

## Investigating Obama's Ideology in his Speech on Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL)

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### Abstract

Political discourse has always been an area of investigation by critical discourse analysis (CDA) researchers, due to its importance in affecting the nations' destinations. This study attempted to unveil the Obamite ideology, and how he used rhetoric and speech to convince his audience about the brutality of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) terrorist group. Fairclough's three-dimension model was used as a framework to analyse Obama's speech on ISIL in December, 2014.

**Keywords:** CDA, Obama speech, ISIL, Fairclough Model

### INTRODUCTION

As a repercussion of America's invasion of Iraq in 2003, some Salafist and Jihadist groups started to attack the occupants of Iraq and their supporters. One of the notorious members of the Salafi groups was Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi, who had formed a militant group known as *Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad*, in 1999. Al-Zarqawi attacked mainly the American troops, and the Shiite mosques. Later, in 2004 Al-Zarqawi and his group declared their allegiance to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network. In 2005, Ayman Al-Zawahri, the second man in al-Qaeda network at that time, and the current leader of al-Qaeda, sent a letter to Al-Zarqawi, outlining a four-stage plan to expand the Iraq War. The plan included expelling US forces from Iraq, establishing an Islamic authority as a caliphate, spreading the conflict to Iraq's secular neighbors, and clashing with Israel (Pool, 2004; France Agency Press).

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On 7 June 2006, Al-Zarqawi who was killed in a US airstrike, and then was succeeded by the Egyptian militant Abu Ayyub al-Masri, to be the leader of the *Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad* group. A few months later in 2006, Mujahedeen Shura Council (MSC) united with three smaller groups and six Sunni Islamic tribes to form the "Mutayibeen Coalition". A day later, MSC declared the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), which comprised Iraq's six mostly Sunni Arab governorates, with Abu Omar al-Baghdadi being announced as its Emir. Al-Masri was given the title of Minister of War within the ISIL's ten-member cabinet (Tran, 2007; BBC News). This militant group posed a threat to many countries in the world including America and the Arab countries. A call for launching a war against ISIL was mainly started by America, some European countries, and some Gulf countries.

The Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) is one of the extremist groups, which appeared recently. They kill for no reasons, and try to relate their horrible deeds to Islam. However, Islam does not accept that. Killing innocent people is not justified in Islam. Moreover, ISIL is not empowered to talk about religion or the establishment of Caliphate System.

As a response for ISIL attacks and savage killings, many countries started to declare their concern, and worry of the spread of such extremist group. Some allied nations launched attacks against this terroristic movement. Many politicians and presidents of the world talked about ISIL. They addressed their nations as the first priority, and the whole world. The American president, Barrack Obama, is one of the leaders who delivered speeches about ISIL. This study, therefore, attempts to understand how Obama employed his ability of using rhetoric and language in convincing his audience about his political and ideological stance, and the necessity of a war against ISIL.

This research aims at addressing the following research questions:

1. How did Obama use discourse to convince his audience about severity of ISIL and the necessity of war against ISIL?
2. How did Obama convince his audience that the war against ISIL is different from it on Iraq?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Critical Discourse Analysis: Political Discourse

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research which is primarily concerned with discussing the social power abuse, dominance and inequality enacted, reproduced and resisted by talk and text in the social and political context (van Dijk, 2003). One of the main types of CDA is political discourse analysis.

Political critical discourse analysis has two main tenets; that is, it analyses political discourse, and it is a critical enterprise, as well. It deals especially with the emergence of political power, and how such power can be abused. It also deals with how domination

occurs through political discourse. It, moreover, addresses the various forms of resistance or counter-power enacted to resist such forms of discursive dominance. Specifically, such kind of analysis deals with the discursive conditions and consequences of social and political inequality that result from such domination (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1993b). CDA is an approach in discourse analysis, which focuses on the discursive conditions, components and consequences of power abuse by dominant groups and institutions. It studies discourse and its functions in society, especially those related to inequality and how they are reproduced in society and sometimes legitimized.

In relation to politics, it is common sense that politics is connected with power. The power to take decisions, control resources and control common people behaviors and values (Bayram, 2010). Politicians employ language in a way that serves their goals. Politicians' skillful use of rhetoric contributes to their success (Jones & Peccei, 2004). They employ language to persuade their audiences about their views, perspectives and plans. Fairclough (2006) argues that language can present as well as misrepresent realities. Language can affect people's thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and attitudes (Wareing, 2004; Jones & Peccei, 2004). A well acknowledged example, which can indicate how language can affect and control people's thoughts and beliefs, may be Newspeak, a form of English invented by George Orwell in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1998) in which people's thoughts were controlled and limited by the language made available to them (Bayram, 2010). Orwell's novel indicated how language could control people's ideologies and thoughts (Bayram, 2010).

Thus, politicians use language mainly to affect their audiences, and to persuade them about their political claims. Edelman (1977) argues that a successful politician is the one who uses his knowledge of informal influence. Jones & Peccei (2004) argue that this informal influence can be achieved by using "presuppositions" and "implicature". These tools can make audience infer meanings that are not said explicitly in the words of the politicians. Van Dijk (2006) argues that context of situation is what makes politicians speak in a certain way. De Wet (2010) claims that politician rise to power due to their use of persuasive language to address their voters. That is why Beard (2000) underscores the importance of studying the language of politics to understand how is language employed by politicians who are apt to gain, exercise or keep power. Van Dijk (1995, 2006) and de Wet (2010) argue that politically structured discourses are used, by the dominant ideology, as instruments to control mind.

Van Dijk (1995, 2006) argues that political discourses mostly aim to control mind or exercise manipulation. As mentioned earlier, politicians get their ideologies accepted through the use of persuasive language. They mostly use emotional language to arouse the interest of the audience, and to influence them. De Wet (2010) argues that "the language of political persuasion is geared to guiding recipients' attitudes and orientation/or behaviour, that is, to forming, sustaining or changing their attitudes on a political issue or impelling them to act." (p. 104).

## Political Discourse Analysis

In relation to linguistic analysis of political discourse including political speeches, it should relate the details of linguistic behavior to political behavior. To achieve this purpose, analysis can either pursue from the linguistic micro-level, or the macro level. At micro level, analysis aims to identify the strategic functions and specific structures (e.g. word choice, a specific syntactic structure) used to serve such a purpose. Another alternative is to start the analysis process from the macro-level, i.e. the communicative situation and the function of a text and identify the linguistic structures that were selected to achieve this function (Bayram, 2010).

Schäffner (1996), Sauer (1996), and Fairclough (1996) underscore the significance of relating linguistic structures to larger contexts of communicative settings and political functions, in the process of political speeches' analysis. According to this view, critical discourse analysis (CDA) should be used as the integrated approach. CDA, as Fairclough (1996:287) claims, is "a perspective which is concerned with showing up often opaque connections between language and other aspects of society and culture". As for van Dijk (1993) recommends examining the style, rhetoric or meaning of texts to identify the strategies that aim at the concealment of social power relations and the exercise of power.

The linguistics - political dimension gives us a picture on how politicians and those in power use language to attain their goals. Thus, the study of language and politics aims at understanding the role of linguistic communication in the functioning of social units, and how these social units form language itself (Bell & McLaughlin, 2004). Such political communication among the social units is of two levels: micro and macro. The micro level is concerned with the conflicts of interest, struggle for dominance and efforts for co-operation between individuals, genders and social groups. The macro level, on the other hand, includes the power struggle or cooperation between political institutions, social groups or individuals on state level (Chilton, 2004; Schäffner, 2002).

Thus, the main aim of political discourse analysis is to unveil the hidden and implicit ideologies of politicians, and how they promote their authority, employing linguistic means. Thus, the political analysis is more concerned with "credibility" and legitimization of one's deeds according to the ideology one is supporting. Most research in political discourse analysis was for the aim of disclosing the politicians' intentions, and analyzing the effects of their speeches. Among the first to address the question of implicit meaning and credibility of linguistic communication is Poul Grice, in his *Theory on Implicature*. Such a theory inspired many scholars in this field (van Dijk, 1997a, 2001; Fairclough, 1989, 1999). According to Grice, there are four conversation maxims: the maxim of quantity (give information as required), quality (be truthful), relation (be relevant) and manner (avoid obscurity). Thus, if a speaker follows all four maxims, there is no implicature. By contrast, if a speaker breaks any of these maxims, the situation results in implied pragmatic meaning or conversational implicature (Vine, 2004:47). Politicians employ such implicature in the political language to convey more than they say through intended meaning. However, such implied meaning is

recognizable to the hearer if he adopts a particular ideology or set of attitudes and values (Chilton, 2004).

### Previous CDA Political studies

CDA has been used widely by many researchers to analyze political speeches. For example, Post (2009) employed CDA to analyze the selections of social actors and social actions from the 2008 campaign speeches of Barack Obama and John McCain. He found that language was used to make salient the most notable linguistic images and socio-semantic features implemented by the texts' writers to facilitate not only the nominee's perceived societal values, but to also shape individual interaction within society through such perceived social values as articulated by representations of social actors and social actions. He also showed how Obama shaped his identity through the manipulation of social actors and social actions to facilitate not only the ideological positions the nominees would strive to reproduce, but also the textual personas they have assiduously created for themselves via their ideological positions and representations of meaning. For Obama, *meaning* was utilized to shape the majority of categories within his discourse

Similarly, Alvi and Abdul Baseer (2002) investigated how Obama used rhetorics and his linguistic ability to convince and persuade his listeners of his propositions. They showed how he used story-telling, rhetorical questions and answers, appeal to authority, salutations as emotion booster, free verbal repetitive constructions, verbal and syntactic parallelism. They pointed out how he uses his linguistic artisanship to draw his credible image in the minds of his listeners, and to convince them that a war on Iraq is not a solution.

Horváth (2009) examined Obama's inaugural speech using CDA. He found that Obama employed persuasive strategies in his public speaking to support his covert ideology. He also found that the key ideologies expressed in Obama's speech are *pragmatism*, liberalism, inclusiveness, acceptance of religious and ethnic diversity and unity.

Similarly, Obaid and Fahad (2012) used CDA to analyze Obama's "historical" speech in Cairo (2009). They attempted to understand how language is used as part of the Obama's attempt to draw a new position and identity for America in the global community in general and in the Islamic community in particular. They showed how Obama used language to convey the start of a new era of peace and consent, away of the discourse of "coercion" during the eight years of the former administration

Wang (2010) analyze Obama's presidential speeches from the modality and transitivity perspective. She explored how political discourse was used to convey the ideology of power. Wang showed how Obama employed the simple language, transitivity and modality to express his nearness to his people, and to arouse the American citizen's confidence in their president

Hoyer (2008) used CDA to analyze the British ex-prime minister, Tony Blair selected speeches, in regards to the war on Iraq. Hoyer revealed how Blair employed discourse to convey his ideological stance, which tries to legitimize the war on Iraq. Blair legitimized his supporting stance in regards to the war on Iraq by highlighting the security discourse in which he showed that Britain needs to defend herself. This expresses Tony Blair's worldview. Hoyer also found that media at that time played a role in supporting Blair's stance in regards to the war on Iraq.

### **Obama's Rhetorical Style**

Rhetoric is the art of persuading the others (Charteris-Black, 2005). Politician all over the world have been characterized by their ability of using rhetoric and language effectively. Some argued that the success of a politician depends on his use of rhetoric (Beard, 2000). Thus, politicians differ in their ability of using rhetoric.

Barack Obama has always been identified as a prominent figure in the use of language and speech. He is talented in playing with language, and using it to convince his audience about his ideologies. In addition, Obama's speeches were academically studied in terms of linguistic features, persuasive language and discourse analysis (Frank & McPhail, 2005). Obama had a high ability of using standard English (Alim & Smitherman, 2012). Such high ability of language use enables him to use rhetorics to convince his audience. One characteristic of Obama's speeches is his way of relating himself to famous people from the past, and that is to gain credibility. He, further, uses language and eloquent speaking voice to build connections with young blue-collar audiences (Leggett, 2011). In addition, Obama employs contrast, tricolon, anaphora, and epiphora, among others. He is skillful in using such devices to impress his audience (Leggett, 2011). Obama has always used language to address his objectives of a speech. In some cases, he used language and rhetoric to convince his audience and Congress of the unjustifiability of a war in Afghanistan (Seif, 2014). An example of his use of contrasts (Leggett, 2011) is the the extract quoted by Leggett (2011), which reads: "I am the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas.". He made use of "white" and "black", which are contrasts to indicate that he has white as well as black roots, and thus he is with every American. An example of Obama's use of tricolon (as quoted in Leggett, 2011) is "Tonight, we gather to affirm the greatness of our nation, not because of the height of our skyscrapers or the power of our military, or the size of our economy...".

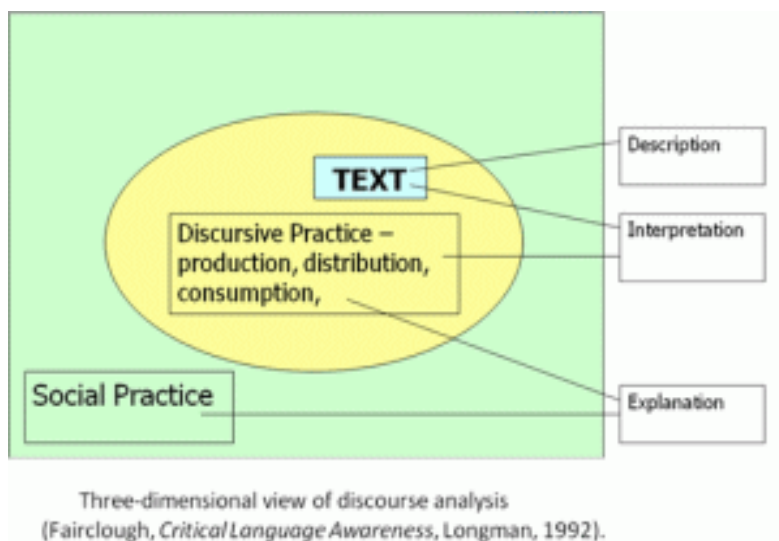
## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sampling**

Obama's speech on ISIL on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014 constitutes the sampling of the current study

## Analysis

Fairclough's three-dimension framework was used to analyse Obama's speech on ISIL on September 10th, 2014. The speech was analysed in terms of his use of Vocabulary, rhetorical devices, mood, transitivity and voice. These elements contribute to understanding the text, and its interpretation.



Fairclough's (1989, 1995) model for CDA consists three inter-related processes of analysis tied to three inter-related dimensions of discourse. These three dimensions are the object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts); the processes by means of which the object is produced and received (writing/ speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects, and the socio-historical conditions that govern these processes (Janks, 2006). According to Fairclough, each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis. For example, text analysis requires description, whereas processing analysis requires interpretation, and social analysis requires explanation.

What is useful about this approach is that it enables you to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxtapositioning, their sequencing, and their layout and so on. However, it also requires you to recognize that the historical determination of these selections and to understand that these choices are tied to the conditions of possibility of that utterance.

## RESULTS

In this section, we try to show how discourse is employed by Obama to convince is audience of his ideology. Vocabulary, metaphor, mood, and voice are discussed in the following lines.

### Vocabulary

Obama employed words which serve his thesis of the speech, that is, to convince his audience of the necessity of war against ISIL, and that this war is different from the war in Iraq or Afghanistan. War is related to evils in the minds of American people, that is,

why he attempts to use his ability of using rhetoric and speech to convince his audience. In the following lines, Obama's use of vocabulary will be highlighted.

My fellow Americans – tonight, I want to speak to you about what the United States will do with our friends and allies to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as *ISIL*.

In this introductory extract, Obama used the word “fellow” instead of ‘citizens’ to increase intimacy with his audience and to shorten the gap between him as a president of the biggest country in the world and his audience, who are the people of America with their different sects, and social classes. Obama, also, used the verb “degrade” and then “destroy” preceded by the adverb “ultimately” to gradually convince his audience of the supreme ability to fight terrorism and defeat it. Obama, also, described ISIL as “terrorist group” to recall the terrible picture of terrorism in the minds of the American people. He used words such as “destroy” to show America's clear aim and target, that is, to eradicate terrorism and to secure America.

To gain his audience sympathy, Obama used expressions that show his due care of his citizens and their security. He says: “my highest priority is the security of the American people”. He prioritized speaking about security because it is related to the issue he is going to discuss. He will soon ask permission to start war on ISIL.

Obama makes good use of pronouns. For example, he uses the plural subject first person. He repeats the pronoun “we” several times throughout his speech, that is, to create solidarity, and inclusion with his audience. He wants them to share him the feeling, and responsibility. He wants to make his audience as a part of decision-making process. He said:

We have consistently taken the fight to terrorists who threaten our country. We took out Osama bin Laden and much of al Qaeda's leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We've targeted al Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen, and recently eliminated the top commander of its affiliate in Somalia. We've done so while bringing more than 140,000 American troops home from Iraq, and drawing down our forces in Afghanistan, where our combat mission will end later this year. Thanks to our military and counterterrorism professionals, America is safer.

In one paragraph only, he repeated “we” four times to create solidarity with the American people. In the whole speech, he repeated “we, fifty-four times, to show inclusion. Obama also recalls the history, which he did not make it all, but as American he is proud of. He recalls to the minds of people the alleged victories of America in what he considers as terrorism. He wants to reassure his audience that he will succeed in his mission, and uproot what he considers as terrorism. Obama uses verbs such as “Erase” to refer to eradication of terrorism. It is a strong verb, which indicates uprooting of evils and terrorism. He, also, uses verbs such as “call itself”, to acquit Islam from that and not to take Muslims as enemies. He uses adjectives properly such as “vigilant” to indicate complete alertness and attentiveness to threats.



Obama uses verbs such as “condone”, which is a *properly used* expression, instead of ‘forgive’. He repeated words such as “killing” and “slaughter” two times for each. He used strong words such as “bloodshed”, brutality, which were repeated twice. “Threaten” was repeated eight times to show the graveness of this terrorist group. The word “terror” and its derivations were repeated twenty-three times to convince his audience of the necessity of the war against this terrorist group. “Genocide” is also used to show the severity and brutality of ISIL, and thus the necessity of war against them. To highlight the legitimacy of the war on ISIL, Obama used expressions to convince his audience of legitimacy of war on ISIL, and the noble aims of America to save the lives of innocent people. Obama says:

These strikes have protected American personnel and facilities, killed ISIL fighters, destroyed weapons, and given space for Iraqi and Kurdish forces to reclaim key territory. These strikes have helped save the lives of thousands of innocent men, women and children.

Obama throughout his speech was boasting America expression, and its status. He mentioned “America” and its derivatives thirty seven times in his speech. He highlighted the threat of ISIL to conclude war necessity. He said: “we will hunt down terrorists who threaten our country”. He used the word “threaten” eighteen times to highlight their danger. Obama, then, makes a transition to remind people that this war against ISIL is not similar to Iraq war. It is know that Obama took back the American forces from Iraq, and he does not adopt the idea of waging wars on the lands of any other country. He used potential verbs such as “drag”, as he said: “we will not get dragged into another ground war in Iraq”. Then later in another position in his speech, Obama said:

I want the American people to understand how this effort will be different from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It will not involve American combat troops fighting on foreign soil. This counter-terrorism campaign will be waged through a steady, relentless effort to take out ISIL wherever they exist, using our air power and our support for partner forces on the ground.

Obama uses rhetoric to highlight the American role in helping others and assisting the needy. In many statements, and using the pronoun “we”, he highlights the American role. For example, he said: “We will also support Iraq’s efforts to stand up National Guard Units to help Sunni communities secure their own freedom from ISIL control.” He once again underscores the American role as a country that seeks peace. He said: “we must strengthen the opposition as the best counterweight to extremists like ISIL, while pursuing the political solution necessary to solve Syria’s crisis once and for all.” Obama in other parts of his speech highlights the humanitarian efforts of America. He said:

We will continue providing humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians who have been displaced by this terrorist organization. This includes Sunni and Shia Muslims who are at grave risk, as well as tens of thousands of Christians and other religious minorities

To highlight the leadership role of America in his speech, and thus her responsibility to fight terrorism wherever it occurs, he said:

This is American leadership at its best: we stand with people who fight for their own freedom; and we rally other nations on behalf of our common security and common humanity.

He also uses metaphor to show how brutal ISIL is. He said: "it will take time to eradicate a cancer like ISIL". In another context he uses metaphor to show how powerful America is. He said: "America is better positioned today to seize the future than any other nation on Earth." Personification you mean? To indicate the power of America and its supremacy, Obama recalls the economic and technological advancements of America. He also mentions his efforts to enhance America and its people. He said:

Our technology companies and universities are unmatched; our manufacturing and auto industries are thriving. Energy independence is closer than it's been in decades. For all the work that remains, our businesses are in the longest uninterrupted stretch of job creation in our history

At the end of his speech, and after all such long talk expression about America as a power in the world, and the his achievements, which he did not directly ascribe them to himself, and after highlighting the brutality of terrorists including ISIL, he then asks the parliament and the American people to support him in starting a war on ISIL. He said:

We welcome our responsibility to lead. From Europe to Asia – from the far reaches of Africa to war-torn capitals of the Middle East – we stand for freedom, for justice, for dignity. These values have guided our nation since its founding. Tonight, I ask for your support in carrying that leadership forward.

## **Voice**

In the most of his speech, Obama uses the active voice. He said: "the United States will do" to enhance intimacy with his audience, and to convince them that it is not him as a president, but America as a country that fosters peace. He wants to recall the alleged role of America as a sponsor of peace in the world. Obama, in the second paragraph, continues to use the active voice. He used active voice because he was talking about his glories and victories. He wants to make people proud of their alleged war on terrorism as if they were part of making it. In his speech, Obama used active voice in most times how often? Give a figure. With few exceptions, active voice was used because he was speaking about victory and successes. However, he used passive in some situations to serve his purpose. For example, he used passive in the context of speaking about waging a war against ISIL because he does not want to take an aggressive stance. He said: "This counter-terrorism campaign will be waged through".

## Mood

Obama employed aspect and tense in a very effective way. For instance, he said "We have consistently taken". In this sentence he used present perfect aspect to make people feel the event as if it were happening now. Sometimes, he used the past, when he spoke about the eradication of terrorism. He said, for example, "We took out Osama bin Laden" to make people feel happy about? And make them feel that they could get rid of whom they consider as the symbol of terrorism. He employed modality in effective way. For example, he said: "we must remain vigilant". Must is used to confirm certainty. He says:

We cannot erase every trace of evil from the world, and small groups of killers have the capacity to do great harm. That was the case before 9/11, and that remains true today. That's why we must remain vigilant as threats emerge. At this moment, the greatest threats come from the Middle East and North Africa, where radical groups exploit grievances for their own gain. And one of those groups is ISIL – which calls itself the "Islamic State."

Modality is widely used in Obama's speech to serve different functions. Obama used "must" three times to express certainty and determinedness. The modal verb "can" is widely used by Obama in his speech, either positively or negatively. He used "can" thirty-two times. He used "can" to express America's ability on taking actions, and doing things. Obama said: "American power can make a decisive difference". By using "can" in this statement, he arouses the American high self-esteem, and thus their role in the world. In another context he said: "we can best support Iraqi Security". Thus "can" is used to express ability, power, and hegemony. "Will" is also widely used to express ability to take free decision, and that every action is taken by America is voluntarily, and due to its role as a world power, and not by obligations from others. Obama said: "– we will send an additional 475 service"

## Transitivity

Examining Obama's speech, we notice that transitive verbs dominate the speech. Obama used material processes out of the six types of transitivity. Material processes refer to those processes in which an action is done. Thus, they include action verbs, actor, and goal (Hu, 1988). He used this type of transitivity to show his ability of doing things, and the American power that sweeps the world. For example, he said: "We took out Osama bin Laden and much of al Qaeda's leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan". He used the material process in this example, whereby "we" (i.e. America) is the actor, "took out" is the verb, and "Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda" are the goal. In this example, transitivity shows the American power and ability to take influential actions. Other examples which indicate the use of transitivity to show power is: "We've targeted al Qaeda's affiliate"; "we continue to face a terrorist threat", and many others. Sometimes, Obama used transitive verbs to show the danger of enemies and their direct impact. For example, he said: "terrorists who threaten our country" This analysis on transitivity is rather brief.

## CONCLUSION

This study attempted to explore how Obama used rhetoric and language to convince his audience (i.e. the American people and the Congress) about the necessity of starting a war on ISIL. He highlighted what he considered as the American victories on terrorism, to convince the audience that in such a prospected war on ISIL, he will not lose. Obama also recalled the American leadership and its responsibility to boost peace and to eradicate terrorism. After, such a long trail of sequential talking about America as the greatest power in the world, he also made it clear that this war will not be like his war in Iraq. In short, Obama could use rhetoric to convince his audience of the ultimate goal of America, that is, to secure itself, and to uproot terrorism.

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## APPENDIX A: OBAMA'S SPEECH

The White House  
Office of the Press Secretary  
For Immediate Release  
September 10, 2014  
Statement by the President on ISIL  
State Floor  
9:01 P.M. EDT

My fellow Americans, tonight I want to speak to you about what the United States will do with our friends and allies to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL.

As Commander-in-Chief, my highest priority is the security of the American people. Over the last several years, we have consistently taken the fight to terrorists who threaten our country. We took out Osama bin Laden and much of al Qaeda's leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We've targeted al Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen, and recently eliminated the top commander of its affiliate in Somalia. We've done so while bringing more than 140,000 American troops home from Iraq, and drawing down our forces in Afghanistan, where our combat mission will end later this year. Thanks to our military and counterterrorism professionals, America is safer.

Still, we continue to face a terrorist threat. We can't erase every trace of evil from the world, and small groups of killers have the capacity to do great harm. That was the case before 9/11, and that remains true today. And that's why we must remain vigilant as threats emerge. At this moment, the greatest threats come from the Middle East and North Africa, where radical groups exploit grievances for their own gain. And one of those groups is ISIL -- which calls itself the "Islamic State."

Now let's make two things clear: ISIL is not "Islamic." No religion condones the killing of innocents. And the vast majority of ISIL's victims have been Muslim. And ISIL is certainly not a state. It was formerly al Qaeda's affiliate in Iraq, and has taken advantage of sectarian strife and Syria's civil war to gain territory on both sides of the Iraq-Syrian border. It is recognized by no government, nor by the people it subjugates. ISIL is a terrorist organization, pure and simple. And it has no vision other than the slaughter of all who stand in its way.

In a region that has known so much bloodshed, these terrorists are unique in their brutality. They execute captured prisoners. They kill children. They enslave, rape, and force women into marriage. They threatened a religious minority with genocide. And in acts of barbarism, they took the lives of two American journalists -- Jim Foley and Steven Sotloff.

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.

I know many Americans are concerned about these threats. Tonight, I want you to know that the United States of America is meeting them with strength and resolve. Last month, I ordered our military to take targeted action against ISIL to stop its advances. Since then, we've conducted more than 150 successful airstrikes in Iraq. These strikes have protected American personnel and facilities, killed ISIL fighters, destroyed weapons, and given space for Iraqi and Kurdish forces to reclaim key territory. These strikes have also helped save the lives of thousands of innocent men, women and children.

But this is not our fight alone. American power can make a decisive difference, but we cannot do for Iraqis what they must do for themselves, nor can we take the place of Arab partners in

securing their region. And that's why I've insisted that additional U.S. action depended upon Iraqis forming an inclusive government, which they have now done in recent days. So tonight, with a new Iraqi government in place, and following consultations with allies abroad and Congress at home, I can announce that America will lead a broad coalition to roll back this terrorist threat.

Our objective is clear: We will degrade, and ultimately destroy, ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy.

First, we will conduct a systematic campaign of airstrikes against these terrorists. Working with the Iraqi government, we will expand our efforts beyond protecting our own people and humanitarian missions, so that we're hitting ISIL targets as Iraqi forces go on offense. Moreover, I have made it clear that we will hunt down terrorists who threaten our country, wherever they are. That means I will not hesitate to take action against ISIL in Syria, as well as Iraq. This is a core principle of my presidency: If you threaten America, you will find no safe haven.

Second, we will increase our support to forces fighting these terrorists on the ground. In June, I deployed several hundred American servicemembers to Iraq to assess how we can best support Iraqi security forces. Now that those teams have completed their work -- and Iraq has formed a government -- we will send an additional 475 servicemembers to Iraq. As I have said before, these American forces will not have a combat mission -- we will not get dragged into another ground war in Iraq. But they are needed to support Iraqi and Kurdish forces with training, intelligence and equipment. We'll also support Iraq's efforts to stand up National Guard Units to help Sunni communities secure their own freedom from ISIL's control.

Across the border, in Syria, we have ramped up our military assistance to the Syrian opposition. Tonight, I call on Congress again to give us additional authorities and resources to train and equip these fighters. In the fight against ISIL, we cannot rely on an Assad regime that terrorizes its own people -- a regime that will never regain the legitimacy it has lost. Instead, we must strengthen the opposition as the best counterweight to extremists like ISIL, while pursuing the political solution necessary to solve Syria's crisis once and for all.

Third, we will continue to draw on our substantial counterterrorism capabilities to prevent ISIL attacks. Working with our partners, we will redouble our efforts to cut off its funding; improve our intelligence; strengthen our defenses; counter its warped ideology; and stem the flow of foreign fighters into and out of the Middle East. And in two weeks, I will chair a meeting of the U.N. Security Council to further mobilize the international community around this effort.

Fourth, we will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians who have been displaced by this terrorist organization. This includes Sunni and Shia Muslims who are at grave risk, as well as tens of thousands of Christians and other religious minorities. We cannot allow these communities to be driven from their ancient homelands.

So this is our strategy. And in each of these four parts of our strategy, America will be joined by a broad coalition of partners. Already, allies are flying planes with us over Iraq; sending arms and assistance to Iraqi security forces and the Syrian opposition; sharing intelligence; and providing billions of dollars in humanitarian aid. Secretary Kerry was in Iraq today meeting with the new government and supporting their efforts to promote unity. And in the coming days he will travel across the Middle East and Europe to enlist more partners in this fight, especially Arab nations who can help mobilize Sunni communities in Iraq and Syria, to drive these terrorists from their lands. This is American leadership at its best: We stand with people who fight for their own freedom, and we rally other nations on behalf of our common security and common humanity.

My administration has also secured bipartisan support for this approach here at home. I have the authority to address the threat from ISIL, but I believe we are strongest as a nation when the President and Congress work together. So I welcome congressional support for this effort in order to show the world that Americans are united in confronting this danger.



Now, it will take time to eradicate a cancer like ISIL. And any time we take military action, there are risks involved -- especially to the servicemen and women who carry out these missions. But I want the American people to understand how this effort will be different from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It will not involve American combat troops fighting on foreign soil. This counterterrorism campaign will be waged through a steady, relentless effort to take out ISIL wherever they exist, using our air power and our support for partner forces on the ground. This strategy of taking out terrorists who threaten us, while supporting partners on the front lines, is one that we have successfully pursued in Yemen and Somalia for years. And it is consistent with the approach I outlined earlier this year: to use force against anyone who threatens America's core interests, but to mobilize partners wherever possible to address broader challenges to international order.

My fellow Americans, we live in a time of great change. Tomorrow marks 13 years since our country was attacked. Next week marks six years since our economy suffered its worst setback since the Great Depression. Yet despite these shocks, through the pain we have felt and the grueling work required to bounce back, America is better positioned today to seize the future than any other nation on Earth.

Our technology companies and universities are unmatched. Our manufacturing and auto industries are thriving. Energy independence is closer than it's been in decades. For all the work that remains, our businesses are in the longest uninterrupted stretch of job creation in our history. Despite all the divisions and discord within our democracy, I see the grit and determination and common goodness of the American people every single day -- and that makes me more confident than ever about our country's future.

Abroad, American leadership is the one constant in an uncertain world. It is America that has the capacity and the will to mobilize the world against terrorists. It is America that has rallied the world against Russian aggression, and in support of the Ukrainian peoples' right to determine their own destiny. It is America -- our scientists, our doctors, our know-how -- that can help contain and cure the outbreak of Ebola. It is America that helped remove and destroy Syria's declared chemical weapons so that they can't pose a threat to the Syrian people or the world again. And it is America that is helping Muslim communities around the world not just in the fight against terrorism, but in the fight for opportunity, and tolerance, and a more hopeful future.

America, our endless blessings bestow an enduring burden. But as Americans, we welcome our responsibility to lead. From Europe to Asia, from the far reaches of Africa to war-torn capitals of the Middle East, we stand for freedom, for justice, for dignity. These are values that have guided our nation since its founding.

Tonight, I ask for your support in carrying that leadership forward. I do so as a Commander-in-Chief who could not be prouder of our men and women in uniform -- pilots who bravely fly in the face of danger above the Middle East, and servicemembers who support our partners on the ground.

When we helped prevent the massacre of civilians trapped on a distant mountain, here's what one of them said: "We owe our American friends our lives. Our children will always remember that there was someone who felt our struggle and made a long journey to protect innocent people."

That is the difference we make in the world. And our own safety, our own security, depends upon our willingness to do what it takes to defend this nation and uphold the values that we stand for -- timeless ideals that will endure long after those who offer only hate and destruction have been vanquished from the Earth.

May God bless our troops, and may God bless the United States of America.

Number of characters (including spaces) :	12171
Number of characters (without spaces) :	9790
Number of words :	2016
Lexical Density :	35.6647
Number of sentences :	110
Number of syllables :	3334

## APPENDIX B: FREQUENCIES

The frequencies are not very meaningful and hardly in line with the discussion.

Some top phrases containing 5 words (without punctuation marks)	Occurrences
the united states of America	2
terrorists who threaten our country	2
it is america that has	2
Some top phrases containing 4 words (without punctuation marks)	Occurrences
it is america that	4
the middle east and	3
of the american people	2
terrorists who threaten our	2
a threat to the	2
iraqi and kurdish forces	2
in the fight against	2
al qaeda's affiliate in	2
we will continue to	2
the united states of	2
of the middle east	2
degrade and ultimately destroy	2
who threaten our country	2
is america that has	2
united states of America	2
Some top phrases containing 3 words (without punctuation marks)	Occurrences
it is america	5
the middle east	5
is america that	4
the united states	4
in the fight	3
the american people	3
in iraq and	3
terrorists who threaten	3
on the ground	3
middle east and	3
we will continue	2
a broad coalition	2
who threaten our	2
support for this	2
iraqi and Kurdish	2
a threat to	2
these strikes have	2
in yemen and	2
- we will	2
Service members to Iraq	2

and kurdish forces	2
the syrian opposition	2
threaten our country	2
of the middle	2
as well as	2
we stand for	2
commander in chief	2
personnel and facilities	2
the fight against	2
of thousands of	2
Some top phrases containing 2 words (without punctuation marks)	
we will	10
in the	7
it is	7
the world	7
of the	7
in Iraq	6
middle east	6
we have	5
and in	5
to the	5
the middle	5
these terrorists	5
iraq and	5
from the	5
is America	5
and the	5
the fight	4
america that	4
on the	4
this is	4
will not	4
the united	4
tonight i	4
united states	4
their own	4
al qaeda's	3
against isil	3
america is	3
american people	3
who threaten	3