

Rhetoric of Silence in American Studies Retoryka ciszy - perspektywa amerykanistyczna

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On covert and overt sayers: A pragmatic-cognitive study into Barack Obama's presidential rhetoric of image construction and (de)legitimisation

O roli jawnych i ukrytych mówiących w kreowaniu wizerunku i legitymizacji: retoryka prezydencka Baracka Obamy z perspektywy pragmatyczno-kognitywnej

Abstract

This article aims to investigate narrative reports based on the use of reported speech frames from a pragmatic-cognitive perspective. As rhetorical means of image creation and (de)legitimisation, they are frequently employed to represent utterances that constitute integral elements of short narratives incorporated into American presidential speeches. This paper's main objective is to propose an original taxonomy of sayers, namely speakers of words reported (Halliday 1981, 1985; Vandelanotte 2006) in political discourse and to investigate their potential for self- and other-presentation and (de)legitimisation of one's stance, actions and decisions. The data used for illustrative purposes comprise extracts from Barack Obama's speeches delivered during his presidency (2009 and 2016) and have been selected from a bigger corpus of 125 presidential speeches by three American presidents: Barack Obama, Bill Clinton and John F. Kennedy. Findings in this study indicate that specific sayer types have greater potential for effective image formation and contribute to (de)legitimisation of events.

Celem badania, którego rezultaty omawia niniejszy artykuł, jest analiza zjawiska raportów narracyjnych (opartych o mowę zależną i niezależną) stosowanych w przemówieniach politycznych z perspektywy pragma-kognitywnej. Wspomniane struktury są często wykorzystywane dla przytoczenia wypowiedzi stanowiących integralną część krótkich form narracyjnych w amerykańskim dyskursie przemówień prezydenckich w celu kreowania wizerunku oraz sankcjonowania działań i decyzji politycznych. Głównym zadaniem artykułu jest zaproponowanie oryginalnej taksonomii mówiących (ang. sayer), tj. mówców (ang. speaker), którym przypisuje się przytaczaną wypowiedź (por. Halliday 1981, 1985; Vandelanotte 2006) oraz określenie potencjału wybranych kategorii mówiących w zakresie zarówno prezentacji wizerunku własnego i innych, jak i legitymizacji wydarzeń i opinii mówcy. Materiał badawczy wykorzystany w artykule w celu zilustrowania omawianych procesów językowych pochodzi z przemówień prezydenckich Baracka Obamy wygłoszonych w latach 2009–2016 i stanowi część korpusu składającego się z 125 przemówień trzech amerykańskich prezydentów: Baracka Obamy, Billa Clintonę oraz Johna Kennedy'ego.

Key words

discourse space, narrative report, presidential speech, rhetoric of image creation, sayer, short narrative, storytelling
przestrzeń dyskursu, raport narracyjny, przemówienia prezydenckie, retoryka wizerunku, mówiący, krótkie formy narracyjne, storytelling

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On covert and overt sayers: A pragmatic-cognitive study into Barack Obama's presidential rhetoric of image construction and (de)legitimisation

1. Introduction

Presidents as public speakers are often seen as individuals wielding a great amount of power to affect reality with their 'authoritative speech' (see e.g. Gal and Woolard 1995; Martín Rojo and van Dijk 1997; Duranti 2004; Philips 2004), which makes them 'more persuasive, more convincing and more attended to' (Philips 2004, 475) in their attempt to convince various audiences – local, national and international alike. In fact, people in general have a stronger inclination to accept narratives from authoritative figures as true, however, their eventual choice to embrace or reject a given story is based on a number of variables, including their attitude towards the speaker, their political leanings, experiences, as well as on whether 'the story connects to other stories already accepted as valid in the life of the group or individual' (Iversen 2014, 580).

The primary purpose of this article is to investigate how political speakers, specifically President Barack Obama, strategically employ narrative reports in short narratives. In this research, I have adopted a definition of narrative proposed by Abbott (2008, 13), to whom a *narrative* constitutes '[a] representation of an event or a series of events'. To clarify his stance, he draws a clear line between a mere description, as in 'My dog has fleas' and a narrative that recreates an event, as in 'My dog was bitten by a flea' (Abbott 2008, 13). Based on reported speech frames (Silverstein 1976; Bauman 1986; Clark and Gerrig 1990; Irvine 1996; Tannen 2006, Tannen 2007), which index utterances made by actors other than the current speaker or those the speaker made in different circumstances, narrative reports are deliberately incorporated into speeches, also as a meta-commentary on utterances represented. This is to say that reported speech frames serve as rhetorical means to persuade the manner in which the addressees can 'read what they're being told'

(Sacks 1992, 274) in a way intended by the speaker, for instance via the choice of specific verbs of speech in the narrating clause (underlined), e.g.

[1] I was a candidate for President that day, and some may recall I argued that our country had reached a tipping point [...]. (Barack Obama Corpus, henceforth BOC 01/07/2010)

Narrative reports are often employed in order to construct a positive image of self, often against an undermined image of other and, simultaneously, legitimise actions and events attributable to self or in-group members, and delegitimise those of out-group members. In discourse, these aims are normally achieved through the use of a variety of categories of *sayers*, namely original speakers of the words rendered via reported speech frames (Halliday, 1981, Halliday 1985; Vandelanotte 2006). This paper proposes a taxonomy of such *sayers* and explains their role in establishing a sense of belonging and inclusion, as well as dissociation and exclusion, which greatly contribute to image formation processes. In this study, reported speech frames have been selected strategically as rhetorical devices to foster image construction and (de)legitimisation. The research data selected comprise texts of presidential public addresses written to be delivered rather than transcripts of spoken discourse, as its purpose is to investigate the process of speech construction and strategic uses of narrative reports in designed political discourse. Therefore, a qualitative and quantitative analysis of collected research data is textually-oriented and the article concentrates on the manner in which speeches are constructed with a view to producing an impression of an improvised rather than a premeditated story, often in the form of a personal account of events or an anecdote.

1.1. Data and methodology

The data compiled to illustrate and discuss the potential of narrative reports come from a subcorpus of speeches delivered by Barack Obama. It constitutes a part of a bigger corpus of 125 political speeches, including John F. Kennedy's and Bill Clinton's presidential addresses to the nation, which exhibited the use of narrative reports in the service of image creation and (de)legitimisation. A sample of 50 such speeches delivered by Obama during his presidential tenures has been investigated, in which narrative reports are used to construct images of self and other. This article refers exclusively to presidential speeches by Obama delivered between 2008 and 2016, since this speaker uses the whole spectrum of representative *sayer* categories and types, while the remaining two speakers tend to rely on more formulaic choices. Barack Obama Corpus (henceforth BOC) amounts to over 64,000 words in the first term and over 69,000 words in the second. It comprises 470 instances of narrative reports incorporated into his speeches.

As for the methodology, this study relies on a selection of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approaches to discourse analysis: Chilton's (2004, 2010) cognitive model, which advances a model of conceptual Discourse Space (DS) based on geometrical approach to meaning and van Dijk's (1995) two basic macro strategies, i.e. positive self- and negative other-presentation, as well as (de)legitimisation (see Chilton 2004; Cap 2006, Cap 2013). It also draws on Fairclough's (1992, 1995) assumption that language is an inherent and defining element of social life that constitutes both an indication of and a reaction to social change.

The present study draws on a pragmatic-cognitive perspective on the analysis of narrative reports in political discourse. It adopts Chilton's (2004, 2010) model of a three-dimensional DS (cf. *story world* and *text world* in Fauconnier 1985 and Werth 1999, respectively), which rests on the assumption that geometrical reasoning is fundamental to conceptualisation of discourse. In his Discourse Space Theory (DST) (2004, 2010), Chilton advocates that comprehension of language and linguistic interaction rely upon the spatial nature of human conceptualisation of the world, which is projected on the way people integrate linguistic input with social contexts. This cognitive approach reflects Chilton's major assumptions, revised and elaborated on in Cap's (2006, 2013) thorough investigation of proximation strategies, as well as for the purposes of this study:

- a) entities (i.e. actors, events, etc.) represented are conceptually ‘positioned’ in relation to the current speaker in a three-dimensional space, represented via spatial, temporal and modal (S-T-M) axes (Figure 1.),
- b) the speaker is located ‘at the intersection [of three axes representing the three dimensions] that is conceptualized not only as [spatially] ‘here’ and [temporally] ‘now’ but also as [modally] ‘right’ and ‘good’ (Chilton 2004, 204-205), and
- c) the speaker relies on pre-existing common ground with the addressees and sharedness of experience.

These assumptions establish the speaker as a focal figure in what I henceforth refer to as *the Frame Discourse Space (FDS)* tied to him/her, in which other DSs may be embedded (see Figure 1.), thus constructing multi-layered representations.

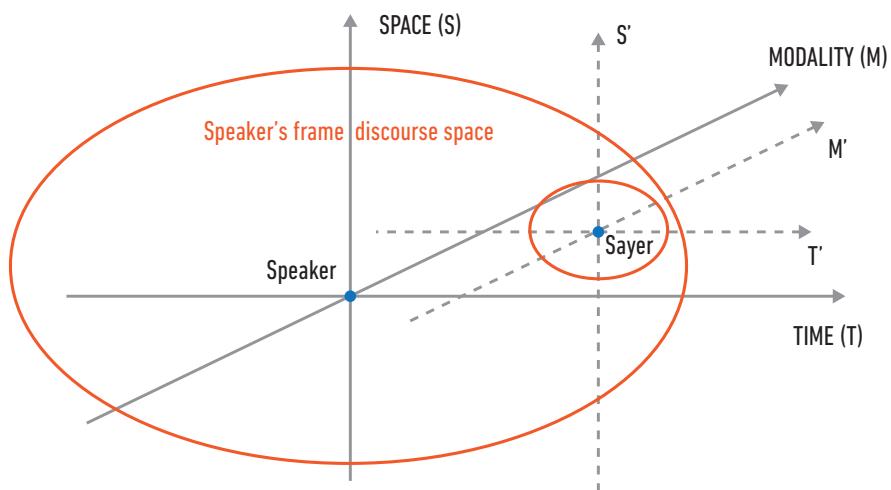


Figure 1. The sayer's embedded DS in a three-dimensional FDS.

In embedded DSs, the sayer's location is plotted on the basis of S-T-M coordinates (Chilton 2004, Chilton 2010), which gives rise to a new DS within the speaker's FDS (Figure 1).

Chilton's DST is perfectly adaptable for the purpose of narrative analysis in political speeches, since it 'incorporate[s] Fauconnier's idea of multiple cognitive spaces and referent mappings across such spaces' (Chilton 2010, 194), which can account for the use of multiple consciousnesses within the same or across distinct DSs, each with their respective focal figures and space-time-modality (S-T-M) coordinate systems. Cap's (2006, 4) approach to DSs, is ideally suited to reflect the opposition between in and outgroup members via the 'intrinsically spatial character' of DS. In both, the speaker is seen as 'positioned' in the 'deictic centre' (Chilton 2004) of a given representation, which Cap (2006, 5) treats as 'the anchor point for all conceptualisations'. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

2. Narrative reports and discourse spaces

Narrative reports, discursively represented via reported speech frames, are seen here as utterances produced by sayers, who are conceptually anchored in other than the current speaker's spatial and temporal location. In other words, their location is plotted in relation to distinct coordinates. The term 'represented' is used in this study much in the same sense as Hodges (2011, 11) applies the terms 'reshaped' and 'reworked' in saying that '[reported] text is inevitably reshaped in this process where it is not simply repeated, but effectively reworked', as Goffman (1974) sees reported text as 'recycled' or Tannen (2006) as 'reframed'. This research favours

the term ‘represent’ to stress deliberate exposition of (selected) information from its original context into a new context in an attempt to build up images of self and other, which may and often do contribute to (de)legitimisation.

Instances of narrative reports that are the primary focus of this research are integral elements of short narratives incorporated into presidential speeches. They constitute rhetorical devices employed with a view to constructing and fostering a positive image of self and a negative image of other and thus have power to (de)legitimize. In the direct representation below, the speaker’s perspective dominates over the representation of events reconstructed in the reporting clause (‘daughters [...] saying’), while the reported clause (‘Dad, you’re not as cool...’) is conceptually tied to the sayer’s DS:

[2] We know about the father who raised two remarkable, caring, beautiful daughters, even after they tried to discourage him from running for President, saying, ‘Dad, you’re not as cool as you think you are’. (BOC 02/04/2013)

In extract [2], the reporting clause is nested in a wider narrative context, where Obama is represented as a loving father who has good rapport with his daughters and to whom addressees may readily relate. From the cognitive perspective, in examples like extract [2], there are two independent DSs: one anchored to the speaker (Obama) and another to the sayers (daughters). Both these spaces are three-dimensional constructs which position discourse entities, e.g. actors involved, within FDS according to a set of spatial (e.g. ‘the (father)’, ‘they’), temporal (e.g. tense in ‘they tried to [...] saying’ and ‘you’re [...] as you think’) and modal (e.g. ‘remarkable, caring, beautiful daughters’, ‘Dad’) coordinates (see Chilton 2004; Cap 2006, Cap 2013), as indicated in Figure 2.

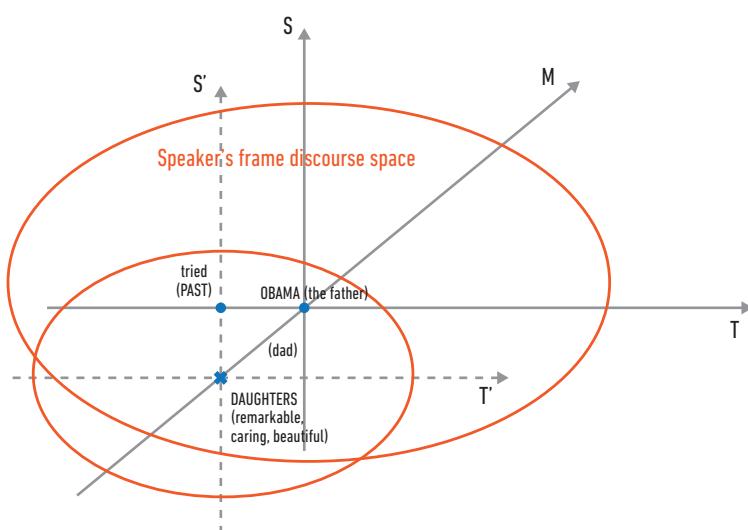


Figure 2. Visual representation of the speaker’s and the sayers’ DSs in extract [2].

What these DSs share is the modal axis along which in-group members are seen as belonging and associated, which is further enhanced by emotion-laden modal coordinates ‘dad’ and ‘remarkable, caring, beautiful’. Such representations increase the audience’s engagement in the narration, since they ‘portray action and dialogue as if they were occurring at the time of telling the story [,which] conveys a sense of immediacy’ (Kuo 2001, 183).

What occasionally occurs in narrative reports that extend the scope of a single representation is that the speaker may recreate an exchange and build on top of it:

[3] One of those times was Thursday, December 6, 1956. Pastor, you said you were a little older than me, so were you around at that point? You were three years old -- okay. I wasn't born yet.
(BOC 17/01/2010)

Obama’s aim is to reconstruct a conversation he had with another actor, present at the time of speech delivery, who, however, is no longer given voice. Thus he renders pastor’s words via an indirect speech frame (‘you were a little older than...’) and extends on it by posing a question (‘so were you around...?’) which he himself answers by impersonating the sayer’s turn (‘You were three...’), without actual contribution on the sayer’s part. In this sense, the answer reported on is fictive: it has not been uttered by the sayer but is constructed by the speaker within the embedded DS.

It is assumed here that narrative reports are integral and strategically employed parts of short narratives in speeches that ‘draw attention to the [...] context in which [sayers’ utterances] were spoken while reinterpreting them within the current interactional setting’ (Hodges 2011, 10). As such, they play a significant role ‘in establishing identities of individuals and groups’ (Hodges 2007, 68) indicating allies and adversaries and facilitating comprehension of relationships, identities and values that associate individuals and groups with or dissociate them from each other.

3. Typology of representations involving narrative reports

Narrative reports tend to be natural and integral parts of stories in general, as well as of those incorporated into political speeches. As such, they are powerful rhetorical devices that captivate addressees’ attention, help them make sense of occurring events and conceptually re-experience them, to various extent (see Gerrig 1993; McIntyre 2006), from within the DS.

Instances of narrative reports are common in political speeches, since they allow speakers to share personal experiences with the addressees in a more vivid manner (Riessman 1993; Ochs and Capps 2001). Events brought conceptually

closer to the addressees constitute strategic means of reducing distance between the speaker and the addressees, allowing them into the speaker's personal space and establishing common ground with a view to (de)legitimising particular actions and shaping in- and out-group relationships.

This paper makes a clear distinction between three major types of representations involving narrative reports employed for the purposes indicated above. In *indirect speech frames* (double underline), a perspective through which events are reconstructed is conceptually anchored to the current speaker's perspective 'here' and 'now':

[4] And it's said that Timothy [...] gave his life, walking toward the gunman, trying to calm him down. (BOC 18/02/2015)

Such representations rely on an indirect speech frame in the sense that it is the speaker's perspective exclusively that has been taken on the events represented, both in the reporting and in the reported clause. This means that the sayer's anchorage for conceptualisation is not activated at any point. In extract [4] above, for instance, Obama's perspective on events reconstructed dominates over the entire representation. *Direct speech frames*, by contrast, rely on direct reported speech frames (double underline) and on a number of distinct perspectives, of which one is tied to the speaker and (an)other to the sayer(s), i.e. the focal point for conceptualisation in the embedded DS, referentially independent of the FDS.

[5] I thought about the mom I met from suburban Chicago whose son was killed in a random shooting. And this mom told me, I hate it when people tell me that my son was in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was on his way to school. (BOC 08/04/2013)

Interestingly, applying Cap's Proximisation Theory (PT) (2006, 2013) in the analysis of this extract, the shift from 'the mum' to 'this mum' (underlined) in the reporting clause would be considered as an instance of spatial proximisation, as the mother mentioned is conceptually brought closer by the use of the anaphoric demonstrative 'this'. Through the use of representations based on direct speech frames, namely referentially different points of view employed in a single utterance, the speaker activates a distinct consciousness, i.e. the sayer, embedded in the speaker's FDS and has a fully-operational DS anchored to it.

The third type of representations proposed in this article, *mixed representations*, combines direct and indirect reported speech frames (double underline) in the same reported clause:

[6] There in that hall in Philadelphia, as they debated the Declaration, John Adams wrote to his beloved Abigail. He predicted that independence would be celebrated 'from one end of the continent to the other, from this time forward forever'. (BOC 06/07/2009)

Like in the case of direct speech frames, multiple perspectives are taken simultaneously on events represented in a given narrative representation of events, however, utterances are rendered in such a manner as to conflate direct and indirect reported speech frames in the reported clause (underlined). They combine direct and indirect speech in order to enable a momentary switch from the former to the latter and vice versa (see free indirect speech in e.g. Leech and Short 1981, Halliday 1994, Semino et al. 1997, Vandelanotte 2004, 2006, Halliday and Matthiessen 2004 as well as Semino and Short 2004). As for their functions, the analysis of my research data indicates that indirect and direct representations exhibit rather distinct qualities, which are brought together in the use of the mixed type. Indirect speech frames are employed in BOC to give an impression of a truthful account or a summary of events – a seemingly objective report on the part of a speaker. Although, in fact, such an account of events is subjective to a greater or lesser extent, the speaker is much more likely to be perceived as an individual in possession of and sharing his full knowledge of the events referred to. Direct reports, by contrast, create more vivid representations of events and utterances that can be conceptually (re)experienced by the addressees, who access and interpret incoming messages from within a DS which is operational at a given point. Mixed representations display potential to integrate the two qualities, as stories involving this category of narrative reports enable the speaker to represent reality through seemingly objective lens and simultaneously ‘step back into, reanimate, or reinhabit the skin of narrated personas’ (Koven 2002, 177), whereby new elaborate perspectives are foregrounded.

In BOC, there is a clear preference for direct representations (61% of all narrative representations), as the speaker aims to create an image of self as an approachable and likeable in-group member who shares a number of personal stories with the audience to maintain common ground, sense of belonging and sharedness within the in-group. Indirect representations (33%) are typically used with reference to political, administrative, corporate, etc. actors, who perform a specific role in the functioning of a country, which may add to positive image construction of the said country:

[7] And FDR knew this. In 1943 [...] he told the nation that the veterans of World War II would be treated differently. (BOC 03/08/2009)

Direct representations are primarily chosen in BOC when the sayer is a non-political actor, typically a representative of the audience (e.g. ‘Josh’ in extract [8]), selected details about whom are provided as an introduction to short narratives:

[8] Before he left for the mine on Monday, Josh wrote a letter for his girlfriend and young daughter. And in it, he said, ‘If anything happens to me, I’ll be looking down from heaven at you all’. (BOC 09/04/2010)

This introductory information contributes to Obama’s positive self-presentation, as the speaker constructs his image of a leader who is emotionally involved in the lives of American citizens. There are relatively few occurrences of mixed representations (6% of all 470 instances of narrative reports) and they are primarily employed for three purposes:

- a) as a comment on the message communicated via indirect reported speech which forms a part of the representation in the reported clause, as in:

[9] Patricia says she hopes enough women will become judges that ‘it’s not worth celebrating’ anymore. (BOC 20/11/2013)

- b) as a means of providing support in the form of a quote for an indirect rendering of the sayer’s utterances through the speaker’s frame perspective:

[10] It’s the story of the small business owner in California who wrote that as long as her employees depend on her, ‘I will not give up’. (BOC 08/05/2009)

- c) as a method of discursively stepping aside to make way for another voice of an actor, an eye witness or someone who has been more involved in events reconstructed:

[11] Joshua Wheeler’s sister says he was ‘exactly what was right about this world. He came from nothing and he really made something of himself’. (BOC 30/05/2016)

The three aforementioned types of narrative representations, based on indirect, direct and mixed speech frames, share several qualities. They are employed as strategic means of reducing distance between the speaker and the addressees and claiming common ground with a view to legitimising particular actions and events as well as increasing conceptual distance between ‘us’ and ‘them’, which may thus be used to delegitimise ‘their’ stance. The latter is by far less frequent in BOC, for Obama’s main objective during his presidency is to create a sense of unity within American society rather than divide. Thus, he renders his opponents’ and adversaries’ utterances exclusively at the time of the presidential campaign in 2012 (see extract [12]) and with reference to increased terrorist activities in the second term (see extract [13]):

[12] Anyway, it's great to be here this evening in the vast, magnificent Hilton ballroom -- or what Mitt Romney would call a little fixer-upper. (BOC 28/04/2012)

[13] That's why ISIL presumes to declare itself the 'Islamic State'. (BOC 18/02/2015)

Both instances above testify to the manner in which Obama represents out-group members: a personalized political opponent mentioned by his name in [12] and a labelled terrorist group in [13].

4. Taxonomy of sayers in narrative reports

Narrative reports are integral parts of narratives and constitute discursive means of rendering utterances via reported speech frames – indirect, direct or mixed – that constitute part of short narratives incorporated into another text, in this case presidential speeches. The linguistic relation between the speaker and the sayer in such reports (underlined throughout section 4) is fairly straightforward, especially when discussed in the light of the cognitive framework of DST. In indirect narrative reports, the perspective is anchored to FDS and represents events from the speaker's current perspective:

[14] [...] there was a woman there who worked for the airlines [...] she saw my name [...] and she asked if I was related to my father, who she had known. (BOC 25/02.2016)

The DS tied to the sayer (underlined) is conceptually not operational in the sense that all events and entities are represented from the speaker's anchor point. Both the reporting clause and the reported clause are tied to FDS. In other words, all indexical markers of reference in both the reporting clause (e.g. tense in 'asked' and deictic 'she') and the reported clause (e.g. deictic 'I' and 'my' and tense in 'was related') are interpretable in relation to the speaker's current perspective. In direct speech frames, by contrast, the sayer's anchorage is activated and fully-operational; thus, the sayer is given voice to represent events through their own perspective embedded in FDS:

[15] [...] Alan heard the news that we were going to offer a chance for folks like him to emerge from the shadows [...]. In that moment, Alan said, 'I felt the fear vanish. I felt accepted'. (BOC 29/01/2013)

The reported clause is anchored to the sayer's, not the speaker's DS. A switch from one independent perspective tied to the speaker to another, tied to the sayer, results in the addressees' conceptual shift of anchorage for conceptualisation, whereby they make sense of all reference markers used in the reported clause. Unlike the reporting clause ('Alan said'), the reported clause (underlined) is tied

to the sayer's perspective via deictic 'I' as well as tense in 'felt' interpretable in relation to the sayer's perspective, which locates the represented event according to a set of spatial and temporal coordinates in the embedded DS.

Finally, in mixed representations, the reporting clause is essentially tied to the speaker (single underline), however, the reported clause is partially anchored to the speaker's and partially to the sayer's DS (double underline):

[16] For Danny, said his fiancée, being in the Army, 'was his life'. (BOC 09/04/2013)

A switch between the frame and the embedded DSs is only evident in the written from of the speech and may be fully concealed when it is delivered orally. A big portion of the sayer's account is thus summarised and only the phrase which stresses a sense of patriotism and evokes emotions in the addressees is selected to be rendered as direct speech.

In the taxonomy of sayers proposed in this article, sayers fall under two major categories, *overt* and *covert*, as indicated in Figure 3.

	First-Person-Singular Sayer (Self Sayer)
	Second-Person Sayer (You Sayer)
Overt Sayers	Third-Person Sayer (Third-Party Sayer)
	First-Person-Plural Sayer (We Sayer)
	Third-Person-Plural Sayer (They Sayer)
	Metonymized Sayer
Covert Sayers	Passivized Sayer
	Implied Sayer

Figure 3. Overt and covert sayer categories.

Overt categories reveal the sayer's identity in an explicit manner, typically through the use of proper names and personal pronouns in the reporting clause, while covert categories do so only implicitly or conceal the sayer's identity fully. Both categories have been divided further to include more diversified sayer types.

4.1. Overt sayers

Overt sayers (OSays) are typically revealed in the reporting clause via proper names or pronominal reference to an actor mentioned elsewhere in the text. Third-person sayers are by far the most frequently employed sayer type in the overt category in BOC for the purpose of (de)legitimisation and image construction, as indicated in Table 1.

FIRST-PERSON-SINGULAR SAYER	118 (25%)
SECOND-PERSON SAYER	9 (2%)
THIRD-PERSON- SINGULAR SAYER	164 (35%)
FIRST-PERSON-PLURAL SAYER	33 (7%)
THIRD-PERSON-PLURAL SAYER	50 (11%)
TOTAL: 374	

Table 1. Occurrences of OSay types in BOC.

The speaker employs *third-person-singular* sayers to support his arguments by reporting on utterances made by: a) public figures held in much esteem who are important for the country's history (see extracts [6], [7], [17]), b) common people, whose stories are fragmentarily told to illustrate an argument the speaker is making (see extracts [4], [5], [8], [11]) and c) political opponents, mostly at the election time in 2012, between Obama's presidential terms, like in extract [18] below:

[17] As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. told Cesar Chavez once, we are 'brothers in the fight for equality'. (BOC 02/05.2013)

[18] In fact, I understand Governor Romney was so incensed he asked his staff if he could get some equal time on The Merv Griffin Show. (BOC 28/04/2012)

In extract [17], which employs a mixed speech frame, Obama's rendering of the words uttered by Martin Luther King, an in-group member held in much esteem, promotes a sense of unity and togetherness, which contribute to self-presentation strategies, while extract [18] does the contrary in the indirect representation – the third-person singular sayer, Obama's political opponent, has his image undermined via an indirect representation of words which testify to his weaker position as a presidential candidate.

The second sayer type that is most frequently used for the sake of image construction is the *self* sayer. Its communicative function boils down to two major purposes. First, acts of self-quotation aim to present the speaker's past arguments and observations as judicious and unchangeably valid, thus strengthening his image of a powerful and insightful leader, as in:

[19] Last summer, as Ebola spread in West Africa, [...] I said that fighting this disease had to be more than a national security priority, but an example of American leadership'. (BOC 11/02/2015)

In fact, this message is further strengthened by implicit evaluation of Obama's firm stance triggered by 'an example of American leadership'. Second, the use

of *self sayer* is frequently found in acts of emphasis on the illocutionary force of the reported clause, which is clearly conveyed via the choice of speech verbs in the reporting clause. In the literature, such instances have been referred to as double speech acts (see Searle and Vanderveken 1985), which is, however, a more encompassing term involving instances of reports on the sayer's thoughts and knowledge. In this study, such instances are referred to as *illocutionary representations*, of which extract [20] is an example:

[20] [...] let me say it as clearly as I can: The historic health care reform legislation that I signed into law does not – I repeat, does not – change your veterans benefits'. (BOC 02/08/2010)

Reporting clauses in the extract above serve as acts of saying and repetition, respectively, and stress the function of the utterances represented, specifying and drawing the addressees' attention to their illocutionary force. This is to say that in illocutionary usage of *self sayers* the reporting clause indicates, or comments on the illocutionary force of the reported clause. In total, BOC comprises 118 instances of illocutionary reports employed for self and other presentation, as well as (de) legitimisation, of which only 32 are not *self-sayer*-triggered. Their occurrences are notably frequent due to their capacity to draw and focus the addressees' attention on the utterance represented via the reporting clause and the high frequency is by no means characteristic of Obama's presidential speeches exclusively.

You sayer is fairly infrequent in BOC for at least one straightforward reason: the sayer may be, and frequently is physically present when their utterances are rendered as narrative reports, which makes such representations readily verifiable in terms of accuracy and trustworthiness, thus limiting the speaker's potential for context alteration. In the reporting clause, the subject slot is typically more complex, as it may either contain a vocative form of address followed by second-person pronoun, as in extract [3] mentioned above, or indexical 'you' as in the direct representation below:

[21] You're the men and women who will push this nation upwards [...] as you proudly sing: 'in heaven your eternal destiny was written by the finger of God'. (BOC 02/05/2013)

The extract above has the capacity to create a sense of togetherness and connectedness between audience members, on the one hand, and to set Obama slightly apart enhancing his leadership position as the president via the use of person deictic 'you', which is exclusive of the speaker. *We sayers* are fairly routinely used and seem to be the most frequent and effective strategy by which the speaker communicates and maintains inclusion, belonging and unity as primary means of constructing his image.

[22] We're telling America's scientists and engineers that if they assemble teams of the best minds in their fields [...], we'll fund the Apollo projects of our time. (BOC 25/01/2011)

[23] Now, all of us have moments when we look back and wonder, 'What the heck was I thinking?' (BOC 20/11/2013)

In these extracts, Obama constructs his own image as a regular in-group member (like in [23] on the one hand, and of a powerful leader (see extract [22]), on the other. The use of inclusive *we* sayer stresses the unity within the in-group as well as the sense of belonging and sharedness, while the use of *we* sayer exclusive of the addressees points at the speaker being a powerful leader and at his administration's role in leading the country.

There are instances of *first-person-plural* sayers in which the speaker represents utterances authored by himself and other in-group members via illocutionary representations in the very same manner as it is employed in the case of *self* sayer:

[24] [...] and we make excuses for inaction, and we say to ourselves, 'that's not my responsibility, there's nothing I can do.' (BOC 27.02.2013)

Here, the speaker lowers the attribution of responsibility by using the *we* sayer inclusive of himself, which helps establish further connectedness with the addressees. In building an image of a leader with the use of *third-person-plural* sayers, the speaker will also resort to drawing comparison between self and other or presenting positive image of self against a negative image of his political opponent(s) through exclusive reference promoting a sense of divide, e.g.:

[25] I know that political campaigns can sometimes seem small, even silly. And that provides plenty of fodder for the cynics who tell us that politics is nothing more than a contest of egos [...] (BOC 07/11/2012)

By dissociating 'the cynics' from in-group members in the indirect representation above, Obama locates himself and the addressees apart from these unidentified out-group members in the modal dimension of the DS, representing in-group members as 'good' and 'right' against 'bad' and 'wrong' opposition.

In BOC, *third-person-plural* sayers can and more often than not do have an inclusive quality (78% of all third-person-plural sayer occurrences), especially if they are referentially equivalent to audience members in general:

[26] That's why Democrats, Republicans, business leaders, and economists have already said that these cuts, known here in Washington [...] are a really bad idea. (BOC 12/02/2013)

The sayers enumerated in the reporting clause of the indirect representation above serve as examples of in-group members from all walks of life, which constitutes an inclusion-driven strategy that promotes association and belonging.

Generally, in the case of *we* and *they sayer* in BOC, the number of sayers that promote association over dissociation is far greater, with 57 inclusive references made against 25 exclusive references, of which only 18 (22%) truly enhance the dissociation between in and out group members (see Table 2.).

INCLUSIVE <i>WE SAYERS</i>	INCLUSIVE <i>THEY SAYERS</i>	EXCLUSIVE <i>WE SAYERS</i>	EXCLUSIVE <i>THEY SAYERS</i>
24 (29%)	33 (40%)	8 (9%)	18 (22%)
TOTAL: 83			

Table 2. Inclusive and exclusive use of *first-person-plural* and *third-person-plural* sayers.

Inclusive reference pertains to participants who belong to the in-group with the speaker, both in the case of *first* and *third-person plural sayers*. Exclusive reference, on the other hand, in the case of *we sayer* indicates the speaker as the leader rather than exclusively an American citizen, while in the case of *they sayer*, it points at out-group members.

As for their function, the overall sense of closeness visibly outweighs that of dissociation from them, as sayer types that serve the purpose of enhancing positive self-image (inclusive *self* and *they sayer*, as well as exclusive *we sayer*) comprise 78% of all *we* and *they sayer* uses in BOC. In fact, the exclusive *they sayers* are actors represented primarily in terms of labelled groups (like ‘cynics’) rather than specific individuals, which disperses responsibility among various impersonalized actors and enhances the existence of a vaguely defined ‘them’.

4.2. Covert sayers

By contrast to OSays, covert sayers (CSays) comprise categories of representations in which the sayer’s identity is either not revealed explicitly and may be arrived at through inference formation or remains fully undisclosed. In BOC, the occurrence of CSays is incomparably lower than the more canonical overt category, with 44 instances (9%) of *metonymized sayer*, 14 (3%) of *passivized sayer* and 38 (8%) of *implied sayer*, which amounts to 96 (20%) of all narrative reports found in the corpus.

The *metonymized sayer* is based on the use of metonymic reference to the sayer (frequently in terms of agent-outcome relation, e.g. words for the speaker). In the case of other reference, *metonymized sayers* are preferred whenever the speaker

obscures ‘their’ identity and solely enhances there being opposition rather than points at specific groups or individuals. Representations of opponents’ arguments serve the purpose of uniting in-group members via reference to an out-group and actions associated with them, against which they may stand and act:

[27] Now, in the past few days I've heard criticisms that this plan is somehow wanting, and these criticisms echo the very same failed economic theories that led us into this crisis in the first place. (BOC 04/02/2009)

Another important function this sayer type has is reference to evidence of various nature supporting the speaker’s arguments. Therefore ‘words’ and ‘messages’ uttered by frequently unnamed actors are foregrounded and focus is placed on common religious and cultural sources, such as ‘history’ (extract [28]):

[28] After all, the only way to truly solve this problem is for the Iranian government to make a decision to forsake nuclear weapons. That’s what history tells us. (BOC 04/03/2012)

There are seven instances of *metonymized* sayers in BOC whose only role is to provide a comment in the reporting clause on the illocutionary force (underlined) of the sayer’s words, like it is done via this mixed speech frame in the extract below:

[29] We have to be mindful of James Madison’s warning that ‘No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare’. (BOC 23/05/2013)

In extract [29], the sayer’s warning clearly indicates the illocutionary force of the reported clause. *Metonymized* sayers in short narratives occur most frequently in direct representations, with relatively few instances of the mixed type (see Table 3.).

INDIRECT SPEECH FRAME	13 (30%) (14% of all CSay types)
DIRECT SPEECH FRAME	27 (61%) (28% of all CSay types)
MIXED SPEECH FRAME	4 (9%) (4% of all CSay types)
TOTAL: 44	

Table 3. Frequency of use of *metonymized* sayers.

This disproportion most probably stems from the fact that direct representations, as most common across all three representation types, contribute to adding vividness to events represented discursively more than any of the two remaining ones. They exhibit the biggest potential to engage the addressees’ attention and evoke emotions, which seems to have a great persuasive capacity.

Passivized sayer, in which the reporting clause employs a passive verb of speech, is a relatively rare sayer type in BOC. It is typically employed to obscure the identity of the sayer and enhance the words reported and their illocutionary force over their author.

[30] [...] one was the family of Grace McDonald. [...] Grace was seven years old when she was struck down [...] I'm told she loved pink. She loved the beach. [...] (BOC 16/01/2013)

In the indirect representation above, the focus rests on the receiver of the message contained in the reported clause. Such a rendering of the sayer's utterance adds to image building strategies and the atmosphere of unity and closeness (as in extract [5]).

Extracts [30] and [5] provide the speaker with an opportunity to present himself as an in-group member who is confided in, which helps him construct an image of a trustworthy and sympathetic leader. Interestingly, in [30] the speaker employs a temporal shift from 'I was told' to 'I am told' proximising the events to the addressees temporally (see Cap 2006, Cap 2013) and giving the representation a more vivid character. The example in question presupposes that the account of events represented is now a shared experience that strengthens common ground between the speaker and the addressees.

As indicated in Table 4., there are relatively few instances of the passivized sayer in BOC:

INDIRECT SPEECH FRAME	6 (43%) (6% of all CSay types)
DIRECT SPEECH FRAME	8 (57%) (8% of all CSay types)
MIXED SPEECH FRAME	—
	TOTAL: 14

Table 4. Frequency of use of *passivized* sayers.

Surprisingly, they are, however, fairly diversified, as one instance of *passivized* sayer employs a participle clause (underlined) rather than a passive construction in the reporting clause, which contributes to the narrative quality of the events rendered via a direct speech frame in extract [31]:

[31] [...] what makes us America is our allegiance to an idea articulated in a declaration made more than two centuries ago: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal [...]' (BOC 21/01/2013)

Moreover, in four instances of passivized sayer use, there is an intentional lack of reference to the sayer of accusatory remarks directed at an in-group member (i.e. Danny in extract [32]):

[32] After being classified as an ‘enemy alien’, Danny joined a Japanese American unit that became one of the most decorated in World War II. (BOC 20/11/2013)

Concealing an out-group sayer’s identity in such a manner in the mixed representation above does not communicate the divide between in- and out-groups, but rather helps the speaker maintain a sense of overall belonging and sharedness.

Implied sayers, like the other two covert categories, conceal the sayer’s identity, which can be retrieved only through inference formation, in which case the speaker relies on knowledge and common ground he shares with the addressees. Thus, the sayer’s belonging to the in-group is emphasized. Importantly, there is a clear difference between the category in question and the *metonymized* sayer. In the case of metonymic uses, the domain is followed by a reporting verb (e.g. ‘history tells us’) or constitutes a comment on the illocutionary force of the reported clause (e.g. ‘a warning that’). *Implied* sayers, however, do not have the reporting verb slot with the exception of impersonalized contexts in the reporting clause (e.g. ‘to say that’) or imperative uses (e.g. ‘know this’), as well as forms of address in illocutionary representations:

[33] In fact, to every young person listening tonight who’s contemplating their career choice: If you want to make a difference in the life of our nation [...] – become a teacher. (BOC 25/01/2011)

Other, rare instances include conversation markers, such as ‘like’, ‘kind of’, ‘and then’ or ‘and suddenly’, as in the direct speech frame in extract [34] below:

[34] In high school, Diego found out that he was undocumented. Think about that. With all the stuff you’re already dealing with in high school and suddenly, “oh, man, really?” (BOC 11/06/2013)

Finally, in some cases of *implied* sayer use, there is no reporting clause that introduces the direct speech frame through which the sayer’s utterance is rendered:

[35] ‘Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart [...]. What Robert Kennedy understood [...] is that wisdom does not come from tragedy alone [...] (BOC 22/09/2013)

Table 5. presents distribution of the *implied* sayer in indirect and mixed representations compared to direct representations:

INDIRECT SPEECH FRAME	2 (5%) (2% of all CSay types)
DIRECT SPEECH FRAME	35 (92%) (37% of all CSay types)
MIXED SPEECH FRAME	1 (3%) (1% of all CSay types)
TOTAL: 38	

Table 4. Frequency of use of *implied* sayers.

This tendency reflects the general distribution pattern in which direct representations are approximately twice as frequently used as indirect, let alone mixed representations (6 per cent of all cases). The use of direct representations of utterances made by the *implied* sayer occur more frequently in the second presidential term. In the majority of cases, these numbers reflect the speaker's tendency to address various groups individually by pointing at them via address markers, like in extract [36]:

[36] And so to all the other peoples and governments who are watching today [...]: Know that America is a friend of each nation and every man [...] (BOC 20/01/2009)

In such instances of implied sayers as [36] above, the form of address takes over the role of the reporting clause, in which case there is no explicit reporting verb, which can be arrived at in the process of inference formation – ‘I am saying,’ which clearly categorises it as an illocutionary representation. This strategy contributes to the speaker’s construction of a sense of unity, as well as an individualistic treatment and awareness of various intragroup relations within the in-group, which aims to present the speaker as an attentive and responsive leader who takes interest in all group members.

5. Conclusions

This article aimed to investigate the use of narrative reports in presidential speeches and their potential for image construction and (de)legitimisation. It proposed an original taxonomy of sayers based on the form of the reporting clause and focused on qualitative and quantitative analysis of representative examples of reports employing various sayer types selected from a total of 470 instances found in BOC. The taxonomy was based on pragma-cognitive approaches, i.e. Chilton’s (2004, 2010) DST, Cap’s PT (2006, 2013), Fairclough’s (1992, 1995) view of social change as reflected in language and van Dijk’s (1995) macrostrategies of self and other presentation.

The taxonomy comprises two broad sayer types: overt (374 instances in BOC) and covert (96), which either reveal the sayer’s identity or conceal it, respectively.

Self-presentation practices employed in the data analysed involve positive images of all in-group members and of the speaker as the leader. Negative other-presentation concentrates on undermining the images of opponents and adversaries as individuals and labelled out-groups. In BOC, there is a clear preference for positive self-presentation and positive other-presentation of in-group members (86% of all narrative reports in BOC contribute to positive self-presentation (see Table 6.). Exclusive reference is limited to often unspecified opponents (e.g. ‘cynics’), representative out-groups (e.g. ISIL) and, rarely, specific individuals (e.g. ‘Mitt Romney’).

CSays											
METONYMIZED		IMPLIED				PASSIVIZED					
SP	OP	SP	OP	SP	OP	SP	OP	SP	OP		
37	7	32	6	12	2						
											SP TOTAL: 81
											OP TOTAL: 15

OSays											
SELF		YOU		THIRD-PARTY		WE		THEY			
SP	OP	SP	OP	SP	OP	SP	OP	SP	OP	SP	OP
106	12	9	-	152	12	26	7	33	17		
											SP TOTAL: 326
											OP TOTAL: 48

Table 6. Sayer type occurrences for self-presentation (SP) and other-presentation (OP) in BOC.

Obama’s overall goal is to construct a sense of unity, belonging and association, on the one hand, and an image of strong leadership rather than a sense of divide, clash and dissociation. In fact, instances of exclusive ‘them’ reference are many a time used against positive image of ‘us’ to enhance togetherness and values attributable to in-group members.

The division into OSays and CSays indicated that the former category is preferred for image construction in BOC and amounted to 80% of all occurrences of narrative reports. OSays contribute to positive presentation of self in majority of cases, especially via the use of *first-person-singular*, *first-person-plural* and *third-person-plural* sayers. These occurrences hints at a pattern for representation of self and other as well as (de)legitimisation, primarily via strategic use of the

sayer types indicated above, a tendency which resembles results from the other two subcorpora of speeches delivered by John F. Kennedy and Bill Clinton from the corpus which constitutes a basis for my research into narrative reports. As for negative other presentation, Obama signals dissociation especially via narrative reports including *third-person-plural* and *third-person-singular* sayers, which is, however, not reflected in the other subcorpora. Clearly, more investigation is indispensable, especially, but not exclusively, into negative image construction via narrative reports as rhetorical means that would lead to a more generic discussion of image creation and (de)legitimisation strategies in political discourse.

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