

EMOTIONS IN DONALD TRUMP'S DISCOURSE

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Abstract: The study focuses on emotion and some of its strategies in Donald Trump's first presidential campaign speech in 2015. In order to influence the value judgements of their listeners, political speakers use emotive language through emphasis markers. Donald Trump's rhetoric is based on the conveyance of emotions. In his first presidential campaign speech in 2015, he used some markers of emphasis to convey and elicit emotion from his listeners, presenting himself as a saint while demonizing his opponents. In light of V. Dijk's (2008) in-group versus out-group presentation techniques in his CDA approach, the analysis revealed that Donald Trump uses grammatical and rhetorical strategies of emphasis as instruments of emotive language to convey different emotions in order to persuade his listeners.

Keywords: demonization, emotion, emphasis, language, rhetoric, self-presentation.

Résumé : L'étude porte sur la mise en relief de l'émotion au moyen de stratégies et items d'emphase dans le premier discours de campagne présidentielle de Donald Trump en 2015. Dans le but d'influencer les jugements de valeur de leurs auditeurs, les orateurs politiques emploient un langage émotif au moyen de marqueurs d'emphase. La rhétorique de Donald Trump est basée sur la transmission d'émotions. L'objectif de cette étude est de mettre en exergue les procédés emphatiques du langage émotif de Donald Trump. À la lumière des présentations intra-groupe et extra-groupe de la théorie de l'analyse critique du discours de Van Dijk (2008), l'analyse a révélé que Donald Trump utilise des stratégies grammaticales et rhétoriques d'emphase comme instruments de langage émotif afin de véhiculer différentes émotions dans le but de persuader ses auditeurs.

Mots clés : autoprésentation, diabolisation, émotion, emphase, langage, rhétorique.

Introduction

Running for a political office is a task that requires communication skills, especially when it comes to winning the trust of voters during political campaigns. The language of a politician running for political office is not everyday language. They tend to use language as a double-edged sword to sanctify themselves, their team members, their families and their potential voters, while demonising their opponents. The message of politicians is emotionally charged for greater effectiveness. For T. Brader (2006), presidential campaign speeches are key illustrations of the effectiveness of emotion in politics. The use of emotive language in political messages is a powerful persuasive technique, which tends to be subtle and implicit because of the pervasiveness of emotion throughout the linguistic system. In the same vein, E. Ochs and B. Schieffelin write:

One cannot argue, for example, that syntax exclusively serves logical functions while affective functions are carried out by intonation and the lexicon. Affect permeates the entire linguistic system. Almost any aspect of the linguistic system that is variable is a candidate for expressing affect. (E. Ochs and B. Schieffelin, 1989, p. 29)

The rise of Donald Trump in the political arena and his presidency of the United States of America was unpredictable. He does not consider himself a politician. Donald Trump defines himself as a “businessman”. Yet this businessman became the forty-fifth President of the United States of America. A presidential candidate's first official campaign speech plays a paramount role as far as his campaign trail is concerned. It sets the tone for the entire campaign trail. As a business man, Donald Trump, before running for president, is involved in a number of affairs that tarnished his reputation, but this did not override his election to the presidency of the United States of America. His first presidential campaign announcement speech in 2015 helped him persuade the American people. His speech is used as a weapon to build a positive ethos and win the votes of the American public.

The study focuses mainly on emotive language and some of its manifestations in Donald Trump's first presidential campaign announcement speech, given that his speech is full of emotion. Donald Trump uses emotive language as his main weapon of persuasion. The main questions addressed in this paper are: What is emotion in discourse? What are the strategies of emotive language in Donald Trump's speech? What is the relevance of emotive language in Donald Trump's discourse? The aim of the study is to show the persuasive use of emotive language through emphasis in the announcement speech of Donald Trump's first presidential campaign in 2015. The analysis is conducted in the light of some of the features of V. Dijk's (2008) critical discourse approach, mainly the in-group versus out-group presentation techniques.

1. Research Methodology

The corpus from which the data is collected comes from *The Washington Post's* website, *washingtonpost.com*. The data is collected through intensive reading and line-by-line exploration of the utterances in the speech transcript. These statements are also selected because they are indicative of lexical resources relating to polarisation. They reveal the in-group versus out-group presentations. Negative and positive polarity resources, through emphasis, motivate the collection of specific statements. The data collected is analysed on the basis of the emphasis strategies used to convey emotions. The types of emotions conveyed are also highlighted.

2. Corpus Presentation

The corpus is Donald Trump's first presidential campaign speech in 2015. Sixteen utterances are extracted from this speech. Each of them illustrates emotion in different ways. These statements constitute the data in this paper. They are highlighted to illustrate emotive language strategies.

3. In-Group Versus Out-Group Presentations in Van Dijk's CDA

This paper addresses the use of emotion through emphasis in Donald Trump's discourse. Emphasis markers have a polarising effect when used in speech. The sub-functions of emphasis, such as contrasts and intensifications, establish a kind of hierarchy between what is to be considered as important and what is not. By conveying emotions, emphatic strategies make it possible to rank the speaker's choices, likes and dislikes. Comparatives, superlatives, cleft constructions, loaded words and all the emphatic figures of speech have in common that they are used to express the degree of pre-eminence of a fact, an idea and an ideology. Campaign speeches are advertising weapons, in which candidates sell their image like a brand. Candidates use self-sanctification techniques to present themselves as beyond reproach and, conversely, to demonise others. Pointing out oppositions, differentiating personalities, abilities and skills are central to their speech, which is why the paper fits in with Van Dijk's critical discourse approach, which also highlights what he refers to as 'polarisation', namely the in-group versus out-group presentations in speeches.

For Van Dijk (2008), CDA is the exploration of texts¹ to reveal the discursive sources of power, domination, inequality and bias. It examines how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced in social, political and historical contexts. To conduct a critical analysis of discourse, Van Dijk (2008) proposes a number of considerations, including polarisation techniques, which involve using linguistic tools such as pronouns, loaded language and sanctification and demonisation techniques to present oneself and others. This theoretical background is used in this paper to show how emotion is conveyed through emphasis.

¹ Written, spoken and images.

4. Emotive Language, a Relevant and Persuasive Strategy in Discourse

Language use can fulfil six functions according to R. Jakobson (1980). These functions are the referential, poetic, emotive, conative, phatic and metalingual functions. R. Middleton (1990) explains that R. Jakobson's typology on the functions of language is the result of the six factors in a communication process, namely the context, the message, the sender, the receiver, the channel and the code. From the referential function to the metalingual function, there is a diversity of uses for language. The speaker who sends the message can decide how to use it, depending on their communication objective. This typology of language functions makes language a weapon with many blades and faces. Depending on the field of use, the goal to be achieved or the context, the use of language is linked to a specific function. While the use of language can be purely informative, used for aesthetic purposes and to ensure the interactivity of a communication between a speaker and their interlocutor, it can also be used as bait to captivate, persuade and manipulate.

For R. Jakobson (1980), the emotive function mediates the speaker's inner feelings. When speakers aim at conveying feelings, they emotively use language. F. Macagno (2010, p. 2) provides more clarity when he writes that “emotive language is a particular dialectical and rhetorical strategy whose distinctive feature is the persuasion through emotions”. What is at stake is the use of emotion to persuade others. F. Macagno (2010, p. 2) binds emotive language to persuasion writing that it is hard not to be persuaded through a specific use of emotive language, which “can make it seem like there is no need to accept or even to consider a contrary viewpoint because doing so would stem from unacceptable values”. By using emotive language, the speaker positions themselves and their messages as the most authentic, sensible and truthful. Adding emotive charges to messages makes communication much bolder, more effective and more powerful.

Emotive language transcends the referential and merely informative use of language to become that which leaves significant clues of conviction in the mind of a listener. When the hearer of a message is emoted by what they listen to, they fall prey to it. The persuasive power of emotive language can be twofold. As F. Macagno (2010) explains, while it can be used to promote positive and cause-oriented values, it can also be used to promote a negative cause and pass it off as the right one. Therefore, the mastery of emotions confers power. For F. Macagno (2010, p. 2), emotive language can also be identified as “the use of language arousing certain emotions to lead the interlocutor to a certain conclusion”. In this case, what counts are the intentions of the person conveying the emotion. Truth and lies can be conveyed successfully through emotion. The emotive function is a useful way of using language as weapon to captivate, persuade and manipulate. Due to its pervasiveness, emotion can be conveyed through a number of channels: verbally, vocally and gesturally. Donald Trump conveys emotions through the strategies and items of emphasis he uses.

4.1 Emphasis, a Strategy of Emotive Language in Donald Trump’s Speech

Emphasis refers to highlighting something, giving it weight, showing particular interest in it, revealing something or contrasting something. The notion of emphasis does not have a clear-cut definition. Given its polysemous nature, it can be defined from various perspectives. For J. Vachek (2003, p. 78), “emphasis either serves to indicate the functional sentence perspective of the sentence content with respect to the context or expresses the characteristic attitude of the speaker to the sentence content”. Emotion and emphasis are interchangeably linked. The speaker's desire to persuade their audience is sometimes representative of the emphasis they use in their messages. Emphasis is a beacon of emotive persuasion. Emotive language is the expression of emotions and feelings, most often conveyed by grammatical and rhetorical markers of emphasis. There are different ways of conveying emotions through emphasis, which can be grammatical, rhetorical and non-verbal.

Grammatical structures and rhetorical techniques make it possible to emphasize a point. In other words, the use of grammatical constructions and tools can be used to highlight statements. Cleft-constructions are one of the main elements used to create emphasis. According to K. Brown and J. Miller (2013, p. 79), cleft-constructions consist in using “word order and particles, in combination or separately, to highlight or focus on parts of a clause or sentence”. In a cleft-construction, a sentence is divided into two in order to emphasize a key point in the sentence. Basically, the last word of a sentence is the one that conveys the new information, what K. Brown and J. Miller (2013) refer to as ‘end focus’. Conversely, when the element emphasised in the sentence is not at the end but elsewhere in the sentence, it is generally derived from the cleft-construction.

Another grammatical emphasis technique consists in using intensifiers, mainly adverbs of degree. These are adverbs that qualifies the intensity of an event, a fact or enable the speaker or writer to make a value judgement about a situation. There are two types of intensifiers. Some are labelled as amplifiers, others as downtoners. Downtoners are particularly attached to words with negative connotations or their use leads to words with negative meanings. The word “hardly” is a downtoner, which is mostly used in statements as in “hardly understandable”. “Barely”, “scarcely” are also downtoners. Words like “absolutely”, “very”, “really” and “fully” are amplifiers. As K. Brown and J. Miller (2013) point out, those words increase the intensity and give more weight to a statement.

The use of intensifying adjectives plays a paramount role in grammatical emphasis. According to K. Brown and J. Miller (2013, p. 232), an intensifying adjective is “an adjective used to intensify or emphasize the meaning of a noun: utter madness, complete fool, absolute genius”. Adjectives are words which have positive or negative connotations. The use of adjectives provides a means of making assessments and giving opinions. The role of an intensifying adjective is to emphasise

a statement and give it greater force. When a speaker uses an intensifying adjective, their subjectivity is involved in the utterance.

Grammatical emphasis can also be expressed using reflexive pronouns, negation, comparatives, superlatives and loaded words. Reflexive pronouns are self-pronouns, that is, words such as “myself”, “yourself”, “herself”, “himself”, “yourselves” and “themselves”. These self-referential words are agents of emphasis and emotion. Their use is a way of hammering home the self-expression. They highlight the subjectivity of the speaker in the utterance. Negation is an emphasis technique as well. D. Crystal (2008, p. 323) defines negation as “a process or construction in grammatical and semantic analysis which typically expresses the contradiction of some or all of a sentence’s meaning”. Negation is used to contradict and counter viewpoints and opinions in a statement. It is used to show disagreement and disenchantment with a fact or point. It is essentially used for self-assertion. When a speaker uses negation, they are conveying to others what they think is right. As such, negation is an emphasis technique that the speaker uses to position themselves. Particles like “not” are some of the negative markers used for emphasis.

Comparative and superlative adjectives are gradable adjectives. These adjectives give clues to the degrees and levels of qualification given by a speaker to some points in their utterance. The emphatic nature of these adjectives becomes apparent through their inherent comparative functions. When they are used, it is for the purpose of comparing something lower, higher or the highest among others. This comparison is nothing more than an implicit emphasis. It's a way for the user to emphasise what they consider to be higher than others: this is known as emphasis. K. Brown and J. Miller (2013, p. 196) write that through the use of a gradable adjective, “a given person may have a greater grade or degree of height than another or have the greatest grade of height in a particular group of people”. For example, in the statement "I will be the best president", the speaker uses the superlative "best" to position themselves above other presidents and emphasise their leadership and abilities. Emphasis rhymes with comparison. Comparative adjectives are adjectives

that establish a comparison between two entities, whereas with the superlative, there is only one entity set above the others.

Loaded words are another grammatical form of emphasis in statements. A loaded word can alter the meaning of an utterance through the connotative meaning it conveys. C. Nimitupariya and P. Tapinta (2021, p. 108) write that “Loaded words are words or phrases which carry strong emotional implications, both positively and negatively”. Some words have a strong connotation and are likely to have an impact, positive or negative, on other words in a statement. These words are loaded and their use emphasises some of the specific elements in the statement. Loaded words convey feelings and emotions. For example, the words 'disaster', 'criminal', 'murder', 'rapist', 'freedom' and 'peace', when heard in a speech, are likely to swing moods and feelings from positive to negative and vice versa. The connotations of these words are enough to bring back memories or to direct listeners' brains towards the images of their connotation. Speakers use these words to emphasise what they say in order to keep listeners' attention focused and persuade them. In addition to loaded words, some words have an intrinsic emphatic role when used in statements.

The words “Do”, “does” and “did”, when followed by a verb can be considered as emphasis markers according to R. Huddleston and G. Pullum (2005). In the statements “I do support you” and “I did help the other candidates”, ‘do’ and ‘did’ are emphasizing words. Both statements make sense without the words 'do' and 'did', but they do not have the same emotional charge when they are added. In addition, 'own' is another emphasis marker, which is mainly used to emphasise and highlight the speaker's deeds, actions and positive affiliations. For example, instead of saying “it is my wealth”, a speaker can say “it is my **own** wealth”. The use of the marker ‘own’ presupposes that the wealth has been obtained by the speaker through hard work, and not through inheritance, for example. In this case, the speaker is implicitly conveying pride. Emphasis instruments such as reflexive pronouns, intensifiers, loaded words, comparatives, superlatives and emphasis-adding words are used to convey different feelings and emotions from speakers to listeners. Emphasis markers

are agents of emotion. Therefore, emphasis as a whole can be considered an emotive language strategy.

Donald Trump uses emotive language through grammatical emphasis in his speech. In utterance (1), he uses an interjection when he says: “**Wow, woah.** That is **some groups** of people. **Thousands**”. The interjection ‘**wow, woah**’ is his way of showing how amazed he is to see people in the building and to flatter them for being a huge crowd. It is also a way for him to boast that people love him. Therefore, he conveys pride. In the same statement, Donald Trump uses grammatical emphasis when he says ‘**some groups** of people’ and ‘**thousands**’. These words help him to give intensity to the emotion he conveys in his statement.

In utterance (2), he declares: “It’s **great** to be at **Trump Tower**. It’s **great** to be in a **wonderful** city, New York. This is **beyond anybody’s expectations**. There’s been **no** crowd like this”. In this statement, Trump uses intensifying adjectives like ‘**great**’ and ‘**wonderful**’ and the adverb of degree ‘**beyond**’ to give greater force to its declaration. He also uses the negation marker ‘**no**’ to convey his deep admiration and pride in his audience. In utterance (3), Donald Trump states: “Our country is in **serious trouble**. **We don’t have victories anymore**”. In this declaration, he uses the intensifying adjective ‘**serious**’ and the negation markers ‘**don’t**’ and ‘**anymore**’ to give a sad and furious presentation of the United States.

In utterance (4), Donald Trump says: “**We lost thousands of lives, thousands** in Iraq. We have **wounded soldiers**, who **I love, I love -- they’re great -- all over** the place, **thousands** and **thousands of wounded soldiers**”. In this statement, he uses loaded words and intensifiers such as ‘**thousands**’, ‘**love**’, ‘**great**’, ‘**all over**’ and ‘**wounded**’ to express his bitterness about the loss and injury of the soldiers. In (5), Trump forwards: “Our enemies are **getting stronger and stronger** by the way, and we as a country are **getting weaker**”. The use of comparatives helps to emphasise the point and to give the audience a sense of frustration and fear about the state of their country. In utterance (6), he states: “**We** have a **disaster** called **the big lie: Obamacare**”. In this assertion, Donald Trump uses loaded words like ‘**disaster**’, and

the intensifier ‘**big**’ to underline how detrimental he considers Barack Obama’s health policy to be. In (7), as he continues to talk about Obama’s healthcare policy, he states: “It’s **virtually useless**. It’s **virtually useless**”. With the repetition of the intensifying words ‘**virtually useless**’, the emotional charge is sufficiently heavy.

In (8), Donald Trump uses some grammatical emphasis devices again to convey emotion when he states: “**They** will **never** make America great again. **They don't** even have a chance. **They're** controlled **fully** -- **they're** controlled **fully** by the lobbyists, **by** the donors, and by the special interests, **fully**”. In this statement, he uses the intensifiers ‘**never**’, ‘**fully**’ and the negation marker ‘**don't**’ to emphatically decry the incompetence and corruption of his opponents. This allows him to portray them as enemies of the American people.

4.2 Rhetoric and Emotive Language in Donald Trump’s Speech

Rhetoric refers to the skilful use of written and spoken words to persuade listeners. In the case of public speaking, speeches are usually carefully drafted before being delivered to the audience. This is why it is not wrong to speak of rhetoric as the stylistic arrangement of words in a written or spoken structure to touch people’s feelings. A rhetorical analysis does not overlook domains such as stylistics, pragmatics, semantics and, above all, grammar, which can be regarded as the harmoniser of these. For a statement to be persuasive, it must be well structured. This is why both grammatical and rhetorical points can be studied under the same heading. K. Brown and J. Miller (2013) draw a link between the notion of rhetoric and figures of speech. For them, rhetoric is achieved through figures of speech. In the same way, D. Crystal (2008, p. 416) mentions: “Several hundred rhetorical figures were recognized by classical rhetoricians, classifying the way words could be arranged in order to achieve special stylistic effects”. A number of figures of speech are based on emphasis, which can be rephrased as rhetorical figures of emphasis. Hyperbole, repetition, simile and paralipsis are some of these figures of speech of emphasis.

Hyperbole is a figure of speech used to exaggerate a fact in order to make it more persuasive. This figure of speech is emphatic in the sense that it relies on

emphasis. When a speaker exaggerates their claims or the points they make, the aim is to make them more emphatic. Like hyperbole, repetition is a rhetorical strategy. The notion of repetition encompasses a range of figures of speech such as ‘anadiplosis²’, ‘anaphora³’, ‘epistrophe⁴’. For J. Fahnestock (2011, p. 230), “orators since antiquity have drawn on the power of repetition for emphasis and emotional heightening”. Repetition is often used to emphasise the arguments in a speech. The repetitive patterns of the words or phrases create emphasis.

Most emphatic figures of speech are easy to notice because of their repetitiveness, while others, such as paralipsis, tend to be trickier. The complexity of classifying paralipsis as an emphatic figure of speech lies in the fact that it consists in emphasising something, but in a surreptitious way. Paralipsis uses irony as a means of emphasis. P. Earlie (2018, p. 251) defines paralipsis as “a subset of irony which consists in drawing attention to something in the very act of pretending to pass it over”. Paralipsis is false modesty. It is paradoxical in the sense that the speaker pretends to deny the substance of what they intentionally conveyed.

Simile can be considered as one of the figures of speech of emphasis. This rhetorical strategy consists in comparing human beings, things and objects with each other or from one entity to another. K. Brown and J. Miller (2013, p. 284) write: “Simile is a metaphor in which the comparison is signalled, as in as good as gold, as poor as a church mouse, Pleasures are like poppies spread”. Similes arise from metaphors, but whereas in metaphors the comparison is subtle, similes are more explicit in their use of specific items of comparison. Comparing an animal to a human being or vice versa underpins the conveyance of emotion. When a human being is compared to a lion, for example, it shows just how tough and resilient that person is. In doing so, the speaker is expressing pride in that person. The figures of speech used to create emphasis, such as hyperbole, repetition and paralipsis in communication,

² The repetition of the closing word of a previous clause.

³ The repetition of a phrase at the beginning of sentences or phrases

⁴ The repetition of the same word or phrase in every clause's end

convey different types of feelings. Speakers sometimes use hyperbole to convey optimism, fear, anger or joy to their listeners. Paralipsis, which is sometimes a boasting technique, can be used by a speaker to express pride. As for repetition, it often makes listeners think about what they need to do immediately. They can therefore be used to arouse feelings and emotions such as fear, anger or urgency in listeners.

Donald Trump uses figures of speech for emphasis as an emotive language strategy in his speech. In utterance (9), he uses two figures of speech, namely repetition and simile, to belittle his opponents when he declares: “**They didn't** know the air-conditioner didn't work. **They sweated like dogs. They didn't** know the room was too big, because **they didn't have anybody** there”. Comparing opponents to “**dogs**” is an emphatic way of demeaning them. With the repetition of the pronoun ‘**they**’, he tries to make his audience mock his opponents. In (10), Trump uses anaphora to convey his feelings and emotion when he states: **They're** laughing at us, at our stupidity. **They are** beating us economically. **They are** not our friend, believe me. **They're** killing us economically”. Through this anaphora, Trump portrays other countries as enemies of the United States. He uses this pattern of repetition to emphasise the extent to which these countries represent a threat to the USA. In utterance (11), Donald Trump points out that the “**U.S has become a dumping ground for everybody's else problem**”. This hyperbole is intended to arouse his public's anger and frustration.

In utterance (12), Donald Trump continues to use figures of speech to highlight emotion when he says: “**sadly, the American dream is dead**”. This figurative language is a personification that emphasises an abstract idea. Trump uses ‘**death**’ as a frightening notion to emphasise the urgency of voting for him. He presents himself as the only one to save the American dream, which is jeopardized. Moreover, in (13), through a series of rhetorical questions, Donald Trump demonizes his opponents when he states: “**How stupid are our leaders? How stupid are these politicians to allow this to happen? How stupid are they?**”.

4. 3 Emotive Language: a Language of Polarization on the Self in Trump's Speech

For V. Lub (2013, p. 165), polarization has to do with the “sharpening of divisions between groups that share certain social, cultural or religious traits”. It consists in bringing about groups opposition through a language of bias. As an emotive speaker, Donald Trump uses polarization to convey emotions. Trump's polarization consists in positioning himself and his voters as saints and victims, while charging his opponents with guilt. As a matter of fact, Donald Trump makes a positive in-group presentation in most of his statements characterised, by the repeated use of the possessive adjective ‘**our**’ and the personal pronoun ‘**we**’ to show inclusion, belonging and empathy. He also uses these markers to emphasize the distress he and the public feel at seeing the United States go through hardships under the leadership of his opponents. As a result, Trump makes his in-group look vulnerable.

In utterance (13), he declares: “**I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created**”. This statement is hyperbole, given the degree of exaggeration conveyed by the superlative ‘**the greatest**’. In utterance (14), Trump affirms: “**We will do very, very well, very, very well**”. The inclusive marker ‘**we**’ allows him to position himself as the hero and his audience as the beneficiaries when he is president. As a result, he repeatedly uses the intensifiers ‘**very well**’ to urge the public to vote for him. To subtly highlight his smugness, Donald Trump declares in (15): “**I use my own money**”. The use of the emphasis-adding word ‘**own**’ lends an extra emotional charge to his statement. In (16), he asserts: “**I'm really rich. And by the way, I'm not even saying that in a bragging way**”. This statement is a paralipsis. Donald Trump brags about his wealth and denies it at the same time. This is false modesty. He uses these strategies of emotive language to persuade the audience.

CONCLUSION

Emotion is a relevant and persuasive strategy in political discourse that is not often mentioned. Political speakers use emotive language to convey their feelings and arouse the emotions of their listeners. The use of emotive language also enables orators to present themselves and their supporters as blameless, full of qualities and abilities, while demonising their opponents. Emotion is most often materialised in political speeches through emphasis, which can be both grammatical and rhetorical. The aim of the study was to show the persuasive use of emotive language through emphasis in the announcement speech of Donald Trump's first presidential campaign in 2015. The findings reveal that Donald Trump uses emphasis as an emotive language strategy to persuade his listeners effectively. The emotive language tools he uses are: intensifiers, superlatives, comparatives, negation markers, loaded words, possessive adjectives, emphasis-adding words, hyperbole, repetition, simile, paralipsis, personification and rhetorical questions. These emotive language devices helped him persuade his audience.

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