US versus *THEM*:

A Corpus-Driven Analysis of President Obama's and President Trump's Speech Discourses

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Abstract

This research work focuses on the language used by the two most recent Presidents of the US, namely Barack Obama and Donald Trump, through six relevant speeches produced in their first term on the job. To carry out this corpus-driven analysis, I use several virtual applications which return a series of results that guide me in the process of study construction. Ultimately, I examine their most frequently used words, nouns, qualitative adjectives that collocate with those nouns, and, finally, the usage of personal pronouns so as to compare their discursive strategies. The results of this study show that Obama's speeches are dictated by formality and indirectness, reflected on his lack of subjective adjectives and usage of neutral personal pronouns, which blur the "*us* versus *them*" distinction; whereas Trump employs a hyperbolic and exaggerated use of evaluative adjectives, alongside the informal practice of personal pronouns in order to manipulate and persuade his audience.

K*eywords:* **Barack Obama, Donald Trump, oral discourse analysis, qualitative adjectives, personal pronouns**

Resumen

Este trabajo de investigación se centra en el lenguaje usado por los últimos dos presidentes de los EEUU, en concreto Barack Obama y Donald Trump, a través de seis discursos relevantes que se dieron en su primer mandato como tales. Para llevar a cabo este análisis *corpus-driven* (surgido del corpus), utilizo varias aplicaciones virtuales, las cuales devuelven una serie de resultados que me guían en el proceso de construcción de estudio. Fundamentalmente, examino las palabras y los sustantivos más usados, los adjetivos cualitativos que más acompañan a estos sustantivos y, finalmente, el uso de los pronombres personales para así comparar sus estrategias discursivas. Los resultados de este estudio muestran que los discursos de Obama se caracterizan por ser formales e indirectos, reflejado en su falta de adjetivos subjetivos y en el uso de pronombres personales neutros, lo cual disipa la distinción "*nosotros* versus *ellos*"; mientras que Trump emplea un uso hiperbólico y exagerado de adjetivos evaluativos, además de una práctica informal de los pronombres personales para así poder manipular y persuadir a su audiencia.

Palabras clave: **Barack Obama, Donald Trump, análisis del discurso oral, adjetivos cualitativos, pronombres personales**

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

Is there a tangible difference between Democrats and Republicans? Between Barack Obama and Donald Trump? Science and statistics should determine whether this difference, this divergence and variation among political parties and Presidents of the United States of America in fact exists. In the era of technology, of the Internet, information has been available to be reproduced and propagated all over the globe. Nothing is out of sight, nor can be hidden from the media anymore. Specially from Twitter, for instance, which is a "performance-enhancing drug for politics [that] has made all the good parts of politics a little better and all the bad parts much, much worse" (Pfeiffer, 2019, p. 210). These times have brought out numerous articles and research studies on political strategies through social media that analyse the use of language alongside new technologies. As Alavidze (2017) states, language plays a vital role in the struggle for power that is politics, for "no political action is prepared, accomplished or implemented without a language" (p. 350).

On the one hand, Barack Obama, "considered himself a writer who entered politics as opposed to a politician who writes" (Pfeiffer, 2019, p. 29). The former President had a close, intimate relationship with his speechwriters. His language use was an intense topic of public and political interest from the very start of his campaigns (Holliday, 2017), being the first African American President to have ever landed on the Oval Office. Anass Bensrhir (2013) used an artificial intelligence processing algorithm that scanned through Obama's speeches and remarks in order to develop insights about Big Data and its application. From the study, Bensrhir (2013) could draw several conclusions which include the affirmation that Obama mainly focuses on "internal affairs like recession and economy" while he still "gives more importance to his own country" (p. 3). Obama's discourses are marked by cyclical variations and guidelines that contain "highly emotional moments and moments of emotional and cognitive integration but also relaxing states between cycles" (Lamparter & Mergenthaler, 2018, p. 2). In Obama's eight years as President, technological tools progressed significantly resulting in future virtual campaigns, which Trump used to his own advantage to spread his message using an army of hundreds of thousands conservative and provocative Twitter followers (Pfeiffer, 2019).

Donald Trump's speeches, on the other hand, vary "between two states: highly emotional or highly abstract" (Lamparter & Mergenthaler, 2018, p. 2). Evidences of

emotional and cognitive assimilation are missing. Similarly, according to Abbas (2019), themes of division and contrast, of emotions, and of blame and responsibility are noticeably and strongly used by Trump in his oral discourses. Donald Trump took the electorally marginalized white working class back to the balloting booth by elaborating and emphasising differences, as Lamont et al. (2017) put it, "by reinforcing the boundaries drawn toward socially stigmatized groups" (p. 173), which was accomplished:

> […] by repeatedly insisting on the moral failings of these groups (in the case of refugees and undocumented immigrants) as well as by making these groups more one-dimensional, by stereotyping them as in need of protection (for African Americans and women). Trump accomplished all this by using strong language that seemed 'authentic', 'in your face', and 'anti-pc', and particularly resonated with frustrated white working class Americans eager to 'tell truth to power'. Thus, Trump acted as an influential cultural agent who knew how to tap into latent and less latent symbolic boundaries that already existed among white working-class Americans in the early 1990s. (p. 173)

In other words, through his electoral speeches, Trump recognised prevailing figurative boundaries by legitimizing the conception that workers were superior to the rest of American society.

In this paper, I will combine language analysis, specifically oral productions, and the use of new technologies, such as virtual applications, in order to examine the Presidents' speeches and, thus, their discourse strategies. This study aims to achieve the following research questions:

- Which are the most frequent words used by the two Presidents?
- Which nouns are more frequently used and what types of qualitative adjectives collocate with them?
- How do both Presidents use personal pronouns and how does that mirror their (un)intentional discursive strategies?

To support this corpus-driven study, the following section will introduce some concepts and studies on different discourse strategies present in politics so as to support the conclusion that will consequently originate from the obtained results.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Discourse is a difficult concept to define, for there are many "conflicting and overlapping definitions" (Alavidze, 2017, p. 350). For this study, the theoretical framework surrounding political and oral discourses will focus on both the use of noun modifiers, more specifically, attributive adjectives; and the use of personal pronouns, for both Presidents. On the one hand, the role of adjectives is key to verbally attack and manipulate an audience, for these modifiers mark stress and emphasise an emotional attach to nouns, and to all the corpus (Sánchez Ruiz, 2015). On the other hand, as Alavidze (2017) states, the selection of certain personal pronouns act as discourse markers in political discourse.

In the first place, a categorisation of adjectives should be considered so as to classify and evaluate the choices made by our two analysed Presidents. Huddleston & Pullum (2002) define adjectives as a syntactic category of words which usually modify nouns. Adjectives can perform three main functions: attributive (*happy* people, predicative (they are *happy*) and postpositive (someone *happy*). In this study, only attributive adjectives are being examined when pre-modifying the political nouns that are selected. According to Huddleston & Pullum (2002), residual pre-head modifiers, adjectives in this case, should follow a specific order within noun phrases: Evaluative (*good*, *horrible…*) > General property (*big*, *long*, *loud*, *sour…*) > Age (*new*, *young…*) > Colour (*black…*) > Provenance/Origin (*Chinese…*) > Manufacture (*wooden*, *carved…*) > Type (*digestive…*). Evaluative modifiers reflect the speaker's judgement whereas the other classes define objective and general properties.

Scotto di Carlo (2015), alternatively, divides qualitative adjectives into two categories depending on their main role: objective adjectives, which describe qualities that are independent from the enunciator (*single*, *red*, *masculine…*), and subjective adjectives, which imply a certain level of sentiment or judgement (*dear*, *strange*, *painful….*). Considering Huddleston's & Pullum's (2002) semantic classes of attributive adjectives recently mentioned, in this paper, subjective adjectives will equate to evaluative modifiers whereas objective adjectives will include all the rest, namely general properties, age, colour, provenance, etc. The amount and type of qualitative adjectives found throughout the speeches will be scrutinised and inspected according to the literature further explored in this section.

Sánchez Ruiz (2015) determined that subjective, or evaluative, adjectives, entail appraisal towards the norm or ideology. Hyland (2005) also argued that evaluative adjectives enable audience engagement, "which is an alignment dimension of interaction in which writers acknowledge and connect to their audience, focusing their attention, including them as discourse participants, and guiding them to interpretations" (as cited in Scotto di Carlo, 2015, p. 204). Moreover, the use of evaluative adjectives to convey personal opinions is also a method "to show how the author is truly involved in what he is saying and how deeply he is exposing himself" (Scotto di Carlo, 2015, p. 204). Low-frequency, or unique, words have also been found associated with subjectivity (Wiebe et al., 2004). Additionally, a statistical analysis carried out by Bruce & Wiebe (2000) proved that adjectives are arithmetically, significantly and positively "correlated with subjective sentences" (as cited in Wiebe, 2000, p. 2).

Similarly, Ali Haif Abbas (2019) states that "politicians always attempt to magnet people to their side [which] cannot be done without the help of the language they speak and the ideological discourse strategies they use in their speeches" (p. 517). Abbas (2019) finds that exaggeration is one crucial discourse strategy, used to either adulate or criticise someone or something. The author's conclusions on hyperboles reflect that the use of modifiers clearly distinguishes an image of *us* versus *them*. In that sense, speakers "largely depend on hyperbole to express his visions, attack his opponents and emotionally influence the audience" (p. 517). Hence, hyperbolic adjectives, and, in general, other types of adjectives, can also be linked to figurative language, "specially personification and metaphor, [which] are a fruitful source of dysphemism when they are used to offend or insult" (Sánchez Ruiz, 2015, p. 130).

Adjectives, as Sánchez Ruiz (2015) has proven, are a key lexical strategy for persuasion and manipulation, "not only because they contribute and relate emotions to nouns, but also because they can be combined with other rhetorical strategies to be more effective" (p. 130). As Azhar Hassan Sallomi (2018) also states, the term *persuasion*, "which is originally borrowed from the Latin term *persuadere*, refers to an intellectual and formal process used by someone as an attempt to influence another" (p. 356). The author describes several techniques of persuasion that can be used in order to manipulate and bring audiences closer to the speaker. Among these techniques, Hassan Sallomi (2018) argues that in the use of adjectives speakers tend to describe nouns with

adjectives that are "highly connected" to those nouns, for instance, "*incredible* and *great* movement" (p. 357).

Ricardo Casañ-Pitarch's (2018) contrastive analysis focuses on the use of personal pronouns as of high relevance to study "how speakers distinguish between themselves and the others" (p. 175), that is, *us* versus *them*. In that regard, the author discriminates narcissist talk and humble discourse. On the one hand, "narcissist talk involves the use of the first singular person, denoting self-focus and egocentrism" (p. 175), which can also accentuate the speaker's emotions, developing into a subjective sense of closeness to the audience. As Casañ-Pitarch (2018) argues, narcissist talk might imply an attempt "to approach middle and lower social classes, convincing emotionally that someone is on their side" (p. 175), which the author associates to populism. On the other hand, "[c]oncerning language use, leaders using humble discourse tend to avoid egocentrism and '*I-Talk*', using the form '*we*' instead" (Casañ-Pitarch, 2018, p. 176). The distinction between inclusive and exclusive language is also crucial to determine a speaker's intentional persuasion. According to Hassan Sallomi (2018), whereas inclusive language (*we*, *our*, *us*) creates the impression that "the speaker and the audience are on the same side" (p. 359), exclusive language (*them*, *they*, *their*) is generally used to persuade the audience.

Moreover, Casañ-Pitarch's (2018) study also distinguishes (in)formality and intentionality in the use of the first, second and third person categories of personal pronouns, as "the use of a less formal discourse is [yet] another strategy to approach the support from lower classes" (p. 181). Initially, the author states that "the personalization of the discourse with the first person is a characteristic of informality" (p. 176). According to Maia Alavidze (2017), "[p]oliticians use the pronoun *I* to present themselves as individuals and speak from their own perspective, preferably highlighting one's good qualities and accomplishments" (p. 351). The pronoun *I* denotes a more personal standard, showing authority and individual responsibility, whereas the plural form *we* is used "to give a sense of collectivity and sharing responsibility" (p. 351). The function of the second person pronoun, *you*, is considered to be persuasive rather than informative, "by gaining the attention of the audience to take actions; thus it is a way of showing closeness with the audience" (Casañ-Pitarch, 2018, p. 176-7).

Finally, Casañ-Pitarch (2018) stresses the function of the third person personal pronouns as "quite varied" (p. 177), for both singular and plural categories discriminate

male, female and neutral forms. In the case of the plural form, *they* "is used in political speeches to create an image of others" (Alavidze, 2017, p. 351). That is, an explicit separation would be reinstated with the use of the personal pronoun *they*. Nonetheless, "neutral forms denote certain indirectness and this is a form of formality" (Casañ-Pitarch, 2018, 176). The way politicians produce speech and display and represent themselves is a part of their personality and it builds themselves as individuals (Alavidze, 2017). In the same way, their preference of choosing a particular personal pronoun "can create an image of a politician both negative and positive" (Alavidze, 2017, p. 351). Pronominal choices in political discourse change depending on whether the speaker is willing to share the responsibility with others or not (Alavidze, 2017).

3. METHODOLOGY

This research paper demanded a specific method of analysis, which would allow for an evolving and adapting path of investigation to take place: the corpus-driven approach. The precursor of the distinction between *corpus-based* and *corpus-driven* type of linguistic analysis was Elena Tognini-Bonelli (2001), as she claims in *Corpus Linguistics at Work*, "a corpus can be used in different ways in order to validate, exemplify or build up a language theory" (p. 65). According to Tognini-Bonelli (2001), in "the corpus-driven approach to corpus linguistics […] the linguist uses a corpus beyond the selection of examples to support linguistic argument or to validate a theoretical statement" (p. 84). That is, the analysed corpus is the sole source of hypothesis, without previous investigation in any matter. In other words, "the theory has no independent existence from the evidence and the general methodological path is clear: observation leads to hypothesis leads to generalisation leads to unification in theoretical statement" (p. 84-5). The characterisation of this path of investigation is that, as McEnry & Hardie (2015) reinstate, corpus-driven linguistics rejects the classification of corpus linguistics "as a method" and asserts instead that the corpus itself "embodies its own theory of language" (p. 6). Therefore, the data is to direct, in this paper, the scrutiny and analysis route.

To begin with, this research work employs its own linguistic data, which is formed entirely by transcribed speech. The spoken corpus (Baker et al., 2006) will be composed of twelve speeches that have been extracted from *AmericaRethoric.com*, six

of which are produced by Barack Obama, and the other six by Donald Trump. According to Tognini-Bonelli (2001), comparable corpora is that "whose components are chosen to be similar samples of their respective languages in terms of external criteria" (p. 7). Hence, the selection of speeches needs to be executed according to given characteristics that guarantees that the data, in this case, will be comparable. Certain correspondences can be then established among the main linguistic features of the proposed corpus: both speakers held the same position when giving the speeches, specifically, first-term as President of the United States; and said speeches are produced under the same contextual circumstances, that is, the events in which the data was delivered are the same in both cases.

The collection of speeches that have been selected for the purpose of this research are: The Victory Speech, the Inaugural Address, the United Nations Assembly, and the First, Second and Third State of the Union Address. Cinzia Bevitori (2015) describes the Inaugural Address, the State of the Union Address and the Acceptance Speech as "[…] three major canonical types of discourse, which stand out as main 'epideictic' genres that are powerfully constrained by custom and ritual, and are thus seen to mostly characterise the presidential role" (p. 112). In terms of linguistic characteristics, this selection of speeches might reflect upon the intrinsic and inherent philological and psychological intentions of the speakers.

Firstly, the Victory, or Acceptance, Speech has been included in this research work due to "its importance in being the decisive moment in which the nominee, by formally assuming a new leadership role, takes responsibility for the political agenda" (Bevitori, 2015, p. 112). It is the first declaration after having won the vote, when the candidate might reinstate their presidential objectives. Similarly, the first speech that newly sworn-in presidents give is the Inaugural Address, which plays a strategic role "in a ritual of transition in which the covenant between the citizenry and their leaders is renewed" (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008, pp. 29–30). Likewise, the State of the Union Address "may be seen as a strategic site of conflict and negotiation through which US presidents try to exercise their authority and influence decisions" (Bevitori, 2015, p. 112). The *U.S. Constitution* also infers that the President "shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient" (*U.S. Const.*

art. II, § 3, cl. 1). Finally, I decided to also include the United Nations Assembly as it might reveal the international objectives that both presidents can linguistically assume.

Furthermore, as Baker et al. (2006) put it, "distribution is a factor in corpus design" (p. 61) which ensures the representativeness of the corpus, thus a range of text categories or genres need to be included. Therefore, after gathering all the data, this corpus can be classified according to 3 types of distribution, as shown in Table 1: speaker, Barack Obama vs. Donald Trump; date, 2008-2012 and 2016-2020 respectively, during both Presidents' first terms; and title/type of speech, that is, the Victory Speech, the Inaugural Address, the United Nations Assembly, and the First, Second and Third State of the Union Address.

Speaker	Date	Title/type speech
Barack Obama	2008-2012	• Victory Speech • Inaugural Address • United Nations Assembly • First State of the Union Address • Second State of the Union Address • Third State of the Union Address
Donald Trump	2016-2020	

Table 1. *Types of Distribution*: This corpus can be classified according to 3 types of distribution: speaker, date and title/type of speech.

Once the speeches are selected, the collection of data should be compared in order to determine whether it is actually comparable. Through Laurence Anthony's application *AntConc* (2019, Version 3.5.8), a number of information and statistics on the spoken corpus are given. On the one hand, for instance, in Baker et al.'s (2006) *A Glossary of Corpus Linguistics*, a token is defined as "[a] single linguistic unit, most often a word, although depending on the encoding system being used, a single word can be split into more than one token, for example *he's* (*he + 's*)" (p. 159). In the proposed corpus, the number of tokens found in *AntConc* are:

- Obama #Word Tokens: 31480
- Trump #Word Tokens: 25677

On the other hand, Baker et al. (2006) discriminate token and type: "While the number of tokens in a corpus refers to the total number of words, the number of types refers to the total number of *unique* words. For example, the word *ship* may occur 177 times in a

corpus, but it only counts as one type of word" (p. 162). Anthony's application also appointed the number of types in our corpus:

- Obama #Word Types: 3899
- Trump #Word Types: 3737

Finally, to determine the "comparability" of the selection of spoken data, a correlation between type and token is established, namely type/token ratio. "The number of types (unique words) in a text, divided by the number of tokens (total number of words) and expressed as a percentage. A high type/token ratio suggests that a text is lexically diverse, whereas a low type/token ratio suggests that there is a lot of repetition of lexical items in a file" (Baker et al., 2006, p. 162). With no intention of diving into the results of the research yet, here are the type/token ratio for both speakers:

- Obama type/token ratio: 12.39%
- Trump type/token ratio: 14.55%

Considering that this type of speeches are very repetitive, the low type/token ratio is to be expected. As you can see from *AntConc* (2019, Version 3.5.8), the results suggest that the data is comparable. This will be discussed in further detail in the following section together with the rest of the findings.

3.1 Voyant Tools

In order to display a visual picture of the results, I will use the virtual application *Voyant Tools*, which is "a web-based text reading and analysis environment" (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016), similar to the formerly mentioned *AntConc* (2019, Version 3.5.8). After selecting a corpus, or, more precisely, uploading the different speeches produced by our analysed speakers, the website presents us with several default tools, specifically Cirrus, Reader, Trends, Summary and Contexts. In this case, I will make use of Cirrus, a "word cloud that visualizes the top frequency words of a corpus or document. The word cloud positions the words such that the terms that occur the most frequently are positioned centrally and are sized the largest" (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016). As can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, the virtual application automatically discards function words in the word clouds. *People*, *America*, *American/s*, *nation/s*, or *world* are some of the most frequent used words by both speakers.

Figure 1. *Obama's Cirrus:* Cirrus of Barack Obama's speeches through *Voyant Tools* (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016).

Figure 2. *Trump's Cirrus:* Cirrus of Donald Trump's speeches through *Voyant Tools* (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016).

Due to these first conceptual snaps of the different speeches, the line of research that I will be taking is driven by the political connotations that both Presidents point out in their speeches. That is to say, after gathering the data of every word used, in terms of nouns, I will be analysing the most frequent words that relate to politics, namely *people*,

America, *country*, *nation*, *sates*, etc. and some of their frequent collocations, in order to describe their discursive style, alongside the use of personal pronouns.

3.2 AntConc

Anthony's application *AntConc* (2019, Version 3.5.8) provided me with a list of all the words used in the speeches, ranked by frequency of use (see Figure 3 to check an example of the computer program).
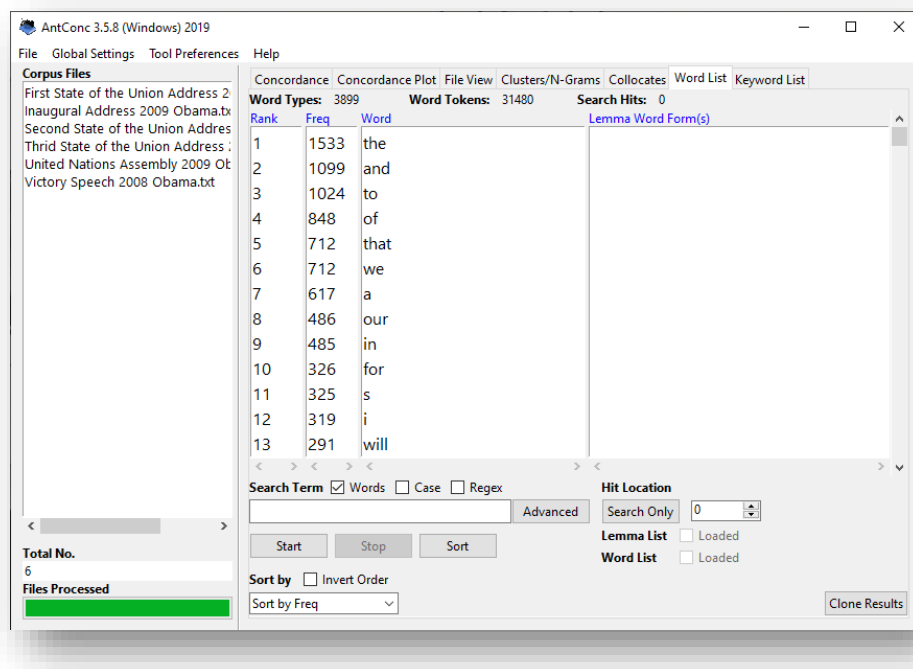
Figure 3. *Obama's results on* AntConc: Screenshot of Obama's outcome on *AntConc* (2019, Version 3.5.8).

So as to work with the results, *AntConc* permits the extraction of data into a text document, which can later be attached to an Excel file. Both Obama's and Trump's four most frequently used words were the same: *the*, *and*, *to* and *of*, and are displayed in Table 2 to show how results will be presented in the following section. Compared to Leech et al.'s (2001) collection of lists that describe frequencies of use in written and spoken English based on the British National Corpus, this result is expected, since function words are usually the most frequently used.

Obama's First 4			Trump's First 4		
Rank	Freq.	Word	Rank	Freq.	Word
1	1533	the	1	1204	the
2	1099	and	2	1025	and
3	1024	to	3	785	to
4	848	of	4	677	of

Table 2. *First 4 Words***:** A comparison between Obama's and Trump's four most frequent words used in the collected spoken corpus.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Most Frequent Nouns and Their 1L Collocates.

Concerning the use of nouns, this study focuses on political nouns, or those that relate to the same semantic field. For that reason, nouns such as *time, year*, or *energy* have been discarded to compare, as can be seen in Table 3, the frequency of use of political references to the perception of *us* vs. *them*, or, in other words, of America vs. the world. The first two nouns for both Presidents are the same: *people* and *America.* Afterwards, Obama, on the one hand, prioritises *world* against *country*, while Trump, on the other hand, does the complete opposite. As was expected, Obama focuses on internal affairs like economy (*jobs*, *tax*, *government*), while he still mentions his own country (Bensrhir 2013), whereas Trump's main references stick to bureaucratic concerns (*states*, *president*, *congress*).

Obama			Trump		
Rank	Freq.	Word	Rank	Freq.	Word
31	144	*people*	20	149	*people*
37	127	*america*	25	131	*america*
47	90	*world*	38	88	*country*
48	88	jobs	47	75	*world*
63	70	*nation*	51	72	states
69	67	americans	52	71	americans
84	54	nations	56	67	nations
88	52	*country*	62	61	*nation*
95	46	tax	77	45	president
96	45	government	81	42	congress

Table 3. *Nouns***:** Ten most frequently used nouns by both speakers that relate to politics.

After gathering the former data on nouns, I ran *AntConc* (2019, Version 3.5.8) in the words in bold and italics: *people*, *America*, *country*, *world*, and *nation* to find their respective collocates on the first position left (1L). As *people*'s results were too abundant, I decided to restrict Table 4 to qualitative adjectives in order to discuss them later on. As can be seen, Obama's use of attributive adjectives modifying *people* were only ten, whereas Trump's overuse is explicitly visible with twenty-four qualitative adjectives collocating with *people*. In this sense, Trump's results almost double Obama's.

Obama			Trump		
Rank	Freq. (1L)	Collocate	Rank	Freq. (1L)	Collocate
3	19	american	2	14	american
4	6	young	5	5	venezuelan
14	2	iraqi	8	4	incredible
16	2	afghan	13	3	great
24	1	sudanese	15	2	talented
25	1	skeptical	16	2	iranian
32	1	palestinian	17	2	good
33	1	pakistani	19	1	young
35	1	ordinary	22	1	wealthy
45	1	fragile	24	1	united
			25	1	tremendous
			27	1	toughest
			31	1	syrian
			32	1	spectacular
			33	1	special
			36	1	righteous
			37	1	powerful
			42	1	jewish
			44	1	innocent
			46	1	horrible
			50	1	fantastic
			52	1	decent
			53	1	cuban
			55	1	brave

Table 4. *1L Collocations of* **People:** Qualitative adjectives that collocate in first position left-hand of the word *people*.

Dividing attributive adjectives into evaluative or objective categories is often complex and overlapping. I have decided to stick to objective vs subjective, which can still exemplify the level of (im)partiality that both Presidents transmit. Therefore, in Table 5, the former list of adjectives has been subcategorized into objective and

subjective adjectives, with their proportional percentage. As stated in the literature review section of the paper, objective adjectives will include those that relate to general properties, age, colour, origin, manufacture and type; whereas subjective adjectives will only include evaluative adjectives. Objective adjectives that pre-modify *people*, in both cases, are generally comprised of provenance/origin adjectives. Obama's use of objective adjectives (70%), in this case, is greater than his use of subjective ones (30%). As can be seen, *skeptical*, *ordinary*, and *fragile,* even though they might be considered human properties, the use of such adjectives denotes subjectivity rather than objectivity. Trump, on the contrary, uses more subjective adjectives (62.5%) than objective (37.5%). Age (*young),* general properties (*wealthy*) and type (*united*) are some of the objective categories that Trump has used. His exaggerated overuse of subjective adjectives (*incredible, great, talented…*) could be considered a discursive strategy used to magnet people, to gain their trust by conveying personal opinions.

	Obama	#	%	Trump	#	%
Objective	American, young, Iraqi, Sudanese, Palestinian, Pakistani	7	70%	American, Venezuelan, Iranian, young, wealthy, united, Syrian, Jewish, Cuban	9	37.5%
Subjective	skeptical, ordinary, fragile	3	30%	incredible, great, talented, good, tremendous, toughest, spectacular, special, righteous, powerful, innocent, horrible, fantastic, decent, brave	15	62.5%
TOTAL		10			24	

Table 5. People: *Qualitative adjectives:* Qualitative adjectives that collocate in first position left-hand of the word *people* divided into objective and subjective adjectives.

In Table 6, *America's* pre-modifiers are listed: no qualitative adjectives were found in either of the Presidents. However, Trump, in this case, makes use of more verbs (*make*, *bless*, *rebuild*, *put/s, keep)* than Obama (where only *make* and *be* are found). The extracted data concurs with Casañ-Pitarch's (2018) findings which concluded that "Trump defeats [Obama] in the use of verbs" (p. 179). In that sense, Trump's message contains further actions, whereas Obama's discourse is a more descriptive one. This lack of adjectival pre-modifiers might be due to the fact that *America* is included within "United States of America," as almost a third of all the 1L collocates for *America* in both speakers is concretely *of*.

Obama			Trump		
Rank	**Freq. (1L)**	**Collocate**	**Rank**	**Freq. (1L)**	**Collocate**
1	23	of	**1**	22	of
2	15	that	**2**	20	in
3	14	in	**3**	7	make
4	5	and	**4**	6	that
5	4	for	**5**	5	to
6	3	an	**6**	5	for
7	2	what	**7**	4	bless
8	2	to	**8**	4	and
9	2	make	**9**	3	put
10	2	if	**10**	2	while
11	2	but	**11**	2	when
12	2	be	**12**	2	rebuild
			13	2	puts
			14	2	keep
			15	2	end

Table 6. *1L Collocations of* **America:** Words that collocate in first position left-hand of the word *America* that were produced at least twice.

Moreover, Table 7 displays the collocations of the token *world*. As can be seen, whereas Obama makes use of five qualitative adjectives (*new*, *Muslim*, *interconnected*, *changing,* and *Arab*), Trump only produces four (*peaceful, new, modern,* and *civilized*).

Obama			Trump		
Rank	**Freq. (1L)**	**Collocate**	**Rank**	**Freq. (1L)**	**Collocate**
1	65	the	**1**	57	the
2	8	a	**2**	5	entire
3	2	whole	**3**	2	in
4	2	that	**4**	1	whole
5	2	of	**5**	1	two
6	1	our	**6**	1	since
7	1	no	**7**	1	second
8	1	new	**8**	1	president
9	1	muslim	**9**	1	peaceful
10	1	interconnected	**10**	1	our
11	1	in	**11**	1	new
12	1	future	**12**	1	modern
13	1	entire	**13**	1	civilized
14	1	changing	**14**	1	and
15	1	arab			
16	1	after			

Table 7. *1L Collocations of* **World:** Words that collocate in first position left-hand of the word *world* for both speakers.

In Table 8, objective and subjective adjectives are once again separated. Obama's use of attributive adjectives is completely objective (100%). These words were found in instances of unemotional discourse. The data also reveals an equal use of attributive adjectives in Trump's case (50% vs 50%). In both cases, the attributive adjective *new* is classified under the age (objective) category. The form *civilized* has been classified as subjective, for it is found when Trump states that: "[We] form new [alliances] and unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism" in the Third State of the Union Address. These results coincide with the previous accounts (see Table 5) where Obama's elaboration on evaluative adjectives is rather inferior than Trump's, whose strategies reinforce an intentional and emotional response by the audience.

	Obama	**#**	**%**	**Trump**	**#**	**%**
Objective	new, Muslim, Arab, interconnected, changing	5	100%	New, modern	2	50%
Subjective	-	0	0%	peaceful, civilized	2	50%
TOTAL		5			4	

Table 8. World: *Qualitative adjectives:* Qualitative adjectives that collocate in first position left-hand of the word *world* divided into objective and subjective adjectives.

In Table 9, words that collocate in first position left to *country* are shown. In this case, Obama does not use any qualitative adjective, whereas Trump's section indicates the use of three (*great*, *wealthy*, and *socialist*).

Obama			Trump		
Rank	**Freq. (1L)**	**Collocate**	**Rank**	**Freq. (1L)**	**Collocate**
1	20	this	1	58	our
2	12	the	2	5	this
3	4	a	3	4	their
4	3	your	4	4	the
5	3	our	5	3	a
6	2	their	6	2	great
7	2	no	7	2	every
8	2	my	8	1	your
9	1	own	9	1	wealthy
10	1	first	10	1	to
11	1	each	11	1	that
12	1	another	12	1	socialist
			13	1	own
			14	1	other
			15	1	from
			16	1	entire
			17	1	another

Table 9. *1L Collocations of Country:* Words that collocate in first position left-hand of the word *country* for both Presidents.

Table 10 displays Trump's objective (33,3%) and subjective (66,7%) adjectives. The token *socialist* has been interpreted as evaluative/subjective, for it was produced with the intention of provoking an emotional reaction from the audience: "America will never be a socialist country," said Trump, while the audience proceeded to cheer "USA! USA!" during the Second State of the Union Address. This specific use of attributive adjectives reinstates Trump's hyperbolic discursive strategy to gain his audiences' trust (Abbas, 2019).

	Trump	**#**	**%**
Objective	wealthy	1	33.3%
Subjective	socialist, great	2	66.7%
TOTAL		3	

Table 10. Country: *Qualitative adjectives:* Qualitative adjectives that collocate in first position left-hand of the word *country* divided into objective and subjective adjectives.

Finally, the words that collocate left to *nation* are displayed in Table 11. On the one hand, Obama produced five qualitative adjectives pre-modifying *nation* (*young*, *united*, *powerful*, *indispensable*, and *greatest*), while Trump, on the other hand, used up to nine (*compassionate*, *wonderful*, *thriving*, *sovereign*, *prosperous*, *grateful*, *free*, *extraordinary*, and *American*).

Obama			Trump		
Rank	Freq. (1L)	Collocate	Rank	Freq. (1L)	Collocate
1	15	our	1	25	our
2	10	this	2	7	a
3	9	a	3	6	this
4	8	the	4	3	one
5	7	one	5	2	the
6	2	other	6	2	no
7	2	my	7	2	compassionate
8	2	each	8	1	wonderful
9	2	another	9	1	thriving
10	1	young	10	1	that
11	1	united	11	1	sovereign
12	1	that	12	1	responsible
13	1	some	13	1	prosperous
14	1	powerful	14	1	other
15	1	own	15	1	grateful
16	1	no	16	1	frontier
17	1	indispensable	17	1	free
18	1	greatest	18	1	first
19	1	first	19	1	extraordinary
20	1	every	20	1	and
21	1	as	21	1	american
22	1	any			

Table 11. *1L Collocations of* **Nation:** Words that collocate in first position left-hand of the word *nation* for both Presidents.

As can be seen in Table 12, both Presidents produced more subjective adjectives (O 60% and T 66.7%) than objective ones (O 40% and T 33.3%) when describing the token *nation*. However, Trump's ratio and, in general, his amount of adjectives is greater and the difference is more significant than that of his opponent. *Young, united, sovereign* and *free* have been classified as objective adjectives, for they define the nation's properties, and were not found in emotional occasions. The other attributive adjectives were describing either evaluative opinions or subjective emotions.

	Obama	#	%	Trump	#	%
Objective	young, united	2	40%	sovereign, free, American	3	33.3%
Subjective	powerful, indispensable, greatest	3	60%	compassionate, wonderful, thriving, prosperous, grateful, extraordinary	6	66.7%
TOTAL		5			9	

Table 12. Nation: *Qualitative adjectives:* Qualitative adjectives that collocate in first position left-hand of the word *nation* divided into objective and subjective adjectives.

4.2 Personal Pronouns (PP)

As discussed in previous sections of the paper, the psychological perception of ourselves vs. the others might be reflected upon our use of personal pronouns (Casañ-Pitarch, 2018). For that reason, the following analysed grammatical category is personal pronouns. In Table 13, there is a complete list of personal pronouns ranked by frequency of use. Both President's most used personal pronouns are *we* and *our*, respectively. In the case of both presidents, no *hers* was found. Besides, Trump did not make use of the personal pronoun *theirs* either.

Obama			Trump		
Rank	**Freq.**	**Word**	**Rank**	**Freq.**	**Word**
6	712	we	5	533	we
8	486	our	7	433	our
12	319	i	12	234	you
23	173	they	14	214	i
26	158	you	24	135	their
28	149	their	31	107	they
38	118	us	42	84	he
72	64	them	49	73	my
74	60	my	61	62	us
105	39	me	63	58	his
149	28	your	83	41	them
169	25	he	89	40	your
174	24	his	118	27	her
209	20	she	144	23	she
218	19	her	182	19	me
990	4	him	244	14	him
3897	1	yours	-	0	yours

Table 13. *Personal Pronoun:* Personal pronouns used by both speakers ranked by frequency of use.

In order to picture the frequency of use so as to discuss it using the theoretical framework previously summarised, in Table 14, personal pronouns have been regrouped by person and number. For instance, first person singular: *I*, *me* and *my* have been assembled together, and similarly with the rest of the cases.

Freq.	I (me/my)	WE (our/us)	YOU (your/yours)	THEY (them/their)	HE (him/his)	SHE (her/hers)	TOTAL
Obama	418	1316	187	322	53	39	2335
Trump	306	1028	274	283	156	50	2097

Table 14. *PP Sorted by Person and Number:* Personal pronouns sorted by person, number and speaker.

As can be seen in Table 15, the distribution from the previous table has been transposed into a percentage in order to facilitate the visualisation of the results. Obama's use of first person pronouns is greater than Trump's in both cases, *I* (O 17.90% vs T 14.59%) and *WE* (O 56.36% vs 49.02%). In the second person, singular and plural, for there is no distinction, Trump clearly surpasses Obama's use of *YOU* (O 8.01% vs 13.07%). Regarding the third person plural, *THEY*, both presidents' results are really close, yet Obama's percentage is a bit larger than Trump's (O 13.79% vs T 13.50%). Finally, the masculine pronouns within the *HE* category are extremely greater in Trump's case, whereas Obama almost does not make use of either of the third person singular pronouns (O 2.27% vs T 7.44%).

%	I (me/my)	WE (our/us)	YOU (your/yours)	THEY (them/their)	HE (him/his)	SHE (her/hers)
Obama	17.90%	56.36%	8.01%	13.79%	2.27%	1.67%
Trump	14.59%	49.02%	13.07%	13.50%	7.44%	2.38%

Table 15. *PP Percentages:* The percentage has been determined by dividing the frequency by the total number of personal pronouns that each speaker has produced.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on the outcome of the results, several assumptions on both speakers are to be inferred. To being with, the general lack of subjective adjectives in Barack Obama's speeches matches a style of formality that is caused and complemented by neutrality in the use of neutral forms in third person pronouns. Furthermore, it seems that Donald Trump's exaggerated use of evaluative adjectives illustrates his strategical process to magnet and manipulate people and to reinstate an image of *us* versus *them*. Trump's

directness in the overuse of the second person pronoun, *you*, also implies persuasion to establish trustworthiness.

As has been noted, the observed linguistic strategies used by Obama seem to reflect a concern for objective formality, articulating qualities independently to the message conveyed. For instance, the tokens grouped as political echo Obama's concern for economy as well as internationality (Bensrhir, 2013), as *world* is mentioned and referred to more than *country*. The lack of subjectivity, of explicit emotion pre-modifying these political nouns, accounts for integration, for humbleness, as this objectivity is opposite to narcissist and populist talk and it dissolves the distinction of *us* versus *them* (Abbas, 2019).

Moreover, Obama's reinforcement of the plural form *we* produces an inclusive impression "that the speaker and the audience are on the same side" (Hassan Sallomi, 2018, p. 359). In other words, the greater use of *we* over *I* confirms a sense of shared responsibility and communalism. Even though third person forms might create a symbolic distinction, Obama's almost exclusive use of the neutral/plural form *they* when addressing third person pronouns also denotes indirectness which symbolises a more formal construction. As a "writer who entered politics" (Pfeiffer, 2019, p. 29), formal language and accuracy in his speeches were expected and thus confirmed.

Conversely, Trump's discursive strategies have been materialized and confirmed in both his hyperbolic and exaggerated use of adjectives and the use of several informal pronominal choices. As Abbas (2019) also deduces, Trump's discursive strategies are generally governed by hyperbole to "attack his opponents and emotionally influence the audience" (p. 517). The abusive use of unique attributive adjectives, that is, qualitative adjectives that only appear once, has also been found to be associated with subjectivity. A subjectivity carried in his message by the evaluative adjectives analysed in this study, developing into a crucial lexical strategy for persuasion and manipulation (Sánchez Ruiz, 2015).

Even though the plural form *we* is also used more than *I* in Trump's case, other pronominal choices reflect directness and informality, such as the significantly large use of *you*, as it may be considered non-academic when used to address the audience, or parts of it; and the masculine pronominal category of *he*, given that the "overuse [of] third person pronouns instead of the person's proper name [might] be considered rude"

(Casañ-Pitarch, 2018, p. 177). In this regard, Trump's informal choices concur with populist talk, aimed at a strategic and potential increase of support from lower classes.

6. CONCLUSION

This corpus-driven analysis has focused primarily on the oral productions of Barack Obama and Donald Trump during their first term as Presidents to evaluate and examine their explicit discursive strategies. Considering the research questions that were posed in the introductory section of the paper, this study can finalise with several conclusions regarding the Presidents' use of language in the selected and analysed speeches. For instance, as expected, both speakers' first four words coincided, that is to say, function words are typically the most used tokens in all languages.

Firstly, regarding the collocates of certain political nouns, dividing attributive adjectives into subjective and objective categories has helped establish a difference between Obama and Trump; where the former's objectivity and formality is widely encompassed, whilst the latter's exaggerated subjectivity infers an intentional closeness to the audience. Lastly, the use of personal pronouns has also manifested several differences concerning the evaluation of *us* versus *them*. Whereas Obama's neutrality has proven a disintegration of that distinction, Trump's informality has conveyed the complete opposite.

The present study may well be of significant relevance given the agitated and bursting protests that have recently swept the United States of America and, extensively, the whole world. Social and more traditional media have played a key role in (dis)informing citizens of the current mobilisations towards a more just and accepting society. The fact of President Trump's hiding and avoiding publicly addressing the nation's issues and controversial disputes has proven to be yet another reason to analyse language use in Presidential speeches. Confronting one's responsibility in political matters and using an inclusive and embracing language, as seen in this study, manifests the intentionality behind any individual's actions.

Looking forward for future lines of research, one may envision that technological tools and improvements are essential to develop new methods for analysing linguistic data and language-based implications. In this study, several virtual

applications have already been used while demonstrating their utility. However, as time progresses, and our knowledge continues to evolve, we ought to persist in our scientific curiosity by questioning and criticising the world's leaders and institutions to make the Earth a better place. No matter how hard we try to understand, our ultimate purpose as humans should be that of dissolving any differences between *us* and *them*, and therefore integrate and mingle humanity into one kind only.

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