Persuasion Tropes in Inspirational and Motivating Speeches: A Stylistic Study

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الوسائل المجازية للإقناع في الخطابات التحفيزية الملهمة: دراسة اسلوبية

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Abstract:

Persuasion is a complicated procedure and there are certain people who are regarded to be gifted to persuade someone or some people. Ordinary speech can not be used to persuade someone. This paper has tackled the use of symbolism and irony by public figure like actors or T.V. shows presenters to persuade people to do the right things. Five speeches have been selected to be the data of the study. It has been found that all the four speakers use symbolism very often due its great effect on people when they need persuade them, where the use of irony was very rare because irony always involve comic meaning, and this will not help the speakers to persuade anybody. A table has been designed to show the frequency of the symbolism and irony in those four speeches.

Keywords: Stylistics, persuasion, symbolism, irony, motivation, personal, conventional.

ملخّص:

الاقناع هي عملية معقدة، تتطلب استخدام عدة وسائل لغوية وبلاغية من اجل اقناع المقابل بفكرة او تصرف ما. يتناول هذا البحث استخدام الرمزية والسخرية كوسائل لغوية لاقناع الجمهور بفكرة ما. حيث كان عينة البحث أربعة خطابات تحفيزية تم القائها في مناسبات عامة مختلفة ومن قبل شخصيات عامة مثل العالمة والطبيبة ليزا جينوفا ومقدم البرامج المشهور ستيف هارفي والممثل الأمريكي جيم كيري واخرا رودي فرانسسكو. لقد توصل الباحثان الا ان اغلب المتحدين يستخدمون عدة وسائل لغوية منها الرمزية لان لها إثر كبير على المتلقي او الجمهور، اما استخدام السخرية فبدا قليلا لان له اثرا تهكميا وهذا لا يفيد بالإقناع بشيء. لقد تم انشاء جدول لتبان عدد المرات التي تم استخدام الرمزية والخرية في اقناع الجمهور.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاسلوبية، الاقناع، الرمزية، السخرية، التحفيز، الرمزية الشخصية، الرمزية التقليدية

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1- Introduction

The problem of this paper is to show how public speakers use certain tropes to persuade their audience or to influence them to do good things. Motivation is something hard to achieve, so it requires an influencing character with a special gift to influence the audience. The main problem of the study is to highlight the use of irony and symbolism by the public speakers in order to motivate their audience.

The study tries to answer the following questions.

1- What are the main tropes that are used by motivating public speakers?

2- How do the motivating speakers persuade their audience?

3- How do the public speakers use irony and symbolism to persuade their audience?

By answering the above questions, the study aims at the following.

1- Identifying the main tropes that are used by the public speakers to persuade their audience?

2- Stating the way in which those public speakers persuade their audience.

3- Specifying the way in which those speakers use irony and symbolism to persuade their audience.

2-Theoretical Background

2.1Stylistics

Babajide (2000) defines stylistics as "the study of style" wherein style is "the effectiveness of a mode of expression". Many of the determinants of any stylistic choices are: "speaker's emotional attitude towards his message, his hearer, or the world in general at the moment of communicating, as well as the context or situation". In order to achieve rhetorical and convincing results, style is sometimes said to include deviation from the norm or normal use of language. In practice, stylistics is divided into 'literary and non-literary stylistics, while the approaches used in each case are based on linguistic observations and terminology (p.123).

In an earlier account, Leech (1969) has defined literary stylistics as "the study of the use of language in literature"; he has considered stylistics as "the meeting ground of linguistic and literature" (pp.1-2) .

According to Fabb (2002, p.16) and Norgaard et al. (2010, p. 6), stylistics includes various branches, linguistic stylistics is the most well-known (which studies a language devices and their structural patterns), literary stylistics (which is concerned with the relationship between the form and the meaning of the literary work), and pragmatic stylistics which is defined by Huang (2012) as "the application of the findings and methodologies of the theoretical pragmatics to the study of the concept of style in language"(p.19).

The model of Crystal and Davy's (1969) and Leech and Short's (2007) are popular from different stylistic models. The former consists of such groups which are situationally dependent on a collection of linguistic categories. These categories are: individuality, dialect, time, discourse, medium, province, position, modality, and singularity. Meanwhile, the latter model is divided into four categories: lexical, grammatical, Figure of speech , and coherence and cohesion. However these two models lack the pragmatic component and that makes them insufficient as pragmastylistic models unless they are changed to be connected to the pragmatic component and the context regulating the development of the target discourse item. It can be inferred that pragmatics is a theory of appropriateness, according to what has been discussed above in relation to pragmatics and stylistics, while stylistics is a theory of effectiveness (Al-Hindawi & Al-Adili, 2019, p.157).

Basically, then, pragmatics agrees with stylistics, as Hickey (1993) points out, that both are directly interested in the choices of speakers within a number of grammatically appropriate linguistic forms. Pragmatics, however, seeks choice as the means chosen to perform acts (request, inform, etc.), while stylistics choice of the consequences on the linguistic level and the impact on the listener , aesthetic, affective, etc.) with particular interest (p.578) .

As a consequence, style can be argued to be a contextually defined variation of language, while pragmatics is a field of research that analyzes

the relationships between language and context. In each case, however the meaning appears to be interpreted somewhat differently. Context for stylistics is typically the condition that makes a certain way of speaking more likely, whereas pragmatics sees a context as composed of the language user's experience, values, assumptions, earlier utterances so that "The dog bit John" is used to talk about the dog and "John was bitten by the dog" to talk about John (p.578) .

Stylistics has been moving towards pragmatics seeking reasons that only with which they do not adequately provide for aspects of language use. In addition to research into the form of linguistic utterances, modern stylistic studies have shown an interest in pragmatics. The resulting studies are called pragmastylistics studies. Consequently, Pragmastylistics aims to provide a framework for understanding the relationship between linguistic form and pragmatic interpretation and how communication style varies as the speaker helps the listener identify the concept behind an utterance (Al-Hindawi & Al-Adili, 2019, p.157).

2.2 Symbolism

Peyre (1901) shows that one of the most influential terms used in mythology, anthropology, psychology, and theology is the word symbolism. There are several difficulties in the interpretation of the word symbolism, and one of these difficulties is being ambiguous and restrictive. He adds that "Symbolism occurs when the idea, the object itself, is translated by means of an appearance that is not its immediate copy, but that serves to evoke that object in an oblique way, more often by analogy or by some other mental process"(p.1).

Combs and Freedman (1990) suggest that it is possible to use every pair of objects or ideas as a symbol. This symbolic relation allows one entity or idea to be used as a reference for the other (p.119). They also say that when one thing stands for another, everything can be used as a symbol (p.119).

Morris (1993) describes symbolism as a "meaningful substitute stimulus". Symbols can be psychological, mathematical, or logical. In

other words, to describe the relationships between two symbols and to illustrate the functions and interactions between symbolic and non-symbolic systems, the term logic is used. Then, the symbols which are distinguished through behavior are called psychological symbols. It is noted that all symbols have an additional meaning that should be understood by the reader in a specific context. Thus, the hidden meaning is seen as implicit or indirect. As such, because it is associated with the realm of indirectness of meaning, the symbolism may be pragmatically tackled (p.15).

Abrams (1999) defines a symbol as a word or an idea that illustrates something. The term symbol is a word or a sentence, in literary works, that stands for an event or action, and has a wide range of references (p.314) Similarly, Baldick (2001) asserts that, in literary works, a symbol is defined as a word or phrase that symbolizes a concrete object. It's simply a kind of sign. The symbol could be an event or action with additional interpretations. Generally, in literary writing, words such as birds, roses and mountains have been used as symbols (p.251).

Black (2006) says that "an interesting pragmatic approach to symbolism is offered by Eco (1984)". His suggestions about the production and reception of symbols place it strongly in the interpersonal context which characterizes pragmatic approaches to interpretation. Therefore, Symbolism is used as an example of textual implicatures, in which the reader is invited to discuss potential interpretations (and the motivation for encoding them allusively) in the ordinary way. The aim of using symbolic modes in any context, even those used by contemporary novelists, is to accomplish certain functions such as influence, manipulation, indirectness, and the novelist's revealing style (p.124).

Bonn (2010) indicates that there may be contextual or conventional symbols. Conventional symbols are recognized through a specific community or culture, and these symbols are used to enhance meaning. Contextual or literary symbols, on the other hand, are widely used in literature, such as characters, settings, individuals or acts. Within a certain context, it gains a particular symbolic meaning (p.164).

Neginsky (2010) mentions that in earlier times, the symbol is used as an allegory whereas in recent years, the term symbol is used by the leaders of the symbolist movement and it is distinct from the way the symbol is used in an earlier time. The word symbol used, in earlier times, to connect the abstract object or concept to a concrete object or idea; whereas the word symbol is used recently to relate the concrete entity, thought, or behavior to an abstract object or idea, for example, it goes from what is heard, seen and felt to the object or idea`s evocation. Neginsky reveals that "imagination" is the basic term that defines the symbolist movement. He notes that artists indicate a "man of imagination" that embraces a poet, a musician, and a painter's work (p.10).

2.2.1 Conventional symbols

Conventional symbols are used in a particular culture, especially by poets like colors (Abrams, 1999, p.314). According to Kennedy et al (2013), a symbol becomes conventional, only if it is persistently repeated until its meaning transforms to be fixed in various cultural contexts. For example, peace is symbolized by the dove, red color stands for love, while youth is represented by spring (p.35).

2.2.2 Personal symbols

According to Abrams (1999), personal symbols may be defined as a specific idea associated with a specific concept, such as the association between sunrise and birth, or death and sunset. It is extremely difficult to identify personal symbols since their interpretation depends on the context, environment, features, and circumstances as a whole (p.314)

2.3 Irony

Webster defines irony as "The use of words to communicate anything other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning,". At least pre-theoretically, we'll accept this informal definition as operational.

2.3.1 Situational vs. verbal irony

The difference between verbal irony, which is a linguistic phenomenon, and situational irony (a.k.a. irony of fate), which is a state of the world that is perceived as ironical, such as the fire station burning down to the ground, is a fundamental distinction in the field of irony. The majority of irony treatments purposefully neglect situational irony. (Muecke, 1970).

According to Kreuz and Roberts (1993), there are four sorts of irony: 1. Socratic irony, 2. dramatic irony, 3. fate irony, and 4. linguistic irony.

Socratic irony is the act of seeming to be ignorant about a subject for instructional purposes.

Dramatic irony, according to Kreuz and Roberts, occurs when the audience is aware of information that the protagonist of a play, novel, or other work ignores (for example, in the case of Oedipus). Situational irony corresponds to fated irony. However, we will only analyze verbal irony in this case.

2.3.2 Unintended Irony

The term "unintentional irony" was used by Gibbs et al. (1995). If "the speaker did not mean the utterance to be understood this way," an incidence of irony is unintended (1995: 189). This sort of irony, according to Gibbs et al. (1995: 189), is a complex scenario containing "components of both verbal and situational irony." They also mention the dramatic irony of Kreuz and Roberts (1993). While they emphasize the distinction (Gibbs et al., 1995: 199), it appears that the distinction is unnecessary: assume that the inadvertently ironic utterance u is simply not ironic to S. When H interprets u as ironic, on the other hand, it becomes ironic. Because H does so on purpose (after all, in order to discover the ironical mismatch between S's planned speech and u, H must recognize S's intention), all cases of irony must entail intentionality, albeit it does not have to be S's.

2.3.3 Irony as a Rhetorical Device

Irony can be defined as saying something while meaning something else,' or, more formally, if S utters a sentence whose (literal) meaning is M, he/she intends to communicate non-M, i.e., the complementary meaning, according to the traditional theory, which is echoed in the dictionary definition quoted above. Kaufer (1981) and Haverkate (1990) argue that the classic view of irony as a trope (figure of speech) is overly broad because it fails to distinguish irony from other figures of speech such as metaphor, litotes, and so on.

2.3.4 Irony as Negation

A revision of the theory of irony as a figure of speech has been offered, claiming that irony expresses a more particular 'opposite' meaning rather than any other meaning (e.g. Brown and Levinson, 1978: 221). Levin (1982: 116-118), for example, offers a distinction between irony as a trope (when the irony is centered on a word) and irony as a figure of thought (when the irony is focused on a phrase). The relationship is antonymy in the first case and negation in the second. Haverkate (1990: 83-85) makes a similar difference, claiming that irony can be focused on the negation of a term or a concept.

2.3.5 Irony as a Violation of Quality: Grice's Theory

Grice (1975, 1989) identifies irony as an example of implicature and demonstrates how irony can be explained as a case of flouting the cooperative principle (CP) by breaching the quality standard (Grice, 1989: 34). Grice later returned to ironic analysis. The traditional accounts of irony are not drastically different from Grice's idea of irony (Sperber and Wilson, 1981). An examination of Tanaka's (1973) and Cutler's (1974: 117) Gricean accounts of irony, as well as Muecke's (1973) and Booth's (1974) pre-Gricean accounts, confirms that conclusion. Grice's account of irony is also treated by Kaufer (1981: 499) as essentially similar to traditional accounts of irony, over which it represents a "significant advance" in that it allows for the determination of the conditions under

which an utterance should be considered ironic (i.e. the violation of the quality maxim), as well as the reconstruction of the ironical intent even when irony is based on non-truth conditional elements of the sentence. Grice's account, on the other hand, is incorrect insofar as violations of other maxims can be proven to induce irony, as Sperber and Wilson (1981) demonstrated in the case of understatement. Holdcroft (1983: 507) gives several examples of irony that do not entail a violation of a maxim and goes on to argue that, in the absence of a target for the irony, it is unclear why a violation of the CP should prompt one to seek ironical meanings rather than any other form of indirect meaning.

Kaufer goes on to explain that breaking any of the maxims might be ironic (1981: 500-501). On the basis of the following apparent counterexample, he goes on to argue that the breach of a maxim is insufficient for the creation/perception of irony (1981: 502).

1- America's allies - always there when they need you.

2.3.6 Graded salience violation

An important contribution to the study of irony comes from the work of Giora

(1995, 1997; Giora et al., 1998; Giora and Fein, to appear). Although she significantly revises Grice's technique, Giora's theory is a two-stage theory. The two concepts of 'indirect denial' and 'graded salience' are central to Giora's theory. In that order, we'll look at both Giora (1995), Giora et al. (1998).

2.3.7 Indirect Negation

The primary premise of the indirect negation viewpoint is that irony entails the presence of both literal and implicit meanings, with an indirect (i.e. non-explicit) negative relationship between them. As previously stated, Grice's (and the orthodox view's) approach assumes that the initial meaning has been rejected and is hence unavailable (Giora, 1995: 241,245).

In this regard, irony differs from disambiguation, in which rejected meanings are discarded and no longer available for processing by the speaker because irony keeps both senses (Giora et al., 1998: 97).

2.3.8 The graded salience hypothesis

The graded salience hypothesis (GSH), which was developed and presented independently of the study of irony, is based on the idea that more salient meanings take precedence in interpretation, i.e., when a polysemous item is encountered during processing, the speaker processes the most salient meaning first, followed by the others (s). The concept of salience,' it goes without saying, is a major point of contention. Salience is a measure of how appealing something is:

1. a word's meaning conventionality (i.e. whether a word has that meaning by convention;

in other words, if it is listed in the lexicon as having that meaning),

2. familiarity (e.g. *freedom* is more familiar than *liberty),*
3. frequency (i.e. more frequent meanings are more salient), and
4. 'givenness status' in a linguistic co(n)text (Giora, 1997: 185).

2.3.9 Irony as Mention

We now *turn* to a family of theories that claim to have introduced a substantial change in the analysis of irony. We will review the basic theory and then address its offshoots and the attempts at empirical verification. The mention (or echoic mention) theories were initially offered in Sperber and Wilson's widely cited work on irony as mentioned (1981), which was somewhat amended in Sperber and Wilson's study on irony as mentioned (1981). (1986). Sperber and Wilson, for example, reject the concept of mention as being too narrow, replacing it with the concept of 'interpretation,' defined as "the use of a propositional form to represent not itself but some other propositional form it more or less closely resembles" (1986: 264n). They also point out that this terminological shift has no bearing on their interpretation of irony.

The concept of echoic utterance is provided as an example of someone else's thought being interpreted (e.g. reported speech). In the instance of reported speech, the significance of the utterance is determined by the speaker informing the listener that someone has stated X. The speaker notifies the hearer that he or she "has in mind" (1986: 238) X and has "a specific attitude toward it" in echoic utterances. As an example, consider the following:

Peter: The Joneses aren't coming to the party.

Mary: They aren't coming, hum. If that's true, we might invite the Smiths. (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 238)

3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data of this research consists of five public motivated speeches recited by public figures like the neurologist Liza Genova, Steve Murphy, Rudy Francisco, and Jim Carrey. The data will be analyzed to find out how the two tropes symbolism and irony are used to make extra emphasis effect on the audience. The researchers will find out if public figures prefer irony or symbolism to deliver their message. The full text will not be stated clearly in the paper, only extract that involve irony and symbolism will be mentioned. The links of videos of those speeches will be mentioned in the references page.

Concerning symbolism, in the first speech by Liza Ginova, the following extracts depict symbolism

Speech one by Liza Genova who delivered about the new ways of avoiding Alzheimer in A Ted Talk.

1. The janitor cells of our brains.
   the fist utterance involves the symbol of a janitor that refers to the cells that protect and clean the neurological synapses. It is personal symbolism.
2. Think of amyloid plaques as a lit match. The match sets fire to the forest
   The amyloid plaques are symbolized by a lit match to emphasize the danger in reaching the tipping point of getting Alzheimer. It is

conventional symbolism as the lit conventionally sets fire to the forest.

3. Let's picture your risk of Alzheimer's as a see-saw scale. Your scale arm has crashed to the floor.
   The risk of Alzheimer disease is symbolized as the see-saw scale the more you get symptoms, the more your scale gets down towards the ground. The type of symbolism here is personal
4. Through the recruitment of yet-undamaged pathways.
   In the fourth extract of the first speech symbolizes the neurological synapse as a path that is paved by experiencing a new thing. The personal symbolism is used here.
5. You want to pave new neural roads.
   Here again the speaker symbolizes the neural synapse as roads to make extra emphasis on the audience. Again the personal symbolism is used by the speaker

Speech Two by Rudy Francisco

This speech was delivered by Rudy Francisco to motivate people not to be pessimistic and to overcome their problems. He used symbolism a lot to make extra emphasis and effect on his audience, see the following utterances**.**

6. **Tell me the morning is a townhouse burning to the ground**.
   The speaker here symbolizes the beginning of the day in the early morning as burning house because the person will collapse his sleep, comfort and warmth to go to work. This type of symbolism used here is personal.
7. **tell me the snooze button is a fire extinguisher**.
   Here the speaker refers to fire extinguished as a symbol for snooze button, what a symbol. As if the alarm clock is as setting fire in the calm morning as the snooze button is just like the fire extinguished

that gives you another ten minutes to sleep. This type of symbolism is personal.

8. **Tell me the alarm clock stole the keys to your smile,**
   Rudy again uses another symbol to refer to the alarm clock, in this utterance he uses hidden thief as he stole the keys to your smile in the morning. All these symbols give extra effect on the audience to which the speech is delivered instead of using simple language. The type of symbolism is personal here.
9. **When your day is a museum of disappointments**
   The speaker here refers to day as museum, as the museum exhibit a lot of things that you may like or not, so the day also my show a series of disappointments. This is also personal symbolism.
10. **when it feels like God is a babysitter**
    This type of symbolism is conventional as the God in so many cultures and society is referred to as caregiver or a babysitter that takes care of us all the time.
11. **when you get punched in the esophagus by a fistful of life.**
    The life here is symbolized as an opponent who is trying to defeat you all the time. So when you have a big issue or a dilemma, it just like life has a fist and it punching you esophagus. This kind of symbolism is conventional.
12. **Remember that life is a gym membership with a really complicated cancellation policy.**
    The life here got another symbol that is a gym. But the policy of that gym is very complicated as we do not have the intention to join, and we do not have the decision to cancel that membership. The symbolism here is conventional because in most of the cultures and nations life is symbolized as a system, a wood, a gym or even a race that ends in death.

Speech three by Steve Harvey

He delivered his speech in his late show to motivate people to do extra work in order to improve their lives.

13. **We all live inside a bubble right this.**

    Steve Harvey use the symbol bubble to refer to life as we live in a very big bubble, by doing extra work, we actually give more air to our bubble. This kind of symbols is personal as it is related to a specific use by Steve.

14. **the Bible says he who loves to sleep and the folding of hands poverty was set upon you like a thief in the night.**

    Steve wonderfully refers to sleep as thief in the night. Id he said "don not sleep a lot in an ordinary way" it will not have that great influence on the audience, but by using this verse form the Bible, it has great emphasis. The type of symbolism is conventional as it is mentioned in the Bible.

Speech Four by Jim Carrey

Jim Carry, a Hollywood actor, delivered a very motivating speech in a graduation ceremony in one of the American Universities. His speech included several tropes one of them is symbolism, let's see some of them.

15. **you are the vanguard of knowledge and consciousness, a new wave in a vast ocean of possibilities.**

    Jim Carrey here symbolizes the person as vanguard for his knowledge and consciousness, the person is like a wave in the ocean of possibilities. The type of symbolism here is personal.

16. **Fear is going to be a player in your life.**

    Jim here uses the symbol player to refer to fear in the life of a person. If the person overcomes his fear, he is just doing like when he overcomes a player in a match or a game. Staying behind you fears will not make you proceed. The type of symbolism here is conventional as life is always symbolized as a game.

17. **hope is a beggar**

The final quote in this part is about hope, it is just like a beggar, why? Because when somebody hopes to do something, there is no guarantee to get that thing done but, faith is guaranteed as opposed to hope, as Jim said "**Hope goes through the fire but faith leaps over it",** this type of symbolism is personal

Surveying the four selected speeches, irony was rarely used because is a comic device that always used a long with satire, those two are not suitable to persuade people to do something. In all the four speeches , the researchers have found only three sentences that represent an irony and they are verbal irony.

Speech two by Rudy Francisco

18. Tell me that you're having a bad day.
19. Tell me about the traffic.
20. Tell me about your boss.
21. Tell me about the job you've been trying to quit for the past four years.

All the four sentence above are used ironically to deny the trivial problems of our lives that we think they are very big but they do not deserve to be on the ip of our tongues. Issues like quitting you boring job, traffic jam, suffering from you boss, all these problems look hard and unsolvable, but you compare you problems with someone lost his arm, or a woman that was assaulted, your issues will be trivial ones. This is why Rudy said " tell me that you're having a bad day, tell me about the traffic…..etc."

3.1 Results and Discussion

According to the data analyzed above, it can be concluded that symbolism is used heavily by different public speaker around the world like Liza Genova, Rudy Francisco, Steve Harvey and Jim Carry to persuade people to do good things or thing that they did not use to do them. All the extract show the use of the two types of symbolism: conventional and personal. Irony on the other hand has not been used much in those speeches because

irony has a comic effect and this will not be used to persuade somebody to do something. Let's see the frequency of the those two tropes.

No. of speech	Symbolism	Irony
Speech one	5 times: four personal, one conventional	None
Speech two	7 times: four personal, three conventional	4 times : all verbal irony
Speech three	2 times: one personal and one conventional	None
Speech Four	3 times: two personal, one conventional	None

Conclusion

Depending on the result of the data it can be concluded that most of the public speakers use figures of speech in order to persuade their audience to do certain things, actions, behaviour and the like, symbolism is highly used because it has a great power to influence the addressees. Unlike symbolism, irony is rarely used to in motivating speech due to its comic essence, so it will hinder people's motivation rather than uprising it. Both types of symbolism are used, personal and conventional, whereas irony is used only one in the verbal category.

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Links of Speeches

Speech one: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twG4mr6Jov0&t=580s

Speech two: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1E3Wr2AoEho&t=108s

Speech three: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYR-gxVcg6s

Speech four: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fo_lDTDSO-M