

Speaking of Trump:

Considering the influence of speechwriters

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Abstract

This essay considers the influence of speechwriters on the speeches delivered by politicians and other public figures. In particular, this essay uses two speeches by Donald J. Trump during the United States 2016 Presidential race, one announcing his candidacy and the other his victory.

Introduction

On January 20th, 2016, Donald J. Trump will be sworn in as the 45th President of the United States of America. As with many recent politicians, Trump made some use of a political speechwriter. However, on many occasions, he spoke extemporaneously, even famously dismantling his teleprompter at one event. His frequent unwillingness or discomfort at speaking from prepared notes makes Trump a unique politician to compare and contrast the use of and influenced of speechwriters.

Political communication is a field of study with a long history. From declarations of war and peace to the negotiation of trade deals and formal dinners, communication by the leaders of countries provides a way to examine and attempt to understand the inner workings as well as the motives of a government. In particular, the use of political speechwriters is of interest because of the concern that these unelected people may end up having a profound influence on the policies and attitudes of the government and the country as a whole.

It seems natural, then, that the communication of the newly elected Donald J. Trump would be of interest to those not only interested in the direction of domestic and international policies, but also in the style and direction of official communication from the United States as well. Presidents and other leaders are often seen as setting an example for not only the policies of their countries, but also for creating a rhetorical or communicative atmosphere, which the rest of the country (as well as those in other countries) must adapt to or fight against.

Communication scholars, in particular, must be interested in not only the actual speeches that are given by prominent politicians, like Presidents and Prime Ministers, but also in the “behind the scenes” influence of those who craft the speeches that are given. In the case of Donald J. Trump, this may be particularly important. He has little experience or record as a politician, so there is less of a sense of predictability or knowledge about how he will react (either rhetorically or in terms of policy) to any given situation.

The campaign and the subsequent speeches presented by Donald J. Trump, then, present a unique opportunity to not only consider the political effects and implications of speeches given by major

political figures, but also an opportunity to consider the influence of the speechwriter on the presentation those speeches. Such analyses may be able to increase our understanding of the direction United States policy will take in the future of this administration as well as a glimpse into the give and take that must be present in any situation where one person is crafting a speech to be presented by a different person.

Background

The scope of this paper, however, does not intend to stretch to a full rhetorical critique of Trump's speeches, but rather to limit itself to an attempt to understand the implications and effects that speechwriters have on the speeches presented by major political figures. In the modern world, where so much of our communication is mediated in one way or another and time-shifted in one way or another, it is increasingly easy to have other people stand in for the named communicator. Simply by handing on a phone or computer (or account password), even a "verified" account can be used by another person. Even when speaking in person, however, the fact that a speaker's words may not be their own is something that students of communication must consider. Naturally, when it comes to the communication from leading politicians and other powerful or responsible people, we should consider the influence of those who create the communication which is attached to their names.

The study of political communication has a history almost as long as the study of communication itself. From its creation, the role of the President of the United States has been a particularly communicative one. Campbell and Jamieson (2008) noted that, even among political communicators, the president has an extreme amount of rhetorical power:

Only a president can issue a presidential inaugural and, in the process, become "the president"; only a president can issue a pardon and, in so doing, absolve a malefactor of a federal crime; only a president can state objections to a piece of legislation and thereby invite its reconsideration by Congress. The identity of the presidents as spokespersons, fulfilling constitutional roles and exercising their executive power, gives this discourse a distinctive character. In turn, the identity and character of the presidency arise out of such discourse (7).

In particular, the influence of speechwriters on political communication has been an issue since almost the beginning of the study of communication. Campbell and Jamieson (2008) noted that "since the earliest recorded history, the need to act rhetorically has generated ghostwriters. In the ancient Greek city-states, logographers, such as Antiphon and Isocrates, penned speeches for others to deliver, particularly for citizens who had to act as their own lawyers for the courts" (16). While presidents made use of speechwriters from the very beginning, their use became more public when, as Gelderman (1997) noted that "from Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Lyndon Baines Johnson, presidents openly used senior aides to help them write speeches. These aides were actively involved in the policy decisions they helped communicate" (X).

As mentioned above, the speeches of Donald J. Trump in his campaign to become President of the United States provide a relatively interesting opportunity to consider the influence of speechwriters on speeches. Despite the fact that he does employ a speechwriter, he is also known for departing from the prepared script (often displayed on video screens called teleprompters. In

one memorable instance reported by CNN News, Trump actually took apart his teleprompters during a speech, preferring to speak without the aid of notes:

Donald Trump earlier this week said the "shackles" have been taken off his campaign -- and on Friday, he cast aside one of the foremost symbols of a disciplined presidential bid: his teleprompters.

Reverting back to the days of his insurgent bid for the Republican nomination, he knocked over the teleprompters beside him on stage and went back to his off-the-cuff style (Diamond 2016).

In particular, the speech Trump gave announcing his candidacy is both an important speech in terms of its goals and scope and a good example of his extemporaneous style. The speech in which he declared his victory in the general election over Hillary Clinton is, similarly, an important speech because of its contents and an interesting speech because it seems clearly to be read (for the most part) from a teleprompter.

Before proceeding to the specific method employed, it may be important to briefly introduce in somewhat greater detail the two speeches being analyzed below. The "Presidential Announcement Speech" and the "Victory Speech" represent both important moments in Trump's campaign to be president, but also represent important speech-acts--that is, they represent moments when, by speaking, Trump is also engaging in an action. In the case of the Presidential Announcement Speech, Trump becomes a public candidate for president by announcing his intention to seek the office. In the Victory Speech (combined with Hillary Clinton's concession), Trump declares to the world that he will be the next President of the United States.

The Presidential Announcement Speech was given June 16, 2015 at Trump Towers in New York City. Trump began the event by taking a ride down the elevators to the microphone and then addressed the assembled crowd. The audience was, as described by Jeremy Diamond (2015), writing for *CNN*, both loud and somewhat impromptu:

Supporters donning "Make America Great Again" T-shirts -- several of them boisterous and interjecting loudly in the middle of Trump's speech -- shuffled up golden elevators to watch from two stories up.

Outside, campaign volunteers flagged down pedestrians to hand them the campaign T-shirts and invite them inside for the announcement.

The speech happened after several years of speculation about whether Mr. Trump wanted to enter into politics generally and run for the office of the president in particular. One key point in the development of Donald Trump into a national figure in American politics was his efforts in propagating and popularizing the so-called "Birther Conspiracy"--the belief that President Barack Obama had been born outside of the United States and also was ineligible to serve as president. Michael Barbaro (2016), while noting that the conspiracy was not true, also mentioned how long Trump had continued to support it in the face of evidence of its falseness:

It was never true, any of it. Mr. Obama's citizenship was never in question. No credible evidence ever suggested otherwise.

Yet it took Mr. Trump five years of dodging, winking and joking to surrender to reality, finally, on Friday, after a remarkable campaign of relentless deception that tried to undermine the legitimacy of the nation's first black president.

This speech is important because it marks the announcement of candidacy and the start, in earnest, of his campaign. As such, this speech represented his introduction to the American people as a political figure (although certainly not as a public one, as he had been featured in the television program *The Apprentice*). In an announcement speech, a presidential candidate might be expected to outline their plans for the future and give an idea of their character and personality--and how that character and personality would match the expectations for a president. For this analysis, another important point about this speech is that it is delivered in a relatively extemporaneous fashion--Trump seems to be working from a few notes on paper and is largely speaking without referencing those notes.

As one might expect for any speech of this magnitude (given by a legitimate or well funded candidate), this speech has been studied and analyzed on both an academic level and in the popular press. One example would be the analysis written by Rupert Neate (2016) in *The Guardian*.

Trump took to the stage as speakers bellowed out Neil Young's 1989 song *Rockin' in the Free World*, and went on to attack most of the rest of the world as he blamed Barack Obama for letting the country collapse to the level of "a third world country."

Most of his wrath was directed at Mexico, which he accused of "bringing their worst people" to America, including criminals and "rapists."

Neate and other commentators, then, noted that the speech was focused on weakness in the United States and placing the blame on other countries, with a particular focus on Mexico.

Delivered almost one and a half years before the actual presidential election, the Presidential Announcement speech set a tone for Donald J. Trump's campaign. Given in front of a crowd assembled in his own building, the Trump Towers, the speech announced his intention to become president and introduced some of the main themes of his campaign: weakness and loss in the United States and placing the responsibility for those losses and that weakness in other countries. Despite the importance of the speech, it was delivered extemporaneously, meaning that it provides a good contrast to his Declaration of Victory speech.

After the results of the 2016 election became clear, Trump addressed the assembled audience early in the morning on November 9th, 2016 at the New York Hilton Midtown in New York City. The crowd was largely composed of Trump supporters, Republican leaders, and the press. They had been waiting since the early evening as election results began to arrive, so may have been somewhat tired, but they also knew for some hours before Trump spoke that he was almost certain to be announced as the winner of the Electoral College.

This speech happened at the conclusion of a long and bitterly contested election. Throughout most of the election, Trump had been seen as an unlikely winner. His background in business and entertainment meant that he had little training in campaigning and little organizational support. Deborah Golshan (2016) noted that Trump's victory was doubly unexpected, as he defeated his Republican (GOP) in the primary election and his Democratic challenger, Hillary Clinton, in the general election:

Against all odds, polls, and projections, Donald Trump claimed victory in the presidential election Tuesday, delivering a speech at the Hilton Hotel in New York City on Tuesday to

a cheering crowd of supporters.

It was an unexpected outcome for the Republican candidate, who beat out not only a stacked GOP primary field but also an even more formidable opponent in Hillary Clinton, who was consistently ahead of him in the polls up and in a much stronger position on the electoral map.

This speech is important, in part, because it is Trump's first speech as the incoming president or president elect. This speech, then, represented Trump's first opportunity to present himself to the American public as the presumptive president. In other words, it was his first opportunity to "pivot" from a candidate and show the audience how he would present himself at the leader of the United States. In part given the pressure of the occasion and, perhaps, its surprise, Trump delivered this speech with the aid of teleprompters, something he had done on and off during the campaign. In fact, his gaze rarely moves off of the teleprompters during the first half. This speech, at least the first half of it, then, present a good opportunity to see how a text and a speechwriter influenced Trump's speeches.

Again, virtually all speeches and other forms of public communication by an incoming president will be analyzed. This speech, given its particular importance, was no exception. Many analysis and critiques have been offered both from academic and popular viewpoints. In particular, it was studied and analyzed in an attempt to "read the tea leaves"—that is, searching for hints as to his future policies and approach as President. One example is Sam Leith's (2016) essay in *The Financial Times*. Leith noted that the Declaration of Victory speech did little to deviate from the genre of such speeches.

It was, in fact, scrupulously obedient to the requirements of the presidential acceptance speech as a genre. It said the victory belonged to the people, not to the candidate. It made gracious noises towards the defeated opponent. It promised that the time had come to unite. It said Mr Trump would "be a President for all Americans."

In other words, Lieth noted that the speech was not particularly typical of Trump, but rather typical of acceptance speeches as a whole.

This speech, then, in contrast to the Presidential Announcement speech had a much more clear audience and a much more structured and typical style. The speech was one which, perhaps, Trump had not expected to give or one for which the ultimate purpose generated enough pressure that he did not feel comfortable speaking extemporaneously. Thematically, it did not discuss the weakness of the United States, seeking rather to promise better things in the future. Similarly, it did not focus on blaming other countries for America's woes. Taken together, then, these two speeches seem like a good contrast to study when considering the influence of speechwriters on Donald J. Trump in particular and speakers in general.

Method

When preparing to study this topic, one question is the extent to which a speechwriter might influence the speech given by a candidate. Specifically, the research questions for this paper are: Do speechwriters influence the speeches given by political candidates?; and, presuming that they do, how does the use of a speechwriter influence the speeches given by a political candidate? My hypothesis is that there is an influence on speeches when using a speechwriter and that the

specific influences will be on language and grammar used and, to a lesser extent on the topics of the presentation. In particular, the speeches given with a speechwriter are likely to show less indication of personal habits or ticks because the resulting speech is more than likely the result of both the speaker and the writer meeting somewhere in the middle.

In order to check the hypothesis, the technique of close reading to analyze the speeches will be used. In addition, a video recording of each speech will be viewed in its entirety. After establishing the relevant details about each speech, they will be compared and contrasted in order to better understand the potential influences of a speechwriter. One specific tool that will be utilized to understand language level and grammar level is the “Measure Text Readability” webpage from *Readability Score*.

Although these speeches might be considered unusual because of the speech acts they represent (starting a campaign and, effectively, ending that campaign), they are useful to study precisely because they are given at times when it is going to be important to establishing the identity of the speaker. The Presidential Announcement speech must introduce the audience to candidate Trump and the Declaration of Victory speech represents the first and best opportunity to introduce the audience to the incoming president.

In particular, the analysis of these two speeches will center on three points: the language used in the speeches, the complexity of the structure of the speeches, and the contents of the speeches. These three points seem particularly relevant because of the way that each point might be used to establish a sense of who the speaker is and might be the most likely to change given the existence of a speechwriter. It is hoped that by analyzing these three points, a more complete picture of the influence of speechwriters might be obtained.

This paper, then, seeks to compare and contrast the language, the structure, and the contents of Donald Trump’s announcement and his declaration of victory speeches. The purpose of this analysis is to attempt to understand the extent of influence on a speaker exerted by a speechwriter. In the results section, the results of the close reading of each speech will be explained in order. Those results will then compared and contrasted in the discussion section. Finally, the conclusion will consider the strengths and weaknesses of this research and whether, on the basis of that research, the hypothesis seems to be reasonably true or not.

Results

Presidential Announcement Speech

When considering the language used in the Presidential Announcement speech there are several features that stand out. The first feature is Trump’s use of reassuring phrases or phrases which assert his truthfulness or correctness. The second is his use of “empty” intensifiers like “so” and “very.” The third is his use of simple emphasizees like “great” and “big.” Taken together these three features seem to present a fairly clear picture of Trump’s natural speaking style.

The first feature is Trump’s use of reassuring phrases like “believe me” or assertions of his factuality like “it’s true.” For example, Trump uses the word “believe” fourteen times in the speech. Similarly, he used the word “true” three times, the word “truly” four times, and “fact” twice. As

one example, when talking about trade negotiations, Trump said, “But I know the negotiators in the world, and I put them one for each country. Believe me, folks. We will do very, very well, very, very well.” When speaking about President Obama, Trump said, “He’s not a leader. That’s true.” These phrases allow Trump to assert his authority and knowledge without having to provide evidence or reasons for his assertions.

A second feature is his use of “empty” intensifiers like “so” and “very.” For example, Trump used the word “very” twenty-nine times during this speech. In fact, four times he used the double emphasis “very, very” during this speech. One example is when he was discussing business dealings with Chinese people. Trump said, “I own a big chunk of the Bank of America Building at 1290 Avenue of the Americas, that I got from China in a war. Very valuable.” An example of the doubled “very” is when speaking about the economy, Trump said, “Be careful of a bubble because what you’ve seen in the past might be small potatoes compared to what happens. So be very, very careful.” Trump uses “so” more than forty times during the speech with approximately half of them being an intensifier. One example is when talking about the economy, Trump said that “there is so much wealth out there that can make our country so rich again, and therefore make it great again.” Trump doubled “so” only one time, near the end of his speech when he said, “strengthen our military and take care of our vets. So, so important.”

A third feature of this speech is his use of simple emphasizees like “great” and “big.” In fact, he used a version of “great” (either great or greatest) 41 times. Trump used a version of “big” (either big or biggest) nineteen times. One example of his use of big is in the phrase “big time” when used to describe the way the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare) would increase in scope. He said, “but Obamacare kicks in in 2016. Really big league. It is going to be amazingly destructive.” An example of his use of “great” is in discussing the need for a new president. He said, “now, our country needs— our country needs a truly great leader, and we need a truly great leader now.” One example of Trump doubling “great” was when discussing the proposed border wall with Mexico. He said, “I will build a great, great wall on our southern border. And I will have Mexico pay for that wall.”

The Presidential Announcement speech, then, has a number of language features which set it apart. The heavy use of phrases like “believe me” to emphasize that he should be trusted and believed is one. A second is his use of “empty” intensifiers like “very.” And the third characteristic is his use of simple emphasizees like “great.” One could argue that a typical sentence from this speech would be something like, “it is going to be very great, believe me.”

The second area of analysis was the structure and grammar of his speech. From the close reading there are three main characteristics of this speech. First, the organization is haphazard. Second, the grammar is not careful, but usually quite simple. Finally, the overall complexity of his sentences is quite low, ranking at about a 4th grade in elementary school level. Taken together, these three characteristics should give a good sense of the complexity and structure of his speech.

The first characteristic of his structure is that his approach is scattershot. Although there are several main themes in the speech, they tend to be mixed together. As one example, in Trump’s Announcement of Candidacy speech, he addresses education reform, Jeb Bush (another Republican

candidate), and immigration in one paragraph:

End— end Common Core [a nationwide compulsory education plan]. Common Core should— it is a disaster. Bush is totally in favor of Common Core. I don't see how he can possibly get the nomination. He's weak on immigration. He's in favor of Common Core. How the hell can you vote for this guy? You just can't do it. We have to end education has to be local.

This kind of free-form association is relatively common in this speech.

The second characteristic is that his grammar in this speech is fractured. The construction of sentences is awkward when written and seems to be more representative of oral communication than written communication. When discussing his businesses, for example, Trump said:

It's labor, and it's unions good and some bad and lots of people that aren't in unions, and it's all over the place and building all over the world.

And I have assets— big accounting firm, one of the most highly respected— 9 billion 240 million dollars.

As with the structure, the grammar is a little scattershot. Sentences start but do not finish. Clauses appear with no clear connection to the subject of the sentence. In some cases verbs or prepositions are missing, replaced by clauses.

The third characteristic is the overall ease or difficulty of his structure and word choice. Here, the *Readability Score* website was used to score the speech. His sentences construction is simple, around a primary school 4th grade level, based on the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level. His speech has an average sentence length of 9.3 words and an average word length of 4.1 letters (averaging 1.4 syllables per word). It is, of course, important to remember that these are averages and not each sentence is going to be that long or each word that short.

Taken together, these three characteristics give a sense of Trump's speech. The structure and the grammar are haphazard and the level is approximately grade school level. One example of the overall structure of his speeches is the single longest sentence, coming in at 58 words long). Trump begins a sentence about net worth and finishes the sentence talking about assets without actually finishing the part about net worth:

But here, a total net worth of—net worth, not assets, not— a net worth, after all debt, after all expenses, the greatest assets—Trump Tower, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, Bank of America building in San Francisco, 40 Wall Street, sometimes referred to as the Trump building right opposite the New York— many other places all over the world.

The third area of analysis was the content of the speech. The Presidential Announcement speech featured a variety of topics. The speech had a largely negative tone overall. The few positive moments in the speech tended to be about Trump himself, his businesses, and his family. By examining the content, one can see the areas that candidate Trump considered important in introducing himself to the American people.

The topics covered in the Presidential Announcement speech were many and varied. Trump discussed, in no particular order, International Trade, Immigration, Middle East/ISIS, Economy, Military Policy, Health Care/Obamacare, Other Republican candidates, Obama, Trump, and

Patriotism. These topics represent a variety of domestic issues (like immigration, health care, and patriotism), a variety of international issues (like trade, the Middle East, and military policy), and political issues relevant to the campaign (Other republican candidates, Trump himself, and Obama). Interestingly, Trump never mentions either Bernie Sanders or Hillary Clinton in this speech.

In terms of tone, the speech was largely negative. The simplest example is near the very beginning when Trump asserted that the United States was always losing. He said, “our country is in serious trouble. We don’t have victories anymore. We used to have victories, but we don’t have them.” Another clear example is at the end when Trump starkly declared that, “sadly, the American dream is dead.” A more specific and content based example is when he discussed immigration. He stated that the United States was unsafe because of poor leadership: “But we don’t know. Because we have no protection and we have no competence, we don’t know what’s happening. And it’s got to stop and it’s got to stop fast.”

There were, of course, positive moments in the speech. These positive moments were largely confined to statements about Trump and his businesses or his family. When discussing rebuilding the infrastructure of the United States, for example, Trump declared that, “nobody can do that like me. Believe me.” About the economy, Trump similarly declared that, “I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created. I tell you that.” A third example is his discussion of trade. He declared that he knew worth of the negotiators in the world:

So I announced that I’m running for president. I would...

... one of the early things I would do, probably before I even got in— and I wouldn’t even use— you know, I have— I know the smartest negotiators in the world. I know the good ones. I know the bad ones. I know the overrated ones.

The Presidential Announcement speech, then, was marked by a variety of topics and a largely negative tone. It did have, however, some positive moments. Those positive moments occurred largely when Trump was discussing himself. Taken together with the language choices and the structure of this speech, these characteristics help present an image of what candidate Trump will be and they start to address the question of what sort of president he would become.

Declaration of Victory Speech

When considering the language used in the Declaration of Victory speech (in particular, the first half of the speech before he begins to thank his family, staff, and supporters), there are several features that stand out. The first feature is Trump’s lack of reassuring phrases or phrases which assert his truthfulness or correctness. The second is his use of “empty” intensifiers like “so” and “very.” The third is his use of simple emphasizees like “great” and “big.” Taken together these three features seem to present a fairly clear picture of Trump’s speechwriter’s influence on his speaking style.

The first characteristic is the lack of reassuring phrases used to assert Trump as an authority. There are no uses of the phrase “believe me” or “that’s true.” Similarly, there were no uses of the phrase “mark my words.” In fact, the words “believe” and “true” do not even appear in the first half of the speech at all, although believe does occur once in the second half of the speech when thanking Reince Priebus. This is not to suggest that the speech featured an emphasis on non-authority based

evidence, however.

The second feature of the first half Declaration of Victory speech is the use of “empty” intensifiers. The word “so” is used 5 times in the speech. One example is when addressing military veterans, Trump said, “We will also finally take care of our great veterans who have been so loyal, and I've gotten to know so many over this 18-month journey.” The word “very” is used seven times, all of them within the first eleven sentences of the speech and either thanking the audience or Hillary Clinton. One example is when he said that Clinton had fought a good campaign: “I mean, she fought very hard. Hillary has worked very long and very hard over a long period of time, and we owe her a major debt of gratitude for her service to our country.”

The third characteristic of the first half of the speech is the use of simple emphasizees like “great” and “big.” The word “great” is used six times. Half of those uses are found in the section of the speech addressing the world when Trump said, “we will get along with all other nations willing to get along with us. We will be. We will have great relationships. We expect to have great, great relationships.” The word “big” is used twice, both times near the end of the first half of the speech when describing dreams. Trump said, “No dream is too big, no challenge is too great. Nothing we want for our future is beyond our reach.”

The Declaration of Victory speech then, has several distinctive characteristics. First, it lacks any use of phrases meant to assert Trump’s position as an authority. Second, the speech features some use of “empty” intensifiers and simple emphasizees. Third, the speech tends to feature simple adjectives used for emphasis. Taken together, these three points help to create an idea of the characteristics of a speech written for Donald Trump.

The second point for analysis was the structure and grammar of the speech. The Declaration of Victory speech uses a relatively standard organization scheme. The grammar is standard with some complexity. The structure and word choice is somewhat simple, scoring at about 6th grade level. These three points should present a relatively complete picture of the structure and grammar of a Trump speech written by a speechwriter.

The first half of Declaration of Victory speech is organized in ascending order from addressing the campaign to the United States to the world audience. Trump began by thanking his opponent in the general election, Hillary Clinton and then suggested that the country must reunite and work together to create a better future. This first section naturally transitioned into a discussion of goals for the United States, including infrastructure and care for veterans. Finally, the speech progressed to a statement about the world, concluding with the statement that the United States would “seek common ground, not hostility; partnership, not conflict.”

The grammar in the first half of the speech is fairly standard with a few exceptions. As an example picked relatively at random, the section on infrastructure, Trump says that, “We will embark upon a project of national growth and renewal. I will harness the creative talents of our people, and we will call upon the best and brightest to leverage their tremendous talent for the benefit of all. It is going to happen.” The conclusion of the first half provides a good example of the few exceptions. Trump said, “All people and all other nations. We will seek common ground, not hostility;

partnership, not conflict.” This conclusion features a sentence fragment and some parallelism, showing both a grammatical problem and some more advanced sentence construction.

The third feature considered is the overall ease or difficulty of his sentence structure and word choice. Again, the *Readability Score* website was used to score the speech. His sentence construction is simple, around an elementary school 4th grade level, based on the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level. However, if only the first half of the speech is considered, that changes to a 6th grade level. The first half of the speech has an average sentence length of 10.4 words and an average word length of 4.4 letters (averaging 1.5 syllables per word). It remains, of course, important to remember that these are averages and that not every sentence is going to be that long or each word that short.

Taken together, the characteristics of organization, grammar, and complexity give a sense of Trump’s speech. The structure and the grammar are relatively standard the level is at a high grade school level. One example of the overall structure of his speeches is the single longest sentence, coming in at 40 words long). In this sentence, Trump addressed those who opposed him, with one related (if slightly ungrammatical) aside which returns to complete the thought that the sentence began. Trump said, “For those who have chosen not to support me in the past, of which there were a few people, I’m reaching out to you for your guidance and your help so that we can work together and unify our great country.”

The third area of analysis is the content of the speech. The Declaration of Victory speech, while short, featured a variety of topics. The speech had a largely positive tone overall. The speech also featured a few moments of humility, in particular about Trump facing the task at hand. By examining the content, one can see the areas that President-elect Trump considered important in introducing himself to the American people.

The speech was, as noted above, relatively well organized, moving from one topic to the next in largely ascending order. The themes included a discussion of the election, the nation and the world. In discussing the election, Trump thanked Hillary Clinton, made a call to unity, and had a discussion of the meaning of his campaign/movement. In terms of the nation, the speech talked about domestic policy with an emphasis on economics and care of veterans. Finally there was a brief discussion of international relations.

The overall tone of the speech was positive and forward looking. In addition to the calls to unity, Trump spoke about the possibilities facing a future world. In one example featuring a hopeful message for both the domestic and international audience, Trump said:

We will embark upon a project of American growth and renewal. We will call upon the best and the brightest to leverage our tremendous talent to benefit all. It will happen. We will have a great economic plan. We will double our growth and build the biggest economy, anywhere in the world. At the same time we will get along with all other nations willing to get along with us.

The speech also had a focus on cooperation and a sense of humility in the face of the task at hand. In the case of cooperation, Trump said, for example, that “working together, we will begin the

urgent task of rebuilding our nation while fulfilling the American dream.” In the case of humility, Trump attempted to redefine his campaign into a movement of the people. He said, “ours was not a campaign but rather an incredible and great movement made up of millions of hardworking American men and women who worked together to make America better for their family.” Similarly, in the quote mentioned above about the people who opposed him, Trump specifically claimed that he was “reaching out” for “guidance and help.”

The Declaration of Victory speech, then, was marked by a variety of topics and a largely positive tone. It did have, however, some unifying and humble moments. Those humble moments occurred largely when Trump was discussing the facing challenges together with the American people. Taken together with the language choices and the structure of this speech, these characteristics help present an image of what President-elect Trump will be and they continue to address the question of what sort of president he would become.

Discussion

How, then, do these two speeches compare to each other? The first characteristic considered was language use, particularly about the use of phrases meant to assert authority, “empty” intensifiers, and simple adjectives for emphasis. The speech written for Donald Trump (the Declaration of Victory speech) seemed to feature no assertions of authority as compared to the speech given extemporaneously (the Presidential Announcement speech). Both speeches featured the use of empty intensifiers. Both speeches also used simple emphasizees. Taken together then, there is some sense of the change brought about by a speechwriter.

Despite the fact that both speeches do not provide any attempts at external evidence (there is some discussion of financial figures in the Presidential Announcement speech, but the accounting firm is not cited and so the audience is left to trust Trump), several of the stronger techniques for asserting authority are missing from the Declaration of Victory speech. Trump never used “believe me” or “it’s true,” techniques which he used somewhat frequently in the Presidential Announcement speech.

While both speeches feature empty intensifiers, they are slightly reduced in the speech written by a speechwriter. In the Declaration of Victory speech, every instance of “very” is in the introduction or in the second half of the speech, after he begins thanking his supporters:

Thank you. Thank you very much. Sorry to keep you waiting. Complicated business. Thank you very much. I've just received a call from Secretary Clinton. She congratulated us. It's about us. On our victory. And I congratulated her and her family on a very, very hard fought campaign. She fought very hard. Hillary has worked very long and very hard over a long period of time and we owe her a major debt of gratitude to her service for our country.

In contrast, the use of “very” and “so” was spread out throughout the Presidential Announcement speech.

Simple emphasizees were somewhat prevalent in both speeches. In fact, both speeches feature a few doubled emphasizees. In the Presidential Announcement speech, for example Trump said that, “I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I’ll build them very inexpensively, I will build a great, great wall on our southern border.” Similarly, in the

Declaration of Victory speech, Trump said that “We will have great relationships. We expect to have great, great relationships. No dream is too big no challenge is too great.”

Considering the use of language and phrases, the two speeches have some clear similarities and some clear differences. Both speeches included assertions of fact, but only the Presidential Announcement speech had somewhat frequent use of phrases asserting authority to make those assertions. Both speeches featured intensifiers, although their placement in the Declaration of Victory speech was limited to the beginning and the end of the speech. Both speeches also featured heavy use of emphasizees.

The second characteristic considered was the structure and grammar of the speeches. The structure and organization of the speech prepared by a speechwriter was much clearer and more well defined. Similarly, the grammar used in the written speech was more standard and, at times, more complex. Finally, the level of complexity was somewhat higher in the speech prepared by a speechwriter than in the extemporaneous speech given by Trump.

When considering structure, the Declaration of Victory speech is much clearer and more well defined. As a simple comparison, consider the sections on infrastructure. In the Presidential Announcement speech, Trump said:

Rebuild the country’s infrastructure.

Nobody can do that like me. Believe me. It will be done on time, on budget, way below cost, way below what anyone ever thought.

I look at the roads being built all over the country, and I say I can build those things for one-third. What they do is unbelievable, how bad.

You know, we’re building on Pennsylvania Avenue, the Old Post Office, we’re converting it into one of the world’s great hotels. It’s gonna be the best hotel in Washington, D.C. We got it from the General Services Administration in Washington. The Obama administration. We got it. It was the most highly sought after— or one of them, but I think the most highly sought after project in the history of General Services. We got it. People were shocked, Trump got it.

Well, I got it for two reasons. Number one, we’re really good. Number two, we had a really good plan. And I’ll add in the third, we had a great financial statement. Because the General Services, who are terrific people, by the way, and talented people, they wanted to do a great job. And they wanted to make sure it got built.

So we have to rebuild our infrastructure, our bridges, our roadways, our airports. You come into LaGuardia Airport, it’s like we’re in a third world country. You look at the patches and the 40-year-old floor. They throw down asphalt, and they throw.

You look at these airports, we are like a third world country. And I come in from China and I come in from Qatar and I come in from different places, and they have the most incredible airports in the world. You come to back to this country and you have LAX, disaster. You have all of these disastrous airports. We have to rebuild our infrastructure.

In contrast, in the admittedly shorter Declaration of Victory speech, Trump said, “We are going to fix our inner cities and rebuild our highways, schools, hospitals. We will rebuild our infrastructure. Which will become second to none, and we will put millions of our people to work as we rebuild it.”

The grammar is more standard in the Declaration of Victory speech than in the Presidential Address speech. Again, a simple comparison based on the subject of international agreements is somewhat useful. In the Presidential Announcement speech, Trump wandered off topic when saying, “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 as they make weapons right now, and then goes into a bicycle race at 72 years old, and falls and breaks his leg.” In contrast, in the Declaration of Victory speech, Trump simply said, “We will call upon the best and the brightest to leverage our tremendous talent to benefit all.”

Finally, the level of complexity of the speeches was slightly different. The Presidential Address speech was delivered at approximately an elementary school 4th grade level. The first half of the Declaration of Victory speech was delivered at a level about 2 years higher in elementary school, approximately a 6th grade level. The words were, on average, longer and contained more syllables in the Declaration of Victory Speech than in the Presidential Address speech.

Taken together, these three points suggest that the hypothesis may be somewhat correct. There are some clear similarities between the two speeches and some clear differences. The lack of external evidence is notable in both speeches. The differences also spread across some similarities, however. Although the use of intensifiers and simple emphasis words remains the same, their placement in the speech is different. That placement together with the complete lack of assertions of authority does suggest the influence of an outside writer.

The final point of comparison was the content of the speeches. While both speeches featured a variety of topics, the topics themselves were somewhat different. The tone of the speeches was quite different. The focus of the speeches was also somewhat different. These three points all seem to indicate that the influence of a speechwriter can be somewhat significant.

In terms of the contents, the Declaration of Victory speech was more limited and the information was presented in a more organized fashion. The Presidential Announcement speech was, on the other hand, somewhat scattershot, bouncing between multiple topics with no clear progression. The Declaration of Victory speech was primarily focused on three points, recognizing the impact of the election, explaining a simple vision for domestic policy and a very simple appeal to other countries with regards to international policy. The Presidential Announcement speech covered a variety of domestic topics, from health care to schools to gun control which were not featured in the Declaration of Victory speech. In addition, there was a great deal of discussion of international topics, focused primarily on terrorism, immigration, and international trade. None of those topics was featured in the Declaration of Victory speech.

Perhaps related to the change in topics, the Presidential Announcement speech was more negative and focused on the past and the present. The themes of the Presidential Announcement speech centered largely on what Trump called America’s losses. On the other hand, the Declaration of Victory speech focused very little on the past and only talked about the present in terms of the election. Rather, the Declaration of Victory speech was focused mainly on what positive changes might happen in the future.

Somewhat ironically, given its role in introducing the newly elected president to the nation, the Declaration of Victory speech is less focused on Trump than the Presidential Announcement speech. In the Presidential Announcement speech, Trump spent a great deal of time discussing his own background as a business person (although very little about his time as an actor). Similarly, while the Declaration of Victory speech includes some discussion of Trump, himself, that discussion is primarily limited to reaching out to those who opposed him and claiming that he would need their help.

This point of comparison brings out the clearest differences between the two speeches. Despite the fact that their simple goals are the same--introducing Donald Trump to the domestic and international audiences, the topics covered are quite different. Similarly, the tone of the two speeches are quite different. Finally, the presentation the candidate and President-elect is somewhat different. There may be numerous explanations for this difference, but the simplest may be the influence of the speechwriter.

Conclusion

Obviously moving forward, Trump and his speeches will be important to study. While the speeches of a candidate are important to study so that we might have a sense of the person seeking to become president, the speeches of the actual president do much more than that--as they have the power to create and modify policy and can have a profound effect on domestic and international relations.

The two speeches chosen here are interesting because their purposes are somewhat similar and they represent a contrast in Trump's use of prepared notes versus speaking extempore. Both speeches represent turning points in the candidacy of Donald Trump. Both are focused on creating a sense of the person--an image aimed at the electorate and the world. One speech is much shorter, however, so it would have been preferable to find two speeches of more similar length.

Looking at the language used, the structure of the speeches, and the content provided a good way to compare the two speeches. Given that Trump's extemporaneous style is so "oral," it would have helped to include some greater analysis of the gestures and para-verbal aspects of these speeches. This analysis would, likely, have reinforced the difference between the extemporaneous delivery of the Presidential Announcement speech and the Declaration of Victory speech. In the Presidential Announcement speech, Trump was more active and animated than in the Declaration of Victory speech. His eyes moved more about the audience rather than being almost constantly focused on the teleprompters.

Overall, the hypothesis that a speechwriter would change the speeches in a more general way seems somewhat verified. While some of Donald Trump's verbal style remains (his abundant use of "great," for example), his language choices and his structure and even content became much more standard in the Declaration of Victory speech. There were fewer examples of poor or unclear organization than in the Presidential Announcement speech. Perhaps most striking is the change in tone and content between the speeches.

Again, ideally, there would be a more lengthy prepared speech to compare to the Presidential

Announcement speech. The longer the speech, the greater the examples and cases that can be considered. Indeed, any one given speech may be an outlier, so the larger the pool of speeches considered, the stronger the conclusions would be. Perhaps, the best option for a single speech would be to compare the Presidential Announcement speech to the Inaugural Address, which had not been given at the time of this writing.

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