

# A Critical Discourse Analysis of Hillary Clinton's (2016) Waiver Speech

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Discourse is a fundamental factor in all worldwide communication and is necessary for speakers to understand the language and its use. In a political world, discourse is an important tool where one's words are the primary means of communicating visions and ideologies and ultimately making people act upon them. In the light of the upcoming American presidential election, it is interesting to place the discourses of Hillary Clinton in the critical discourse analysis framework because political speeches are highly constructed pieces of discourse. Thus, implicit patterns embedded in discourses are expected to be identified as they are written and performed for specific purposes. The waiver has been given little attention from other researchers as a notion of Critical Discourse Analysis. However, this paper is an effort to shed light on this linguistic obscurity. This paper attempts to illuminate it and provide a clear picture of this concept with waiver samples, as shown in Clinton's speeches with some statistical tools to support the paper's objectives. Hillary Clinton delivered an amazing and encouraging waiver speech to all audiences around the world after her loss in the U.S. presidential election on November 8, 2016. The current paper is a critical discourse analysis of Hillary Clinton's waiver speech. It aims to investigate how this concept is used in critical discourse analysis. It is hypothesised that: 1- The description is used to express vocabulary and grammar in waiver speech. 2-The interpretation is used to show the propositional and coherent expressions. 3-The explanation is used to explain the ideology and power of waiver speech. In order to achieve the aims of the research, the following steps are followed: 1- Reviewing the literature about waiver speech. 2- Some devices such as description, interpretation, and explanation are also reviewed since they are relevant to the aims of the study. 3- Analyzing five texts of Clinton's waiver speech drawing upon the adopted model from Fairclough (1989).

**Key words:** *Waiver, critical discourse analysis, ideology, power.*



## Waiver

A waiver speech in politics is the act of a losing candidate publicly yielding to a winning candidate after an election when the outcome of the vote's overall result has become clear (Simons et al.,1986:111).

Political discourse waiver speeches are new areas of discourse analysis and are rare in the political realm, particularly in American politics. After the election results, many politicians do not accept defeat and those who accept do so primarily for the love of their people (ibid:112).

Political speech plays a major role in public speaking as an important speech, attracting great attention from home and abroad. Because of the uniqueness of political discourse, many scholars tend to analyse political discourse from the critical discourse analysis perspective in order to reveal the hidden hegemony and power resulting from the various ideologies and cultures(Swanson et .al.,1990:131).

A significant nature of the contents of waiver speeches informs the selection of the texts for this paper. The forms help to decode these politicians social purposes and ideologies, and these elements are used to convey to their listeners the real motives behind their waiver speeches (ibid).

The waiver speech of a high-office candidate reaches a broadcast age audience and is seen as the final triumphant return of a lost campaign. The campaign winner usually waits for a waiver speech, if one is forthcoming, before giving the acceptance speech. Usually, a losing candidate gives thanks to their supporters for their courageous efforts and points to the non-electoral successes of the campaign in building party strength and raising issues that would otherwise not be discussed in public. It is also traditional to congratulate and wish the winning candidate well, possibly even offering a word of advice, unless the campaign was exceptionally bitter (Partington et al., 2013: 34).

A waiver speech is optional and thus defeat may be refused by a candidate. With president Hillary Clinton, this is not the case. She does not see these as obstacles to the election winner's congratulations. Her speeches are viewed as congratulatory messages and the ideologies behind the speeches reveal that Clinton is conditionally admitted to the election result due to American's love (ibid).

### ***Types of Waiver*** ***Winning***

A winning presidential election campaign is a triumph, but the campaign hardly ends (Corcoran,1994:109). There is euphoria for the winner and his supporters, as close to ecstasy as politics can be. The speech of victory is inevitably a continuation of the battle. Fear of vast expectations, fear that his talents will be exposed as superficial, fear that he will be too small for the legendary role he will play. Victory's speech, then, is merely a continuation of all that has gone before: the campaigner's claim of goodness, determinism, and inevitability. Victory is now final, a prelude. The campaign continues, not only to wage office wars but to immediately launch the presidential campaign (Corcoran,1994:109-110).

### ***Losing***

Corcoran(1994:111) states that defeat is an unbearably public failure, a feeling of deep inner sorrow and mortification that is still unexpired; nearly an hour old must speak for itself. On the heels of crushed hopes is a final unpleasant experience: the speech of waiver. It is not surprising that for such a painful ceremony commonplaces have evolved. Metaphorically, it is a worse destiny than death. Not just bowing to the conquering enemy, but proclaiming his victory.

The conquered warrior, bloodied but unbowed, must offer his sworn enemy the wreath of victory. Suddenly war metaphors, mortal fighting arrogance, give way to bravery, sport. The rhetorical challenge is to pronounce one's defeat as an honouring event in the history of the nation, to face failure with a brave face, transforming defeat into a semblance of victory. Granting is a means of preventing defeat, giving the ground and giving the opponent victory. A presidential campaign needs a good end, a desire that extends to all those who witness it beyond the rival candidates. The rejection of democracy is the focus of attention for a brief moment. The loser on his own can truly congratulate the winner and at the same time absolve his immoralities from the electoral process (ibid).

It can be gracious only to the loser. In the received concepts of defeat, whatever the defeated might say, his waiver will be reported as very gracious indeed (Corcoran,1994:111-112).

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

In general, the analysis of discourse from a broad perspective refers to different meanings and activities within disciplines ranging, for example, from sociolinguistics to computational linguistics. Although these linguistic areas differ in approach, they all share the fundamental view of the analysis of discourse as the analysis of the use of language. In addition, it is not

just the study of linguistic forms, but also the study of their purposes in a communicative situation (Brown & Yule, 2003:1).

In other words, discourse analysis is not merely semantic knowledge, but rather a complex language knowledge to understand a successful communication practice. The research, having generally established the diversity of discourse analysis, is based on the theoretical basis of critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA)(Bloor and Bloor, 2007: 5).

CDA is a branch of discourse analysis that focuses on inequality, social and power relations, and often embedded within a political context. CDA is therefore interested in uncovering of power relations and hidden ideologies in social contexts. So, discourses are the product of ideology and social struggle (Van Dijk, 2008:85).

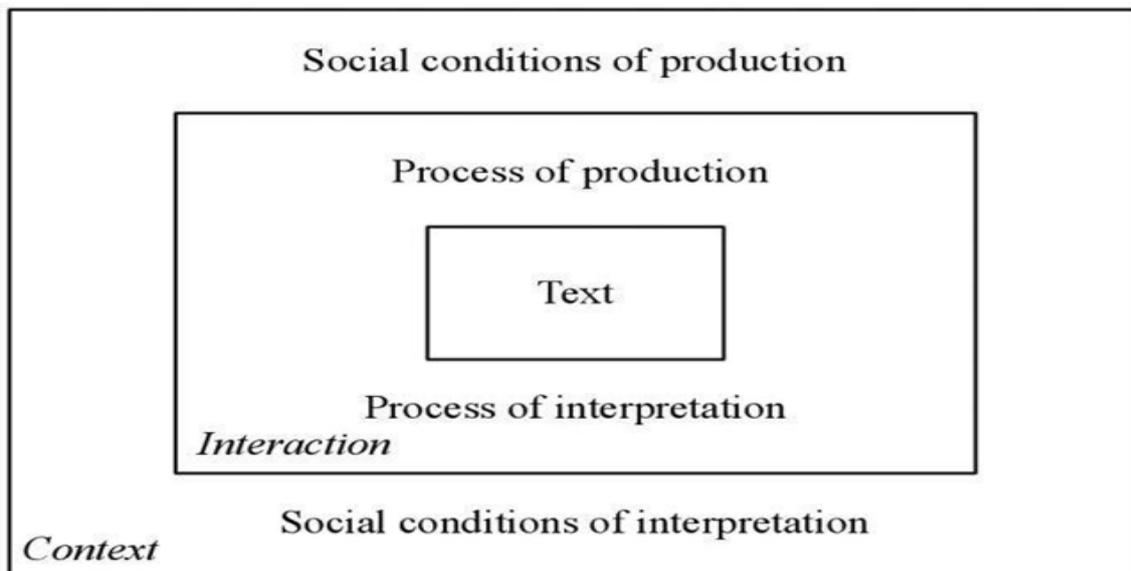
### ***Ideology***

Wodak and Ludwig (1999: 12-13) point out that three perspectives are implied by the CDA. First, the discourse power and ideologies are always involved. Second, discourse is always historical, i.e. it is synchronously and diachronically connected with other communicative events that occur simultaneously or have occurred before. Third, any approach to discourse analysis must take into account interpretation, so that readers and listeners may have different readings of the same communicative event pending upon their background knowledge, information, and position.

Furthermore, discourse does ideological work, meaning ideologies represent and build society and culture through discourse, and thus also create unequal relations of power. Therefore, looking at the text alone is not enough; the analyst also has to take into account the perlocutionary effect. As this research deals with Clinton's discourse, differentiating between political ideologies and discursive ideologies, this is of great importance. In elaboration, the concept of values is concerned with discursive ideologies.

Critical discourse analysts are responsible for determining the amount of contextual knowledge required for interpretation, which means that discourse understanding is always dependent on context and recipients. It is important to bear in mind when carrying out the analysis, that the analysts must perform a micro-and macro-level analysis. To specify, whereas a micro-level analysis focuses on grammatical aspects such as lexemes, phrases and sentences, the analysis of macro-levels places discourse within the context of society and culture. In his three-dimensional model, Fairclough conceptualises this idea (Fairclough,1989:21).

**Figure 1.** Fairclough(1989) three- dimensional model.



The analyst conducts a syntactic analysis of the discourse at the first level, represented by the inner box, focusing on grammatical aspects or other points that can be read directly from the text, ultimately requiring as much objectivity as the analyst can master. The first level is, therefore, a description of the object of analysis(Fairclough,1989:91).

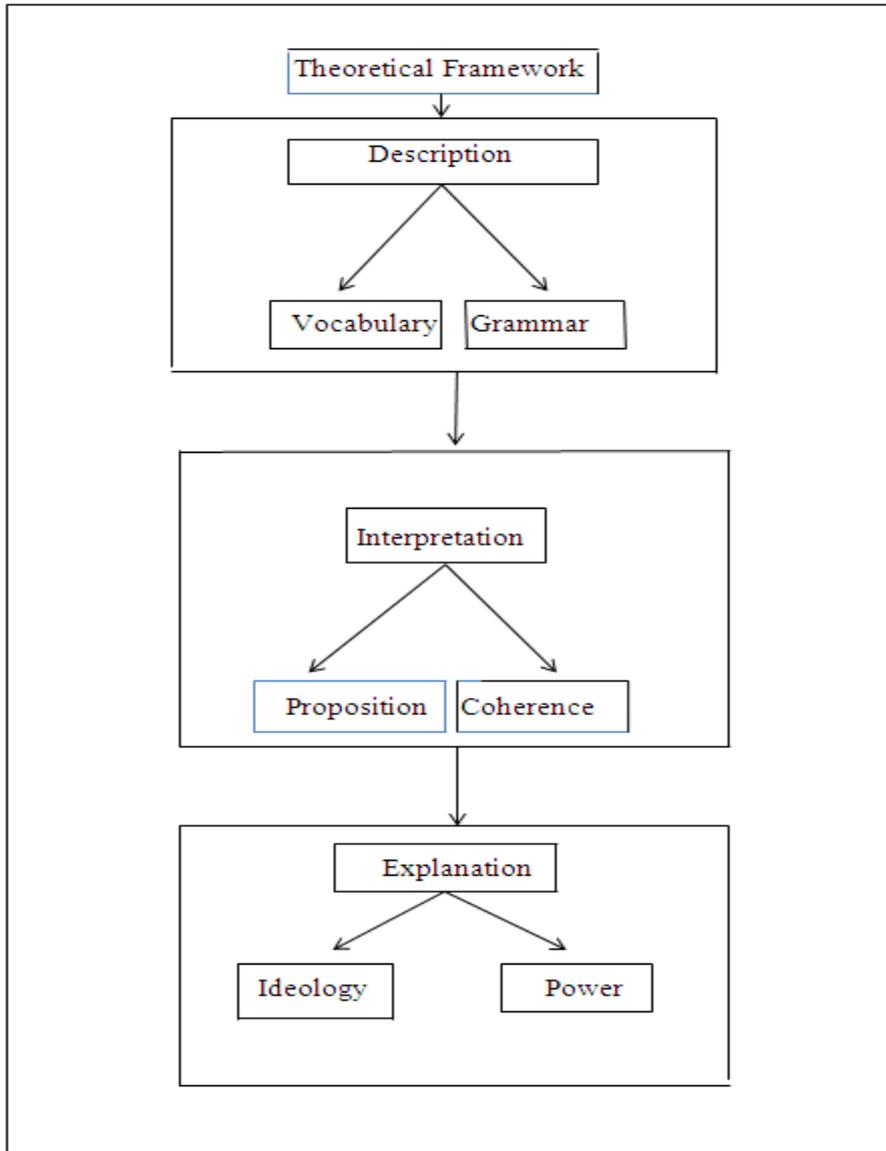
The second level represents the semantic part of the analysis of discourse and involves interpreting the text's meaning in its communicative situation. In other words, the discourse is seen from this perspective as a communicative action where the focus is on the sender and the recipient (ibid).

The third level, represented by the outer box, focuses on placing the text within a context of socio-culture. This is done by combining and contextually explaining the analytical data from the two previous levels (ibid).

### ***Power***

In this paper, power is taken to mean the ability gained by powerful or dominant individuals or groups that enables them to inculcate or instruct their social as well as political ideologies implicitly or explicitly through discourse. This view resembles Fairclough's (1989) 'ideological power' which is to generalise one's ideologies as common sense or universal. When analysing the following texts, two points are concentrated upon concerning power: first, authority and second, source.

**Figure 2.** The following is the the adopted theoretical framework based on Fairclough (1989)



### Model of Analysis

The chosen data is analysed according to the model which is adopted from Fairclough(1989). The adopted model is primarily based on a number of strategies. The basic elements of the model are the following:

The description stage is interested in revealing the proper properties of text. As Fairclough (1989: 110) points out, analysing choices between options (e.g. vocabulary or grammar) is carried out at this stage. In other words, he highlights a set of textual characteristics that are selective and tend to be most important to a CDA. For him, the three parameters to be analysed

in any text are either vocabulary and grammar. For the sake of mediating the correlation between text and social structures, Fairclough (1989: 140) asserts that knowledge of the formal properties of a text might not be sufficient. As such, this relationship could be mediated; first, when texts are interpreted (according to proposition and coherence) and produced opposite background of common-sense suppositions. Further, it could be mediated when the relationship between discourses and processes of struggle and power is explained.

## **Data Analysis**

### ***Text (1)***

Very rowdy group. Thank you, my friends. Thank you. Thank you, thank you so very much for being here and I love you all, too. This is not the outcome we wanted, or we worked so hard for, and I'm sorry that we did not win this election for the values we share and the vision we hold for our country. But I feel pride and gratitude for this wonderful campaign that we built together, this vast, diverse, creative, unruly, energized campaign. You represent the best of America, and being your candidate has been one of the greatest honors of my life.

## **A-Description**

### ***-Vocabulary***

In this text alternative wordings, classification schemes, or lexical choices are different naming for the vocabulary analysis that reveals the experiential values of words. Hillary Clinton starts her speech by thanking her audience and the ideology behind this word is to consider her audience as her friends. So she uses informal words like my friends to express her love to her country. Clinton uses euphemistic expressions to describe the campaign by saying it is a vast , diverse, and creative campaign.

### ***-Grammar***

Clinton uses declarative sentence at the beginning of her speech to declare her thanking and love to the American people like Thank you, my friends. Thank you. Thank you, thank you so very much for being here and I love you all, too . Then she expresses her losing of the campaign by using negative and compound sentences like This is not the outcome we wanted or we worked so hard for, and I'm sorry that we did not win this election for the values we share and the vision we hold for our country.

## **B-Interpretation**

### ***-Propositional meaning***

Proposition meaning of the words is the use of implicit meaning to arrive to the meaning of the whole proposition. Losing the campaign is not the result that Clinton wants , on the contrary, she feels pride and gratitude to her country for they love her like But I feel pride and gratitude

for this wonderful campaign . This expresses her strong attitude towards the result of the campaign.

### ***-Coherence***

Clinton's speech is coherent in the sense that she concentrates on one idea which is 'campaign'. She talks about it by being vast, diverse, creative, unruly, and energized. Then she ends her speech by accepting this result. So she concentrates on one part of the text with a coherence in meaning, connections, and consequences.

### **Explanation**

#### ***-Power***

There is an authority in Clinton's speech which is clearly found in the way she represents the campaign. Her power is presented in her words by saying I feel pride. For her , losing a campaign is a victory not a fail.

#### ***-Ideology***

Explaining waiver speech requires much attention to be paid on the ideology that makes it. The ideology of waiver is multidimensional. It can be observed through examining the words chosen in this text since these choices reflect the ideology intended. Waiver speech is ideologically presented through a number of dimensions some of which are: political, moral, social, or economic. In the matter of political and social dimension, Clinton emphasizes that she does not win the election and asserts that her candidates are the best of America.

#### ***Text (2)***

We have seen that our nation is more deeply divided than we thought. But I still believe in America, and I always will. And if you do, then we must accept this result and then look to the future. Donald Trump is going to be our president. We owe him an open mind and the chance to lead.

### **Description**

#### ***-Vocabulary***

In this text alternative wordings, classification schemes, or lexical choices are different naming for the vocabulary analysis that reveals the experiential values of words. Hillary Clinton continues her speech by talking about the election. She describes the election and the result of it by saying We have seen that our nation is more deeply divided than we thought. The ideology

behind using the word 'divided' that what comes to America is worse than before. So Clinton uses this word metaphorically. Clinton uses euphemistic expressions when she talks about the winner candidate who is Trump by stating that Donald Trump is going to be our president. We owe him an open mind and the chance to lead. She also uses informal expression when she speaks about president Donald Trump Donald Trump is going to be our president. We owe him an open mind and the chance to lead.

### ***-Grammar***

Clinton uses active sentence when she talks about her nation We have seen that our nation is more deeply divided than we thought. She also explains her acceptance of the result of the campaign by using complex sentence And if you do, then we must accept this result and then look to the future.

### **Interpretation**

#### ***-Proposition***

Clinton uses implicit meaning in order to give the meaning of the whole proposition. The implicit meaning of the word 'divided' is that the situation will be difficult and different with the following candidate We have seen that our nation is more deeply divided than we thought.

#### ***-Coherence***

Clinton is coherent in her speech. She begins talking about her country about the result of the election like But I still believe in America, and I always will. Then she mentions that she must accept the result and look at the future by giving a chance to Trump.

### **Explanation**

#### ***Power –***

There is an authority in Clinton's speech when she says We have seen that our nation is more deeply divided than we thought. But I still believe in America, and I always will. She expresses this idea after her losing the election.

#### ***-Ideology***

There is an ideology behind using the word 'divided' since it has its effect on American people and it has a further meaning that the nation will be divided than they thought.

### ***Text (3)***

Because, you know — you know, I believe we are stronger together and we will go forward together. And you should never, ever regret fighting for that. You know, scripture tells us, “Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”

### **Description**

#### ***-Vocabulary***

Clinton describes the situation of the result of the campaign by using formal vocabularies which are expressed by the scripture “Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” She uses the words 'stronger', 'fighting' metaphorically to express her power.

#### ***-Grammar***

Clinton uses complex sentence to express her strength Because, you know — you know, I believe we are stronger together and we will go forward together. She also asserts her strength by describing it positively depending on the scripture “Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”

### **Interpretation**

#### ***-Proposition***

Clinton uses the quotation by scripture “Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” to express the hidden meaning behind it. She tells the American people that they must be stronger and do not worry about the result because there are much to do in the future.

#### ***Coherence***

Clinton talks about one idea which the decisions for the future which means that losing the election is not the end like Because, you know — you know, I believe we are stronger together and we will go forward together.

### **Explanation**

#### ***-Power***

Clinton is powerful enough to deliver a presidential waiver speech after the result of the election. She support her speech by the scripture “Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in

due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” She does not worry about the result though she thinks about what to do in the future.

### ***-Ideology***

Clinton considers the text of the scripture as an ideological character to encourage her people and do not make them lose heart about this result like “Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”

### ***Text (4)***

Our constitutional democracy enshrines the peaceful transfer of power, and we don't just respect that, we cherish it. It also enshrines other things: the rule of law, the principle that we are all equal in rights and dignity, freedom of worship and expression. We respect and cherish these values, too, and we must defend them.

### **Description**

#### ***-Vocabulary***

Using synonym expressions like the rule of law, the principle that we are all equal in rights and dignity, freedom of worship and expression entails that Clinton accepts the result of the election and considers it as a law that all people must respect. The ideological significant use of these words means that power has to transfer from one to another logically and politically the peaceful transfer of power, and we don't just respect that, we cherish it.

#### ***-Grammar***

Clinton declares that all people have to submit to the law of the election and defend it. She uses compound sentences to numerate the important things that the law consists of it like the rule of law, the principle that we are all equal in rights and dignity, freedom of worship and expression.

### **Interpretation**

#### ***-Proposition***

The implicit meaning of this text is the acceptance of the campaign result according to the law . All people must respect the values of the law and defend it like Our constitutional democracy enshrines the peaceful transfer of power, and we don't just respect that, we cherish it.



### ***-Coherence***

Clinton concentrates on one idea which is the law and the principle of it. She states that these principles have valuable indications and all people have to respect them. Our constitutional democracy enshrines the peaceful transfer of power, and we don't just respect that, we cherish it.

### **Explanation**

#### ***-Power***

This text implies the power of the law and the power of the president Clinton. The power of the law is the must that all people must respect and cherish it like Our constitutional democracy enshrines the peaceful transfer of power, and we don't just respect that, we cherish it. while the Clinton's power is the acceptance of the result and thinks about what to do in the future.

#### ***-Ideology***

Here the ideology depends on the structure of the text and its effect. The words have ideological implication . It includes the power and the principles of this power.

#### ***Text (5)***

I've had successes and setbacks and sometimes painful ones. Many of you are at the beginning of your professional, public, and political careers — you will have successes and setbacks too. This loss hurts, but please never stop believing that fighting for what's right is worth it. It is, it is worth it.

### **Description**

#### ***-Vocabulary***

Clinton describes her losing of the election by using synonym vocabularies like 'painful', 'hurt', and 'setbacks'. But she believes that losing is not the end point since she fights for what's right.

#### ***-Grammar***

She uses compound and positive sentences to tell her audience about her successes and setbacks and how she fights for what she thinks it is right like I've had successes and setbacks and sometimes painful ones. Many of you are at the beginning of your professional, public, and political careers — you will have successes and setbacks too.

## Interpretation

### *-Proposition*

The meaning of her speech is that losing is not the end point of career but there is still much to do. This loss hurts, but please never stop believing that fighting for what's right is worth it. It is, it is worth it. The whole meaning implies that all she has done is for the love of her country and she encourages her people to do what they think it is right.

### *-Coherence*

She talks about one idea which is the end of the election, the successes and setbacks in her political work, and the hurt of losing the election. But finally she says that her country deserves to fight for it.

## Explanation

### *-Power*

Her power is represented by her speech. She says This loss hurts, but please never stop believing that fighting for what's right is worth it. It is, it is worth it.

### *-Ideology*

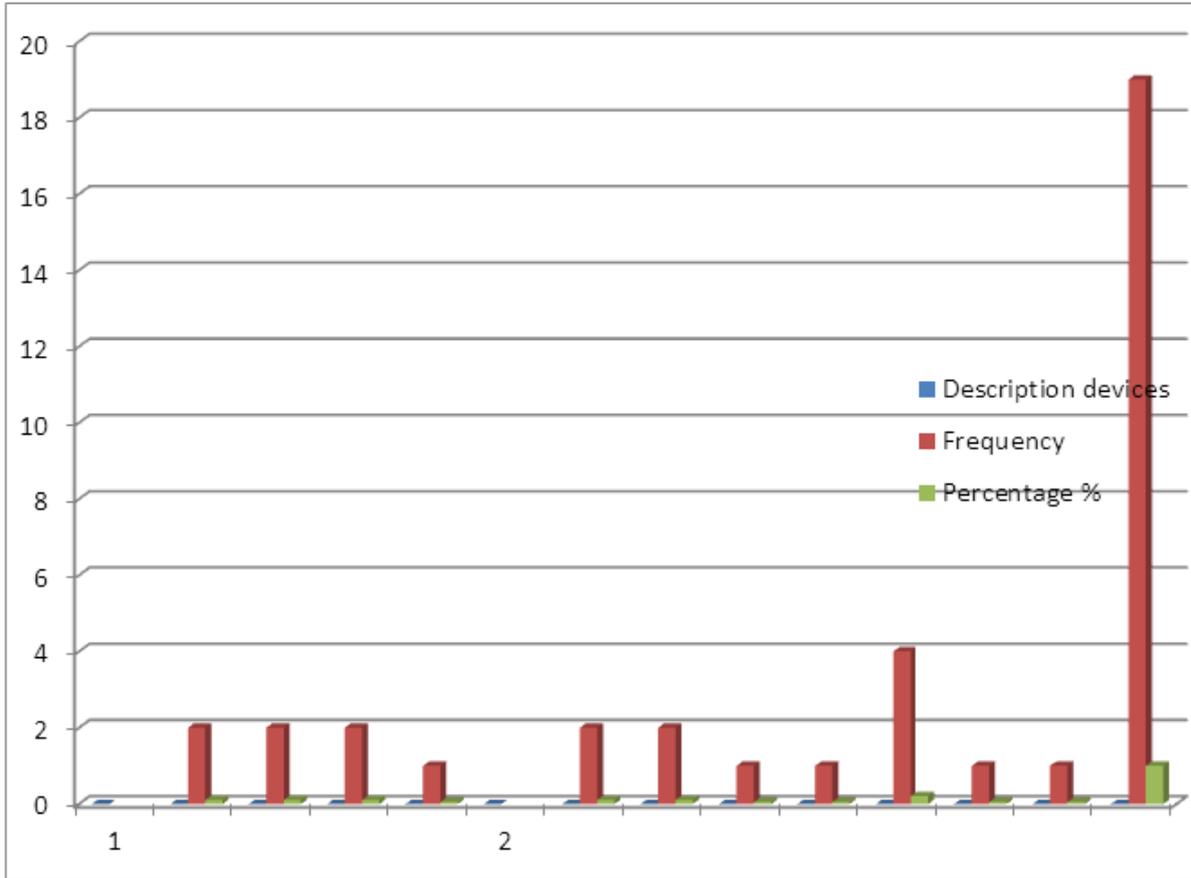
The ideology of her speech is that losing an election is not the real matter that she cares about instead it is fighting for the principles of her nation is the real matter which deserves to be respected.

**Table 1:** Frequency of occurrence and percentage of description devices

No.	Description devices	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Vocabulary		
	Euphemistic	2	10.5 %
	Formal	2	10.5 %
	Metaphor	2	10.5 %
	Informal	1	5 %
2.	Grammar		
	Declarative	2	10.5 %
	Positive	2	10.5 %
	Negative	1	5 %
	Synonym	1	5 %
	Compound	4	21 %
	Active	1	5 %
	Complex	1	5 %
	Total use of descriptive	19	100 %

	devices		
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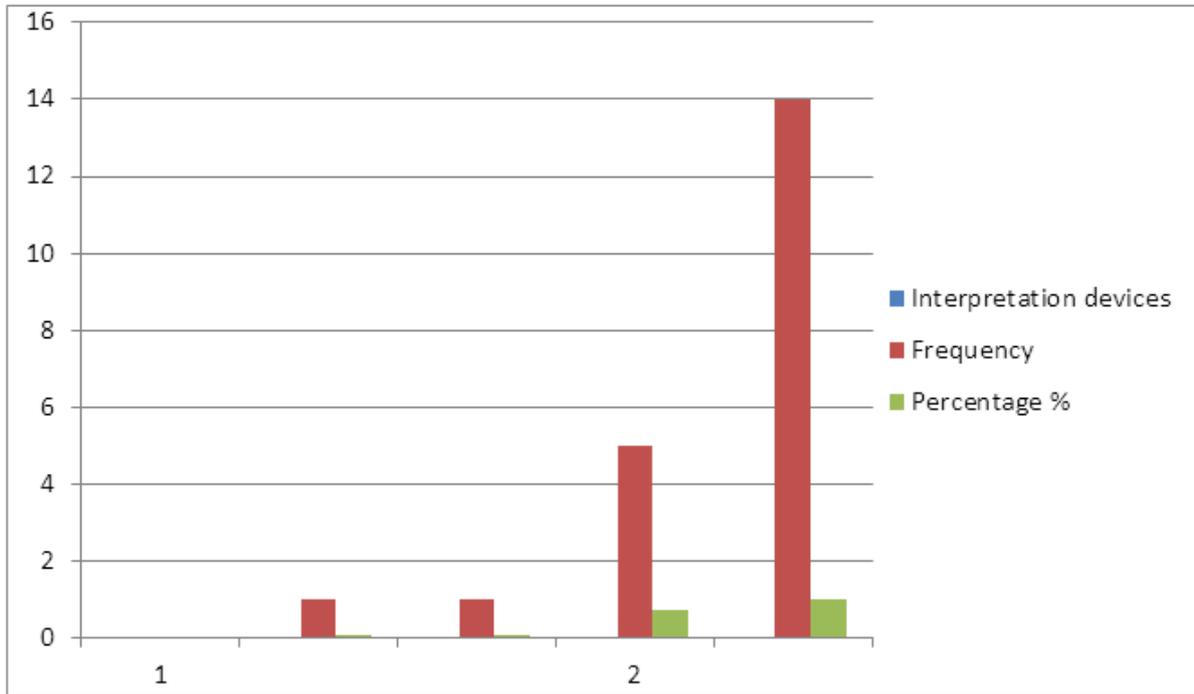
**Figure 1.** Frequency of occurrence and percentage of description devices



**Table 2:** Frequency of occurrence and percentage of interpretation devices

No.	Interpretation devices	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Propositional meaning		
	Pride	1	7 %
	Gratitude	1	7 %
2.	Coherence	5	71 %
	Total use of interpretive devices	14	100 %

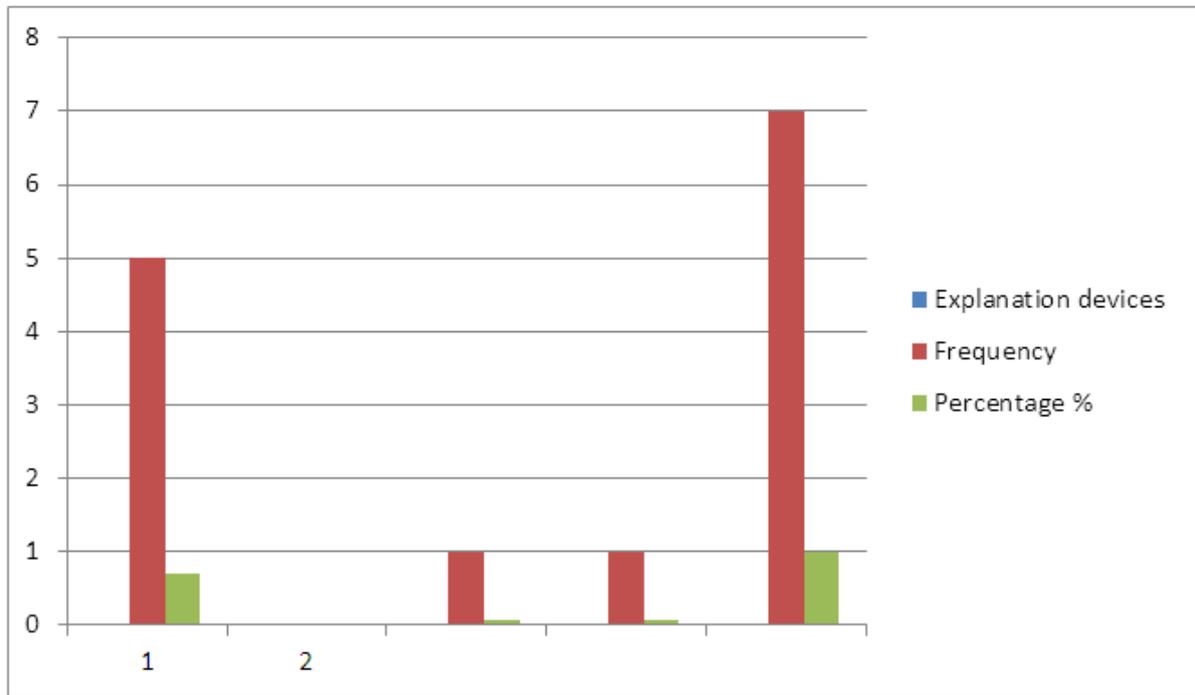
**Figure 2.** Frequency of occurrence and percentage of interpretation devices



**Table 3:** Frequency of occurrence and percentage of explanation devices

No.	Explanation devices	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Power	5	71 %
2.	Ideology		
	Effect	1	7 %
	Ideological character	1	7 %
	Total use of explanation devices	7	100 %

**Figure 3.** Frequency of occurrence and percentage of explanation devices



## Conclusions

It is concluded that:

1-The most frequent devices which are used by Clinton's political speech are descriptive devices which include grammar and vocabulary. The grammatical devices which are highly used by Clinton's speech are declarative , positive ,negative, active, synonym, complex, and compound sentences. Compound sentences have the percentage of (21%), declarative and positive sentences have the percentage of (10.5 %) while negative, active, synonym, and complex sentences have the percentage of (5%). Therefore these results approve the first hypothesis which states that the description is used to express vocabulary and grammar in waiver speech.

2- The analysis shows that the interpretation devices are used to explain the meaning of Clinton's political speech . Coherence is highly used by Clinton and it has the percentage of (71%) while propositional devices which include pride and gratitude have the same percentage of (7%). Therefore the results of the analysis approve the second hypothesis which states that the interpretation is used to show the propositional and coherent expressions.

3- The explanation devices power and ideology are used to explain the situation and the character of Hillary Clinton through her waiver speech. So power is used highly in Clinton's speech. It has the percentage of (71%) while the ideological devices ( effect and ideological character) have the same percentage of (7%). Therefore these results approve the third



hypothesis which states that the explanation is used to explain the ideology and power of waiver speech.



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