

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

This chapter contains my personal comments on the findings in Chapter Three. Firstly, all the strategies used by both candidates can be summarized as follows. Obama uses disclaimer and irony for four times; specific level of description and history as lesson for three times; hedging and explanation twice; implication, illustration, repetition, and passive construction once each.

On the other hand, McCain uses irony, metaphor, and number game for four times; vagueness and general level of description for three times; evidentiality, implication, and illustration twice; repetition, passive, antimetabole, and hedging once. In addition, McCain does not use any strategies he theoretically is supposed to, twice.

From the summary, we can see that the strategies used by both candidates are irony, hedging, implication, illustration, passive construction, repetition, and specific level of description. In my opinion, the underlying reason why both candidates use irony, hedging, passive construction, and implication is because the debate analyzed is part of the presidential campaign, and thus, it is one of the

examples of political settings. As we know, it is common for politicians not to be direct with their speech lest people will easily accuse them later in the future when their words are different from their actions. This fact is clearly seen in their use of hedging, passive construction, and implication, which is basically necessary to hide the speaker's attitude or stance.

On top of that, politicians will try their best to save their face while attacking their opponents. This, I believe, makes irony the most popular strategy used since irony is considered an elegant strategy to save face effectively. Meanwhile, the remaining strategies are used by both candidates because those are essential to emphasize meaning (repetition) and convey the meaning to the audience more clearly (specific level of description and illustration).

Generally speaking, the strategies used by both candidates can be categorized into two groups: single function strategies and double function strategies. Single function strategy means that only one of the four general strategies stated by van Dijk (44) – emphasize positive things about Us, emphasize negative things about Them, deemphasize negative things about Us, and deemphasize positive things about them – is used in a strategy. On the other hand, double function strategy means that two general strategies are used in a strategy at the same time. For example, disclaimer can be used to emphasize negative things about Them and deemphasize negative things about Us.

Of all the strategies listed, there are only two strategies that are considered double function strategies: disclaimer and irony. Both are used to emphasize negative things about Them and deemphasize negative things about Us. The candidates use double function strategies so that they will not directly attack the

opponent and make sure their positive presentation is not tainted. Since direct attack will expose the attacker's negative things, an attacker, by not doing so, will be able to deemphasize negative things about Us.

Further analysis reveals that the strategies used by Obama are basically objective and to the point. This fact is clearly seen in the way those strategies are used to deliver the facts by either supporting his position or showing McCain's flaws. On the other hand, McCain uses mostly rhetorics such as repetition, antimetabole, metaphor. Evidently, he believes that a convincing speech can be supported by these kinds of strategies to enhance his positive presentation. Besides, he is such a typical politician who prioritizes indirect statements more than direct ones, which is clearly seen in nearly all strategies he uses in the debate. Therefore, his tendency causes his strategies to be more indirect and more rhetorical than Obama's.

After comparing Obama's and McCain's strategies, I find that there are only 10 types of strategies used by the former candidate with the total occurrences of 22 times, whereas the latter uses 15 strategies with the total occurrences of 30 times. Statistically, McCain seems better than Obama because he offers more variations in strategies. However, I am of the opinion that the rich variation does not mean much if the strategies themselves are not used in an appropriate way.

Thus, from the analysis of how both candidates use the strategies and whether they deliver them as intended, it can be concluded that Obama gains more credit than McCain. This is because nearly all the strategies used by Obama are fit to the context except for one strategy in data 26 (95,45%). On the other hand, there are six out of 30 strategies (20 %) in which McCain uses the appropriate

strategy, nine of them (30 %) which are not used appropriately, and 15 of them (50%) which are not used effectively. What is more, there are two occurrences in which McCain does not use any strategies at all, which surely exposes how weak his presentation is.

If probed carefully, the basic reason why McCain uses the strategies inappropriately is because he keeps being implicit or indirect when he should speak out loud about his positive things or his opponent's negative things. Actually, this choice is due to many negative things that will be much exposed if he does attack Obama or shows his own positive things. To put it simply, in my opinion, McCain does not directly emphasize his positive things because he may not really understand the matter well or cannot specify it more clearly. He also does not want to attack Obama directly because if he does, his negative standpoint will be revealed.

Furthermore, the most cases when McCain does not succeed in using the strategies effectively are when he uses rhetorics or strategies that emphasize more on beautifying one's speech. This is because McCain does not try to place himself in the audience's position, which makes his metaphors and illustrations not very clear and understandable. The reason for McCain's using the rest of the strategies less effectively is that McCain does not completely utilize the strategies, which means that the important components of those strategies are left behind.

Obama, on the other hand, uses the strategies as the context demands in an appropriate way. Therefore, the arguments are much stronger as they make sense and mostly cannot be rebutted by McCain. He also pays attention to the moment when he should attack or defend himself while McCain sometimes does not

answer back Obama's claims, which also makes Obama's presentation weigh more than McCain's.

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