

PHONETIC AND SYNTACTIC STYLISTIC MEANS IN MEDIA SPACE: MANIPULATION OR EMOTIONAL COMMONPLACE?

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ABSTRACT:

The essay presents research of video and audio texts featuring public personalities for usage of phonetic and syntactic stylistic means in their speeches, aiming at identifying whether a set of phonetic and syntactic devices may enable deliberate manipulation or remain commonplace showing mere melodic patterns in speech. The analysis embraces schemes of stylistic overlapping and isolation, examines their effect within a speech and outlines cultural, gender and social backgrounds of the speaker and the audience, their correlation and 'dialogue' on the touch points. Taking into consideration the idea that any influence of famous personalities must have its achievement point and relevant feedback, it is possible to speak of media as of a bridge to human minds, a key to their hearts and a trigger to their behavioural patterns.

KEY WORDS:

emotions, gender, manipulation, media space, phonetic stylistic means, syntactic stylistic means



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Introduction

The idea to combine media and linguistics and investigate the cross-section issues gains primary importance when it comes to words,¹ sounds² and intonation.³ I believe that when used on purpose, they may serve a powerful weapon to impact the listener and make him react respectively to the aim of the speaker.

¹ STASHKO, H.: An American Woman through the Prism of the Epithet: Semasiological Aspect in Creating Images. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 356-391.

² STASHKO, H.: When Phonetics Matters: Creation and Perception of Female Images in Song Folklore. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 299-335.

³ ZABUZHANSKA, I.: American Postmodern Poetic Texts: In Search of Rhythmicity. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 445-481.

Moreover, this synergy in complex with culture⁴ and gender aspects⁵ provides valuable discoveries and handy clues, which help us understand the power of words⁶ and the evolution of a woman.⁷

It is worth noting that there have been quite a number of recent research studies focusing on manipulative techniques⁸ used by public media speakers to gain particular results when addressing to the audience.⁹ On the other hand, it must be taken into account that emotionality¹⁰ also remains a background reason for a personal drive when delivering a speech.

The aim of the analysis is to identify whether a set of phonetic and syntactic devices – when used in public – may enable deliberate manipulation or remain emotional commonplace, showing mere melodic patterns in speech.

I have chosen video texts (online versions) featuring world-famous English-speaking female public personalities such as Anne Hathaway,¹¹ Michelle Obama¹² and Oprah Winfrey¹³ (see Pictures 1-3) to investigate the usage of phonetic and syntactic stylistic means in their respective speeches. The overall time of the analysed videos constitutes 52 minutes.

Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 1: Anne Hathaway: Speech on International Women's Day, 2017

Source: Screenshot from the video Anne Hathaway on International Women's Day. [online]. [2018-03-08]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdw8KNmr2pc&t=466s>>.

Picture 2: Michelle Obama: Speech at Let Girls Learn, 2015

Source: Screenshot from the video The First Lady Speaks in London on the Let Girls Learn Initiative. [online]. [2018-06-16]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0sao_1gILs>.

Picture 3: Oprah Winfrey: Speech at Power of Women

Source: Screenshot from the video Oprah's Tearful Speech at Power of Women. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

4 EROFEEVA, I., USHNIKOVA, O.: Media Text Energy as Collective Cultural Memory Reflection. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 1-46.

5 PANASENKO, N.: Песенный дискурс в культурно-историческом и гендерном аспекте. In *Человек и его дискурс – 4: кол. монография; под. ред. М.Р. Желтухиной*. Москва : ИЯ РАН; 000 "ИЦ "Азбуковник", 2014, p. 296-302.

6 STASHKO, H.: Sound Symbolism in Female Images Creation (Based on American Song Folklore). In *Science and Education a New Dimension. Philology*, 2016, Vol. 4, No. 20, Issue 85, p. 60-63.

7 For more information, see: STASHKO, H.: Жіночі образи в американському пісенному фольклорі: лінгвостилістичний та лінгвокультурологічний аспекти : дис.... канд. філол. наук. Київ, 2016.

8 GNEZDILOVA, Y.: Autonomous Metacommunicative Lexicon and Its Specifics in Manipulative Discourse. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 42-89.

9 FEDORIV, Y.: Speaking to the Global Audience: A Case Study into the Message Transformation. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2016, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 1-36.

10 PINICH, I.: Pragmatics of Emotionality in Discourse Processing: Prolegomena to Ideology Shaping Engines. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2017, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 262-298.

11 Anne Hathaway on International Women's Day. [online]. [2018-03-08]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdw8KNmr2pc&t=466s>>.

12 The First Lady Speaks in London on the Let Girls Learn Initiative. [online]. [2018-06-16]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0sao_1gILs>.

13 Oprah's Tearful Speech at Power of Women. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

It must also be mentioned that all the targeted female speakers are actively involved in the development of gender equality and protection of women. They give speeches at special events connected with women, such as International Women's Day, HeForShe Campaign, etc.

The focus on female speakers and gender-related issues as topics of their speeches arose due to several reasons. First, women are more emotional than men, which may already be considered a natural manipulation technique. Second, they are believed to be born to manipulate. In addition, another relevant point is that women understand other women better as they might experience similar cases in their lives, so they have higher chances to manipulate the audience. The most crucial point made so far is that female audience may appear more susceptible and thus vulnerable when it comes to motivation, protection and support in problematic situations.

The Usage of Stylistic Means in Public Speaking: Case Study

It is generally known that words and their meanings do matter, that lexically words convey positive, negative and neutral clouds of influence. Words can be a handy manipulation tool, though it is rather a vague issue with separate sounds and sound clusters, empowered by rhythm, pausation, speech tempo, etc. When certain clusters are constantly repeated and their occurrence in sentences is stylistically structured, can we say it happens randomly or if it is deliberately done to manipulate? The research results show obvious touch points of both.

Syntactic stylistic means in public speaking

The first part of the analysis provides key syntactic devices used in the speeches and the stylistic effects created by them. It has been revealed that the most recurrent syntactic devices are repetitions of various kinds (anaphora, epiphora and ordinary repetition), polysyndeton and asyndeton. I will illustrate how and why these stylistic devices are applied in the given public speeches.

According to the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, **anaphora** is treated as a rhetorical device in which a word or expression is repeated at the beginning of a number of successive phrases, clauses, sentences or verses, especially for rhetorical or poetic effect.¹⁴ Lincoln's "*we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow – this ground*" is a good example to illustrate anaphora. Its counterpart, **epiphora** (epistrophe), is considered repetition of a word or expression at the end of successive phrases, clauses, sentences or verses, especially for rhetorical or poetic effect¹⁵ (such as Lincoln's "*of the people, by the people, for the people*").

It has been found that anaphora and epiphora are used in every analysed speech, and Oprah Winfrey's one may show bright examples too ("*... his definition of authentic power meaning the kind of power that can never be taken from you: not your looks, not your fame, not your money, not your square footage, but authentic power is when the personality, your personality comes to serve the energy of your soul.*").¹⁶ In spite of being structurally different, both anaphora and epiphora function to lay emphasis on a particular element or idea within the speech. In the mentioned excerpt, the speaker stresses the importance of inner, not outer characteristics of a person in everybody's life.

14 MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY: *Anaphora*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anaphora>>.

15 MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY: *Epiphora*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/epistrophe>>.

16 Oprah's Tearful Speech at Power of Women. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

Michelle Obama's speech also proves that using anaphora is a simple yet very effective technique to show growing interest:

"But before I begin, I want to say a special hello to everyone who I know is watching this event online and on TV all around the world. I want to thank everybody out there for joining us and for paying careful attention to this important issue. And finally, most importantly, I want to thank all of the students here – the smart, powerful, creative, accomplished young women of Mulberry School for Girls. You all are beautiful. And your welcome was touching."¹⁷

"... Now, I imagine that some of you might be wondering, well, why would the First Lady of the United States come here to Tower Hamlets? Why would she choose this community and this school when she could be anywhere in this city or in this entire country? And the answer is simple: I'm here because of you. I'm here because girls like you inspire me and impress me every single day. I am so proud of your passion, your diligence; as Dr. Ogden said, your grit, your determination. And I am beyond thrilled that you are working so hard to complete your education. It is so important. And I'm here because when I look out at all of these young women, I see myself."¹⁸

Ordinary repetition is an instance of repeating certain word(s) in close proximity to stay emphasised to the listener.¹⁹ The example with the word *remember* used four times in a row ("They may not remember what they got in their box, but they will remember that somebody remembered them, they will remember the experience.")²⁰ illustrates the necessity to create emotional memories for kids.

The emphasis on the verb *liberate* in Anne Hathaway's speech ("... in order to liberate women we need to liberate men...")²¹ gave the audience clear understanding of the action plan to support overburdened women who are also mothers. Hathaway, who acts as goodwill ambassador for the United Nations, underlined that parental leave policies must be legally fair to both women and men. Applying emphasis to repetitions, she gained frequent applause in support of her brightest ideas throughout the speech.

Another type of repetition, **polysyndeton**, shows conjunctions in close succession²² (as in "*we have ships and men and money*"), which aims at furnishing an artistic effect to passages. *And* is the most frequent conjunction used in speeches:

"... hearing from Susan and Gwyneth, and Selma, and Rebecca, and Jemma, and Anna ..."²³

"... any life and every life is enhanced by the sharing and the giving, and the opening up of the heart space ..."²⁴

"... So I am very proud of the work that we're doing together. And I'm especially proud to be announcing these new commitments here in London, because this city was the first stop on my very first international trip as First

17 *The First Lady Speaks in London on the Let Girls Learn Initiative*. [online]. [2018-06-16]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0sao_1gILs>.

18 *The First Lady Speaks in London on the Let Girls Learn Initiative*. [online]. [2018-06-16]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0sao_1gILs>.

19 MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY: *Repetition*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/repetition>>.

20 *Oprah's Tearful Speech at Power of Women*. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

21 *Anne Hathaway on International Women's Day*. [online]. [2018-03-08]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdw8KNmr2pc&t=466s>>.

22 MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY: *Polysyndeton*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/polysyndeton>>.

23 *Oprah's Tearful Speech at Power of Women*. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

24 *Oprah's Tearful Speech at Power of Women*. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

Lady. And during my time here, I visited with the girls from Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School – a school a lot like this one – and I know that there are some of the students here today – yes, there you go ..."²⁵

Polysyndeton functions here to mention each person involved, each person who is important, both separately and altogether, individually and collectively. Names may be different, but what really matters is the atmosphere of everybody's involvement.

On the contrary, **asyndeton**, i.e. omission of conjunctions that ordinarily join coordinate words or clauses²⁶ (as in "*I came, I saw, I conquered*") serves to stress the significance of the relation between the words or clauses in question. For instance, one person may be so important ("... my beloved mentor, teacher, friend, mother, my angel passed away...")²⁷ that pauses between the enumerated roles instead of conjunctions generate respect and grief at the same time, adding rhetorical weight.

Enumeration is a rhetorical device used for listing details, which can bear a function of speeding up a conclusion, keeping the line poetic and specifying one detail after another:²⁸

"... we went from village to village, offering toys and clothes, food, soccer balls ..."²⁹

"... I see cause for hope. In my own country, the United States, currently the only high-income country in the world without paid maternity, let alone parental leave, great work has begun in the states of New York, California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Washington, which are currently all implementing paid parental leave programs ..."³⁰

"... My parents told me every day I could do anything – I could grow up to be a doctor, a lawyer, a scientist, whatever – but only if I worked as hard as I could to succeed in school ..."³¹

Bearing in mind the previous points, I am convinced that the mentioned syntactic stylistic devices are different in their functions, different in effect, though they all have one goal – to impact the listener. From the first point of view, they may seem overwhelming and oversaturating the speech, but this is how they create certain rhythm; they help avoid monotonousness and therefore draw attention. They have an expressive function to specify information and focus on detail.

Phonetic stylistic means in public speaking

The second part of the analysis considers effective phonetic devices and their involvement into the speech atmosphere. The most effective and thus recurrent are rhythm, pauses, empathic stress, tempo and alliteration.

25 *The First Lady Speaks in London on the Let Girls Learn Initiative*. [online]. [2018-06-16]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0sao_1gILs>.

26 MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY: *Asyndeton*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/asyndeton>>.

27 *Oprah's Tearful Speech at Power of Women*. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

28 MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY: *Enumeration*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/enumeration>>.

29 *Oprah's Tearful Speech at Power of Women*. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

30 *Anne Hathaway on International Women's Day*. [online]. [2018-03-08]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdw8KNmr2pc&t=466s>>.

31 *The First Lady Speaks in London on the Let Girls Learn Initiative*. [online]. [2018-06-16]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0sao_1gILs>.

As far as a rehearsed speech is concerned, it is crucial to consider **rhythm**, which is an ordered recurrent alternation of strong and weak elements in the flow of sound and silence in speech.³² It is evident that the better the speech is shaped in terms of rhythm, the more confident the speaker sounds and the higher the chances to convince the audience are. It appears problematic to show it on paper, therefore the links to the analysed speeches are available in the reference list. For instance, Oprah Winfrey shows how rhythm changes the perception of her ideas and beliefs. Just try and compare the way you read this (“... *and I only ask one thing of you is that you give, as much of yourself as I and the school is willing to give to you...*”)³³ and the way she does it to feel the difference.

Taking into consideration interrelation of different integral elements, which constitute rhythm, it is worth demonstrating how a speech depends on them separately. Examples of **pausation**, or temporary stops, can be found in abundance in every speech³⁴:

“... *the real empowerment comes when every person leaves this room and makes a decision...*”³⁵

“... *so by trial and error I knew that in order to literally change the way a girl sees herself...*”³⁶

“... *and I have seen it again and again and again that what our parents told us really is true – that if we get our education, we can do anything...*”³⁷

Pauses may be different in length, which depends on their functions. Short pauses are either natural stops to take a breath of air, while long pauses act as emphatic moments of silence to show the speaker’s attitude to the issue or attract the listener’s attention.

Emphatic stress³⁸ becomes an effective method to draw attention too. Certain words are stressed more in the utterance mainly due to private reasons, but not because of the established rules. To verify the above-mentioned statements, let us consider several examples. Oprah Winfrey’s inspiration gets even more tangible through emphatically stressed words, as shown in one of her tearful speeches (“*But she wrote me this amazing letter that will be something I treasure forever. I just wanted to share it...*”).³⁹

Michelle Obama’s speech is influential, too:

“*And it is so important that you do that, not just for yourselves, but for all of us. Because you all have a unique perspective. You have a unique voice to add to the conversation.*”⁴⁰

32 MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY: *Rhythm*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rhythm>>.

33 *Oprah’s Tearful Speech at Power of Women*. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

34 MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY: *Pausation*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pausation>>.

35 *Oprah’s Tearful Speech at Power of Women*. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

36 *Oprah’s Tearful Speech at Power of Women*. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

37 *The First Lady Speaks in London on the Let Girls Learn Initiative*. [online]. [2018-06-16]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0sao_1gLLs>.

38 MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY: *Emphatic*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emphatic>>.

39 *Oprah’s Tearful Speech at Power of Women*. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

40 *The First Lady Speaks in London on the Let Girls Learn Initiative*. [online]. [2018-06-16]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0sao_1gLLs>.

Another noticeable effect is created by **tempo**, i.e. the rate of speed of a spoken piece or passage often indicated by an exact metronome marking.⁴¹ The analysed material usually shows a change from fast to slow and vice versa. However, both tend to bring a significant influence as they contribute to suspense and gaining interest to the next word or phrase. To fully accept this idea, let us consider a piece from Oprah Winfrey’s speech stated below:

“... *every person, who has ever watched the show decided they were gonna back to school or watched the show and decided that ‘I’m gonna leave my husband, I’m no longer be a victim of abuse’. Every person who watched the show and said ‘I am a victim of abuse and because I saw this I now can stand up from myself’. Every person who gained the voice of you, you have no idea what your legacy is. Your legacy is every life that you touch.*”⁴²

Alliteration, which is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in close proximity,⁴³ is rather unique but essential in creating backgrounds. In the example from Oprah Winfrey’s speech (“... *the personality, your personality comes to serve the energy of your soul...*”)⁴⁴ we can observe a number of sibilants. Some studies⁴⁵ show sibilants /z/, /ʒ/, /θ/, and /ð/ may express power, feelings and liveliness and /s/ even sounds seductive. When together they tend to cause certain action and liveliness, push to act, which is the target of the speaker.

Key stylistic overlapping clusters in public speaking

As any stylistic device is reinforced when combined with several other devices, it appears obvious to speak about such combinations. Therefore, the final level of the analysis embraces schemes of stylistic overlapping and isolation, examines their effect within a speech and outlines cultural, gender and social backgrounds of the speaker and the audience, their correlation and ‘dialogue’ on the touch points.

Speaking about stylistic overlapping, it is worth mentioning that exactly this overlapping of different means makes the whole story fly, creates the effect of true-life monologues instead of monotonous reading from the paper. There may be a counterargument that mere repetition of any kind, anaphora or epiphora, is not interesting, for instance. Though it is significantly important what to repeat, how to repeat and when to repeat.

What to repeat? – there can be the exact word that people are waiting for, something that can inspire and be meaningful for the audience. It is understandable that if you want to make them *decide*, the word *decision* can be numerously repeated.

How to repeat? – applying rhythmicality, pausation, falling or rising tones or a combination of both, extremely high or extremely low voice pitch, in fast or slow tempo, etc.

When to repeat? – when there is already a certain story behind, when you feel it is the right time.

Bearing in mind the three questions, it is clear that clusters of stylistic devices must also be considered. The study shows that **the most recurrent and effective stylistic overlapping clusters** are:

- anaphora + epiphora + polysyndeton + pauses
- emphatic stress + enumeration + epiphora + tempo

41 MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY: *Tempo*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tempo>>.

42 *Oprah’s Tearful Speech at Power of Women*. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

43 MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY: *Alliteration*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alliteration>>.

44 *Oprah’s Tearful Speech at Power of Women*. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

45 SEDLEY, D.: *Plato’s Cratylus*. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-cratylus/#CreTex>>.

- emphatic stress + pauses + tempo + enumeration
- pauses + repetition
- emphatic stress + pauses

However, one should not forget that any cluster scheme contributes to certain rhythm; they all have something emphatic and certain changes in tempo, due to efficient usage of pauses in particular. To observe how effective the clusters are in relevant cases, see the way Oprah Winfrey uses anaphora (*they*) and emphatic *will* to inspire, to promise, to show dedication and the will itself:

“... *but they will have clothes, and they will be able to do drama, and they will be able to excel beyond anybody’s dreams ...*”⁴⁶

Her attention is paid to the balance of heart and soul, which is emphasised with the help of anaphora (*how*), epiphora (*life*), polysyndeton (*and*) and pauses:

“*Any life, no matter how fantastic it is, how glorious it seems, how much attention you receive, how much square footage you have, any life and every life is enhanced by the sharing and the giving, and the opening up of the heart space.*”⁴⁷

The ‘emphatic stress + enumeration + epiphora + tempo’ cluster illustrates uniqueness of every person Winfrey took care of, and perspectives everyone will have with this approach applied:

“*So the only difference between understanding that is understanding that what Selma has done, what Susan has done, what Anna has done, Rebecca’s done, what Gemma’s done, what I’ve done – you can do, too! Because true philanthropy comes from living from the heart of yourself and giving what you have been given.*”⁴⁸

Meanwhile there is a good match between the ‘emphatic stress + pauses + tempo + enumeration’ cluster and humour, where the latter amortises the speaker’s fear and shows the effective model to follow for those who are shy and scared:

“*So during this entire experience Nelson Mandela had invited Stadman and I to stay at his home. So when Nelson Mandela invites you, you stay. And I was so nervous. I was like ‘Oh my god, what am I gonna talk to, because it’s ten days, it’s ten days, it’s not just a dinner, it’s not a lunch, it’s ten days, it’s ten days, breakfast, lunch and dinner with Nelson Mandela, what am I gonna say?’ Sadman said: ‘Why don’t you try listening?’ So I did.*”⁴⁹

Conclusion

The conducted analysis of the relevant material enables me to draw certain conclusions. First and foremost, it has been found out that speeches by women bear common peculiar features. Syntactically they are full of repetitions, anaphoras, emphatic words and phrases, etc. Pauses are an effective tool to draw attention. Phonetic devices are clearly seen and perceived in public speeches as they serve an additional technique to manipulate the audience.

46 Oprah’s Tearful Speech at Power of Women. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

47 Oprah’s Tearful Speech at Power of Women. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

48 Oprah’s Tearful Speech at Power of Women. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

49 Oprah’s Tearful Speech at Power of Women. [online]. [2017-10-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rfn94k717U&t=594s>>.

All the speeches are totally emotional, sometimes with tears in the eyes, sometimes humorous. Every speaker got a standing ovation and inspired many people around the world. Moreover, public speeches delivered by women may show how women are treated in the society – whether they are regarded as positive, balanced, beautiful and harmonious creatures respected by the society and loved by men more than anything in the world or hated and loathed.

Every speaker starts with their family background and early childhood hardships to illustrate examples for the ones in need. And here is the issue of paramount importance: the speaker’s social and cultural background points are tightly connected with the topic. They experienced something (usually quite awful and unpleasant as Oprah Winfrey did in her childhood) and it echoes in the listener’s heart and finds some reflection, which later on will turn into an activity, will lead to an activity, which in its turn change their lives to the better.

Finally, taking into consideration the idea that any influence of famous personalities must have its achievement point and relevant feedback, it is possible to speak of media as of a bridge to human minds (see Figure 1), a key to their hearts and a trigger to their behavioural patterns.



Figure 1: Media as a bridge to human minds
Source: Own processing based on: As-Sirat [The Bridge]. [online]. [2018-03-09]. Available at: <<https://islam365.org/video/as-sirat-the-bridge/>>.

So, back to the question I posed before:

Is it commonplace? – Yes!

Is it manipulation? – Yes!

Our communication turns out to be a powerful tool of manipulation when the listener is ready to be manipulated. Whatever messages are used, they will be forgotten if you are not into it that very exact moment. It is not only about what you say but also about how you say it, how you feel when you say it.

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