# Application of Interpersonal Meaning in Hillary's and Trump's Election Speeches

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## ABSTRACT:

Presidential election speeches, as one significant part of western political life, deserve people's attention. This paper focuses on the use of interpersonal meaning in political speeches. The nine texts selected from the Internet are analyzed from the perspectives of mood, modality, personal pronoun and tense system based on the theory of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. It aims to study the way how interpersonal meaning is realized through language by making the contrastive analysis of the speeches given by Hillary and Trump. After making a minute analysis, the paper comes to the following conclusions: (1) As for mood, Trump and Hillary mainly employ the declarative to deliver messages and make statements, and imperative is used to motivate the audiences and narrow the gap between the candidates and the audiences, and interrogative is to make the audiences concentrate on the content of the speeches. (2) With respect to the modality system, the median modal operator holds the dominant position in both Trump's and Hillary's speeches to make the speeches less aggressive. In this aspect, Trump does better than Hillary. (3) In regard to personal pronoun, the plural form of first personal pronoun is mainly employed by the two candidates to close the relationship with audiences. (4) Regards to tense system, simple present tense are mostly used to establish the intimacy of the audiences and the candidates. Then two influentia  factors are discussed. One is their personal background and the other is their language levels. This paper is helpful for people to deeply understand the two candidates' language differences.

## INTRODUCTION

2016 was an important year for America because the 58th presidential election was held to elect the new president. After a long period of competition, Donald Trump won the election in the end and is the new president of America. Presidential election, as a hot issue in 2016, drew much attention around the world. Presidential election speeches, which in most degree can help the candidates establish their image in front of the public and then assist them in winning the election, deserves our analysis and through these analysis, we can receive some enlightenment in the aspect of delivering a public speech.

Political speeches are always used as the data of researches on account of their great importance. Although many scholars have done some researches on the election speeches given by president candidates like Hillary from different perspectives, such as, the perspective of critical discourse analysis, positive discourse analysis, functional grammar, most of the studies analyze the features of wordings and structures of the speeches, seldom make a comparison between the speeches given by different candidates from the aspect of interpersonal meta-function. In this paper, I try to make a comparison of the interpersonal meaning containing in the election speeches given by presidential candidates Hillary and Trump in the election year of 2016 and try to fi ure out the reasons why Trump can finally win the election

Systemic functional grammar was developed by Michael Halliday in the 1960s. There are three broad aspects for the functional bases of grammatical phenomena which are called meta-functions. Meta-functions can be divided into three parts: ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function (Halliday, 1994). Written and spoken texts can be examined with respect to each of these meta-functions in register analysis.

This thesis attempts to use interpersonal function as a tool to analyze the interpersonal meaning in the speeches given by Hillary and Trump. From the aspects of mood, modality, personal pronoun and tense system, it tries to explore the interpersonal meaning included in the presidential speeches, and tries to explain why Trump can finally turn the tables and win the election. Through the whole research, people can better understand the influential speeches given by two

candidates from the aspects of mood, modality, personal pronoun and the tense system, and I hope this research can have implications for other people.

In this thesis, the writer is going to answer the following two questions: 1) Do Hillary and Trump express their speeches by using mood system, modality system, personal pronoun and tense system? 2) What are the distributions and the contributions of mood, modality system, personal pronoun and tense system in their presidential election speeches? Are there any similarities or differences between them?

This paper consists of six parts. The first part includes a brief introduction to the background of this study and points out the significance of the research. The second part introduces the knowledge of interpersonal meaning and reviews the previous research on the interpersonal meaning at home and abroad. The third part is about research design. In this part, the writer will introduce the sources of 9 texts that are going to be analyzed, theoretical framework—Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and analytical parameters. The fourth part involves the detailed analysis of the interpersonal meaning of the election speeches given by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. The fifth part discusses the reasons of the results. The last part puts forward the conclusion of the thesis, indicates the significance of this research and gives some suggestions for further study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Interpersonal Meaning of Language

#### Definition of interpersonal meaning

Thompson thinks that interpersonal meaning means people use language to interact with other people, to establish and maintain relations with them, to influence their behavior, to express our own viewpoints on things in the world, and to elicit or change theirs (Thompson, 2000, p. 28). Halliday (1973, p. 41) indicates that the interpersonal function refers to "the use of language to express social and personal relations".

#### Relevant research on interpersonal meaning

Interpersonal meaning is one of the three important meanings of the meta-function. One of the duties of language interpersonal function is to judge others' attitude and express one's opinion (Guo, 1998). It has been used in many areas. Li Zhanzi (2002) thought that interpersonal meaning should be considered from the macro discourse level and micro grammar vocabulary level. Jiang Ting and Jin Wen (2012) created a Chinese law corpus to analyze the usage of the modality system in the translation. Zhang Yunling (2016) used the interpersonal meaning to study the evidentiality in business English. Durey (1988) was concerned with authorial attitudes and her study emphasizes author's interpersonal comment on what is being talked about. She believes narrative modality is evident and effective both in the smaller unit of text such as phrase and in the larger structures such as clauses. She investigates George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch* and finds that on the phrasal level, interpersonal function can

be realized by verbal (participial and gerundive), prepositional, adverbial (comment adjuncts) and nominal phrases. Martin (1992), based on SFG, developed the appraisal system. He insists on discourse semantics and text-oriented resources for meaning, and expands the range of interpersonal meaning from clause to discourse. Hunston (2000) and Martin (2000) held the view that mood and tense system cannot summarize the overall perspective. Evaluation, cognition and other semantic elements should be added to completely describe the interpersonal meaning of the discourse. From these studies, we can see that interpersonal meaning has a wide usage in different areas.

Interpersonal meaning has also played a significant role in political speeches. In China and abroad, many scholars analyze the political speeches from the aspect of interpersonal meaning. Zheng Dongshen and Liu Xiaojie (2010) took the Bush's speech as an example to discuss the interpersonal function in political discourse. Wang Hesi, Yin Pian and Wang Furong (2011) made a comparative study on the interpersonal meaning in English and Chinese political speeches and drew a conclusion that the usage of modality words in English speeches is higher than that of Chinese. Qin Liying and Xu Fenghua (2016) analyzed Hillary's first election speech in 58th presidential election speeches through the interpersonal function. In 2017, Rashid and Jameel applied Halliday's Systemic-Functional Grammar Theory to analyze the political texts in 2012.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### Data Sources

In this thesis, there are 9 texts to be analyzed, including three TV debating speeches and six personal speeches delivered in the beginning, the middle and the final stage of the election (see the appendix). The total words of these speeches are 39,659. So the reliability of the analysis can be ensured.

### Theoretical Framework: Systemic Functional Grammar

Language is a tool and means for people to exchange thoughts, express emotions and pass on information. Then the functions of descriptive, appealing, and expressive which have something in common with Halliday's meta-functions were proposed by Buhler (1934). Systemic functional grammar was developed by Michael Halliday in the 1960s. There are three broad aspects for the functional bases of grammatical phenomena which are called meta-functions. Meta-functions can be divided into three parts: ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function (Halliday, 1994). Written and spoken texts can be examined with respect to each of these meta-functions in register analysis.

The ideational function is the function for construing human experience. It is the means by which we make sense of "reality". To analyze a text from the point of ideational function involves inquiring into the choices in grammatical system of "transitivity". Transitivity here does not mean that a verb has an object or not. In particular, it refers to a system for describing the whole clause, rather than just the verb and

its object. To analyze the "transitivity" of a clause, "there are three basic questions that can be asked about any process and the clause of which it forms the nucleus: ①what kind of process is it? ②how many participants can/must be involved in the process? ③what roles can/must those participants play?" (Thompson, 2000, p. 79). In the above three questions, there is a word "process". According to the properties of the action, process consists of material process, relational process, mental process, verbal process, and so forth. "One of the most salient types of processes is those involving physical actions: running, throwing, scratching, cooking, and sitting down, and so on. These are called material processes" (ibid.).

The meaning of the interpersonal function is that people use language to communicate with each other, build and keep the interpersonal relationship, and express their views toward the world and even change the world. The interpersonal function has to do with how language allows interpersonal exchanges to take place, how language allows people to position themselves with respect to each other, and how language allows people to express attitudes toward people, things, and events. Analytical tools to help us to discuss interpersonal meaning are speech functions, clausal mood, systems of address, pronoun use and modality.

The textual meta-function refers to "how speakers construct their messages in a way which makes them fit smoothly into the unfolding language event" (Thompson, 2000, p. 117). It relates to the cohesion of the whole text and highlights how the writer organizes information to create focus and emphasis. The interpersonal function is utilized in this article to analyze Hillary's concession speech and Trump's victory speech.

**Analytical Parameters**

*Mood system*

Mood system is "the place in the grammar where the socio-contextual role of relations between addresser and addressee and the semantics of commodity exchanges are realized" (Halliday, 1994, p. 113). Mood is made up of the Subject and the Finite (Thompson, 2000). The Subject may be any nominal group or a complex nominal group which is consisting of more than one constituent functioning together as the Subject. The Finite refers to one verbal operator which expresses certain tense, or modality. There are three kinds of mood—imperative, interrogative and declarative. The imperative mood is used to ask help or service, while the interrogative is to ask unknown information and the declarative is to state the information (Halliday, 1994).

Three examples are listed below.

Book me a plane ticket to Beijing. -------imperative

Could you book me a plane ticket to Beijing? -------interrogative

I wonder if you might be able to book me a plane ticket to Beijing. -------declarative

In imperative clauses, demanding goods, services or information is the main purpose. In interrogatives, the speech role is demanding information and the speech function is realizing a question. In yes-no interrogatives, it is primarily the polarity of the message which the speaker wants the listener to specify (She had finished her homework or she had not finished her homework). In WH-interrogatives, if the Finite precedes the Subject, the primary purpose is to ask the listeners to fill in a missing part of the message; and the WH-element signals which part is missing. In declarative clauses, the speech role is giving information and the speech function is realizing a statement. The speaker expresses what he or she wants to convey to the listeners through the Subject and indicates the degree and validity of the claims through the Definite

*Modality system*

According to Halliday (2004, p. 356), modality refers to the area of meaning that lies between yes and no----the intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity. Eggins (1994, p. 179) claims that modality refers to how a language user can intrude on his/her message, expressing attitudes and judgments of various kinds. Therefore, modality is a major exponent of the interpersonal function of language.

Modality can be classified into Modalization and Modulation according to the exchange of information and the

**Table 3.1.** Typical and non-typical mood structures of four basic speech functions

| Speech function | Typical mood structure | Non-typical mood structure |
|---|---|---|
| Command | Imperative mood | Modulated interrogative & declarative mood |
| Offer | Modulated interrogative mood | Imperative &declarative mood |
| Statement | Declarative mood | Tagged declarative mood |
| Question | Interrogative mood | Modulated declarative mood |

(Adapted from Halliday, 2004: 95)

**Table 3.2.** Types of modality

| Type of modality | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Modalisation (information) | | Modulation (goods-&-services) | |
| Probability | Usuality | Obligation | Inclination |
| The child might be hers. | She often went there. | You should go now. | I'll give you a hand. |

(Adapted from Halliday, 2000: 58)

exchange of goods-&-service. If the commodity being exchanged is information, the modality relates to how valid the information is in terms of probability (how likely it is to be true) or usuality (how frequently it is true). There are some basic points on the probability scale: possible/probable/certain and some basic points on the usuality scale: sometimes/often/always. If, on the other hand, the commodity is goods-&-services, the modality relates to how confident the speaker can be in the eventual success of the exchange. In commands it is about to which degree the other person can carry out the command (the scale for the demand goods-&-services consists of permissible/advisable/obligatory). In offers it is about to which degree the speaker can fulfill the offer (the speaker may signal: ability/willingness/determination). There is a table showing the different types and sub-categories, with an example of each:

### Personal pronoun system

In English grammar, a personal pronoun is a pronoun that refers to a particular person, group, or thing. Personal pronouns are organized of three parts:
(1) First person: I, me, we, us.
(2) Second person: you.
(3) Third person: she, he, it, they, them, her, him.

Personal pronouns can be used to realize the interpersonal function. Personal system is made up of personal pronouns, which is part of the reference system. And reference is often used in the communication between the people. Pronoun choice is the way that the speaker expresses both his own presence, the presence of others, and the relationship that he keeps with others.

## RESULTS: REALIZATION OF INTERPERSONAL MEANING

### Interpersonal Meaning Realized by the Mood System

In the above discussion, mood system consists of imperative mood, interrogative mood and declarative mood. In declarative, the role of speech is to give information and the function is to realize statement. In interrogative, the role of speech is to demand information and the function is to realize question. In imperative, the role of speech is to demand goods-&-services and the function is to command. So different moods can be utilized to realize different purposes. In this article, by conducting a quantitative analysis of mood in Hillary's and Trump's speeches, the distribution of mood types in the two speeches is exhibited.

From Table 4.1, we can clarify that Trump's election speeches consist of 1745 sentences, among which the declaratives are 1608 sentences, accounting for 92.15% in all the clauses. Hillary's election speeches consist of 1021 sentences, among which the declaratives are 969 sentences, accounting for 94.91% in all the clauses. This statistics indicates that both Trump and Hillary use declaratives mainly.

From Table 4.2, it is found that Trump's election speeches have 53 imperative sentences, which accounts for 3.04% of all the clauses. Hillary's election speeches have 40 imper-

ative sentences, which accounts for 3.92% of all the clauses. This fi ure shows that there is no such distinct difference in the use of imperative clauses in both Trump's and Hillary's speeches. Imperative mood can help a person to shape the image of a confident leader, and help realize people's power and higher social positions. Therefore, the two candidates both adapt many imperative sentences.

From Table 4.3, we notice that the percent of Trump's imperative mood is twice than the Hillary's. There are 84 interrogative sentences in Trump's speeches, accounting for 4.81% of all the clauses. Hillary's speeches have 28 interrogatives, accounting for 2.74% of all the clauses. According to the traditional grammar, the speech role of interrogative is to demand information and the speech function is to get an answer for the question. However, the low percent of interrogative in the two presidential candidates' election speeches may tell the audience that their aims are to make the audience focus on the content of their speeches. And they didn't expect to get any answer from the audience by asking questions.

As for the mood system, declarative in Hillary's speeches is higher than that of Trump. Declarative can make the meaning of the speakers' utterance without doubt for the listeners.

**Table 3.3.** Modal values

|  | **Modalisation** | **Modulation** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| HIGH | I shall never be happy again. | You must ask someone. |
| ↕ | | |
| MEDIAN | They should be back now. | You ought to invite her. |
| ↕ | | |
| LOW | I may be quite wrong. | You can help yourself to a drink. |
| Thompson, 2000:59 | | |

**Table 4.1.** Percent of Declarative

|  | **Declarative** | **Total** | **Percent** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Trump | 1608 | 1745 | 92.15% |
| Hillary | 969 | 1021 | 94.91% |

**Table 4.2.** Percent of Imperative

|  | **Imperative** | **Total** | **Percent** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Trump | 53 | 1745 | 3.04% |
| Hillary | 40 | 1021 | 3.92% |

**Table 4.3.** Percent of Interrogative

|  | **Interrogative** | **Total** | **Percent** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Trump | 84 | 1745 | 4.81% |
| Hillary | 28 | 1021 | 2.74% |

In their speeches, Trump and Hillary talk about different aspects from economy to other fields. They have something in common, for example, they claim their resolution of exerting all their energies to make America's future bright. In Trump's speeches, we can see that he puts forward a lot of solutions to solve the employment issue, and he promises that if he is elected the president of America, he will take measures to get back companies and jobs from the others countries and his own company will create more job opportunities to meet the requirements. Hillary also promises to recover the economy, but she puts forward fewer specific plans than Trump. Although she seems to be firm, the lack of concrete plans places her in the weak position. Therefore, in this aspect, Trump performed better than Hillary. In Trump's speech, there is an example of interrogative sentence "How are they going to beat Isis?"

In this example, Trump used the interrogative to ask the Americans whether some of the candidates will take measures to protect America from the threat of Isis. The aim of Trump adopting this interrogative was to emphasize that not all candidates have the ability to solve the problem. That is to say, he hinted that he could solve the problem and he is capable of being the next president.

In Hillary's speech, the example is "So, you have to wonder: 'When does my hard work pay off? When does my family get ahead? When?' "

In this example, Hillary used three interrogative sentences at the same time to ask when the working class will be treated fairly. As a candidate coming from the Democratic Party, Hillary represents the interests of the common people. She made a comparison that the top 25 hedge fund managers make more than all of America's kindergarten teachers combined, and, often pay a lower tax rate. In order to make America become better, she is running for the president of the United States. Hillary wishes to let more and more people live a happier life. People will not work extra shifts, take second jobs and postpone home repairs.

In the two candidates' speeches, they did not expect the questions were answered by the audience. Almost all the questions had been dealt with by themselves. The reason why they did so is that they want to attract the attention of the audience and arouse their interest and motivate them to participate in what the candidates say during the speech. Thus, there is a close tie between the candidates and the audience.

**Interpersonal Meaning Realized by Modality System**

Modality, which expresses the attitude and viewpoint, communicative intention of the speaker and cultural informa-tion in the discourse, exercises strong interactive function on interpersonal communication (Li, 2012). And modality, as one important part of interpersonal meaning, is the key approach to realize interpersonal meaning. According to Halliday (1994), modality can be regarded as a speaker's understanding of a state, emotion, and attitude toward his will, revealing the speaker's estimation and uncertainty to the recognition of things. Through the analysis of various types of modality, we can have a better understanding of the speaker's attitudes, assessments or purposes.

In Trump's and Hillary's speeches, modality is one of the approaches to realize the interpersonal meaning. Their attitudes, emotion, judgments and so on are expressed with the help of modality.

According to traditional grammar, modality is mainly realized by modal operators which are also called modal auxiliary. Table 4.4 displays the percent of modal operators in Trump's and Hillary's speeches.

Through Table 4.4, it can be found that in the two candidates' speeches, "will" takes the highest percent, covering 32.74% in Trump's speeches and 22.90% in Hillary's speeches. In both two candidates' speeches, "can" take the second place, covering 19.29% and 21.76% respectively. In Trump's speeches, "would" accounts for 12.18%, taking the third place. And in Hillary's speeches, "would" and "should" cover the same percent—12.98%, being in the third place. Therefore, "will", "can", and "would" appear most frequently in the two candidates' speeches. We can also discover that the median modal operators, in Trump's and Hillary's speech, both occupy the largest percent, accounting for 54.31% and 48.86% respectively. It can be seen that both Trump and Hillary are opt to avoid being too aggressive and bossy when they express their views. As for the low and high modal operators, the percent of both two candidates is between 20% and 30%. No such distinct difference exists in these two parts.

When it comes to the modality system, according to Lyons (1996, p. 310), "will" has two meanings. The first meaning for "will" is to supply information about what will happen in the future and the statement made about future occurrences on the basis of the speaker's prediction, beliefs or intentions. The second meaning for "will" is employed in sentences with a modal use of the permissive, in which the speaker puts himself forward as the guarantor of the truth or the occurrence of the event he refers to.

In presidential election speeches, "will" is frequently employed to win the support from the audience by making a series of promises. Look at the following examples.

**Table 4.4.** Percent of Modal Operators

| Modal operator | Low | | | Median | | | High | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **May** | **Can** | **Could** | **Will** | **Would** | **Should** | **Must** | **Need** | **Have to** |
| Trump | 2 | 76 | 18 | 129 | 48 | 37 | 2 | 42 | 40 |
| Percent (%) | 0.51 | 19.29 | 4.57 | 32.74 | 12.18 | 9.39 | 5.08 | 10.66 | 10.15 |
| Hillary | 4 | 57 | 17 | 60 | 34 | 34 | 6 | 28 | 22 |
| Percent (%) | 1.53 | 21.76 | 6.49 | 22.90 | 12.98 | 12.98 | 2.29 | 10.69 | 8.40 |

Examples in Trump's speeches: 1) I'll bring back our jobs from China, from Mexico, from Japan, from so many places. 2) I will stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons, and we won't be using a man like secretary Kerry that has absolutely no concept of negotiation, who's making a horrible and laughable deal, who's just being tapped along that as they make weapons right now, and then goes into a bicycle race at 72 years old and falls and breaks his leg. 3) I will immediately terminate president Obama's illegal executive order on immigration.

Examples in Hillary's speeches: 1) I will do just that — to turn the tide so these currents start working for us more than against us. 2) I will rewrite the tax code so it rewards hard work and investments here at home, not quick trades or stashing profits overseas. 3) I will give new incentives to companies that give their employees a fair share of the profits their hard work earns.

From these examples, it is clearly demonstrating the function of "will"—to manifest their determinations to build a better country. Trump is going to make more people have jobs, and create safe surroundings for America. Hillary concentrates more energy on the life of ordinary people—rewarding hard work and giving fair share of the profits to the workers.

Through the comparative analysis of Trump's and Hillary's election speeches, it is found that modality system plays an irreplaceable place for political speeches to realize the interpersonal meaning. "Will", providing the information that will happen in the future, takes the lead among all the modal operators in both Trump' and Hillary's presidential election speeches. In the speeches, the two candidates mainly use "will" modal operator to talk around the future plan if they become the president.

## Interpersonal Meaning Realized by Personal Pronoun

In English grammar, a personal pronoun refers to a particular person, group, or thing. Personal pronouns are organized of three parts:
(1) First person: I, me, we, us.
(2) Second person: you.
(3) Third person: she, he, it, they, them, her, him.

Personal pronouns can be used to realize the interpersonal function. Personal system is made up of personal pronouns, which is part of the reference system. And reference is often used in the communication between the people. Pronoun choice is the way that the speaker expresses both his own presence, the presence of others, and the relationship that he keeps with others. Table 4.5 shows the number and percent of personal pronouns in the two candidates' presidential election speeches.

From the above table, the data distribution is clearly displayed. As for the first personal pronoun "I" and "we", in Trump's speeches, "we" accounts for 23.83% and "I" is 30%, while in Hillary's speeches, the percent of "we" and "I" are 29.33% and 34.15% respectively. In regard to the second personal pronoun "you", it is 20.05% in Trump's speeches and 16.58% in Hillary's speeches. With respect to the third personal pronoun "they" and "it", in Trump's

election speeches, "they" takes up 6.86% and "it" occupies 19.26%, while in Hillary's speeches, "they" and "it" respectively account for 4.83% and 15.12%.

For personal pronouns, in these speeches, the first personal pronouns "we" and "I" are used frequently, the reason is that they can narrow the gap between the speaker and others. In the presidential election, the candidates need to make efforts to win more support from the electorate and building a close relationship with the electorate can easily achieve the wish. From Table 4.5, we can find that "you" appears frequently. The candidates use it to have more interaction with the audience and make them concentrate on the speech content, after all, when something connects one, he will concentrate his attention easily. For the third personal pronoun "they" and "it", their frequency in the speeches is relatively high. The two speakers adopt the third personal pronoun to make their speeches sound more objective and convincible. To sum up, Trump and Hillary skillfully employ the personal pronoun to state their own views and make them closer to the audience so that they can win more trust and support.

## Interpersonal Meaning Realized by Tense System

Tense is a kind of syntactic structure that constructs the relationship between beginning time "now" of the discourse and the time when one thing happed (Halliday, 1994, p. 198-201; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p. 337-348). Klein (1994, p. 20) points out that expressing time is the secondary function of tense. The more important functions are to mark the different types of discourse, distinguish the background and foreground materials, or label the focus and features. In order to fi ure out how tense system affects in realizing the interpersonal meaning, the author makes a contrastive analysis between Trump's and Hillary's speeches on the distribution of the tense. Look at Table 4.6.

**Table 4.5.** Number and Percent of Personal Pronouns

| Participants | Trump's election speech | | Hillary's election speech | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| We | 448 | 23.83% | 322 | 29.33% |
| I | 564 | 30% | 375 | 34.15% |
| You | 377 | 20.05% | 182 | 16.58% |
| They | 129 | 6.86% | 53 | 4.83% |
| It | 362 | 19.26% | 166 | 15.12% |
| Total | 1880 | 100% | 1098 | 100% |

**Table 4.6.** Number and Percent of Tense System

| Tense system | Trump's speeches | | Hillary's speech | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Present | 1220 | 69.95% | 752 | 73.65% |
| Past | 241 | 13.82% | 132 | 12.93% |
| Future | 283 | 16.23% | 137 | 13.42% |
| Total | 1744 | 100% | 1021 | 100% |

From Table 4.6, the distribution of present, past and future tense is explicit. There are 1220 present tense in Trump's speeches, accounting for 69.95% and taking the first place. The same situation of present tense happens in Hillary's speeches. 752 present tense accounts for 73.65% of all the tense and takes the first place. Future tense is in the second place in both Trump's and Hillary's speeches, occupying 16.23% and 13.42% respectively. The third place of the tense system lies in the past tense----13.28% of Trump's speeches and 12.93% of Hillary's speeches. From these statistics, we can find that both Trump and Hillary tend to use the present tense more often.

In regard to tense system, present tense can be used to state the universal truth, the current situation, habit or process, and has the effect of bridging the social distance between the speaker and listener. In these 9 election speeches, the two candidates employ the present tense to state the current domestic and world situations which make the voters have a brief understanding of the situation they are facing and what they need the next president to do for the country. In terms of the past tense, the percent of it is the least in the three tenses. Past tense is often used to remind the hearer of the past. In the election speeches, the candidates use the past tense to recall the achievements and hardships they experienced together, which can make them have more confidence to face the difficulties they are facing. Generally speaking, future tense is to describe what will happen in the future. In the election speeches, the candidates adopt the future tense to promise what he/she will do to help build a better country if they come into power. Through their promises, the voters can know the candidates' governing ideas and governing styles. These are the crucial factors for an electorate to vote. In short, through the contrastive analysis of Trump's and Hillary's speeches, we can find that tense system also plays an important part in realizing the interpersonal meaning.

From the above data, we can find tha
(1) As for mood, they usually employ the declarative to deliver messages and make statements, and imperative is used to motivate the audiences and narrow the gap between the candidates and the audiences, and interrogative is to make the audiences concentrate on the content of the speakers.
(2) With respect to the modality system, the proper use of it can avoid being aggressive.
(3) In regard to personal pronoun, the plural form of first personal pronoun is mainly employed to make the candidates closer to the audiences.
(4) Regards to tense system, simple present tense is mostly used to establish the intimacy of the audiences and the candidates.

## DISCUSSION

What I have shown in the above results is the differences between the two candidates' speeches. From those data, it can be seen that the overall trend of using mood, modality, personal pronoun and tense is just the same. What are the factors that influence their language use? There are two factors. One is their different backgrounds and the other is that they try to become closer to the voters so that they can get more support.

## Different Personal Backgrounds and the Influence of their Language Use

Hillary and Trump have different characteristics, and they come from different backgrounds. Before the 58th presidential election, Hillary has a good deal of experiences in politics. As a lawyer and a politician of the Democratic Party, she is a controversial politician. In February 2000, Hillary moved to New York and was elected senator of the United States Senate, becoming the first one of the First Ladies to work in the public office and the first female senator of New York. In the mid-term elections of American in November 7th, 2006, Hilary was reelected to the New York Senate, and the majority of the voters were women. In the election year of 2008, at the beginning, Hillary led other candidates in the national polls, but unfortunately she lost to Obama. When Obama came to power in 2008, Hillary was appointed the Secretary of State, and during her tenure, she visited 112 countries. Until 2013, Hillary was relieved of her office. And then she ran for president again in 2016. The history, however, is always surprisingly similar because at first, she won the support from most of the people and was exceeded Trump in polls, but finally she lost the election

Donald Trump graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Walton School of business in 1968. Then he worked in his father's Real Estate Company, and began to be in charge of the company in 1971, which meant he officially entered the business. In the following decades, Trump began to establish his own real estate, known as the "king of the estate." In addition the estate, Trump also extended the range to the other industries, including the opening of casino, golf course. He is also involved in the entertainment industry, being a TV host of an American reality show "Celebrity Apprentice" and serving as chairman of Miss Universe Pageant. In the past 20 years, Trump was the main support of Republican and Democratic presidential candidates. In June, 2016, Trump officiall participated in the presidential election as a Republican candidate. Previously, he had no experiences in public office, which is quite different from Hillary' abundant experiences.

The two candidates have different work experiences. Although Hillary has much more experience in politic, Trump, as a businessman, can provide more job opportunities which is consistent with most of Americans' expectation. As we can see, both of them know the art of utilizing words. But the skill of grasping the focus of the audience differs because of their life experience.

## Target Voters and the Candidates' Language Choice

According to Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test, American presidents' language level can be graded. The first US President George Washington reached a graduate level in the 1796 farewell speech (grade 17.9). The language of Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" in 1863 was grade 11. John Kennedy in his inaugural address in 1961 said a famous

sentence, "Ask not what your country can do for you." This sentence is in grade 13.9. And later on, the language level of presidents' speech shows a declining trend. For Donald Trump's speech, the level is just in grade four. In fact, since the founding of the United States, political words tend to become simpler and simpler, and experts say this is not necessarily a bad thing. Actually it is a sign of democracy. In the early days, the president was able to assume that they spoke with the same people who were educated and had civic conscious. And at that time, they did only have the right to vote. But as time goes on, more and more people can vote. The president's speech needs to take the wider audience into account. We also should bear in mind that in an age of information explosion and the twitter of 140 words, the candidate must draw the voters' attention by using concise and powerful language. The more important thing than catching one's attention is that concise language can bridge connection between the candidate and voters. Jon Favreau, who used to write speeches for Obama, said to the Boston Globe that the task of a leader is to motivate and persuade the public instead of educating them.

Although Trump's words have a very low level, he can win a lot of support. Trump's talk focuses on bringing impact to people instead of paying attention to the graceful of language. His words can easily draw people's attention, such as his campaign theme (Make America Great Again), his description of his wealth (I am really rich) and his disdain for Washington's political culture (politicians only talk but do not act). Language is the most important means by which a politician can exert his influence. Obviously, Trump masters the secret of language very well. Firstly, his words are simple. Under the same conditions, short phrases consisting of commonly used words tend to be more advantageous. Orwell said in *Politics and the English language* that simple words are always the first choice. From the aspect of psychology, People think that what is easy to understand is truer. The weakness of the human brain is that it likes simple things. Secondly, he knows the importance of repetition. "I have a dream" in the twentieth century was familiar to everyone. Although Trump is not Martin Luther King, he knows how to make his words leave a deep impression on people. So his speeches can win much support from the voter.

### Limitations

For this paper, there are still several limitations.

First, this thesis studies the differences between Trump and Hillary from the aspect of interpersonal meaning based on the systemic functional grammar. This is limited. More theories can be used to do the analysis.

Second, collecting data is only done by the author. Though the author has tried best to ensure the reliability and correctness of the data, it is hard to avoid some mistakes because of the limitation of the author's capability.

Third, there are insufficient texts at the author's hand. In the presidential election process, the candidates have delivered more than 9 speeches. The more the texts are, the more accurate the conclusions are.

## CONCLUSION

### Major Findings

After comparing Trump's and Hillary's speeches, some findings are summarized and listed below.

First, declarative mood takes the most part of the mood system in the two candidates' election speeches. It plays an important part in conveying the information that the speakers want to tell the audience. The percent of imperative and interrogative mood is less than the declarative mood. Imperative mood can be used to motivate the audience and appeal them to act, while the interrogative mood can make the audience focus on the content of the speeches.

Second, interpersonal meaning of election speeches can be realized through modal operators. After analyzing the modal operators of these speeches, it is found that median modal operators (will, would, should) are the most frequent ones among the three types of modal operators in both Trump's and Hillary's speeches, because using these operators can avoid being aggressive and bossy when they express their viewpoints.

Third, the adopting of first personal pronoun (we, I) can help the speaker build a close and harmonious relationship with others. Through this way, the speaker could get more trust and support from the voters. As for the second personal pronoun, the two candidates both use less often than the first and third personal pronoun, because it can separate the audience and speaker. Third personal pronoun can make the speech content more objective and convincing.

Forth, the present tense takes the lead place in proportion in the two candidates' election speeches. The high frequency of present tense not only has the effect of narrowing the gap between the audience and the speaker, but also can help the presidential candidates to state the current situation of America. Past tense and future tense are less used by the candidates.

### Significance of the Study

The paper, studying the hot issue of American presidential election, discusses the differences of content and methods between Hillary's and Trump's speech which is worthwhile analyzing. In this paper, quantitative approach is mainly used to interpret the phenomena in the speeches. As a branch of applied linguistics, stylistics mainly studies the text style. This paper is helpful for people to deeply understand how to combine the theory with text analysis and helps deepen the theory application ability of language learners.

### Suggestions for Further Studies

In this thesis, the author mainly uses the mood system, modality system, personal pronoun system and tense system to analyze the interpersonal meaning in the Trump's and Hillary's presidential election speeches. Halliday's systemic functional grammar, however, consists of the other two meta-functions except the interpersonal meta-function. The other two are ideational and textual meta-functions. Researchers can also use them to analyze the election speeches and have more findings

In terms of the choice of texts being analyzed, the author in this paper chooses 9 presidential election speeches. Other researchers can try to use the systemic function grammar to analyze other kinds of texts or discourses, such as the classroom discourse.

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## APPENDIX: SOURCES OF ELECTION SPEECHES

1. The speech that Trump announced his candidacy for president. Retrieved 2016-9-10 from http://v.24en.com/speech/2015-06-22/5781.html. 6294 words.

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