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ESTRATTO

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"LET US BE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY": POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND RHETORIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Abstract

I discorsi politici rappresentano un esempio di materiale autentico che può essere utilizzato in una classe di lingua. Gli studenti hanno l'opportunità di acquisire consapevolezza delle strutture linguistiche in un discorso e, contemporaneamente, riflettere su temi controversi e crearsi una propria opinione su questioni politiche e sociali, contribuendo così alla propria formazione ed educazione all'uguaglianza e alla democrazia. Dal punto di vista prettamente linguistico, l'analisi di un discorso politico, attraverso l'uso di task guidati, fornisce agli studenti la capacità di decodificare le varie figure retoriche tese ad abbellire il testo e renderlo accattivante e persuasivo. Allo stesso tempo, gli studenti acquisiscono consapevolezza e conoscenza di uno specifico genere testuale e ne interiorizzano le strutture lessico-grammaticali e pragmatiche.

There is a right and wrong side of history for the struggle for full equality of LGBT peoples. The arc of the universe is bending towards justice for LGBT peoples. Those people who maintain anti-LGBT positions are going to be caught behind the curve. And if history has taught us anything, those people who are so against gay people today will show up with their hats in their hands, repentant and asking for forgiveness for their sins. But why wait? Get on the right side of history – today.

1. Introduction

The introductory paragraph to this paper appears in the article *LGBT Rights – Getting On The Right Side of History*, in The

Huffington Post website, posted by Paul Brandeis Raushenbush, the Senior Religion Editor (see Webliography at the end of this paper). It reflects the widespread opinion in the USA on a particularly sensitive topic, that of the human rights of LGBT people, an initialism indicating the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender community. Students and young people in general should be taught and invited to reflect on certain topics and create their own opinion on controversial and divisive issues, which frequently produce tension and hostility. Nowadays, teachers and instructors have a highly responsible role in the field of education and their work certainly cannot be detached from the world events and transformations which are slowly and constantly changing our society. Language teachers in particular should exploit the very essence of teaching another language and another culture in order to enable students to learn from each other and reflect upon different viewpoints and contrasting beliefs and perspectives.

2. Political speeches as authentic texts and inductive learning

It is argued here that one of the ways in which students in a language classroom can approach certain topics is through analyzing authentic texts. As underlined by Dudley-Evans and St John in their study *Developments in English for Specific Purposes* (1998:27) "the exact meaning of authenticity has often been unclear" (1998:27). They explain that "Many have used it with reference to unsimplified or 'genuine' texts that were used in ESP materials but were originally written for purposes other than language teaching. Others have recognized that genuineness of the text does not guarantee relevance and that a text is only truly authentic if it is exploited in ways that reflect real world use. In other words, authenticity of purpose is as important as genuineness of text" (Dudley-Evans, St John 1998:27-28).

For the purpose of this study, we will adopt the basic and widespread notion of authentic materials as texts which were not created or edited expressly for language learners. In day to day teaching, authentic materials can help the planning and designing of more interesting and direct and relevant lessons. Using authentic materials may help students consolidate certain grammatical constructions or linguistic structures better and give them a sense of how a certain construct can be used in a specific context. For example, learning and teaching political discourse analysis gives students the opportunity to be engaged in the exploration

of written-to-be-spoken texts, such as political speeches. Direct hands-on analysis of discourse data found in these types of speeches encourages students to reflect upon and critically evaluate knowledge and awareness acquired in the study of the syntax and semantics of the English language. It also allows them to become aware of the rhetoric of certain types of texts.

The study of the structure of political texts can be seen to enrich students' understanding of how language works in society, of how meaning is constructed and negotiated in the various fields and contexts of social life. Additionally, through the observation of texts and interaction between teachers and students, discussions about emotionally charged social and political issues can still be constructive and beneficial to students' overall education. Education in a democracy requires teachers and students learn to deal actively and constructively with political and social differences. Therefore, the analysis of political speeches in a classroom can go beyond the simple investigation of keywords, catchy sentences and memorable statements and slogans and pursue instead the following objectives:

1) present students with authentic materials and exploit their various advantages in the language classroom;
2) promote inductive learning and discovery processes in a learner-centred environment;
3) develop students' knowledge of specific genres within political discourse and enhance their skills in analysing texts both linguistically and rhetorically;
4) give students the opportunity to discover a politician's position on certain controversial issues and learn how to agree with, contrast or criticize another person's standpoint;
5) raise students' awareness and consciousness on particular political and social issues in order to foster their civic responsibility as citizens.

The structure and the identifying features of political speeches can be taught to a class whose level of competence in the English language is at least B1 (CEF): the tasks presented here are thus created for students attending the last two years of high school and university students. As a matter of fact, the didactic relevance is very high in several university courses where communication, sociology or politics represent the basic disciplines in the curriculum.

3. Theoretical background

Political discourse represents the type of language used by and among politicians or public actors in general (i.e. members of government and opposition, members of parliament, candidates to general or local elections, party leaders) and the language used by media specialists to communicate with their peers and the public about politics. The specialized discourse of politics can be analysed from a variety of angles: morphosyntactic, textual and pragmatic, as well as semantic, functional and rhetorical. The most familiar approaches or traditions used to analyse political texts are Critical Discourse Analysis, Rhetoric, Pragmatics and Corpus Linguistics.

The theoretical background for this study is based on the investigations of the formal linguistic and rhetorical aspects of the language of politics as suggested by scholars such as Bollettieri Bosinelli (1986), Wilson (1990), Chilton and Schäffner (1997), Fairclough and Wodak (1997), Beard (2000), Partington (2003; 2006), and Halmari (2005). Furthermore, some works such as those by Charteris-Black (2004; 2005), De Landtsheer (2009), in addition, of course, to the seminal work by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have provided useful insight on the use of metaphors in political language. Useful insight was also gained from the analysis of discourse and genre conducted by Bax (2011) who dealt with political oratory at length.

One of the fundamental features of political discourse is its pragmatic nature: the *illocutionary* force of political language is designed to convince and persuade along with its *perlocutionary* force which seeks to trigger a certain type of behaviour or political action on the part of the audience. It can certainly be considered the most prototypical persuasive discourse and its persuasive function is achieved through the use of rhetorical devices and linguistic and discursive strategies. Bax (2011:164) explains that "(i)t is illuminating to see how a good orator can pull together a range of resources in order to achieve this function". The linguistic analysis of public political speeches cannot disregard the social and political context in which they are embedded and delivered: this can be seen to be particularly relevant to language classroom teaching.

4. Data and methodology

The speech under scrutiny here is the *"Remarks in Recognition of International Human Rights Day"*, delivered by the former American

Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton (in office from 2009 to 2012, during the first Obama administration) at the Palais des Nations, in Geneva, Switzerland, on December 6, 2011, easily retrievable from the USA government website http://www.state.gov. The transcript of the speech, which contains 3746 words, is subdivided into 37 paragraphs which make the text clearer and more comprehensible and students' activities and tasks more manageable and straightforward. The analysis and the activities proposed in the language classroom will focus on four fundamental aspects of political speeches:

1) overall organization
2) the pragmatic use of **pronouns**
3) the rhetorical employment of **three-part lists**
4) **metaphors.**

Despite the negative and pejorative connotation that rhetoric has acquired in the course of the centuries (Beard 2000:36; Mortara Garavelli 1988:7-8) nowadays many scholars contend that the different linguistic and rhetorical aspects that orators use to write their speeches can be skillfully and proficiently combined in various manners and consequently "(t)he overlapping of diverse rhetorical strategies creates a powerful interplay that ensures persuasive political communication" (Charteris-Black 2005:5). Rhetoric is firmly linked to discourse in the political arena and the protagonists within it. For centuries, politicians have been utilizing rhetorical strategies to make their points and to outline their positions on significant issues relevant to their countries. However, politics is just one of the numerous fields in which the communicative tools offered by modern rhetoric are utilized and codified. Rhetoric is all around us in conversation, in movies, in advertisements, in books, in body language, and in art. Teaching the connections between words and the world outside can challenge and engage students in powerful ways as they find out how communication works in the various context of life.

The speech under investigation is part of a *corpus* assembled by the author of this paper, including several speeches and remarks on women and human rights delivered by the former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during her tenure from 2009 to 2012. The corpus is the object of an ongoing research concerning the relationship between language, gender and power and the implications that the political rhetorical style and the discursive practices of a woman in politics can have in the context of human rights, gender inequality and women's empowerment

(Giordano 2012). However, this perspective and approach go beyond the aims of the present paper, which focuses on giving students the opportunity to reflect on certain controversial issues while studying and analysing the language of authentic texts.

5. Overall organization of speeches

First of all, students should be made aware of the overall organization of speeches. In order to do this, attention ought to be focused on the various sections of a speech, highlighting the particular composition and organization that political speeches tend to have. Known as *dispositio* in Latin, it identifies the structure of the speech and explains the rhetorical devices put into practice in writing the speech. The *dispositio* consists of four parts:

1) *exordium or proemium*
2) *narratio*
3) *argumentatio*
4) *epilogus* or *peroratio* or *conclusio* (Mortara Garavelli 1988:61).

A simpler distinction, which best fits the purpose of this study, is that provided by Bollettieri Bosinelli (1986:108-115) and which includes

1) opening
2) body
3) epilogue.

The opening is the initial part of the speech, the preamble or opening remarks, which includes the Latin *captatio benevolentiae*, i.e. a particular strategy used by the politician to obtain the audience's attention and favour, "to capture benevolence or ingratiate the audience" (Bollettieri Bosinelli 1986:108). The second part of the *dispositio*, or the body, is the central part of the speech, incorporating the *narratio* and the *argumentatio*, which are the most significant strategies used by politicians to illustrate their arguments. It is the part where a list of arguments can usually be found.

In the speech under examination here, after the Secretary of State runs through her introduction and greetings, she narrates the history of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in order to supply her audience with background knowledge and to provide scaffolding for the five issues she intends to deal with in the body of the speech, all forming

part of her arguments concerning the question of human rights for LGBT people and other marginalized communities. The final part, or epilogue, includes the final perorations of the speech where the politician usually utters memorable expressions calling the audience to action. For the greatest effect to be achieved, the key points and key passages in the speech will have to be crucially and skillfully arranged.

After introducing the overall organization in political speeches, an initial task designed to engage students is to identify the paragraphs in which the various parts of Hillary Clinton's speech are distributed. Different tasks can be devised depending on the students' level of competence. For an intermediate level class, the teacher might decide to provide tags or headings for the various paragraphs and students then discover which paragraph or sequence of paragraphs correspond to those headings or topics being dealt with (Task 1). With more proficient classes, students themselves could be asked to provide tags or headings for each one of the paragraphs, discovering and classifying the several topics dealt with in the paragraphs.

Task 1. Identify the paragraphs in which the various parts of the speech are distributed.

Dispositio	Headings/topics	Paragraph (s)
Opening	Introduction and salutation	1
	Presentation and history of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights	2, 3, 4, 5
	Statement of the purpose of the speech Introduction to the analysis of important issues related to the question of LGBT people's rights	6, 7, 8
Body	1st issue: some have suggested that gay rights and human rights are separate and distinct	9, 10, 11
	2nd issue: whether homosexuality arises from a particular part of the world	12, 13, 14
	3rd issue: people cite religious or cultural values as a reason to violate or not to protect the human rights of LGBT citizens	15, 16, 17
	4th issue: the prejudices convincing us that homosexuality is a disease and can bring about crime	18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23

	5th issue: the continued denial of rights to minorities who, left alone, will never be able to achieve political and social change	24, 25, 26, 27
	Invitation to support human rights: to the leaders of countries where there is discrimination, to people of all nations, to LGBT people worldwide	28, 29, 30
	Presentation of human rights policy within foreign policy issues in Obama administration; announcement of the Global Equality Fund launch	31, 32, 33
Epilogue	Peroration and Conclusions: Hillary R. Clinton pledges support for those who advocate human rights, for those who have started the march toward equality and justice; elicitation of response and action	34, 35, 36, 37

To move from one to another of the three major parts of a speech (i.e. opening, body, and epilogue), transition can be signalled through statements that summarize what has been said in the previous part and point the way to the next. Therefore, after identifying the various parts in the speech and the paragraphs devoted to the various topics dealt with, students can be engaged in a second task in which they are required to identify which sentences might represent an internal summary of previous topics or paragraph(s) and a transition to the following one.

Task 2. Identify the internal summaries and transitions from one part to another in the speech.

A	B
This weekend, we will celebrate Human Rights Day, the anniversary of one of the great accomplishments of the last century. (par. 1)	Transition from par. 1 to par. 2, from Salutation to History of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
In most cases, this progress was not easily won. People fought and organized and campaigned in public squares and private spaces to change not only laws, but hearts and minds. (par. 5)	Summary of History of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (par. 2, 3, 4, 5)
Today, I want to talk about the work we have left to do to protect one group of	Transition from History of the Universal Declaration of Human

people whose human rights are still denied in too many parts of the world today. (par. 6)	Rights to statement of purpose
So in that spirit, I want to talk about the difficult and important issues we must address together to reach a global consensus that recognizes the human rights of LGBT citizens everywhere. (par. 8)	**Transition** from statement of purpose to analysis of the 5 issues related to LGBT people's rights
The first issue... (par. 9) *The second issue...* (par. 12) *The third...* (par. 15) *The fourth issue...* (par. 18) *A fifth and final question...* (par. 24)	**Transition** from one issue to the following one.
Now, we must go further and work here and in every region of the world to galvanize more support for the human rights of the LGBT community... (par. 28)	**Transition** from the listing of issues to the invitation and request to support human rights
I know that the thoughts I've shared today involve questions on which opinions are still evolving. (...) We are called once more to make real the words of the Universal Declaration. Let us answer that call. (par. 37)	**Summary** of previous topics, transition to elicitation of response and action.

In **Task 2**, students can be given either column A or column B information and they then fill in the blanks with the missing information. In other words, the teacher indicates the various internal summaries or transitions from one part to another, with students having to provide the sentences taken from the paragraphs of the speech. Alternatively, the teacher opts for providing the example sentences, and students will have to decide whether they represent an internal summary or a transition from one topic to another.

6. Personal pronouns and their pragmatic function

Bax (2011:169) underlines that "(d)iscourse analysts have focussed frequently on the way in which pronouns are used in subtle ways to denote or enact power relations and solidarity relations". According to Wilson (1990:46) pronouns used in political discourse are primarily so-

ciolinguistic in nature as they reflect formality or informality, status, solidarity, power, class and sex. They also carry pragmatic implications since their use can reflect the speakers' intentions and the degree of their personal involvement and concern. Politicians tend to use them to

a) include themselves in a group or distance themselves and the audience, b) background or foreground responsibility and accountability for a certain policy, c) show personal participation in and commitment to a new political strategy or course of action.

As a prelude to looking further at the pragmatic functions that pronouns have, it could be useful to engage students in a quantitative investigation in order to ascertain frequency and occurrence of pronominal forms with a view to verifying their relevance in the text. In classes not properly equipped to conduct a *corpus* analysis or where the availability of technology is limited, a word processor is sufficient to obtain some revealing figures. It might seem easier to conduct a computer assisted analysis in a university context where students could be introduced to the use of software such as Wordsmith Tools to compute occurrences and frequencies and obtain keywords, concordances and collocations present in the texts (Milizia 2012). Nevertheless, in a school context where computers are sometimes provided for the students' use, several functions in a mere word processor can help instructors explain the basic ways of calculating occurrences and focus on the essential implications of this type of investigation.

In **Task 3**, students are required to calculate the occurrences and frequency of pronouns. The quantitative investigation shows that the forms *I, we, you* and *they* are the most frequently used pronouns in the speech. At this stage, students are not required to distinguish between the pronoun *you* in the singular or plural forms or used as a subject or as an object in the sentence, since that would entail scanning the text and carrying out a more qualitative analysis which could be carried out later. When looking at pronominal forms used by politicians, Wilson (1990:61) considers three main pragmatic functions:

1) **Self-referencing**, to mean the way in which speakers choose to portray themselves in relation to the topic of the speech and addressees, utilizing *I* or *we*;

2) **Relations of contrast**, to mean "the way in which speakers make use of the pronominal system to compare and contrast others on a negative/positive scale", utilizing for example *him* or *her* in reference to political opponents in a campaign or predecessors in office;

3) **Other Referencing**, to mean the use of third person pronouns to refer to individuals and groups who do not belong to the category of speaker or addressee.

Other authors have pointed out additional qualities of personal pronouns, such as their *subtlety* and *pervasiveness* in political speeches. Halmari (2005:126) explains that "(a)s a persuasive strategy, the choice of personal pronouns is a subtle and clever way to guide the thinking of the audience. It is a subtle strategy, but because of the frequency of occurrence of personal pronouns, they successfully penetrate throughout the speech". Additionally, other scholars identify *positioning* as one of their main characteristics and purposes in a speech: according to Chilton and Schäffner, "pronouns and the meaning associated with them give a kind of map of the socio-political relationships implicit in a discourse"; since they "have a special function in producing a social and political *space* in which the speaker, the audience and others are *positioned*" (1997:216).

Task 3. Use the "Find" function in your word processor to find out which pronouns are most used in the speech and calculate their frequency of occurrence in the text.

Pronouns		Frequency
1st person singular	I	16
	me	3
	Myself	2
	Mine	0
1st person plural	We	55
	Us	8
	Ourselves	1
	Ours	0
2nd person singular and plural	you (subject)	17
	you (object)	
	yourself/yourselves	0
	Yours	0

	he/she	2
3rd person singular	him/her	0
	himself/herself	0
	his/hers	0
3rd person plural	They	37
	Them	4
	Themselves	2
	Theirs	0

Self referencing: The 1st person singular forms 'I/me/myself/mine' and plural forms 'we/us/ourselves/ours'

The first person singular forms *I/me/myself/mine* indicate the clear personal involvement of the speaker. When leaders use this *self-mention* strategy in a speech, their aim is to strengthen the image they want to give of themselves as someone determined and resolute, capable of leading the country or a party, and fully able to tackle any political or social issues that arise. Nevertheless, the frequent use of *I/me/myself/mine* can have negative implications when things go wrong, resulting in the loss of the speaker's credibility and doubts concerning his/her reliability. In **Task 4** students are asked to spot the various occurrences of the pronominal forms *I/me/myself/mine* in the text.

Task 4. Self-referencing: Identify 1st person singular pronouns *I/me/myself/mine* and their pragmatic use in the speech under scrutiny:

- I want to thank… (par. 1)
- Today I want to talk about… (par. 6)
- I am talking about gay, lesbian… I speak about this subject… (par. 7)
- Now, raising this issue, I know, is sensitive… (par. 8)
- So I come before you… I want to talk (par. 8)
- How would it feel if it were a crime to love the person I love? How would it feel to be discriminated against about **myself** that I cannot change? (par. 23)
- I ask you to consider this… I am not saying that (par. 28)
- I say supporting human rights… (par. 29)
- I am also pleased to announce… (par. 33)

- Many people including **myself**… (par. 34)
- And I quote… (par. 35)
- I know that the thoughts I've shared today involve questions… I come before you with great hope and confidence (par. 37)

After completing Task 4, students can be asked to consider the significance of certain results in their findings. For example, the findings reveal the use of the pronoun *I* to introduce certain types of hedging phrases or expressions such as "*I am talking about*", "*I speak about this subject*", "*I ask you to consider this*" before proceeding with more authoritative and resolute statements (that would sound too abrupt without a soft introduction). This might be indicative of Hillary R. Clinton's desire to establish a constructive, sympathetic and equal relationship with her audience, rather than asserting the superiority and authority of her position. The expressions "*I know*" and "*I want to talk about*" humbly introduce controversial and sensitive topics such as those concerning LGBT community's rights, and enable Hillary R. Clinton to seek support and sympathy from the audience in order to embark upon solving problems together. This is evident from the sentence "*So I come here before you with respect, understanding, and humility*" in the paragraph below:

Now, raising this issue, I know, is sensitive for many people and that the obstacles standing in the way of protecting the human rights of LGBT people rest on deeply held personal, political, cultural, and religious beliefs. So I come here before you with respect, understanding, and humility. Even though progress on this front is not easy, we cannot delay acting. So in that spirit, I want to talk about the difficult and important issues we must address together to reach a global consensus that recognizes the human rights of LGBT citizens everywhere. (par. 8)

The advantage of using the plural pronoun forms *we/us/ourselves/ours* is that responsibility and blame can be shared when something goes wrong or when a given policy is not working properly. First person plural pronouns are also used by politicians when they want to show that they are in touch with the citizens or with their electors, asking for their approval and appealing to their sense of solidarity in certain situations.

However, in political language the pronoun *we* can generate a variety of possible interpretations concerning who the intended referents might be. Its use in political language has been extensively investigated in the context of Critical Discourse Analysis and in particular by Fairclough and Wodak (1997:274), who distinguish between an *inclusive we*

(including the audience and the general population, *we human beings, we members of this society*) and an *exclusive we* (including the speaker but excluding the listener, i.e. *we who govern this country*). Students must be made aware of the fact that the referents of the pronoun *we* can change and accordingly it constitutes a key persuasive resource in political discourse. The identity of *we* is often vague and only a thorough and intensive reading of the speech can help them distinguish between the use of *inclusive we* and *exclusive we*, as described in **Task 5**.

Task 5. Self-referencing: Identify 1ˢᵗ person plural pronouns *we/us/ourselves/ ours*. Make a distinction between the "inclusive we" and the "exclusive we" and find out who the various referents are.

Inclusive *we*

<u>WE THE HUMAN POPULATION</u>
- We will celebrate Human Rights Day... (par. 1)
- we would prevent future atrocities... (par. 2)
- what country we live in, who **our** leaders are, ... (par. 3)
- we have left to do to protect... (par. 6)
- we cannot delay acting... we must address together (par. 8)
- We have come to recognize... (par. 9)
- we understood that we were honoring... (par. 10)
- No matter what we look like, where we come... (par. 11)
- whether we know it, or whether we... (par. 12)
- we came to learn that no practice... (par. 16)
- to who we are as people... the bonds of love and family that we forge... (par. 17)
- about how we make progress... (par. 18)
- while we are each free to believe whatever we choose, we cannot do... (par. 19)
- We need to ask ourselves... applies to all of us as we reflect... (par. 23)
- how we do our part... we know the names of brave... we will never know... (par. 24)
- when we see denials... when we do act, we send a powerful moral message (par. 26)
- We know the road ahead... as we have devoted... (par. 34)
- We are called once more to make real... the work we do today... we will travel it successfully together (par. 37)

- <u>WE AMERICANS</u>
- So we, like all nations, have more work to do to protect human rights at home (par. 7)
- ... we saw how it strengthened our social fabric in ways that... (par. 22)
- We fought a brutal civil war over slavery (par. 36)

Exclusive *we*

<u>WE WHO GOVERN (THIS COUNTRY)</u>
- A step toward what we hope will be the creation of a special rapporteur... (par. 27)
- In Washington, we have created a task force at the State Department... we will provide every embassy with a toolkit... we have created a program that offers... (par. 31)
- we are launching a new Global Equality Fund... We have committed more than... we have hope that others will join us... (par. 33)

A sense of inclusiveness and solidarity is pursued in the following paragraphs where the *inclusive we* is utilized:

[...] It does not matter what country we live in, who our leaders are, or even who we are. Because we are human, we therefore have rights. And because we have rights, governments are bound to protect them. (par. 3)

[...] Even though progress on this front is not easy, we cannot delay acting. So in that spirit, I want to talk about the difficult and important issues we must address together to reach a global consensus that recognizes the human rights of LGBT citizens everywhere. (par. 8)

[...] No matter what we look like, where we come from, or who we are, we are all equally entitled to our human rights and dignity. (par. 11)

The Secretary of State employs a personal, informal tone here along with the *inclusive we* to create an immediate bond with the audience. Her intention is to convince them of her arguments by making them feel part of the general picture and of the common plan for having human rights of LGBT citizens recognized everywhere in the world.

Conversely, students will recognize the different use of *we*, an *exclusive we* this time, in the following paragraph where Hillary R. Clinton is listing the policies the Obama administration is undertaking as

part of its human rights policy and as a priority of American foreign policy. In this case, she utilizes the *exclusive we* to include herself and the government but not the listeners/audience:

> I am also pleased to announce that we are launching a new Global Equality Fund that will support the work of civil society organizations working on these issues around the world. (...) We have committed more than $3 million to start this fund, and we have hope that others will join us in supporting it. (par. 33)

Other referencing: 3rd person plural pronoun 'they'

Students' attention can then be focused on the use of the third person plural *they*, which "is often used in politics to define 'the other', the political or military enemy, the opposite party in an electoral campaign, the opposition in a government, the guilty party to be blamed for some reprehensible, culpable action" (Giordano 2012:98). It can also be used as a distancing strategy, when the speakers try to distance themselves and the government they are representing from other purportedly blameworthy groups. This is not the case in the present speech. As will be seen in **Task 6**, the pronoun *they* indicates a number of referents in the speech and students will be guided in the identification and classification of these. As established in Task 3, there are 37 occurrences of the pronoun *they*: it is first used to refer to the delegates from six continents who gathered together between 1947 and 1948 to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, subsequently ratified on December 10th, 1948. Later in the speech the pronoun *they* is used to refer to the invisible minority, the LGBT people who are victims of violence and abuse the world over and who are experiencing the same level of discrimination that other marginalized groups (such as women and the racial or religious minorities cited in the speech) are subjected to on a daily basis.

Task 6. Other Referencing: identify the various occurrences of the 3rd person plural pronoun *they* and find the referents in the speech.

The pronoun *they* refers to: ...
- *example* (par. ?)
- ...

The pronoun *they* refers to: <u>DELEGATES</u>
- They discussed, they wrote, they revisited... they incorporated suggestions and revisions (par. 2)

- **They** also weren't thinking about how it applied to indigenous people or children... (par. 9)
-

- The pronoun *they* refers to: <u>LGBT people</u>
- **They** are an invisible minority. **They** are arrested, beaten, terrorized... **They** are denied opportunities... forced to suppress or deny who **they** are... (par. 6)
- because **they** do not conform... when **they** are forced... because **they** are gay... (par. 11)
- **they** are all ages... **they** are doctors... **they** are our family... (par. 12)
- **they** can and **they** do... (commit crimes) and when **they** do **they** should be held accountable... (par. 28)
- the treatment **they** receive every day... the schools **they** attend... and offices where **they** work... (par. 29)

The pronoun *they* refers to: <u>ABUSERS</u>
- ... that sends the message to those deniers and abusers that **they** won't suffer any consequences for their actions, and so **they** carry on (par. 26)

The pronoun *they* refers to: <u>MARGINALIZED GROUPS</u>
- members of these groups... **they** share a common humanity... (par. 9)
- whether **they** are women, racial, or religious minorities... (par. 14)

1.1 *The 2nd person pronoun 'you'*

As stated before, some paragraphs in the speech are intended as an invitation and exhortation to support respect for human rights. Hillary R. Clinton directly addresses three categories of people, the leader of the countries "*where people are jailed, beaten, or executed for being gay*" (par. 28), the people of all nations and then the LGBT men and women worldwide. Therefore, the 2nd person plural pronoun *you* has three different referents to be found in the three subsequent paragraphs, i.e. 28, 29 and 30, as students will discover when engaged in **Task 7**.

Task 7. Is any other type of pronoun used in the speech? Are there any occurrences of the 2nd person pronoun *you*? What or who do they refer to?

The pronoun *you* refers to: LEADERS OF COUNTRIES
- To the leaders of those countries where people are jailed, beaten, or executed for being gay, I ask you to consider this: leadership means... (par. 28)

The pronoun *you* refers to: PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONS
- the actions you take, the ideals that you advocate, can determine whether human rights flourish where you are (par. 29)

The pronoun *you* refers to: LGBT PEOPLE
- Wherever you live and whatever the circumstances of your life, whether you are connected... please know that you are not alone... People around the globe are working hard to support you.... And you have an ally in the United States of America and you have millions of friends among the American people. (par. 30)

7. *Repetition and three-part lists*

Repetition is one of the most common strategies in political discourse since it draws listeners' or readers' attention towards certain structures, topics and concepts that the speaker wants to raise awareness of and clarify. Quite simply, repetition is an effective means of aiding memorization and enables the speaker to capture the audience's attention, plead for their support and elicit their political participation and active response. One of the ways to achieve this is the use of lists, in particular the *three-part list* or *tricolon*, which serves as a 'claptrap' (following Atkinson 1984, cited by Charteris-Black 2005:5), prompting applause and approval from the audience. In his work *The Linguistics of Political Argument*, Partington states that "(t)wo occurrences of a phrase structure are sufficient to set up an expectation that there will be a third. The slight change renders the third item emphatic (and probably, more than incidentally, highlights the speaker's own rhetorical skill)" (2003:215).

In class students will most likely read the speech, but if teachers have the opportunity to have them listen to it (for example, through videos available on the web), they should focus attention on the high impact the three-part structure acquires in spoken and *written-to-be-spoken* texts, as political speeches are. By stressing and reiterating key concepts and ideas in groups of three, tricolons have the effect of embellishing

even superficial linguistic structures through the use of *rhyme* and *alliteration* that provide rhythm and thus aid memorization. Phonetic features and sonic effects very often contribute to delivering the message both effectively and agreeably; statements presented in groups of three are inclined to make speakers' arguments particularly appealing and attractive. As explained by Bax, "although oratory appears to consist of one lengthy 'turn' from only one speaker, it relies for its success on its ability to interact with the audience" (2011:178).

Task 8 guides students in their search for examples of this specific feature of public oratory, often called "list of three" or "rule of three" (Bax 2011:173). The lists they are required to look for in the texts should fall into one of the categories provided: they can be lists of nouns, verbs, adjectives or adjective-noun combinations; they might be parallelisms of similar syntactic structures such as subject + verb. Students could also look for *binomials*, i.e. two or more words or phrases (that sometimes belong to the same grammatical category) having some semantic relationship and joined by *and* or *or* (Partington 2006:43). *Anaphora* and *epiphora* are also commonly used in speeches. Therefore, students may have the task of identifying repeated sequence of words that may be at the beginning or at the end of subsequent clauses or sentences in the speech under analysis. The effect to be noticed is how messages are conveyed and audiences convinced of a point of view and how, at the same time, the overall impact influences the listening audience on a subconscious level.

Task 8. Identify the various types of lists and their pragmatic use in the speech in question.

a) Lists of NOUNS

- Governments, organizations, individuals (par. 1)
- not only laws, but hearts and minds (par. 5)
- that commitment, that reality and progress for all people (par. 6)
- with respect, understanding and humility (par. 8)

a) Lists of VERBS

- They revisited, revised, rewrote (par. 1)
- have been repealed, have been abolished, has been secured (par. 4)
- people fought and organized and campaigned (par. 5)

b) ADJECTIVES and ADJECTIVE-NOUN combinations

- in the political, economic and social lives (par. 5)
  all ages, all races, all faiths (par. 12)
- they are our family, our friends, and our neighbors (par. 12)
- for our people, our nations, and future generations (par. 37)

c) SYNTACTIC PARALLELISMS

- they discussed, they wrote, they revisited (par. 2)
- What we look like, where we come from, who we are (par. 11)

d) THREE-PHRASE LISTS

- the full measure of liberty, the full experience of dignity, the full benefits of humanity (par. 4)

e) Other examples of lists:

BINOMIALS
- honor and pleasure (par. 2)
- humanity and dignity (par. 2)
- suggestions and revisions (par. 2)
- a simple, powerful idea (par. 3)
- equality and dignity (par. 7)
- violence and harassment (par. 7)
- bullying and exclusion (par. 7)
- difficult and important issues (par. 8)
- their families and communities (par. 16)
- fears and concerns (par. 18)
- freedom of expression and freedom of belief (par. 19)
- tolerance and respect (par. 23)
- denials and abuses (par. 26)
- deniers and abusers (par. 26)
- isolated and vulnerable (par. 30)
- injustices and dangers (par. 30)
- brave and dedicated (par. 34)
- dialogues and debates (par. 34)
- personal and professional relationships (par. 34)
- intolerance and inequality (par. 36)
- great hope and confidence (par. 36)
- ...

CONTRASTIVE PAIRS

- public squares and private spaces (par. 5)

LONGER LISTS

- they are arrested, beaten, terrorized, even executed (par. 6)
- racial, religious, tribal or ethnic minority (par. 10)
- they are doctors and teachers, farmers and bankers, soldiers and athletes (par. 12)
- the rights of women, indigenous peoples, racial minorities, children, people with disabilities, immigrants, workers, and on and on (par. 36)

ANAPHORA and EPIPHORA

- it is a violation of human rights (par. 11)
- because they are gay... because they are gay... because they are gay (par. 11)
- Leadership, by definition, means being out in front of your people... It means standing up for the dignity of all your citizens... It also means ensuring that all citizens are treated as equals... (par. 28)

The first two examples of *anaphora* and *epiphora* (or *epistrophe*) in Task 8 draw students attention to paragraph 11 in the speech, which is an outstanding example of rhetorical style, where the "litany" model is used (Giordano 2012:120-121) to list the acts of violence perpetrated against people because of their sexual orientation. The *anaphoric* structure *"it is a violation of human rights"* is repeated four times and the *epiphora "because they are gay"* is repeated three times giving poignant emphasis to Hillary R. Clinton's stance on this controversial issue expressed through didactic poetry, which is both convincing and easy-to-be-remembered:

It is violation of human rights when people are beaten or killed because of their sexual orientation, or because they do not conform to cultural norms about how men and women should look or behave. **It is a violation of human rights** when governments declare it illegal to be gay, or allow those who harm gay people to go unpunished. **It is a violation of human rights** when lesbian or transgendered women are subjected to so-called corrective rape, or forcibly subjected to hormone treatments, or when people are murdered after public calls for violence toward gays, or when they are forced to flee their nations and seek asylum in other lands to save their lives. And it is a violation of human rights when life-saving care is wi-

theld from people because they are gay, or equal access to justice is denied to people because they are gay, or public spaces are out of bounds to people because they are gay. No matter what we look like, where we come from, or who we are, we are all equally entitled to our human rights and dignity. (par. 11)

8. Political metaphors

In a language classroom, some students may view metaphor as something confined to the language of poetry and literature. However, the medium of political speeches provides numerous clear examples of how this figure of speech is also used widely in political discourse, as detailed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who noted how metaphor pervades everyday life, language and even people's thoughts and actions. Understanding expressions such as *conceptual metaphor* or *conceptual domain* might prove a bit difficult for the average student in a language classroom, but teachers can certainly focus on familiar metaphorical expressions used in political speeches which are also common in the everyday language. Students can thus observe how metaphors very often enable speakers to heighten the eloquence of their intended messages. They can discover that certain key points are clarified by creating a link between the experience from a *source domain* (the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions) and the *target domain* (which is so implicitly understood thanks to the source domain). The resulting effect is that the latter becomes less abstract, more concrete and more comprehensible. Put simply, metaphors facilitate comprehension by translating abstract notions and concepts into concrete ones.

Delivered before hundreds of heads of state and representatives of many countries of the world, the speech being analysed was certainly designed to uphold the Secretary of State's personal vision and the American government's position on the controversial issue of the LGBT community's human rights; but it also aimed to win as much support as possible from the audience present and from the general public worldwide. To this end, the speech undoubtedly strived to take advantage of emotional appeal in order to gain the audience's full attention, motivate them and galvanise them into action. Metaphors are unquestionably effective at enabling people to gain a better understanding of certain political ideologies or social values, which may otherwise be complicated, hard to grasp, and unlikely to be accepted and shared. Metaphors used in politics belong to different semantic fields:

science and medicine, religion, sport, war, journeys, catastrophes, good and evil, old and new. De Landtsheer (2009:59-78) distinguishes between lower power metaphors, such as those belonging to the semantic fields of *everyday life*, *family*, *space*, *path*, *nature* and *animals*, and higher power metaphors, such as those evoking *disaster*, *violence*, *war*, *sport*, *drama*, *disease* and *death*. De Landtsheer asserts that lower power metaphors tend to be favoured by speakers opting to focus on political and ideological content, whereas the higher power metaphors are preferred by speakers seeking to achieve a hard-hitting, persuasive style. No matter what semantic field is involved, metaphors serve to transmit ideology by appealing to our emotions: metaphors are thus seen as "an important means of conceptualizing political issues and in constructing world views" (Charteris-Black 2004:47-48).

Prior to embarking on their hands-on heuristic discovery process of metaphors in the speech, students should be instructed on precisely what the fundamental characteristics of the most frequently used political metaphors are. These would include *silence*, *journey*, *barrier*, *war* metaphors and the metaphors that juxtapose *positive vs negative* or *good vs evil*.

The *metaphor of silence* alludes to *exclusion* from dominant cultural and disciplinary traditions. Silence signals an absence of voice and therefore sound; it epitomises non-participation, a lack of importance and a lack of power. Consequently, *silencing* is an obvious metaphor to use in reference to *censorship*, *discrimination* and *marginalization*. By contrast, *voice* is associated with speech, but also *inclusion*, strength and resolution to defend one's own rights.

The *journey* metaphor is often employed to symbolize a trail that politicians or presidents go along together with their people, striving forwards in the same direction. In such metaphors, people are invited to participate actively in the journey and to contribute to the development of the country, to the success of a certain policy, or to the achievement of justice, equality and progress. Political activity itself is seen as a journey and the personal path undertaken by the politician or by a candidate is very often concurrent with a more general path travelled along by the people and their country. Therefore, personal achievements or successes, or even a personal struggle or effort, are frequently viewed as a "we've done this together" achievement, a collective effort to get through tough periods and finally attain success and progress.

Closely linked to the journey metaphor is the *barrier* metaphor, since any journey may inevitably be stopped or delayed by impediments, obstacles or whatever complications might hinder advancement

and progress. In order to reach the common destination, the difficulties and burdens must be borne together. There must be solidarity and unity, since hardships are to be expected even if there is a strong will to go through adversities collectively, as one, to achieve any given goals and objectives which are commonly considered worthwhile. Themes such as solidarity, union, participation and progress are frequently used in American political discourse along with the ideas of nation, government, party, community, and family. As Secretary of State Clinton says in paragraph 24 of the *Remarks in Recognition of International Human Rights*, "*Acting alone, minorities can never achieve the majorities necessary for political change*". It can therefore be seen that American political ideology is based on the traditional values of American society, i.e. hope, loyalty, responsibility and unity, as stated by the Founding Fathers in the American Constitution. In particular, the themes of *family* and *future* constitute "cohesive chains" in American political rhetoric and are associated with such concepts as love of country, love of God, security, peace, mutual respect, compassion, togetherness, opportunity and the *American dream* (Bollettieri Bosinelli 1986:124). As Hillary R. Clinton underlines in this particular speech:

> For many of us, **religious belief and practice** is a vital source of meaning and identity, and fundamental to who we are as people. And likewise, for most of us, the **bonds of love and family** that we forge are also **vital sources of meaning and identity**. And **caring for others** is an expression of what it means to be fully human. It is because **the human experience is universal** that human rights are universal and cut across all religions and cultures. (par. 17)

A further semantic field from which metaphors are often drawn is that of war and conflict. In general, *sport*, *war* and *fighting* involve a physical contest of some sort, and politics itself is often conceived as confrontational, antagonistic and aggressive. Both sport and war involve fields and battlefields, weapons, strategies and front lines, winners and losers, enemies, opponents and allies. Nevertheless, politics can also be envisaged as a defensive struggle for certain social values such as change, justice, freedom and equal rights for which both personal sacrifice and collective efforts are fundamental. Violent practices against marginalized groups, in addition to prejudices, misconceptions and stereotypes are troublesome and fearsome enemies that hinder progress worldwide.

The above considerations can help lead to an improved understanding of the significance of metaphors in political discourse and to a recognition of the type of metaphors encountered in speeches such as this. Students should thus find it easier to spot words and expressions in the text which help them decode abstract notions and concepts made more concrete through the use of figurative language. In **Task 9** students are engaged in the discovery of certain types of metaphors, such as silence, journeys, barriers, war, good *versus* evil, which represent the most frequently and productively used metaphors in American political speeches.

Task 9. Identify the several kind of metaphorical expressions in the speech.

Metaphors of SILENCE (INCLUSION/EXCLUSION)
- They are **denied opportunities** to work and learn (...) and **forced to suppress or deny who they are** to protect themselves from harm (par. 6)
- **silencing of voices and views** that would strengthen communities (par. 14)
- for as long as LGBT people are **kept in shadows** (par. 15)
- so when any part of humanity is **sidelined**, the rest of us cannot **sit on the sidelines** (par. 25)

Metaphors of the JOURNEY
- **Step by step...** (par. 4)
- History teaches us about how **we make progress towards** rights for all (par. 18)
- willing to **walk a mile in someone else's shoes** (par. 23)
- a **step toward** what we hope will be the creation of a special rapporteur (par. 27)
- We know **the road ahead** will not be easy. A great deal of work lies before us. (par. 34)
- the **march towards** equality and justice has continued (par. 36)
- No matter how long the **road ahead** we **will travel** it successfully together (par. 36)

Metaphors of BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES
- **barriers** that once **prevented** people from enjoying the full measure of liberty (par. 4)
- individuals whose lives were once **narrowed by injustices** (par. 5)

- **obstacles standing in the way** of protecting (par. 8)
- Every time a **barrier to progress has fallen**, it has taken a **cooperative effort** from those on both sides of the **barrier** (par. 25)

Metaphors of CONFLICT (FIGHT/WAR/SPORT/COMPETI-TION)
- People **fought** and **organized** and **campaigned** (par. 5)
- Even though progress **on this front** is not easy, we cannot delay acting (par. 8)
- We came to learn that no practice or tradition **trumps** the human rights that belong to all of us (par. 16)
- In the **fight** for women's rights... The **fight** for racial equality... **Combating** Islamaphobia or anti-Semitism... And the same is true with this **struggle** for equality (par. 25)
- The story of the United States is the story of a nation that has repeatedly **grappled** with intolerance and inequality... We **fought** a brutal civil war over slavery. People from coast to coast **joined in campaigns**... (par. 36)

Metaphors of POSITIVE VS NEGATIVE, GOOD VS EVIL
- Those who advocate for expanding the circle of human rights were and are **on the right side of history**, and history honors them. Those who tried to constrict human rights **were wrong**, and history reflects that as well (par. 36)

As the results of Task 9 clearly show, it is social goals in general and the achievement of human rights for all that are the final destination of the common journey. The goals laid down by the Secretary of State are worthwhile ones and in inviting all to pursue them she stirs confidence and raises self-esteem in the listeners. The barriers and obstacles which for centuries have impeded and prevented all people from enjoying a full measure of liberty and democracy have to be broken down. Collective action is indispensable because

[...] when we see denials and abuses of human rights and fail to act, that sends the message to those deniers and abusers that they won't suffer any consequences for their actions, and so they carry on. But when we do act, we send a powerful moral message. (par. 26)

Finally, students' attention should be directed to the closing para-graph, the epilogue, which perfectly summarizes Hillary R. Clinton's thoughts and acknowledges the need to wait with patience because opinions still need time to evolve. Although the path ahead is long and difficult, it must be walked together until in the end

...opinion will converge once again with the truth, the immutable truth, that all persons are created free and equal in dignity and rights. We are called once more to make real the words of the Universal Declaration. Let us answer that call. Let us be on the right side of history, for our people, our nations and future generations, whose lives will be shaped by the work we do today. (par. 37)

8. Conclusions

The present study has endeavoured to show one of the many ways in which a political speech can be exploited in the context of a language classroom. Setting a number of possible teaching objectives, students are presented with a speech which clearly represents a sample of authentic material and are guided in how to exploit its various advantages as learning opportunities. First of all, not only does the hands-on discovery approach promote learning and understanding but genre-awareness is also fostered in a learner-centred environment. A text such as this can be analysed for its linguistic and rhetorical features once students are in possession of a few simple analytical tools through which they can work on tasks by themselves, guided and actively monitored by the teacher, who thus becomes not only a language consultant but also a research organiser, helping students to "look behind the scenes".

As previously underlined, speeches are written to be spoken. Therefore, many other factors could be considered in a classroom context. These include characteristics such as a low or high pitch in the speaker's voice, facial expressions, head movements, eye contact and gestures. The fact that these factors represent important contributions to the overall quality and impact of the speech is indisputable. However, this paper only partially comments on these features since it is believed that they would deserve an exhaustive and thorough investigation which goes beyond the aims of the present study. Since language and rhetoric are powerful weapons, it is an added bonus that students gain some knowledge of how they might express their own ideology through the study of meaningful and lexically rich texts, that contain captivating

rhythm, fascinating figurative language, and that aim to prompt and urge people to take social action. It is indeed a fortunate by-product that language lessons can often turn out to be beneficial to learners' overall education, not just to their linguistic competence and communicative proficiency.

In point of fact, the speech chosen here provides students with an opportunity to deal with a sensitive and controversial issue, as human rights for the LGBT community certainly is. Through the analysis of this speech, learners are given an overview of the following most common questions and concerns related to the issue of gay people:

a) the unjust distinction between gay rights and human rights;
b) the supposed geographical origin of homosexuality which makes us think it is just "other people's/nations' problem";
c) the religious and cultural values which are often wrongly adduced as an excuse to violate rights;
d) the prejudices convincing us that homosexuality is a disease and can bring about crime;
e) the continued denial of rights to minorities who, left alone, will never be able to achieve political and social change.

Students are therefore guided through the deconstruction of wrongful notions and misconceptions and can be enlightened by a balanced, considerate and expert interpretation of questions designed to help them think through and form their own personal opinions on the issue. Moreover, the linguistic and rhetorical analysis of such a political speech will, in addition, raise students' awareness and consciousness of political and social issues. This in turn will encourage them to develop their civic responsibility as citizens, instilling them with the conviction that by participating in such battles, they will be supporting and upholding human rights the world over.

Primary source

Hillary Rodham Clinton's speech

Remarks in Recognition of International Human Rights Day, December 6, 2011, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/12/178368.htm. Last accessed June 5, 2013.

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