



## Power in Political Discourse of Barak Obama

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### ABSTRACT

This paper explores how the phenomenon of power exists in Barak Obama's interviews on the base of Hallidayian Systemic Functional Grammar from critical perspective of Norman Fairclough. The main focus of research analyzing seven interviews derived from different websites is to explore how ideological loading and socio-political relations of power have been manifested in discourse of Obama. This study attempts to underscore some of methods Obama uses to hint the degree of power to his addressees. The analysis of interviews with regard to ideology is confined to identification of transitivity and modality. Analyzing hesitation, persuasion, threat, religious statement and illusive speech in each clause on the basis of Fairclough's model is done in the second phase of research. At the end, it is concluded that Obama as a dominant character who manipulates more material process mostly uses "I" and "we" pronouns, more religious statements, more persuasion, and longer turns in his interviews.

**KEYWORDS:** Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). Power. Barak Obama.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Until 1970s, interdependence of linguistic and social structures, specifically discourse and power were remained unnoticed or marginalized as one-way, that is only the effect of power on discourse was taken into consideration. With emerge of critical linguistics by Roger Fowler and Gunther Kress as a recreation to pure linguistics and conversational sociolinguistics, the traditions faced a serious challenge (Baker & Ellece, 2011). Subsequently the interrelation between discourse and power became the focal point in critical discourse analysis. Motivation for this assumption comes from one of the main postulations that discourse is socially effective and socially determined, that power affects and is affected by discourse. Subsequently most of researchers commenced to evaluate speeches of different political and powerful figures all over the world.

In a study, Wang (2010) using two speech samples of Obama, victory speech on November 4, 2008, and inaugural address on January 20, 2009, summarizes features of his speeches. According to Wang, Obama uses more simple words and short sentences instead of difficult ones. His language is easy and colloquial. Thus, it can easily shorten the distance between him and the audience. Obama mostly uses material process which shows what the government has achieved, what they are doing and what they will do. With applying transitivity, Obama tries to arouse the American people's confidence toward the president and his government in the following four years. Wang states, using modality, Obama makes his audience easily understand and accept his political speeches. Obama uses simple present tense to present the domestic and worldwide situations ranging from political, economic and cultural fields at present. And then depending on simple future tense, he lays out his following reforms and steps taken in his term. In this way, the government's objectives are shown and at the same time, the audience's confidence is built. Moreover, by using first person pronouns and religious belief, Obama successfully shortens the distance between him and the audience.

In another study, Horvath (2009) examines the persuasive strategies of Obama's public speaking as well as the covert ideology of the same, enshrined in his inaugural address. His 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. The selected corpus' ideological and persuasive components are assessed, thus revealing Obama's persuasive strategies. The first part of his analysis shows that the key ideological components of Obama's speech can be summarized into the concepts such as pragmatism, liberalism, inclusiveness, acceptance of religious and ethnic diversity and unity. In his research the results of the keyword analysis show that the most prominent words employed by Obama are nation, new and America, and an 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. The results of the biblical references show 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

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society. The overall, underlying theme of the speech is the need to be inspired and empowered by the strength from 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. The discursive event and discursive structure interrelatedness ideas proposed by Fairclough have been by the results of his analysis. The inaugural address – the discursive event shaped the text – the discursive structure, plus, the discourse became subject of interpretation by the audience, which shapes the following discourse practice of Obama.

Following mentioned researches, this paper sets out to explore how the phenomenon of power exists in Barak Obama's interviews on the base of Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) from critical perspective of Norman Fairclough.

#### **A. An Overlook on Critical Discourse Analysis**

According to Baker and Ellece (2011), unlike many other forms of linguistic analysis, CDA is not only concerned with words on a page but also involves examining social context. This approach was first developed by Norman Fairclough. According to Fairclough (2003), discourse is a way of representing aspects of world, processes, relations and structures of material world, mental world of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and social world. Meanwhile as Van Dijk (1993) states, there is a direct relation between discourse and social power, in which power is an abstract concept holding an infinitely important influence on peoples' lives. Moore and Hendry (1982) describe power as the force in society that gets things done. So the more access to public discourse, genres, contexts, discourse properties, text, talk properties, and participants, the more powerful social groups and institutions are. Studying power, it may be identifiable who controls what and for whose benefits. Fairclough (1995) defines power not only as asymmetries that exist between individuals participating in the same discursive event but also in terms of how people have different capacities to control how texts and thus discourses are produced, distributed and consumed.

According to Baker and Ellece (2011), in critical discourse analysis, language is viewed as a social practice and is interested in the ways that ideologies and power relations are expressed through language. According to Van Dijk (1985), when speakers and writers are able to influence the mental models, knowledge, attitudes and eventually even the ideologies of recipients, they may indirectly control their future action. That is, mentally mediated control of the actions of others is the ultimate form of power, especially when the audience is hardly aware of such control, as is the case in manipulation, indeed, most forms of discursive and communicative access, such as control of setting, interaction, topic or style will be geared toward mind controlling of participants, recipients or the audience at large, in such a way that the resulting mental changes are those preferred by those in power and generally in their interest. According to Baker and Ellece (2011), Fairclough views ideologies as constructions of reality which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination. According to Van Dijk (1995a), ideologies are usually expressed and reproduced in discourse, verbal and non-verbal communication and other forms of interaction. They are often embedded in organization and institutional contexts. However, among the many forms of reproduction and interaction, discourse is the most suitable and preferred site through which ideologies are formulated and communicated explicitly and verbally. Thus, ideologies may be expressed and communicated in text and talk variably and indirectly and discourses are used as a suitable and preferential means to construct new ideologies and confirm already present ones.

According to Baker and Ellece (2011), Norman Fairclough developed one of the first approaches to critical discourse analysis, based on extending critical linguistics to take social practices and different types of context more thoroughly into account. Fairclough has been influenced by Halliday and Bakhtin at the linguistic level and theorists such as Foucault, Gramsci, Althusser and Bourdieu at the sociological level. He has applied his own three-stage model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (sometimes called textually Oriented Discourse Analysis or TODA) in order to address how language is used to create, maintain and challenge power relationships and ideologies.

According to Fairclough (1995), TODA refers to an approach to discourse analysis which pays special attention to features of a text, especially linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and coherence. Textually-Oriented Discourse Analysis (TODA) includes the analysis of actual instances of discourse such as texts. Fairclough (1992a) argues that TODA is different from Foucault's more abstract approach to discourse analysis. This means that TODA must involve linguistic description of the language text, interpretation of the relationship between the (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text, and explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes.

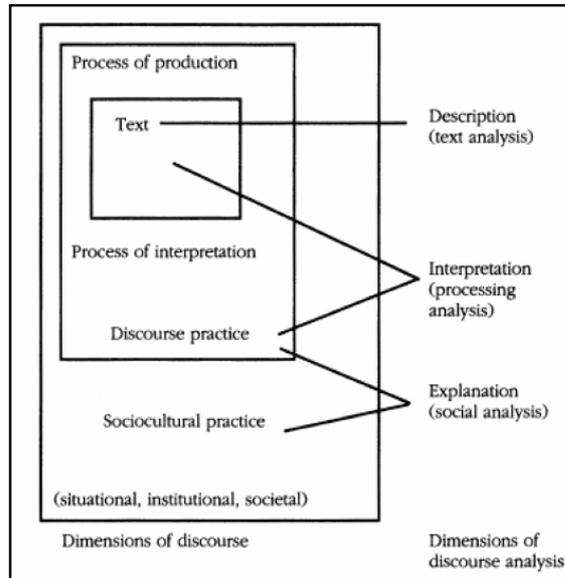


Figure 1: Dimensions of Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1989)

According to Blommaert (2005) and Fairclough (1989), at the text level, there is a focus on describing the contents of text (also language in text) themselves, their discursive content as well as how these texts are linked to other discourses, genres and styles. At this level, the researcher looks at what is represented in the text. Here the analysis is descriptive and, in many ways, may be described as a form of linguistic analysis of texts in that texts are analyzed by looking at vocabularies (wording and metaphors), semantics, utterances, grammar (transitivity, modality) to identify representations, categories of participant, constructions of participant identity or participant relations of subjects, objects, social positions, how subjects and objects were positioned, and instances of relations of power in the use of language. It is also important to look at collocations, patterns of co-occurrences of words in text, simply looking at which other words most frequently precede and follow any word which is in focus. Also of specific interest at this level are the genres to which specific discourses belong, whether the texts conform to that particular genre, the semantic relationships, how elements of social events (processes, people, objects, means, times, places) are represented, the absence/exclusion or inclusion of specific characteristics in the genre, generalizations, how events are ordered, the angle which is being taken, what is emphasized (foregrounding) what is not (backgrounding) and, among other things, what are the main assumptions and presuppositions of the generic and discursive configurations of text. According to Baker and Ellece (2011), description itself was developed out of Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar.

According to Blommaert (2005), the second level is discourse as discursive practice, i.e. discourse as something which is produced, circulated, distributed, and consumed in society. As Blommaert (2005) states, Fairclough sees these processes largely in terms of the circulation of concrete linguistic objects. Remarkably little time is spent, however, on the issue of (socio) linguistic resources – the language varieties, for instance and other macro-conditions on the production and distribution of discourse such as literacy. As Fairclough (1989) states, in this level, the researcher analyzes what are the factors that influence how social actors interpret an event and how this process influences the production, distribution, transformation and consumption of texts. At this level, an interpretation of discursive practices in relation to events, inter-discursivity, orders of discourse and the power relations between people in an event are undertaken. It is also at this level that moments such as action, interaction, social relations, the material world, material practices, the rituals, beliefs, attitudes, values, desires of people and institutions, power and discourse, forms of consciousness, time and space, objects, instruments, subjects and their social relations, activities as well as abstract social structures and concrete social events are taken into consideration in relation to text production, distribution, transformation and consumption to ascertain possible social injustice in and over discourse. As Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) state, through discursive practices, texts are produced and consumed as an important form of social practice which contributes to the constitution of the social world including social identities and social relations. It is partly through discursive practices in everyday life that social and cultural reproduction and change take place.

The third dimension is discourse as social practice, i.e. the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is seen to operate. According to Fairclough (1992b), hegemony is a form of domination in which the dominant group wins the consent or at least acquiescence of other groups to the practices and ideologies which constitute its domination. According to Fairclough (1989), understanding the wider socio-cultural, political, ideological, institutional and historical context and structures surrounding the text and their associated discourses, socio-cultural practice is an important activity in explaining the dynamics of a text and how the text is produced, distributed, transformed and consumed as well as the discursive elements of this process. Here the analysis is at the explanatory level. At this level one also takes into consideration the underlying power relations which might be reproduced, how they facilitate the exploitation and marginalization of groups as well as possibilities of change and resistance. The process also helps a researcher to identify, understand and explain the causal and circular logic at work, in other words how and why powerful discourses and powerful agentic forces shape beliefs, fantasies and desires so as to regulate practices of institution building that set the stage for material production and reproduction activities that in turn construct social relations that finally return to ensure the perpetuation of power.

As it was mentioned before, according to Zhuanglin (1988), Baker and Ellece (2011), Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar is usually considered the main foundation of text analysis in critical discourse studies in which systemic grammar aims to explain the internal relations in language as a system while Functional grammar considers language as a means of social interaction. As Fairclough (2003) states, Systemic Functional Linguistics is profoundly concerned with the relationship between language and other elements and aspects of social life, and its approach to the linguistic analysis of texts is always oriented to the social character of texts.

### B. An Overview on Systemic Functional Grammar

On the base of Systemic Functional Grammar, Halliday (1985) considers text analysis as discourse one. He states linguistic analysis may explain why one text is appropriate or inappropriate for some specific purpose. According to Christie (2002), text and specific combination of situational context is a condition of cultural context. Choices from language in relation to a given context are considered as selection from register and specific selection from register depends on specific selection from components of situational context. These components are field of activity, tenor and mode.

Table 1: Components of Situational Context (Filardo Llamas et. al., 2011)

<b>Field</b>	Language choice	Subjects	Objects (& verbs)	Adjuncts	Lexical choices
	Meaning	Participants	Processes	circumstances	
	Contextual information	Social activity and topic Angle of representation			Degree of specialization
<b>Tenor</b>	Language choice	Speech function (declarative, imperative, interrogative)		Lexicon (degree of formality, terms of address)	Modality (Modal verbs & evaluative lexis)
	Meaning	Sender's status Receiver's status		Social distance	Speaker's persona
	Contextual information	Social roles Relationship between social roles Sender's attitude			
<b>Mode</b>	Language choice	Complexity of clauses & phrases	Mid-sentence corrections, repetitions	Anaphoric / exphoric reference	
	Meaning	Lexical density	Degree of spontaneity	Role of language & communicative distance	
	Contextual information	Degree of interactivity Type of text Communicative role of language			

Accordingly, the procedure of stylistic analysis may be divided into three logically ordered phases. The limitless practical functions may be generalized into a set of highly coded and abstract functions which are inherent in every language. These functions are ideational, interpersonal and textual.

In ideational function (Halliday, 1971), speaker or writer embodies in language his experience of the phenomena relating to the real world and this includes his experience of the internal world of his own consciousness, his reactions, cognitions and perceptions and also his linguistic acts of speaking and understanding. The ideational

function mainly consists of transitivity and voice in which transitivity includes six processes called material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal and existential through which material, relational and mental processes are considered as three primary ones.

Relating to interpersonal function (Halliday: 1971), language is used by speaker as a means of his own intrusion into speech event, the expression of his comments, attitudes and evaluations, and also of the relationships that he sets up between himself and listener, in particular, the communication role that he adopts of informing, questioning, greeting, persuading and the like. Modality and mood are often used to express interpersonal function. Mood shows what role the speaker selects in the speech situation and what role he assigns to the addressee. Modality refers to an intermediate range between the extreme positive and negative. On the other hand, modality may objectively express speaker's judgment toward the topic, showing the social role relationship, scale of formality and power relationship.

According to Zhuaglin (1988), relating to textual function, language has mechanism to make any stretch of spoken or written discourse into a coherent and unified text and make a living passage different from a random list of sentences. Although two sentences may have exactly the same ideational and interpersonal functions, they may be different in terms of textual coherent. According to Halliday (1971), textual function fulfils the requirement that language should be operationally relevant, having texture in a real context of situation that distinguishes a living passage from a mere entry in a grammar book or a dictionary.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This paper tries its best to analyze selected materials to explore workings of power in Barak Obama's interviews. Researcher is concerned with linguistics of Obama's speeches extracted from various interviews. The most significant aspect of this study is the way Obama makes use of linguistic resources to create positive or negative power in his interviews. The approach which is adopted in this research is an eclectic, multilevel critical discourse analysis which is mostly under the impact of Norman Fairclough's and M.A.K Halliday's perspectives.

### A: Materials

In this research, seven interviews of Barak Obama are selected from the following websites: [www.newsweek.com](http://www.newsweek.com), [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com), [www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com), [www.msnbc.com](http://www.msnbc.com), [www.blog.beliefnet.com](http://www.blog.beliefnet.com), [www.cbsnews.com](http://www.cbsnews.com), [www.boston.com](http://www.boston.com), and [www.grist.org](http://www.grist.org), in which interviewers are Gilgof, Garrett, Al Arabiya, Grist, Williams, King and Falsani. The period of gathering interviews is from April 23, 2010 to December 12, 2010.

### B: Procedure

Having collected Obama's interviews, sentences are analyzed according to Hallidayian Systemic Functional Grammar in which the most attention is paid to specific lexis or clauses which operate as indexes enabling the researcher to identify power and consequently interpret them. In this research, researcher will additionally tries to analyze the chosen interviews critically in terms of some categories of discourse analysis which are introduced by Norman Fairclough because Hallidayian Systemic Functional Grammar does not consider pragmatic features. So, having analyzed interviews on the base of Systemic Functional Grammar, noticing three types of processes (material, mental and relational), and modality (modality, tense and pronouns), Fairclough's critical model of discourse analysis is captured to study persuasion, hesitation, threat, religious statement and illusively speaking.

## III. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this study, selected interviews of US president, Barak Obama are analyzed on the base of Hallidayian Systemic Functional Grammar from critical perspective of Norman Fairclough. At first, transitivity and modality are analyzed in each interview. The analysis of interviews with regard to ideology was confined to the identification of the three material, mental and relational processes and modality (modality, tense and pronouns). Then each clause was analyzed on the basis of Fairclough's model (persuasion, hesitation, threat, religious statement and illusively speaking). Having shown results in table with their frequencies, they were discussed to show how the political ideology and opinion of Obama about different topics in nowadays world are manifested in these interviews.

### A: Transitivity Analysis

As stated above, ideational function consists of transitivity and voice in which transitivity includes six material processes: mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential through which material, relational and mental are considered as primary ones.

According to Eggins (2004), material processes are ones of doing or about actions, usually concrete and tangible ones. They express the notion that some entity does something; undertake some actions which may be done

to some other entity, whereas processes encoding meanings of thinking, feeling or perceiving are considered as mental processes.

According to the table below, material processes are used the most in all Obama's interviews in comparison to the other processes. Mental process ranks second while relational is the third. According to Wang (2010), Material process, as a process of doing, is a good choice in the address to demonstrate what the government has achieved, what they are doing and what they will do in different aspects of affairs, home or abroad. And it can also arouse the American people's confidence toward the president and his government and to get their support in policies or measures in the following four years.

Table 2: Transitivity

Total Number	Material Process	Mental Process	Relational Process
		<b>Interview No. 1</b>	
96	41	37	18
		<b>Interview No. 2</b>	
206	87	80	24
		<b>Interview No. 3</b>	
131	57	54	20
		<b>Interview No. 4</b>	
238	58	102	71
		<b>Interview No. 5</b>	
121	54	61	4
		<b>Interview No. 6</b>	
106	29	44	28
		<b>Interview No. 7</b>	
206	87	80	24

### B: Modality Analysis

Relating to interpersonal function, Eggins (2004) states, using language, one of the processes occurred in conversation is creating communication among people speaking or may speak in the next turn-taking process. According to Halliday (1985), during conversation, speaker may give something to addressee or ask something from him. Subsequently he introduces two speech acts of giving and demanding. Having noticed nature of transferred material relating to two mentioned speech acts, he introduces four speech functions called offer, demand, information and question. Following Halliday, Lock (1996) refers to minor function called Exclamation in which attitude of speaker on present condition is expressed.

Table 3: Speech Functions (Halliday: 1985)

Function in Exchange	Type of Exchange	
	A) Services and Objects	B) Information
<b>A) Giving</b>	Would you like this teapot? «Offer»	He is giving her the teapot. «Information»
<b>B) Demanding</b>	Give me that teapot. «Demand»	What is he giving her? «Question»

Speech functions each is reflected in different clausal structures. Information, question, demand and exclamation are expressed throughout Declaratives, Integratives, Imperatives and Exclamatives respectively (Halliday, 1985), whereas According to Lock (1996), this is just offer which has no specific mood and as Halliday (2002) states, it may be expressed throughout different moods. Halliday (1985) states, in studying Declarative and Integrative clauses and different responses to them, interpersonal meaning is expressed throughout just a specific grammatical component in clause. He calls that part of clause Mood.

According to Lavid et al (2010), Mood is composed of elements by which different types of interaction is performed between interlocutors. According to Halliday (1985), Mood is composed of functional elements of subject and finite in which subject approves or disapproves argument whereas finite shows primary tense and modality. Modality refers to an intermediate range between extreme positive and negative; as it may objectively express speaker's judgment toward the topic, showing the social role relationship, scale of formality and power relationship.

In table below, formality of modality is shown in three low, medium and high ranks in which low politeness is used mostly in Obama's interviews in comparison to medium and high politeness while Obama uses high modality with low rank of high politeness in his discourse. In this table, modals such as Dare, Might, Can, May and Could are used according to Obama's interviews to show low politeness while Must, Ought to, Need and Has/Had to are used to show high politeness. Obama has used lots of modal verbs in his speech because they are more easily identified and understood and then accepted. Modal verbs are understood and accepted soon because at the time of listening to the speeches, there is no time for the audience to reflect. So here in all interviews Obama used modal verbs to express his attitudes and made his speeches understood easily by his interviewers.

Table 4: Modality

Total Number	Low Politeness					Medium Politeness			High politeness				
	Dare	Might	Can	May	Could	Shall	Will	Would	Should	Must	Ought to	Need	Has/had to
32	Interview No. 1												
	0	2	7	5	0	0	13	3	1	0	0	1	0
	14					17			1				
60	Interview No. 2												
	0	1	25	0	8	0	10	0	0	0	0	4	12
	34					10			16				
53	Interview No. 3												
	0	1	12	3	3	0	10	7	5	4	0	4	4
	19					22			12				
36	Interview No. 4												
	0	0	17	2	0	0	4	8	0	0	0	2	3
	19					12			5				
17	Interview No. 5												
	0	1	0	6	4	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	1
	11					4			2				
13	Interview No. 6												
	0	0	3	1	3	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	1
	7					5			1				
25	Interview No. 7												
	0	1	6	3	3	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	2
	16					7			2				

**C: Tense Analysis**

As stated above, dealing with interpersonal function, clause is divided into two constituents called Mood and residue. According to Halliday (1985), Mood is composed of functional elements of subject and finite in which finite shows primary tense while residue comprises predicator, complement and adjunct. According to Egging (2004), predicator forms lexical and content part of verb phrase. Verb phrase consists of two functional elements. The first element is finite and the second one, providing information about the type of event is called predicator. Halliday (1985) defines four functions for predicator:

- A. Specifying time reference other than reference to the time of speech event (secondary tense).
- B. Specifying various other aspects and phases like seeming, trying and hoping.
- C. Specifying the voice: active or passive.
- D. Specifying the process (action, event, mental process, relation) that is predicated of the Subject.

As mentioned above, predicator specifies time reference other than reference to the time of speech event. In fact finite in Mood expresses calendar time while predicator in residue shows grammatical tense (Shayegh, 2011). According to the table below, simple present tense is used much more in comparison to other tenses in Obama's all seven interviews. According to Wang (2010), the use of simple present tense facilitates creation of a close relationship between the president and his audience and the easy identification and acceptance of the validity of the assertions contained in the speaking.

Table 5: Tense

Total Number	Present			Past			Future	
	Simple	Continuous	Perfect	Simple	Continuous	Perfect	Will	Be going to
229	Interview No. 1							
	153	21	20	17	0	0	12	27
	194		17			39		
409	Interview No. 2							
	274	29	23	43	0	0	11	29
	326		43			40		
218	Interview No. 3							
	140	11	10	34	3	2	10	8
	161		39			18		
407	Interview No. 4							
	291	33	7	63	1	3	4	2
	331		70			6		
153	Interview No. 5							
	96	12	12	22	5	1	1	4
	120		28			5		
180	Interview No. 6							
	119	10	9	38	0	1	0	3
	138		39			3		
116	Interview No. 7							
	73	10	6	15	2	0	5	5
	89		17			10		

### D: Pronoun Analysis

Relating to interpersonal function, Halliday (1985) states Mood is composed of functional elements of subject and finite in which subject approves or disapproves argument. In clauses, pronouns may be used as subject. As it is shown in the table below, in all seven interviews, pronouns "I" and "WE" are used mostly in comparison to the other ones. The use of first person pronoun "we" shortens the distance between the speaker and the audience, regardless of their disparity in age, social status and professions etc. it may include both the speaker and the listener into the same arena, and thus make the audience feel close to the speaker and his points. When Obama is asked about his views on different political issues, he mostly answers with "I" to express his words. He also uses "I" when he is sure about some cases or success so he states his words with all his credibility and authority.

Table 6: Pronoun

Personal Pronoun		Number of Interviews						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
First Person	I	44	64	31	161	24	59	31
	We	28	67	43	4	25	6	29
Second Person	You	17	36	16	15	12	10	2
Third Person	He	0	11	0	0	0	9	0
	She	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
	It	13	25	17	51	3	15	9
	They	0	24	3	17	10	5	4

Having analyzed transitivity and modality, each clause is being analyzed on the basis of Fairclough's critical model of discourse analysis. Norman Fairclough in his book *Language and Power* (2001) provides a more detailed and clearer method. In his opinion, Systemic Functional theory of language is particularly helpful in textual analysis (Halliday 1978; 1985; Hodge and Kress 1988; Thibault 1991), both because its approach to studying grammar and other aspects of language form is a functional one, and because it is systematically orientated to studying the relationship between the texture of texts and their social contexts and Systemic Functional Linguistics also has a view of texts which is a potentially powerful basis not only for analysis of what is in texts, but also for analysis of what is absent or omitted from texts.

According to the table below, Fairclough (1989) introduces linguistic mechanisms to indicate power. All of the mentioned mechanisms are discussed below relating to Obama's seven interviews.

Table 7: Fairclough Model of Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1989)

Linguistic Mechanisms to Indicate Power	
1	Question
2	Imperative verb
3	More/long turn taking
4	persuasion
5	speaking illusively
6	introducing himself as the best one
7	religious statement
8	threat
9	future plan

According to Fairclough (1989), the more the number of interviewee's questions, the more powerful the person is. As it is shown in table below, imperative structure of the clause used by Obama is a not a lot. So in this item Obama cannot be a powerful one. Using imperatives is considered as one of linguistic mechanism to indicate power. As it is shown the number of imperatives in each interview is low. It is found out that Obama has not manipulated Integratives and imperatives in expressing his confidence or authority.

As it is also shown, number of hesitation in all seven interviews is not a lot. When a person uses hesitation in his/her speeches, that person is not a powerful person. The less the number of hesitation, the more powerful the speaker is.

Turn in speech shows power. The more the number of turns, the more powerful the person is. On the other hand, the one who uses long turns can also control the topic of speech. As it is shown in table below, Obama manipulates lots of long turns in his interview indicating his power and authority over the issues he discusses.

Table 8: Analysis of Obama’s Discourse on the Base of CDA

Question	Imperative	Hesitation	Turns
			<b>Interview No. 1</b>
3	3	7	19
			<b>Interview No. 2</b>
2	10	2	16
			<b>Interview No. 3</b>
0	0	4	18
			<b>Interview No. 4</b>
5	2	2	19
			<b>Interview No. 5</b>
1	1	6	9
			<b>Interview No. 6</b>
0	0	1	19
			<b>Interview No. 7</b>
1	0	4	9

**A. Persuasion**

There are lots of persuasions in selected interviews from Obama. Persuasion is a kind of demonstration. When we see a thing having fully been demonstrated, we become persuaded. Aristotle (as cited in Beard, 2000) refers to persuasive devices as:

A: Persuasion through personality and stance.

B: Persuasion through the arousal of emotion.

C: persuasion through reasoning.

All these categories are used by the speaker as part of the performance. The way they are constructed and the way each member of the audience responds to them makes politicians seem sincere or manipulated. The real purpose is to manipulate the audience into agreeing with policies which really serve only the desire of the politician to gain or keep power. Among these devices Obama seems that uses emotion. By using emotion he wants to build close relationship between people and himself. He wants to make his audience agree with him and his government and shows himself as a sincere person. For example:

*“I am not disappointed; I knew this was going to be hard. It is hard not only because of the politics, people I think understandably are fearful after a lot of years where were told that Guantanamo was critical to keeping terrorists out.”*

**B. Speaking Illusively**

According to Fairclough (1989), more powerful people speak illusively because they want their sentences being interpreted in different dimensions for their own sake in situations when they were criticized. They want to consider all aspects of their words and sentences so they try to find some statements which they can defend themselves in bad days. So speaking illusively shows the person’s power and this item is seen in most of Obama’s interviews. For example:

*“I do think that for the average Arab or Indonesian or Nigerian or Asia Muslim on the street that my familiarity with their culture would have an impact. I think that they would view America differently if I were president.”*

**C. Introducing himself as the best person**

In most parts of interviews, Obama introduces himself as an authoritative, powerful, and truthful person. So being persuaded by an accepted person is easier. Obama thinks very highly of himself and this is one sign of power. For example:

*“What I think is important, though, and is important not just for me, but also for my team. I am trying to always reinforce this within the culture of our organization, ...”*

**D. Religious statement**

We see some specific context, certain meanings and forms of discourse during studying Obama’s interviews. He mentions to his beliefs, religion and God in many parts of his turns which have more influence on people’s mind as the notion of persuasion. Direct and indirect speeches from Bible and the Christian stories can all help the speaker to win the sympathy and supporting of audience. They make the speech full of charisma. Obama puts emphasis on

the role of religion in people life and seeking hegemony by expressing his own beliefs to universalize particular meanings in the service of achieving and maintaining dominance and this is ideological work. There is hegemony when we see the minds of the readers or listeners of the interviews are influenced in such a way that they accept dominance and act in the interest of the powerful out of their own will. Obama tells his own beliefs while not asking people to have his own ideas and beliefs and make them to be free with what they think. This action means persuading people to act voluntarily in the way powerful groups want instead of using physical force or coercion is more effective as Thomas and Wareing (1999) believe. To keep power, politicians and other powerful groups attempt to persuade people that what those groups want is also what people want. And the matters about God, religion and beliefs are some topics that most people accept and respect. For example:

*“I felt God’s spirit beckoning me. So ultimately, as I write in ‘The Audacity of Hope’, I submitted myself to his will, dedicated myself to discovering his truths.”*

#### **E. Threat**

Considering all interviews, there are fewer statements which include threat. Fairclough believes that powerful people can threaten others while we saw less threat in interviews. The researcher thought that Obama uses this device less because he wants to show himself as a person who never put others in bad situations and as a person who wanted to show himself as the best person.

#### **F. Future Plan**

When Obama talks about future plans, he wants to refer to his government’s objectives indirectly. In this way, his interviews’ listeners become more confident to his government and the plans which will be done in next years of his presidential span. We could see many sentences which related to Obama’s present and future plans. For example:

*“And so I am going to constrain myself in speaking on purely political issues and am more likely to broaden the theme to address broader issues, values and our ideas, how we can come together to solve the problems that we face as a nation and in the world.”*

### **IV. Conclusion**

This paper tries its best to analyze selected materials to explore workings of power in Barack Obama’s interviews. Researcher is concerned with linguistics of Obama’s speeches extracted from various interviews. The most significant aspect of this study is the way Obama makes use of linguistic resources to create positive or negative power in his interviews. The approach which is adopted in this research is an eclectic, multilevel critical discourse analysis which is mostly under the impact of Norman Fairclough’s and M.A.K Halliday’s perspectives. Having analyzed all the selected interviews, it concluded that Obama uses more simple words and short sentences instead of difficult ones. His language is very easy and this can shorten the distance between him and the audience. From transitivity analysis, we can see material process; a process of doing has been used mostly in his speeches. From this process Obama shows us what the government has achieved, what they are going and what they will do. And also by applying transitivity, his speeches are trying to arouse the American people’s confidence toward the president and his government in the following four years. Through the analysis of modality, we can find out that Obama makes his audience more easily understand and accept his political speeches by means of modal verbs, tense and first person pronouns. Obama uses simple present tense to present the domestic and the world wide situations ranging from political, economic and cultural fields at present. Depending on simple future tense, he lays out his following reforms and steps taken in his term. In this way, the government’s objectives are shown and at the same time, the audience’s confidence is built. Moreover, by using first person pronouns and religious belief, he successfully shortens the distance between him and the audience. So it can help him persuade the public to accept and support his policies, actions and what he determined for his future businesses. Obama uses most of linguistic mechanism of power in the models such as religion, persuasion, and future plan’s statements.

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