use and social interaction with social situations and social structures. Discursive structures and social structures can only be related through the mental representations of language users as individuals or current participants of the communicative situation and as members of social groups and communities. Crucial to socio-cognitive approach is Short-Term Memory (STM) and Long-Term Memory (LTM). LTM features remembrances of autobiographical experiences and knowledge stored in Episodic Memory (EM), on the one hand, and more general, socially shared knowledge, attitudes and ideologies in Semantic Memory (SM), on the other hand. That is, it distinguishes between personal and social memory or cognition. The socio-cognitive approach claims that there is no direct link between such different structures of discourse and society, and that social or political structures can only affect discourse through the language users' minds. This is possible because social members represent both social structures as well as discourse structures in their minds, and thus are able to relate these mentally before expressing them in actual text and talk.

6. Value of the Study:

The value of the study stems from being, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, the first study on Secretary Carter's political discourse during ISIL. Thus, the study sets a higher value on the analysis of Carter's persuasive discourse strategies.

Furthermore, the present study is believed to be of higher importance to linguists, critical discourse analysts and scholars studying the language of politics and political discourse and all other situations and fields related to political issues such as media, press, advertising, etc.

Finally, we believe that the study will be valuable to people so as to increase or improve their knowledge and awareness of political discourse and the persuasive strategies adopted by politicians in general and by Carter in particular and their implicated intentions, and how they exploit this means to expose their power and persuade people.

7. Data Analysis and Discussion:

The analysis tackles three persuasive rhetorical strategies, viz, repetition, metaphor and appeal to logic. In this speech, Carter

resorts to emotional and logical grounds. These grounds are best realized through the three strategies tackled. We want to see to what extent he is emotional or logical through his speech.

Atkinson (2004: 179, 180) points out that rhetorical strategies are part and parcel and the building blocks of the language of persuasion, and are an indispensable way by which politicians make their speeches effective and heard in action when they are arguing or trying to be persuasive. These devices appear to be adaptable that politicians use them to increase the effect of their messages, shape public opinions and arouse people's feelings and attentions towards politicians' opinions and ideologies that they strive for. For Beard (2000: 37), persuasive political speeches should contain highlights which are called "sound bites": clear, concise and carefully organized and sequenced messages that receive attention and are memorable. Therefore, political speakers, in order to sound persuasive, should spice their messages with these sound bites or linguistic strategies that make their messages more potent and more memorable. In addition, politicians convey their viewpoints and try to convince people of the validity of their ideas through the use or choice of the most powerful linguistic strategies so that people show approval of these viewpoints. Therefore, they use certain words or omit some of them to affect meaning and highlight certain ideas that they aim at (ibid: 18).

What follows is a presentation of these three strategies and the analysis.

 7.1. Repetition:

Al-Khafaji (2005: 1, 6) argues that repetition is the process of using and repeating the same words and phrases or ideas many times in the same form or with some changes to produce playful, emotional and rhetorical functions. Johnstone (1994: 13, 16) indicates that repetition is a universal linguistic persuasive strategy and part of a linguistic system which is used by all languages. It helps memory and directs people's attention. Moreover, it increases and reinforces the effectiveness of one's messages and thoughts, and creates a strong emotional and persuasive effect on people's perceptions and emotions. Johnstone adds, the more certain words and ideas are

repeated, the more they attract attention and the more they emphasize the meaning of one's points. For his part, Khdair (2016: 36) mentions that the use of repetition carries the notion of power in political discourse, which politicians depend on to gain a political strength and reassert their beliefs and political positions, and to model people's attitudes towards certain political matters. Khdair adds that repeating certain words comes from power and aims at controlling people's perceptions and ideologies, where politicians try to raise their ideological slogans and to achieve a wider validity of their political messages.

The use of the strategy of repetition that Aston Carter employs in his speech intensifies the main point of his speech that he aims at, namely, destroying ISIL. In this sense, repetition becomes a subtle way to raise Carter's slogan, assert his beliefs and to direct the audience's attention towards their objectives so that his listeners remember them best and follow him in any step he will take. This strategy can be illustrated in the following extract where Carter repeats the word 'defeat' or the idea of defeating ISIL three times throughout the whole paragraph:

This defeat of ISIL in Iraq and Syria is a vital and necessary – although not sufficient – component of our worldwide campaign to defeat ISIL. And as I have said previously, President Obama is committed to doing what it takes – as opportunities arise, as we see what works, and as the enemy adapts – until ISIL is delivered a lasting defeat.

Throughout his speech, Carter repeats the word 'defeat' to highlight his main point or idea, that is, defeating or destroying ISIL. He attempts to attract his listeners' attention to the idea that defeating or destroying ISIL is the core or the most important and ultimate objective that the coalition campaign aims to achieve. In fact, Carter generally tends to raise the positive side of the military campaign or battle against ISIL, i.e., victory, although a battle implies some killing. He attempts to arouse his listeners' feelings by driving them into believing that defeating a terrorist group like ISIL, who might expose their lives and the whole world to danger and death, would provide them security and peace. In this way, he succeeds in persuading them in that his own goal is to protect humanity and the

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whole world and bring freedom and happiness. Therefore, his listeners would think that he is a hero who has come to save them, and thus they will respect, trust and follow him in any decision he will make in the future because they will think that such an issue serves their best interests. Carter tries to create an image of not being biased, since he shows himself as caring not only about his own interests but also about the interests of the whole world that is threatened by a global terrorist group ISIL. This will make his listeners perceive him as sounding right and that he is God-like that cares about all human beings. Finally, Carter's repetition of the word 'defeat' implies that he is confident and determined to achieve goals, thus creating a sense of credibility.

Furthermore, in order to involve all his listeners in his suggested points so as to convince them to support him, Carter states that the defeat of ISIL should be a global task. Let us consider the following excerpt as an illustration:

The lasting defeat of ISIL must be a global undertaking, because it's a global threat.

Carter attempts to create a sense of involvement with his listeners and that they should help and support him in his role as a military coalition campaign leader to defeat ISIL in a lasting way, because ISIL is global threat that threatens the whole world. He affects his listeners' attitudes in order to support him by repeating that ISIL will be defeated and this time this defeat must be done by all partners. In this way, he gives a sense that he cares about all and that all should participate in this fight to eliminate this terrorist group ISIL. By doing so, Carter provokes his listeners' emotional side to the certainty and collaboration of defeating ISIL and grabs their attention to his unbiased plan and military campaign.

7.2   . Metaphor:

Metaphor is a shift in the literal meaning of a word or a phrase, where they are used with a new meaning that differs from another more basic meaning that the original word or phrase has. It is used to label an entity or a thing a name that belongs to something else or has an implicit meaning that is contrary to the common or literal meaning, for example, the phrase "American Dream" refers to

something else with positive connotations, that is, hopes for a better future, so 'dream' means 'hope'. Moreover, a metaphor is a feature of language discourse and a figure of speech that is used in persuasive political arguments in order to gain people's submission and eventual compliance, since it helps to evoke emotional and affective responses from the people because it touches value systems through the powerful use of language. In addition, metaphors are persuasive when politicians use them to show that they are thinking right, telling the right story, sounding right and having the right intentions; it is a means to establish moral credibility and a legitimate source of authority (Charteris-Black, 2011: 28-45).

Aston Carter's speech is based on creating an implicit meaning or an idea that differs from its literal meaning in order to make the speech more alive and easier to remember and to attract attention and exploit the emotional side of people's perceptions so that they easily accept his points. All this exists in the strategy of metaphor as the examples below illustrate. It should be mentioned that the following are the only two examples of metaphor realized throughout the speech.

We've made it clear that those who threaten or incite harm to Americans, wherever they are, will surely come to feel the long arm and the hard fist of justice.

In the above-mentioned example, Carter states that those who are intent on harming America will be punished. He uses "the long arm and the hard fist of justice" as a metaphor in order to make the abstract mental model of punishment more concrete and attractive and thus stronger and more fearful for the enemies. Justice is represented as a strong long hand that can hard strike enemies down. Moreover, punishment and justice metaphorically represented as "the long arm and the hard fist" implies a positive value, because it is a powerful and energetic way to counter and deal with something negative, namely here, those who threaten America. In this sense, Carter positively attracts his listeners' attention by portraying America as a strong hand and hence as a person who can strongly and entirely defeat those who threaten Americans. Therefore, he construes a mental model with emotions

of strength and power. In this way, Carter plays on the emotional string of his listeners so as to convince them of his ideas.

Furthermore, Carter uses the word "oxygen" to attract his listeners' attention and create an emotional impact on their emotions and perceptions so that he creates a positive feeling in order to support his ideas. The use of this strategy can be shown in the following example where Carter makes the abstract notion of security more concrete, and hence more attractive, by using a metaphor such as oxygen:

"It's been said that security is like oxygen. When people have enough of it, they tend to pay no attention to it. But when they don't have enough, it's all they can think of. You provide that oxygen, not only for the people of the United States but in many cases for people around the world. You give them the security that makes everything else in life possible – the freedom to dream their dreams, raise their children and live lives that are full. You do that."

Using this strategy, Carter states that security is like oxygen, but this is not his own claim. By using 'It's been said that', he states this as a general fact and everyone agrees on that. Moreover, it is known that oxygen represents breathing, life, existence, and a new beginning. Thus, since the soldiers provide security for all people, they are providing life and safe havens at the same time. The metaphor of oxygen construes concrete mental models in the soldiers' minds with emotions of being an indispensable element for others to live and being valued by the whole world, and feelings of happiness and pride to give life. That's why Carter uses the word "oxygen" as a metaphor for birth and life that they provide in order to affect their emotions and get their attention to the point that their contribution in encountering ISIL is important on the basis of intelligence helping, if not fighting on the ground, as oxygen is. That is, he refreshes their minds and encourages them to participate in the military coalition campaign because they are described as oxygen. As a result, they will obey him and put their destiny in his hands. In this way, in order to get them support him, Carter tries to arouse their emotions and link them to positive things and values that are related to their lifestyle and that are necessary to all human

beings. That is, he tries to say that people will like and respect the soldiers when they are in need of security.

7.3.   Appeal to Logic:

Halmari (2005: 118-120) states that appealing to logic or appealing to logical reasoning is the substance of rhetorical persuasion, i.e. a clever persuasive strategy to affect people's perceptions. Appealing to logic involves using a clear, systematic, and logical organization of ideas, which this implies the premises instead of stating them explicitly. Moreover, the speaker presents facts and evidences to support his/her argument and divides the speech into topics, making people believe that he/she thinks right, for instance, he/she uses the words 'first', 'second', 'third' and 'fourth' as part of his full agenda, or he/she uses hortative 'Let's', 'I ask you', and 'Let's be clear'. An example of appeal to logic is Clinton's speech in which he states: "Every time we have acted to heal our environment, pessimists have told us it would hurt the economy". In this speech, the verb 'heal' evokes positive associations: when healing something is in bad condition, it is logical to support the process of healing. It is not logical to oppose healing, and if anyone does that, he/she is called a pessimist)ibid).

Carter using this strategy convinces his listeners of his viewpoint about why America should not counter ISIL directly on the ground and why other nations should participate in the fighting against ISIL and not America alone. This can be seen in the following extract:

"Going in alone would also Americanize the conflict, giving ISIL the chance to call it a foreign occupation, persuading some of those who are resisting ISIL to fight us instead, and feeding the anti-Western story ISIL has been pushing all along as it tries to inspire acts of terror around the world."

Carter tries to convince his listeners of his argument by appealing to logos and stating that America should not face ISIL alone and on the ground since this would be an occupation like 2003 when Bush invaded Iraq, reminding Iraqis and nearby countries that America is occupying Iraq again, and thus they would fight America instead. Without any doubt, Carter's listeners would support this point since they also want to avoid a direct combat with any enemy and to avoid human casualties.

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Moreover, what makes Carter's speech more successful and persuasive is the use of logic and evidence where he organizes his thoughts in a logical pattern, numbering his points and summarizing his speech. He appeals to the logical thinking of his listeners, making him sound right. Let us look at the following extract:

"It won't be easy. ISIL is a cancer that's threatening to spread. And like all cancers, you can't cure the disease just by cutting out the tumor. You have to eliminate it wherever it has spread, and stop it from coming back. Our military campaign accordingly focuses on three military objectives: One, destroy the ISIL parent tumor in Iraq and Syria by collapsing its two power centers in Mosul and Raqqah. Two, combat the emerging metastases of the ISIL tumor worldwide, and three, protect the homeland. And to do it, we're going to enable local, motivated forces and an international coalition with a clear campaign plan, with American leadership, and with all of our awesome capabilities – ranging from air strikes, special forces, cyber tools, intelligence, equipment, mobility and logistics, to training, advice, and assistance from those on the ground – including you."

        In the above-mentioned example, Carter appeals to his listeners' logical thinking in that in order to defeat ISIL, it is not enough to cut out parts of it for that it would be able to spread around the whole world again. Instead, every cell of ISIL that has spread everywhere has to be eliminated so that it would be hard to develop and emerge from the same places again. In this sense, since everyone, including those who might oppose Carter's point, knows that cutting out a cancer like ISIL entirely requires an elimination of every part of it, they should believe him and support his argument and strategy to defeat ISIL, if they are logical thinkers. If they don't, they are not logical thinkers. Moreover, Carter outlines the objectives of his coalition military campaign plan by putting them in a logical pattern, numbering them as first, second and third. Therefore, in doing so, Carter's credibility is enhanced, making his listeners perceive him as thinking right. In addition, his listeners would support his views more than ever and comply with his ideology when he gives a description of accomplishing these

objectives and the steps that should be followed in order to accomplish these objectives.

8.Findings and Conclusions:

8.1. Findings:

Throughout a detailed analysis of Carter's political speech, the study arrives at some findings that can be shown in the following table which shows the frequencies of each strategy and its percentage within the speech:

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage %
Repetition	6	22.22
Metaphor	2	7.40
Appeal to Logic	19	70.37

As the findings suggest, the use of appeal to logic strategy has outnumbered the other ones since appealing to logic and reason helps Carter in getting his listeners' perceptions and attentions in the sense that the presentation of rational argument makes Carter sound and think right, and this, in turn, makes him look more reliable and credible. Thus, facts and evidences comprise a large part in constructing Carter's political speech in his effort to persuade his listeners. The investigation of the speech also shows that the strategies of metaphor and repetition are less frequent. The reason for this seems to be that that Carter doesn't want to depend on arousing emotions to get their attentions than appeal to logic. The least frequent strategy is that of metaphor, where it consists of only two examples throughout the speech. Above all, it seems that Carter exercizes persuasion over his listeners by stating facts and evidences rather than inspiring their emotional side.

8.2. Conclusions:

The study has come up with some conclusions that validate the hypotheses raised. The results have shown that Carter has made use of three important discourse strategies, though with differing degrees, in order to strengthen his statements and persuade his listeners. Moreover, Carter's political discourse is intentionally constructed for political purposes. Thus, he chooses specific words and strategies so as to convey his ideology, fulfil different implications and aims and change his listeners' attitudes. In addition, persuasion is best enacted through the use of logical statements by which Carter legitimises power over his listeners.

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تحليل خطابي نقدي لبعض أساليب الإقناع في خطاب أشتون كارتر السياسي في عام ٢٠١٦ حول العراق وسوريا

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&

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المستخلص

يضم الخطاب السياسي بين جنباته سمات لابد أن يدركها المخاطبون، وينبغي أن يكون الخطاب مقنعاً لهم، وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل ثلاثة أساليب إقناعية خطابية في خطاب (أشتون كارتر) السياسي في عام ٢٠١٦ حول الصراع في العراق وسوريا، فضلاً عن إيجاد الإيديولوجيات الضمنية في الخطاب. هذه الأساليب الخطابية هي التكرار والمجاز والمنطق الاقناعي، وإن النموذج المُتبنّى لتحليل هذا الخطاب هو التحليل النقدي للخطاب لـ (ڨان دايك) لعام ٢٠٠٠ م، وتفترض هذه الدراسة أن يكون خطاب (كارتر) السياسي تعبيرياً عاطفياً ومنطقياً، وأنه مُصوّغ على أساس إيديولوجي، وقد توصلت هذه الدراسة إلى أن استراتيجية المنطق الاقناعي كانت الأكثر تكراراً والتي من خلالها التجىء (كارتر) للتحدث بالمنطق وسرد الحقائق لإقناع مستمعيه للانحياز إلى وجهة نظره .