

Critical Discourse Analysis of Obama's Political Discourse

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Abstract

This paper examines the persuasive strategies of President Obama's public speaking as well as the covert ideology of the same, enshrined in his inaugural address. Our analysis is grounded in Norman Fairclough's assumptions in critical discourse analysis, claiming that "ideologies reside in texts" that "it is not possible to 'read off' ideologies from texts" and that "texts are open to diverse interpretations" (Fairclough: 1995). The selected corpus' ideological and persuasive components are assessed, thus revealing Obama's persuasive strategies.

1. Introduction

Politics is a struggle for power in order to put certain political, economic and social ideas into practice. In this process, language plays a crucial role, for every political action is prepared, accompanied, influenced and played by language. This paper analyzes discourse of political speaking, namely the inaugural address of President Barack Obama. Given the enormous domestic and global significance of the said speech in times of international economic turmoil it is crucial to decipher ideological traits typical for Barack Obama's enshrined in his inaugural address. Inaugural address predestines policies of the newly inaugurated president and its overall significance is enhanced in the case of Obama's policy of change. The aim of this paper is to examine persuasive strategies of President Barack Obama and its ideological component.

2. Theoretical underpinnings

2.1. Discourse

Discourse, as such, is a broad term with many a definition, which "integrates a whole palette of meanings" (Titscher et.al. 1998: 42), ranging from linguistics, through sociology, philosophy and other disciplines. For the purposes of this paper we apply the definition of discourse, based on van Dijk's (1977: 3), and his general concept of discourse as text in context, seen as "data that is liable for empiric analysis" (Titscher et.al. 1998: 44), with focus being put on discourse as action and process. From this it follows that "discourse" is a wider term than "text": "I shall use the term discourse to refer to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part" (Fairclough 1989: 24).

2.2. Critical discourse analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is obviously not a homogenous model, nor a school or a paradigm, but at most a shared perspective on doing linguistics, semiotic or discourse analysis. (van Dijk 1993b: 131)

CDA objective is to perceive language use as social practice. The users of language do not function in isolation, but in a set of cultural, social and psychological frameworks. CDA accepts this social context and studies the connections between textual structures and takes this social context into account and explores the links between textual structures and their function in interaction within the society. Such an analysis is a complex, multi-level one, given the obvious lack of direct, one to one correspondence between text structures and social

functions. Especially when it comes to creating and maintaining differences in power relations. The relatedness of the complex mechanism of discursive practice and their social function is frequently and willingly left opaque, especially when the need occurs to create and maintain differences in power relations. One of the objectives of CDA is to create a framework for decreasing this said opacity. Fairclough (1993: 135) in his definition perceives CDA as

discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practice, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

It should be noted that the relationship is bi-directional. Not only the language use is affected by its groundedness within certain frame of cultural or social practice, but also the use of language influences and shapes the social and cultural context it finds itself in. It can be concluded that discursive practices are constitutive of social structures, the same way as the social structures determine discursive practices. CDA recognises both directions, and in particular it “[explores] the tension between these two sides of language use, the socially shaped and socially constitutive” (Ibid.: 134). Language is a constituent of the society on various levels. A division proposed by Fairclough (Ibid.: 134-136) is that of social identity, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief. All of these levels are effected, only with a variation as far as the strength is concerned. The issue of interpretation of these levels in the context of discourse models and social cognition will be addressed in the latter part of this work.

The one element of CDA by which it is differentiated from other forms of discourse analysis lies in its attribute of ‘critical’. “‘Critical’ implies showing connections and causes which are hidden; it also implies intervention, for example providing resources for those who may be disadvantaged through change” Fairclough (1992: 9). It is important to expose the hidden things, since they are not evident for the individuals involved, and, because of this, they cannot be fought against.

Of the theoreticians of discourse linguistics, who, in the words of Van Dijk contributed “many articles and books that establish CDA as a direction of research, and that focus on various dimensions of power”, is the work of Norman Fairclough (1989, 1992). It is for him that CDA is perceived as a research tactics rather than a direction of thought or a model of analysis.

What the followers of CDA try to achieve has been summarised by Batstone (1995)

Critical Discourse Analysts seek to reveal how texts are constructed so that particular (and Potentially indoctrinating) perspectives can be expressed delicately and covertly; because they are covert, they are elusive of direct challenge, facilitating what Kress calls the “retreat into mystification and impersonality”. (Batstone 1995: 198-199)

The definitions, as proposed above, are quite complete, but they would need further specification of how CDA is undertaken. Norman Fairclough, in his work *Language and Power* (1989), wishes to “examine how the ways in which we communicate are constrained by the structures and forces of those social institutions within which we live and function.” (Fairclough 1989: vi). In the same publication, the possible procedures for analysing of texts are suggested. Faiclough (Ibid.: 24-26) gives his opinions on the actual nature of discourse and text analysis. In his view, there are three levels of discourse, firstly, *social conditions of production and interpretation*, i.e. the social factors, which contributed or lead to the

origination of a text, and, at the same time, how the same factors effect interpretation. Secondly, the *process of production and interpretation*, i.e. in what way the text was produced and how this effects interpretation. Thirdly, the *text*, being the product of the first two stages, commented on above. Fairclough subsequently gives three stages of CDA, which are in accord with the three abovementioned levels of discourse:

- Description is the stage which is concerned with the formal properties of the text.
- Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction – with seeing the text as a product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation...
- Explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context – with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects.

(Fairclough 1989: 26)

2.3 Conceptual basis

Our conceptual basis is adopted from Norman Fairclough's ideas on discourse and power and discourse and hegemony. We attempt to link social practice and linguistic practice, as well as micro and macro analysis of discourse (Fairclough 1989: 97). At the same time, analytical part of this paper analyzes the possible interrelatedness of textual properties and power relations, which is also underpinned in Fairclough's conceptual work. Furthermore, this paper attempts to deconstruct covert ideology which is 'hidden' in the text, stemming from the theoretical conceptualization of Batstone, who claims that "critical discourse analysis seeks to reveal how texts are constructed so that particular (and potentially indoctrinating) perspectives can be expressed delicately and covertly; because they are covert, they are elusive of direct challenge, facilitating what Kress calls the 'retreat into mystification and impersonality' (1989: 57)" (Batstone 1995: 198-199). The main analytical tool of our paper reflects the "three-dimensional method of discourse analysis", introduced by Norman Fairclough, namely the "language text, spoken or written, discourse practice (text production and text interpretation), and the sociocultural practice" (CDA: 97). This notions of Fairclough transform into an analytical method, including the "linguistic description of the language text, interpretation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the text, and explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes" (Fairclough 1989: 97).

3. Liberal discourse

To be able to decipher ideological components in the Obamite discourse, we should give an outline on what constitutes liberal discourse and in what way it is differentiated from the conservative discourse.

The basic difference of liberal narrative from that of the conservatives lies in emphasizing the importance of Enlightenment ideals over the religious ones. The creation of the nation is not perceived as the act of God but rather as based on principles of humanity. The National Education Association, for example, insists that "when the Founding Fathers drafted the Constitution with its Bill of Rights, they explicitly designed it to guarantee a secular, humanistic state" (cited in Hunter 1991: 113). However, despite the conservative efforts to monopolize the religious principle, the God and religion are not completely excluded from the liberal narrative: "America and every nation on earth is called by God to seek justice and serve the common good of humanity, not as a special privilege, however, but as special responsibility" (cited in Hunter 1991: 113).

The founding documents are seen as living, therefore, they can be differently interpreted or amended to suit the ever-changing world in order to maintain the basic principles that the Founding Fathers entrusted in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

As different as the notion of the founding documents are the concepts of *freedom* and *justice*. *Freedom* is a principle the American liberalism built on the *classical liberalism*, where it meant individualism and the notion of choice the individual has that is not restrained by tradition (Micklethwait & Wooldridge 2005: 343). According to Taylor, the liberal *freedom* is defined largely in terms of the social and political rights of individuals as “immunity from interference by others in his life, either by state or church or by other individuals”. *Justice*, on the other hand, is “understood in terms of equality and the end of oppression in the social world – ‘fair play’.” (cited in Hunter 1991: 114)

The American Revolution is seen as a fresh start for mankind to create a “better world”. The Democratic Party became the advocate for all the inequalities in the society, whether it is segregation and racial prejudice, women rights, gay rights or simply economic disparities stemming from unrestricted capitalism. The capitalism is, however, venerated in the liberal vision because it creates wealth, but it has to be regulated in order to serve the common good. “Progressive social change and an active role by the government are important, and initiatives such as the New Deal and the Civil Rights Movement are positive forces that improve society. Increasing wealth creates new opportunities to achieve fairness and justice.” (Morris 2004: 56) Therefore, the *American Dream* has also a different interpretation; in the view of liberalism it means equal opportunity for success for anyone.

According to Lakoff (2002: 108), the liberal model is a reflection of *the nurturant parent morality* model, where the government builds on mutual respect rather than on control, and where the “compassion” and “caring” are the keywords. In order to end the inequalities in the society, the government has to play a significant role in the lives of the people. Taxation is required for the common good of the society and in implication, a big governmental apparatus has to be formed for a fair distribution of wealth. Schooling and welfare systems are the governmental responsibilities as well.

The problem of liberal ideology is the concept *equality* that especially in the 20th century became linked with Marxist theories and their implementation after the Second World War. The Democratic Party therefore struggles to form a new narrative that would stress the differences with Marx, but at the same time, will be consistent with the Democratic Party's role of the correcting force in the course of American history (desegregation, civil rights, women rights, New Deal etc.).

So, as to sum up the main difference between the two ideologies, the quote from Hunter (1991: 114) can be borrowed: “Where the cultural conservatives tend to define freedom economically (as individual economic initiative) and justice socially (as righteous living), progressives tend to define freedom socially (as individual rights) and justice economically (as equity).”

4. Outline of the inaugural speech

The inaugural address of president Barack Obama can be internally divided into the following six parts:

1. **Thanking his predecessor** (paragraphs 1-2)
2. **Acknowledging the economic crisis** (paragraphs 3-7)

Obama is direct, using the following phrases: “the challenges ... are real. They are

serious and they are many.”At the same time, he has shown his resolve and leadership as shown in the following excerpt: “But know this, America — they will be met.”

3. **Pointing out crisis of the past** (paragraphs 8-17)
He is consistent with the overall message of hope. He quotes the Bible (10), goes back to the Declaration of Independence (10), and points out the crises of the past (paragraphs 12-15). His concluding remarks remind the audience that the timeless American values persist (paragraph 16).
4. **Addressing cynics** (paragraphs 18-20)
In a brief digression he attempts to persuade those who are sceptical of his plans. Obama employs the key phrase “Their memories are short.”
5. **Addressing the World** (paragraphs 21-26)
Obama outlines new foreign policy anchored in common, human ideals.
6. **The solution lies with the people** (paragraphs 27-35)
The president draws a parallel between American civilians and American soldiers, both embodying the American spirit of service. This parallel is topped by a Revolutionary War story metaphor.

Examples of the Rules of Three:

- “Homes have been lost;
jobs shed;
businesses shuttered.” (5)
- “Our health care is too costly;
our schools fail too many;
and [...] energy [...] threaten our planet.” (5)
- “all are equal,
all are free,
and all deserve [...] pursue [...] happiness.” (10)
- “struggled and sacrificed and worked” (15)
- “birth or wealth or faction” (15)
- “we must pick ourselves up,
dust ourselves off,
and begin again the work of remaking America” (16)
- “to spend wisely,
reform bad habits,
and do our business in the light of day” (19)
- “the justness of our cause,
the force of our example,
the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.” (22)

Examples of contrast:

- “rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace” versus “gathering clouds and raging storms” (paragraph 3)
- “know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not what you destroy.” (25)
- “we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist” (25)
- “a man whose father less than sixty years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath.” (32)

The overall theme for this inauguration speech can be summarised as “strength from our heroic past“, which is manifested by examples from the American past and urges the American people to go back to the good, old American values. These mentioned and referred to values are old and timeless – tolerance, curiosity, loyalty and patriotism.

Examples of past references:

- “mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors” (paragraph 2)
- “Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath” (3)
- “faithful to the ideals of our forebearers, and true to our founding documents” (3)
- “So it has been. So it must be with this generation of Americans.” (4)
- “passed on from generation to generation” (10)
- “Our journey has never been ...” (11)
- “Concord and Gettysburg ; Normandy and Khe Sahn” (14) At seven words, this passage is wonderfully brief, yet manages to span four wars: Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War II, and Vietnam War, respectively.
- “Their memories are short.” (18)
- “Our Founding Fathers [...] expanded by the blood of generations.” (21)
- “Recall that earlier generations...” (22)
- “the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington” (27)
- “But those values upon which our success depends - hard work and honesty, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism - these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history. What is demanded then is a return to these truths.” (29)
- “In the year of America’s birth...” (33)

5. Analysis

5.1 Ideological analysis

Our analysis and interpretation of the ideological aspect of Obama’s inaugural address attempts to link the inaugural discourse with the social processes and to decipher covert ideology of this text. At the same time, a diachronic method will be applied for contrasting Obamite discourse with the one of his predecessors.

(1) "My fellow citizens: I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors."

Starting with the opening lines of the speech, a shift from the style of Bush, with the multitudes of “my fellow Americans” is evident. Obama’s form of address can be perceived as more inclusive, including all nationalities and ethnicities, applying a more citizen-centered attitude. Also, this style of Obama can be explained on the lines of that citizenry is the cornerstones of the American republic, and that the whole system is based on a grass root diplomacy, rather than an exclusive and elitist system of Bush. *Strong Citizenry*.

(2) "That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age."

Obama not only condemns "greed and irresponsibility" of the individuals when commenting on the effects of the global financial crisis, but also criticises the "collective failure" of the system, the former being prosecutable, the latter not. So the problem will require a major, institutional reform. The president acknowledges the ongoing war on terror; however, he makes no reference to the terrorist organization al-Qaeda. A preponderance of the possessive pronoun “our” indicates unity of the people in the time of national peril.

(3) "Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real, they are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this America: They will be met."

An adamant statement full of far-reaching resolutions, the temporal deixis "today" gives the air of a fresh start.

(4) "For us, they fought and died in places Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sahn."

The president gives an excerpt of the American grand narrative, which is a standard procedure of this kind of discourse. However, by enumerating examples of America's sacrifices, Obama rehabilitates the war in Vietnam and puts it on the equal footing with the Revolutionary War for Independence and the Civil War, which can be perceived as an attempt to legitimize the war in Vietnam. *Heroic past that can be built upon.*

(5) "What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them, that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long, no longer apply. The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works, whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified. Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end."

Obama expresses the pragmatism omnipresent throughout his campaign. He deflates the accepted dichotomies and rather focuses on their consequences. As far as the inherent ideology is concerned, Obama expresses an obvious lack of any ideological standpoint regarding the role of government in the time of global financial troubles. Obama implies that the means to reaching his goals are subject to change, and that he will not adapt any dogma or doctrine for reaching his objectives. *Pragmatism.*

(6) "Nor is the question before us whether the market is a force for good or ill. Its power to generate wealth and expand freedom is unmatched."

At this point, Obama departs further from the Bushite dichotomies of *good* and *evil*, or in his case of *good* or *ill*. He strengthens his resolution of not reliance on any underlying ideology, unless this ideology is aiming at reaching the targets of his future administration.

(7) "The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our gross domestic product, but on the reach of our prosperity; on the ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart -- not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good."

Obama concentrates on the economy further and explains his philosophical standpoint to the ways of distribution of national wealth, axing the free market mantra of various republican administrations. At this point, Obama negatively outlines his economic theory and ideology with the lack of referring to the free market.

(8) "Recall that earlier generations faced down fascism and communism not just with missiles and tanks, but with the sturdy alliances and enduring convictions. They understood that our power alone cannot protect us, nor does it entitle us to do as we please. Instead, they knew that our power grows through its prudent use. Our security emanates from the justness of our cause; the force of our example; the tempering

qualities of humility and restraint. We are the keepers of this legacy, guided by these principles once more, we can meet those new threats that demand even greater effort, even greater cooperation and understanding between nations."

The grand narrative of the American past is mentioned again with the emphasis put on the special quality of the American republic, which has been exercising its power only for good and just purposes. The "justness of our cause" should be reinvented, after the period of American military involvement of rather dubious character and this principle of justice should be transformed into a multilateral perception of international cooperation, marked by the phrase "greater cooperation and understanding between nations". Justice can be perceived as another of key principles or ideological cornerstones enshrined in Obama's speech. *Justice.*

(9) "For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and nonbelievers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth. And because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace. To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect. To those leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict or blame their society's ills on the West, know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not what you destroy."

Obama acknowledges the presence of nonbelievers in America, which comes as a surprise after a long period of Christian right leading the waves, despite his invoking God in his speech, which can be attributed to the genre. At the same time Obama speaks in favourable terms about and to the Muslim world, thus recognizing and embracing the social and religious diversity, which had been suppressed under previous administrations. Thus an ideological shift from republican administration is evident, a shift from a traditional and conservative perception of the United States' society to a more liberal and diverse one. Liberal ideology can clearly be identified in this excerpt. *Liberalism and acceptance of religious diversity.*

(10) "To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds. And to those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty, we say we can no longer afford indifference to the suffering outside our borders, nor can we consume the world's resources without regard to effect. For the world has changed, and we must change with it."

This part of the text marks another shift in the ideological standpoint of the Obama administration. The poor nations should be helped and the wealthy nations should be more careful in their expenditures, and the "indifference to the suffering" should become an issue of the past. *An outward an inward solidarity.*

(11) "But those values upon which our success depends – hard work and honesty, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism – these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history. What is demanded then is a return to these truths. What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility -- a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit,

so defining of our character than giving our all to a difficult task. This is the price and the promise of citizenship."

History is interpreted as an endless source of inspiration, as an endless source of American timeless virtues - sacrifice, selflessness and liberty. The American society is interpreted as if it had temporarily departed from these accepted virtues and needs to embrace them again. Obama's final remarks on citizenship and citizens, defined by mutual obligation of duty, further strengthen the significance of this notion for American democracy and make an active citizenry aware of their duties the centre stage of his address. *Duty*.

5.2 Analysis of frequently used words and connotations

In order to arrive at a more quantitative based result of this analysis, a keyword analysis of both frequently used words and connotations in Obama's speech was undertaken, yielding the following results.

The speech consists of 2403 words. The pronoun "we" being the absolute champion of this count, with its absolute occurrences being reaching 62, which can be attributed to an inclusiveness of Obama.

Keyword Density Report For President Obama's Inaugural Address

Words

Keyword Repeats Density

Nation	12	0.50%
New	11	0.46%
America	9	0.37%
Today	7	0.29%
People	7	0.29%
Less	7	0.29%
World	7	0.29%
Let	7	0.29%
Time	6	0.25%
Work	6	0.25%

Phrases

Keyword Repeats Density

a new	7	0.58%
our nation	5	0.42%
the world	5	0.42%
no less	4	0.33%
men and	4	0.33%
and women	4	0.33%
our common	4	0.33%
of peace	3	0.25%
the people	3	0.25%
that America	3	0.25%

The results of the keyword analysis can be interpreted as Obama's attempt to concentrate on the domestic issues, "nation", "our nation" being the most prominent words and collocations, and also begin a "new" chapter in the relations with "the world". At the same time, the key attribute of Obama's address is the adjective "new", which characterizes the strategy and ideas of the newly sworn president and his administration.

5.3 Analysis of Biblical references

It is customary in American political discourse to employ biblical language, which is an inherent part of American public speaking. However, given the non-traditional and liberal stand of Barack Obama, it is essential to analyze biblical references of Obama and give possible explanations of the particular choices made by him.

"We remain a young nation," Obama said, "but, in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things." Obama was quoting the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 13:11, dealing with St. Paul's letter to the church in Corinth. The implications of this particular choice of Scripture, especially in a speech aimed also at the Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and non-believing Americans are enormous, for it is the "love chapter", usually read at weddings. It speaks about true love in the following manner:

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails." (1 Corinthians, 13:4)

"When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians, 13:11)

St. Paul's letter to the church in Corinth is dated to the times when the church was going through the period of internal struggles and divisions, and when the church was threatened by immoral influences surrounding the community. Corinth was a young town, the church a young church filled by your people. St. Paul delivered a letter of criticism and implored the Corinthians to stop the arguing and embrace what he called the most important virtue: love.

The choice of this particular biblical reference can be perceived as Obama's attempt to spread the notion and ideology of love, and through "loving thy neighbour" the American people can embrace a notion of racial inclusiveness and ideological diversity, necessary in the time of economic and international crises.

6. Conclusion

This paper analysis the ideological component enshrined in the inaugural address of President Barack Obama. It is embedded in Fairclough's notions of ideology residing in text and that "ideology invests language in various ways at various levels" and that ideology is both "property of structures and of events". We have attempted to use another concept of Fairclough, namely that "meanings are produced through interpretations" and attempted to decipher the possible interpretations of various references of Obama. In this process we have managed to identify the framework of Obama's ideological standpoint present in the address. At the same time, we have attempted to put Obama's address into a diachronic perspective of the outgoing administration of President George W. Bush. The following are our conclusions:

1. The results of the first part of our analysis have shown that the key ideological components of Obama's speech can be summarized into the following concepts: *pragmatism, liberalism, inclusiveness, acceptance of religious and ethnic diversity and unity*.
2. The results of the keyword analysis have shown that the most prominent words employed by Obama are *nation, new and America*, and a overall dominance of the personal pronoun *we*, which is an evidence of Obama's inclusive perception of the American society and a need for unity, understood as necessary in the time of national peril.
3. The results of the biblical references have shown that Obama's choice of Scripture references – quoting the Corinthians “love section” was to strengthen the notion of unity and brotherly love among the various members of the American diverse society.
4. The overall, underlying theme of the speech is the need to be inspired and empowered by the *strength from our heroic past*, which should be used as a resort for rebuilding the nation in the time of the global financial crisis and the threat of global terrorism.
5. The discursive event and discursive structure interrelatedness ideas proposed by Fairclough have been by the results of our analysis. The inaugural address – the discursive event shaped the text – the discursive structure, plus, the discourse became subject of interpretation by the audience, which shaped the following discourse practice of Obama.

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