

Socio-Political Dimensions of the Speaker's Cognition in Political Discourse

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Abstract

The aim of the present paper is demonstrating how factive presupposition and epistemic modality uncover the social and political dimensions of the speaker's cognition in political discourse. Van Dijk's discourse-cognition-society triangle has been selected to analyze Hillary Clinton's political remarks on the Tunisian Revolution. First, based on the discursive analysis, the research findings reveal that factive presupposition and epistemic modality are frequently used and almost evenly distributed in the selected corpus. Second, the analysis of political cognition shows that the speaker's personal and social values and attitudes are demystified via cognitive frames and mental models relating to democracy and human rights. Third, studying social cognition in the corpus demonstrates that H. Clinton's personal values and attitudes are selections of the socially shared ideologies and opinions in her epistemic community. It also shows that she perceives the world in terms of ideological poles. The present research analyzes the socio-political dimensions of politicians' cognition via factive presupposition and epistemic modality from a socio-cognitive perspective.

Keywords: factivity, modality, political discourse, social cognition, political cognition, polarization.

1. Introduction

The present research is conducted within a combined framework, incorporating presupposition theory, epistemic modality and CDA. More specifically, van Dijk's (1995) socio-cognitive approach will be implemented to study presupposition and modality from cognitive and social perspectives. This seems to be an inviting area of analysis because these linguistic features help to unveil the knowledge background of the speaker in political discourse. The first part of the present paper examines factive presupposition triggers. The second part sheds light on epistemic modality and how it embeds the attitude of the discourse emitter. More concern is about demystifying the link between factive presupposition and epistemic modality and how they reveal the speaker's social and political cognition. The third part focuses on political discourse and, more importantly, the sociopolitical dimensions of discourse. The present paper attempts to answer the following research questions:

- a- How are the lexical features that trigger factive presupposition and epistemic modality distributed in Hillary Clinton's political discourse?
- b- What is the link between factive presupposition and epistemic modality?
- c- How do these linguistic features in discourse unveil H. Clinton's social and political cognition?

2. Literature review

2.1 Factive presupposition triggers

Epistemological presupposition may express both beliefs and knowledge. *Epistemological presuppositions* are defined as "deep, and often unstated beliefs that form the foundation of a particular system of knowledge" (Dilts, 1998, para.7). Epistemological presuppositions are also presented as fundamental assumptions upon which other ideas are built and proven. They are "the primary ideas and assumptions from which everything else in the field is derived" (Dilts, 1998, para. 18). In other words, they are the basic beliefs upon which other concepts are based. Factivity and presupposition are related pragmatic and linguistic phenomena. The lexical features that trigger factive presupposition are mainly factive verbs and factive noun phrases. Factive verbs are divided into epistemic and emotive verbs. First, epistemic or cognitive factives describe the mental state of affairs of the

agent, like in “*John knows/ doesn’t know that Baird invented television*” (Iwanov, 2014, p. 1), where it is presupposed that Baird invented television.

Second, emotive factives describe the emotional state of affairs or the feeling of the agent, like in “*Martha regrets/doesn’t regret drinking John’s homebrew*” (Iwanov, 2014, p. 2), where it is presupposed that Martha drank John’s homebrew. Factive verbs trigger epistemological presuppositions. Factive verbs are ‘know’, ‘be sorry that’, ‘be proud that’, ‘be indifferent that’, ‘be aware that’, etc. (Iwanov, 2014, p. 1-2). These verbs seem to reveal the speaker’s background knowledge since they trigger factive presuppositions, hence factual information. Since information is factual, the speaker seems to show strong commitment to the truth value of her propositions. A distinction, however, has to be made between ‘know’ and ‘believe’. The use of “*I believe that p*” reveals the speaker’s uncertainty about p, hence anti-presupposition (Chemla, 2008, p. 6). Factive presupposition is also triggered by noun phrases or NPs (Iwanov, 2014). Presenting personal beliefs as factual information is stronger when nouns that topicalize the epistemic certainty of propositions are utilized by the speaker (Schmid, 2001). These nouns are ‘fact’, ‘reality’, ‘truth’ and ‘certainty’ which can be used as markers of strong epistemic claims (Schmid, 2001, p. 1544). By using nouns in ‘that-clauses’, for instance, the speakers may sell their own views and personal opinions as objective truths and irrefutable facts. Speakers, in such constructions, give the impression that their views-disguised-as-truths represent given and shared knowledge by all discourse participants (Schmid, 2001).

2.2 Epistemic modality

Epistemic modality is an indicator of the source of information. Epistemic modals are interpreted by analysts on the ground of “a body of information or evidence, which is frequently referred to as the so-called what is known” (Song, 2009, p. 1). Epistemic modality expressions highlight the necessity/possibility of a proposition, or a pre-jacent depending on some evidence or knowledge (von Stechow & Gillies, 2007). However, epistemic modality does not affect the truth conditionality of an utterance (Papafragou, 2006, p. 1688). Epistemic modality is only a comment on the proposition expressed in the utterance. It is “the speaker’s assessment of probability and predictability” (Halliday, 1970, p. 349). It is something external to the content and a part of the speaker’s attitude towards her own speech role as ‘declarer’ (Halliday, 1970). It also signals the presupposition’s status in terms of the speaker’s commitment to it (Palmer, 1986). Such an attitude towards the truth conditionality of the proposition depends on evidentiality. As the aim of the present research is studying the speaker’s cognition, the focus will be on epistemic modal adverbs, epistemic modal adjectives and mental state predicates.

2.2.1 Modal adverbs

Modal adverbs are basically neutral, but in certain contexts, they may imply subjective or non-subjective evaluations (Nuyts, 2001). Jackendoff (1972) states (as cited in Drubig, 2001, p. 9) that modal or evidential adverbs, such as ‘probably’, ‘supposedly’, ‘evidentially’, ‘obviously’, cannot occur in negation scope. This can be illustrated in the following example, cited in Drubig (2001, p. 9):

(a) *John probably never ran so fast.*

(b) * *Never did John probably run so fast.*

Other modal adverbs, like ‘necessarily’, occur in the negation scope, but lack epistemic interpretations. Epistemic adverbs of certainty involve ‘certainly’, which expresses that the state of affairs is certain (Simon-Vandenberg, 2008). According to Grice (as cited in Simon-Vandenberg, 2008, p. 1531), the common assumption is that speakers say things they are sure about their truthfulness and for which they have evidence. In short, epistemic modal adverbs can be subjective, objective, or neutral depending on evidence and context.

2.2.2 Modal adjectives

Modal adjectives can also steer subjective, objective or neutral readings. Subjectivity is “systematically involved in adjectival expressions of epistemic modality” (Nuyts, 2001, p. 389). Adjectival constructions can express, depending on the form of the construction, both objective and subjective meanings (Nuyts, 2001). For instance, when a speaker uses the standard form ‘it is probable that’, she expresses non-subjectivity via the impersonal subject ‘it’ and the copula ‘be’, which asserts the modality expressed (Perkins, 1983, p. 67). Like

epistemic modal adverbs, epistemic modal adjectives can reveal the subjectivity, objectivity or neutrality of the speaker.

2.2.3 Mental state predicates

Mental state predicates are systematically subjective. Consequently, such predicates “typically and predominantly occur in contexts in which the speaker voices personal opinions” (Nuyts, 2001, p. 390). Mental state verbs occur in contexts that involve antagonism between the views of the speakers and hearers. Since they are inherently subjective, mental state predicates may be used to mitigate or hedge. This idea is illustrated by Nuyts (2001, p. 391) as follows:

(a) *Well, I thought that I had already said that a minute ago, didn't I?*

(b) *I think now I have to say something after all worthy colleagues.*

In (a) and (b), speakers are clearly sure about what they say. However, when they use the mental state predicate 'think', they express a tentative personal opinion. Such an opinion can be wrong, hence allowing other opinions or reactions on the part of the addressees. In short, mental state verbs are only subjective. Subjectivity leads to questioning the reliability of information and thinking about the attitude of the speaker. This also raises the question: how does epistemic modality unveil the speaker's social and political cognition in political discourse?

2.3 Political discourse

Political discourse is simply the discourse of politicians and a form of institutional discourse (van Dijk, 2002a). It must be delivered by the speaker when she plays the role of a politician in an institutional setting. In other words, discourse is political when it performs a political act in a political institution, like electoral campaigns, parliamentary debates, legislation, governing, decision making etc. It is political because of its function in the political process (van Dijk, 1997b, 2002b). Add to that, political discourse is ideologically controlled by political actors. Political discourse is influenced by ideologies via general social attitudes, more personal mental models of concrete events and context models of the communicative situation (vanDijk, 2002a). Reviewing Fiske's (1994) work, McGregor (2003) points out that “our words are politicized, even if we are not aware of it, because they carry the power that reflects the interests of those who speak” (para. 4). The discourse of people in power is taken as true and evident, whereas the words of those who are not in power may be rejected and considered as inappropriate and irrelevant. Dominant discourses interpret conditions, problems and events in favor of the elites' interest. The discourse of the marginalized groups is, however, considered as a threat to the ideological interests and propaganda efforts of the elite.

Political discourse is influenced by elite institutions and influences foreign policy. First, political cognition and political discourse are a product of complex inter-elite influences, or other elite discourses, such as those of the mass media, ministries, state agencies, scholars and other experts (van Dijk, 1997a). In this context, the goals of political discourse involve clarifying the understanding of issues by citizens, helping citizens to reach a judgment about how to solve problems, boosting citizens' contribution in political life and urging the future generations to be active social actors (Johnson & Johnson, 2000, p. 291). Second, political discourse constitutes a foreign policy line framework. It is one possible source of foreign policy (Larsen, 1997). In fact, approaches to discourse may offer a mechanism or a 'transmission belt' by which the international impulses are transmitted into policy. Such international impulses are internally translated through text and talk (Larsen, 1997).

Political Discourse Analysis (or PDA) is a critical approach to political discourse (van Dijk, 1997b). Critical political discourse analysis focuses on the reproduction of political power and power abuse via political discourse. This also involves dealing with the different forms of counter-power or opposition against discursive dominance (Fairclough, 1995). Locke (2004) states, in this regard, that critical researchers “tend to align themselves with a political agenda that is committed to challenging the relative power bases of competing discourses” (p. 37). As such, antagonism between different discourses is central since struggles occur between discourses, hence 'discursive antagonism' (Larsen, 1997, p. 20). Doing discourse analysis of political discourse is different from doing political analysis (van Dijk, 1997b, p. 37). The role of political discourse analysis “to relate the fine grain of linguistic behavior to what we understand by 'politics' or 'political behavior'” (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997, p. 211).

2.4 Sociopolitical dimensions of political discourse

The study of political cognition sheds light on the mental representations that political actors share. It focuses on different aspects of political information processing. More specifically, it “essentially deals with the acquisition, uses and structures of mental representations about political situations, events, actors and groups” (van Dijk, 2002b, p. 206). The main topics of such political cognition are how political beliefs are organized, how political candidates are perceived and how political judgments and decisions are made. It also deals with stereotypes, political group identity, public opinion etc. It covers other topics related to memory representations and the mental processes involved in political comprehension and interaction (van Dijk, 2002b, 2014).

Political cognition has social facets or dimensions. Social memory consists of representations about knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, values and norms. Some of such representations are schematically organized in the social mind. They represent political knowledge that is mostly group knowledge and is considered by opposing groups as mere political opinion. Unlike personal knowledge, which is stored in episodic memory, socially or culturally shared knowledge, however, has to be general and abstract (van Dijk, 2002b, p. 220). Hence, socio-political knowledge resides in the social memory of the human mind.

To comprehend political discourse, one has to unveil the underlying political cognition of participants in a political interaction. Both personal and socially shared beliefs may be organized in different “schematic formats, clustered and assigned a theoretical place in the overall architecture of the social mind” (van Dijk, 2002b, p. 224). Models form the mental background of all social interactions, more specifically discourse production and understanding (van Dijk, 2002b, 2014). This will be elaborated further while conducting the present research.

3. Research methodology

The corpus of the present study is a collection of Hillary Clinton's political remarks that focus on the Tunisian Revolution. The time span is from January 2011 to January 2013. The selected corpus consists of 27 press statements, interviews and remarks. Given their complexity and length, “AntConc” software has been used to analyze Clinton's discourse. The social and political cognition of the speaker will be analyzed within a combined framework. First, the classification of presupposition triggers is based on the works of Karttunen (1973), Levinson (1983), Yule (1996) and van Dijk (2003). The collected data involves factive presupposition triggers, namely factive verbs, emotive verbs and factive noun phrases. Second, studying epistemic modality, mainly mental state verbs, epistemic adjectives and epistemic adverbs, is based on the works of Karttunen (1972), Kratzer (1981; 1991), Lyons (1977), Palmer (1986), Perkins (1983) and Song (1999). The framework of analysis is van Dijk's socio-cognitive triangular approach to CDA. Table 1 illustrates these three analytical levels:

Table 1

Ideologies and Discourse: Levels of Analysis, adapted from van Dijk (1995, p. 20)

1- Social Analysis

- Group relations, e.g., discrimination, racism, sexism

2- Cognitive Analysis

a. Social cognition

- Sociocultural values, e.g., intelligence, honesty, solidarity, equality
- Systems of attitudes, e.g., about affirmative action, multiculturalism...

b. Personal cognition: General (context free)

- Personal values: personal selections from social values
- Personal attitudes: systems of personal opinions

3- Discourse Analysis

- Lexical features: factive presupposition and epistemic modals

The three stages of analysis of van Dijk’s (1995) approach will be implemented on Hillary Clinton’s political discourse regarding Tunisia’s democratic transition. First, discourse analysis focuses on factive presupposition and epistemic modality. Second, the cognitive analysis studies Clinton’s personal and social cognition, mainly personal and social values and attitudes regarding democracy and human rights in Tunisia. Third, the social analysis tackles only group relations based on the values, attitudes, ideologies and agendas of the speaker.

4. Results

As stated in the previous section, the findings have to be analyzed and interpreted on the basis of three levels of analysis, mainly discourse, cognition and society.

4.1 Discursive analysis

At this level, the corpus of the present study has been processed both manually, and computationally via "AntConc" concordance program. The following frequency lists have been obtained:

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Factive Presupposition Triggers and Epistemic Modals in the Corpus

Factive lexical triggers (94 items)		Epistemic modality (104 items)	Total N of Lexical Items
Factive verbs (80 items)	Emotive verbs (5 items)		
Be aware (2) Be forced (1) Forget (1) Know (51) Prove (3) Realize(1) Recognize(15) Remember(4) Remind (2)	Be proud(5)	Mental state verbs (62 items)	198
		Acknowledge (1), admit (1), think (51), understand (9)	
	FactiveNoun Phrases (9 items)	Modal adverbs (18 items)	
		Certainly (10), clearly (3), obviously (4), probably (1)	
		Modal adjectives (24 items)	
		Certain (1), clear (7), confident (4), obvious (2), sure (2), true (8)	

After examining table 2, which illustrates the lexical features to be analyzed in the corpus, one can note the important use of factive presupposition in Clinton’s political discourse, with a total number of 94 lexical items. Factive predicates come first (80 occurrences), followed by factive noun phrases (9 uses) and emotive verbs (5 uses). The most frequently used item in the category of active predicates is the verb ‘know’ (51 occurrences), followed by the verb ‘recognize’ (15 items).

One can also highlight the important use of epistemic modals (104 occurrences), mainly mental state verbs (62 occurrences), modal adjectives (24 items) and modal adverbs (18 uses). In the 'mental state verb' category, the verb ‘think’ is the most dominant mental state predicate (51 items). The second most frequently used verb is ‘understand’ (9 occurrences). In the 'modal adjective' category, one can note the dominance of the adjectives ‘true’ (8 features) and ‘clear’ (7 occurrences). In the 'epistemic modal adverb' category, one can highlight the important use of the adverb ‘certainly’ (10). As such, factive predicates (80) and mental state verbs (62) are the most dominant lexical categories in the selected political discourse.

4.2 Cognitive analysis:

4.2.1 Personal cognition

This stage of van Dijk’s approach (1995) examines mental models, mainly the speaker’s personal values and attitudes. Clinton’s mental representations are analyzed via factive presupposition and epistemic modality in the corpus. More emphasis is allocated to her views and perceptions of democracy and human rights. More specifically, the focus has to be on Clinton’s positive or negative attitudes towards entities, events and issues

discussed in her remarks. Figure 1 illustrates the frequency of occurrence of words relating to human rights, such as freedom, dignity, equality, solidarity etc.

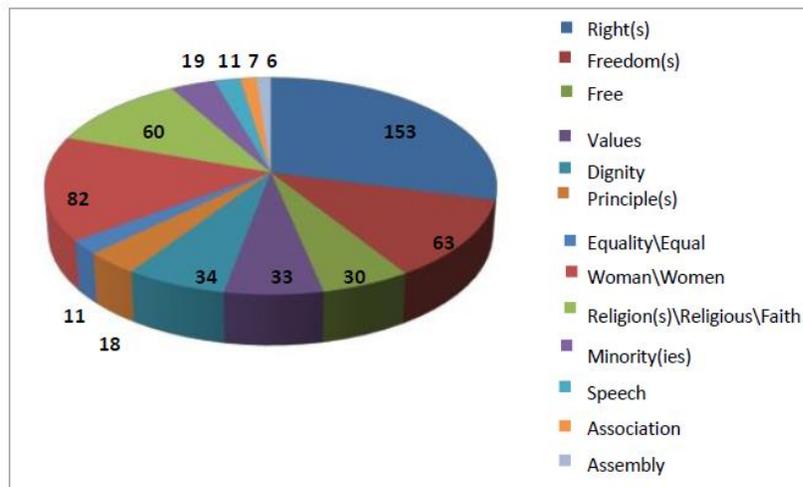


Figure 1. Diagrammatic Representation of the Frequency Distribution of Human Rights' Rhetoric in the Corpus

Figure 1 shows how the rhetoric related to human rights is distributed in the corpus. First, one can note the dominant use of the noun phrase 'right' (153 items) in its singular and plural forms. Such dominance conveys the speaker's main concern, which is promoting human rights in a new democracy, like Tunisia. Second, one can notice the frequent use of the singular noun 'woman', along with its plural form 'women' (82 items). This reflects Clinton's focus on feminist issues, particularly in newly-democratized Arab countries, because women are deprived of their basic rights in some regions. Third, the singular noun 'freedom' and its plural form 'freedoms' are frequently used in the corpus (63 items) to stress the importance of freedom as a basic human right. Based on Clinton's values, humans should not be jailed for expressing their opinions, adopting a different faith, or protesting in public. For democratic transitions to be successful, Clinton emphasizes the importance of providing more freedom for youths, women and every citizen.

Apart from values, one has to shed light on the main findings relating to Clinton's attitudes in the corpus. Adopting positive or negative attitudes depends on the issues discussed in discourse. First, Clinton has a clear positive attitude towards human rights, democratic transitions and religious freedom. Second, she reveals a clear negative attitude towards dictatorship, intolerance, fanaticism, corruption, oppression and authoritarian regimes. The speaker's views and attitudes are in favor of guaranteeing these rights in the Arab world, and more specifically Tunisia. She also supports women and minorities' rights. In this regard, she highlights the significant role that can be played by women and young people to determine the future of the country. According to Clinton, the rights to a decent life, a good job and physical sanctity are also necessary for building a sustainable democracy (See Appendix A).

However, Clinton shows negative attitudes towards human rights' violations, like torture, oppression, lack of freedom, intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion or gender. She expresses her bias against oppressive rulers or dictators, like Arab leaders in the Middle East and Ben Ali in Tunisia. Clinton denounces corruption and corrupt political systems. She is also critical about offensive remarks online that nurture hatred and religious intolerance. Similarly, she shows a negative attitude towards religious fanaticism and extremism. In sum, by promoting human rights and democracy in the Middle East and North Africa, Clinton fights the rulers' abuses of universal values and oppressive political systems.

The analysis of personal cognition in Clinton's political remarks on democracy and human rights in Tunisia in post-Ben Ali period has demonstrated that Clinton's personal values and attitudes are selections of the socially shared mental representations of her epistemic community, mainly the USA, and democratic communities in general. To have a clearer idea about Hillary Clinton's social as well as political cognition, one has to examine the socio-cultural values, systems of attitudes, ideologies and socio-cultural knowledge in her political discourse.

4.2.2 Social cognition

Social cognition is a system of socially shared representations or SRs, which may be conceptualized as networks, organized in hierarchical structures in terms of node-categories. For example, social representations about groups may feature nodes, like cultural characteristics, socio-political goals, appearance, origin, religion, political orientation etc. These categories determine the propositional contents of SRs, which encode shared social knowledge as well as evaluative information, like opinions and attitudes towards other people, groups or communities.

4.2.2.1 Socio-cultural values and systems of attitudes

The SRs, related to social and cultural values and attitudes, are social because they are acquired, changed and utilized in social situations. They are shared cognitions between all or most of the members of a group. They are abstractions of personal experiences and opinions of social actors. Such personal cognitive representations undergo a process of adaptation, abstraction or generalization to become socially shared values, or opinions. More specifically, SRs are any socially shared cognitive representations about social phenomena, such as social problems, social groups and social relations.

After examining the corpus of the present research to study personal values and attitudes, one can emphasize that Clinton's personal values are selections of socially shared values and principles, like in "[...] *while remembering that human rights are at the center of some of the most significant challenges to global security and stability and therefore to our national interests* (Dec.6.12\App. B, p. 38). In fact, Clinton calls for universal human rights values, which are acquired, saved and retrieved to be reproduced in discourse. Political and humanitarian values, like democratic principles and human rights, are shared, cognitive representations that make discourse meaningful and facilitate its interpretation and understanding, like in "*But at the same time, one must never forget universal values are vital to who we are and what we hope to see our world become. And they are American values and Irish values; I would argue they are everyone's values* (Dec.6.12\App. B, p. 38). Clinton's cognitive interface embeds social, cultural, political and religious values of a community or a group.

Regarding attitudes, Clinton reflects the attitudes of her American society, in general, and her government, in particular, since she is the US Secretary of State. She also expresses the attitudes of groups, like humanists and feminists, since she defends the rights of disadvantaged and unprivileged people, including religious minorities, LGBT communities and women, like in "*I can certainly promise you, it will continue to be mine. I will continue advocating for civil society, working to make democracy real, pushing for Internet freedom, standing with religious minorities, women, LGBT communities, people with disabilities* (Dec.6.12\App. B, p. 43). However, Clinton, sometimes, stresses the idea that her opinion is personal, and hence expresses her personal convictions, not the group's beliefs or her epistemic community's views, like in "*I personally have no doubt that if women everywhere were treated as equal to men in rights and dignity, we would see economic and political progress come to places that are now teetering on the edge* (Dec.6.12\App. B, p. 42). In short, the micro-level of Clinton's values and attitudes reflects the macro-level of socially and culturally shared values and attitudes.

4.2.2.2 Ideologies and socio-cultural knowledge

At this level, the focus has to be on the social and ideological representations, embedded in Clinton's discourse. Mental models are the cognitive representations of personal experiences and interpretations, involving personal knowledge and opinions. Whereas mental models are situated in episodic memory, socially shared SRs are located in social memory. Mental models play the role of interface between the personal and individual uses of SRs in social perception and interaction, and the generalized SRs shared by a group, community or society. Similarly, mental models are the basis of SRs and general knowledge.

In the corpus of the current study, one can note that Clinton's beliefs reflect the socially shared opinions of her epistemic community. For instance, Clinton's feminist ideology about women's equality with men emanates from the socially shared ideological beliefs of her society, or at least the feminist groups in the USA and elsewhere, like in "*And certainly in Tunisia, they are saying all the right things. They are saying that they will protect women's rights, that—they are saying that they will protect human rights* (Feb.26.12\App. B, p. 26). Likewise, Clinton, who is a democrat, might have stored personal beliefs and attitudes about

democracy in the past. She retrieves these stored mental models and reuses them in political discourse to highlight the democratic values and principles of her epistemic community, in this case democrats in the USA and everywhere in the world, like in "*I want to acknowledge Tunisia establishing an independent Electoral Commission, made up of jurists and civil society leaders* (July1.11\App. B, p. 15)".

As far as knowledge is concerned, one can state that knowledge is basically social since people acquire knowledge mostly from public discourse, whether it is school discourse, media discourse, political, parliamentary discourse and everyday social interactions. Subsequently, knowledge is socially shared by the members of certain societies. Personal knowledge scripts are selections of cultural, social and universal knowledge. First, Clinton uses cultural knowledge, or commonground, to speak about religious freedom in her country, such as Muslim Americans in the USA, like in "*I mean, if you go to the United States, you see mosques everywhere, you see Muslim Americans everywhere. That's the fact* (Feb.25.1.12\App. B, p. 25). Second, she shows knowledge about democracies to reflect what is taken for granted by democrats, hence group knowledge, like in "*Clearly this is a moment of significant transition in Tunisia and through this period and beyond it is important that the Tunisian Government respects the right of its people to peacefully assemble and express their views* (Jan.14.11\App. B, p. 1). Third, Clinton also promotes human rights, which she thinks they are universal values that should be granted for every individual in the globe. Such a kind of knowledge is international and may be based on scientifically approved facts, specialized knowledge and evidence.

In short, one can deduce that group beliefs affect and shape personal beliefs. In other words, social cognition influences personal cognition. Subsequently, Clinton's personal values, attitudes, ideologies and knowledge are different types of social representations. After dealing with the discursive and cognitive analyses of Clinton's political remarks about the Tunisian revolution, one can tackle the final stage of van Dijk's (1995) triangular approach, mainly the social component.

4.3 Social analysis: Group relations

At the social level, focus has to be on the communities and groups mentioned in Clinton's discourse and the cognitive representations shared by their members. In other words, groups whose socio-cultural values, attitudes, knowledge and ideologies determine their collective identities have to be studied. After examining the corpus, one can notice an IN-GROUP\OUT-GROUP structure. First, Clinton's mental representations determine who belongs to the IN-GROUP, what degree of involvement is considered and how much information is given about IN-GROUP social actors. Consequently, Clinton understands the world in terms of categories by ordering, classifying and organizing social actors in discourse. Clinton mentally transforms people and the world in terms of her categories.

Second, the OUT-GROUP social actors are interpreted, shaped and organized by Clinton who understands the others and evaluates them in terms of her perspective. Outsiders, according to Clinton, stand far away from 'OUR' standards because they are different from 'US'. 'THEY' refers to extremists, oppressors, dictators and human rights' violators. Difference is negatively evaluated by Clinton, who opts for a 'WE-THEY' dichotomy that divides the world into two poles. Clinton stores mental models, involving beliefs, attitudes and knowledge about 'OTHERS' values, customs, habits, religious beliefs and socio-cultural features to organize them in terms of categories or mental frames. Group interests as well as everyday inter\intra-group interactions, perceptions and norms shape social representations about IN-GROUPS and OUT-GROUPS.

Ideologies play a significant role in categorizing people into groups based on their ideological backgrounds. In the corpus, Clinton categorizes the world as democratic countries, non-democratic countries and countries in transitions. These groups are depicted as cooperating and conflicting depending on the group ideologies, goals and interests. The first ideological group is Clinton's democratic community, which defends democracy and cooperates with countries in transitions, like Tunisia. Clinton's group, however, shows a negative attitude towards extremists and governments that work hard to impede the democratization process. Clinton's Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs) reflect a triangular mental map, which consists of 'democrats', 'our allies' and 'our enemies'. Relations between democrats and 'our allies' are based on positive mental representations, like friendship, solidarity, cooperation, collaboration and humanitarian aid. However, relations between democrats and 'our enemies' are based on negative image schemas, such as extremism, enmity, threat, hijackers of democracy, dictators etc.

The discursive strategies of polarization, in the corpus, are based on semantic macrostructure, local meanings and lexicon. The semantic macrostructures are based on two strategies. The first strategy is POSITIVESELF-PRESENTATION, like in “we’ve been on the side of freedom, we’ve been on the side of human rights” (Feb.25.12\Ap. B, p. 23). What is foregrounded is Clinton’s enumeration of American principles, like freedom and human rights. As such, Clinton gives a very positive account of the American history. The second strategy is NEGATIVE OTHER-PRESENTATION, like in “Now, personally, I think that you will face extremists who are trying to really change the Tunisian culture” (Feb.25.12\Ap. B, p. 23). Clinton depicts a negative image about extremists and shows a hostile attitude towards them. This image can also be portrayed by de-emphasizing or rejecting negative topics about ‘US’, like in “There are comments made that certainly don’t reflect the United States, don’t reflect our foreign policy” (Feb.25.12\Ap. B, p. 25). In this example, Clinton rejects any doubts about the US intolerance with Islam and Muslims in America.

As for local meaning strategies, one can notice Clinton’s focus on and explicitness about ‘OUR GOOD ACTIONS’ as opposed to ‘THEIR BAD ACTIONS’. One can note the prevalence of positive lexicon collocated with ‘WE’, like in “But the United States stands very clearly on the side of peaceful protest, nonviolent resolution, political reform” (Mar.16’.11\Ap. B, p. 5). Indeed, Clinton selects positive words to present the USA, such as the adjectives ‘peaceful’ and ‘nonviolent’ and the noun phrases ‘resolution’ and ‘reform’. However, Clinton selects negative words for ‘THEM’, like in “It’s very true that many governments attempt to squeeze civil society in a steel vise[...] punishing people, harassing them, beating them, imprisoning them for who they are” (Dec.6.12\Ap. B, p. 41). In fact, Clinton uses words that imply negative connotations, such as the verb ‘squeeze’ and the gerunds ‘punishing’, ‘harassing’, ‘beating’ and ‘imprisoning’. This builds very negative image schemas about non-democratic governments.

The third group includes countries in transitions, in this case, Tunisia as a model. The discursive strategies are used to positively present countries in transitions. In the whole corpus, Clinton opts for different persuasive strategies to convince audience about the benefits of democratic changes. Apart from the positive presentation of Tunisia’s revolution and its democratization process, Clinton mitigates its drawbacks, like in “We are well aware of the challenges that come with these kinds of transitions. You cannot create jobs or economic opportunities overnight” (Feb.28’.11\Ap. B, p. 2). Clinton also emphasizes friendship and cooperation between the US and Tunisia to promote democratic transitions in the regions.

At the socio-cognitive level, Tunisians are prototypically framed as struggling youths protesting for human rights and democracy. On behalf of the USA, Clinton establishes good relations with countries that adopt the American ideals or democratic principles. This can be inferred from the following example: “Let us be sure that we support these new democracies” (July.1.11\Ap. B, p. 16). Figure 2 illustrates the relations between social groups in Clinton’s discourse:

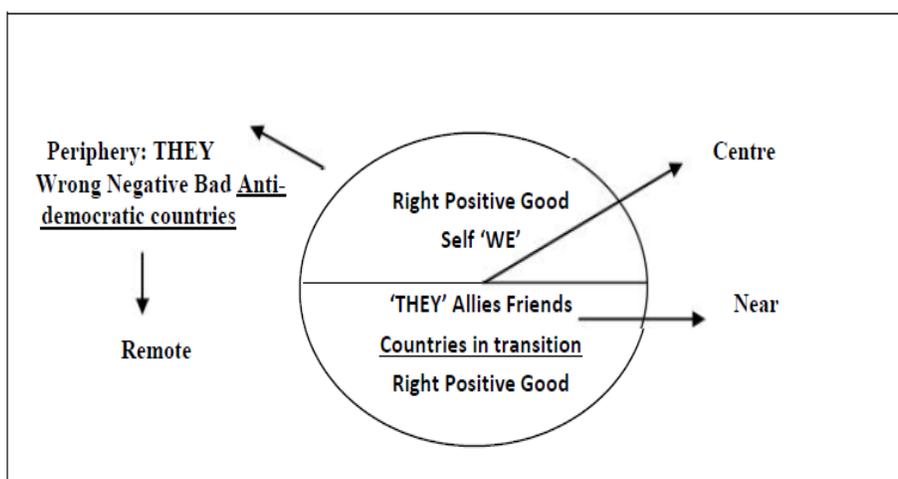


Figure 2. Rightness-Wrongness Proximity-Remoteness Scale

Inspired by Chilton’s (2004) scale, figure 2 demonstrates that ‘WE’ and friends, allies and countries in democratic transitions, or INSIDERS, are collocated with positive words, like ‘right’ and ‘good’. However, ‘THEY’,

referring to anti-democratic countries or OUTSIDERS, are depicted negatively by allocating pejorative words, like 'wrong' and 'bad'. Likewise, 'WE' or the SELF is located in the CENTRE of the image schema. 'THEY' or our friends are NEAR, whereas 'THEY' or our enemies are marginalized in the PERIPHERY. Hence, RIGHTNESS and PROXIMITY are the characteristics of groups like 'us', while WRONGNESS and REMOTENESS are the aspects of groups that are different from 'us'.

5. Discussion

To start with, one can note that 'think' is a predicate that performs a mental act. It endorses a judgment, an evaluation, an assessment or an opinion. Such a judgment reveals the perspective or point of view of the speaker. It is the mirror that reflects the speaker's perception of the real as well as fictitious worlds. It shows how the discourse emitter understands and interprets events and entities around her. 'Think' foregrounds information and explicitly reveals the propositional content of the utterance. 'Think' expresses the attitude of the speaker clearly, leaving no doubts on the part of the hearer. It is a direct and subjective way to convey personal as well as group thoughts and opinions about particular issues. It signals a great deal of speaker involvement. Such strong personal involvement unveils the speaker's perception of events, entities and issues and her mental or epistemic state. In sum, the predicate 'think' reveals the speaker's personal thoughts and her own views, hence her personal values and attitudes.

Since 'know' is a primary verb that expresses the speaker's knowledge, it is used to claim the objectivity and reliability of information. It is also a factive verb that takes a complement clause. The truth conditionality of the proposition is presupposed by the addresser. Indeed, what is presupposed in p is presented as taken for granted. The proposition p is introduced as previous knowledge that is personal or shared by an epistemic community. Such past knowledge seems to be unchallengeable and irrefutable by discourse participants since it is not the speaker's personal point of view or her biased attitude towards events. The use of the factive predicate 'know' means that the proposition is based on evidence, or given by a reliable source. As such, knowledge is not a matter of doubt or controversy because it is shared and accepted by all group members.

'Know' is a typical factive verb that triggers factive presupposition, while 'think' is a typical verb that encodes epistemic modality. Presupposition is always restricted to non-asserted true propositions, while epistemic modality asserts the propositional content of utterances. As a whole, the features that embed presupposed, factual information are 94 items, compared to 104 features that describe the epistemic commitment of the speaker to the truth of such information. Whether they encode facts or opinions, both factive presupposition and epistemic modality uncover Clinton's mental state and her perception of the world. In other words, factive presupposition and epistemic modality reveal both the unstated and stated knowledge and attitudes in the corpus. Epistemic presupposition deals with what is unstated in the corpus, while epistemic modality focuses on what is stated in Clinton's discourse. For instance, propositions introduced by 'know' pertain to non-asserted, taken for granted knowledge, whereas propositions stated after 'certainly' are asserted beliefs or knowledge.

One has to demystify the link between epistemic modality and presupposition. One can highlight that when the speaker uses a mental state verb, she has evidence that leads her to express epistemic involvement in the truth of the proposition p. For instance, in "*But think of how many people need this help right now*" (6.12.12\Ap. B, p. 41), Clinton uses the imperative form to call recipients to perform a mental act. Asking recipients to think about people who need help presupposes the truth value of p. Thus, factive presuppositions are based on epistemic evidence. The same can be noted about the epistemic modal adverb in the following example: "*But the United States stands very clearly on the side of peaceful protest, nonviolent resolution, political reform*" (16'.3.11\Ap. B, p. 5). The modal adverb 'clearly' rejects any doubt that the proposition can be false. Hence, p is given as presupposed knowledge. Clinton presupposes p because she has evidence for it. Another example of presuppositions, triggered by epistemic modality, is the following: "*But then the people who are elected have to also respect their people. And that is true whether it is a Christian party, a Hindu party, or a Muslim party*" (25.2.12\Ap. B, p. 22). The epistemic adjective 'true' evaluates the truth value of p by performing a mental act that confirms the factuality of the proposition. Clinton relies on her previous, personal knowledge to introduce p as factive, presupposed knowledge. In short, epistemic modals function as factive presupposition triggers.

At this level, one has to emphasize the social and political dimensions of Clinton's personal values and attitudes. They are selections or fragments of socio-cultural values and the systems of attitudes. First, Clinton's personal values translate the democratic societies' values and principles, mainly human rights and democratic values. Second, Clinton's attitudes mirror the US community's perception, interpretation and evaluation of events and entities. In sum, personal cognition is influenced by social cognition. At the cognitive level, one can note that mental models and sub-models are evaluative and subjective interpretations of social situations. These mental frames are fragments of past experiences and previous knowledge, hence what is already stored in our memories about the real, perceptual world as well as what we internalize from the abstract, conceptual world. The retrieval and activation of such cognitive frames facilitate discourse production and understanding. Decoding these mental representations in discourse uncovers the speaker's cognitive frames and the kind of mental models she stores via discourse lexical features.

Clinton's values and attitudes, manifested in discourse, reflect her ethics, convictions, evaluations and assessments of events and people. In the corpus, discourse unveils the speaker's adoption of humanist values and her involvement in defending the rights of disadvantaged people, more specifically people who seek freedom and flee dictatorship and oppression. The attitudes of the speaker have also been examined to reveal a very positive attitude towards guaranteeing human rights and implementing democratic principles in Tunisia and non-democratic countries, in general. A similar positive attitude has been noticed towards countries in transitions that seek democratic change. However, Clinton's negative attitude towards dictators, oppressors and the opponents of democracy and human rights is obvious. These values and attitudes mirror Clinton's perceptual world, how she grasps events and from what perspective she makes evaluative judgments.

After discussing the main results obtained at the discursive and cognitive analytical stages, one has to discuss the main findings obtained at the social level of van Dijk's (1995) triangular approach. It has been shown how group relations are based on ideological differences. Clinton's perceptual world is divided into 'WE', 'friends' or 'pro-democratic countries' and 'THEY', 'enemies' or 'anti-democratic countries'. Relations between 'WE' and 'pro-democracy', more specifically relations between the USA and Tunisia, are based on friendship, cooperation, solidarity and collaboration at different levels. However, relations with 'THEY' or 'OTHERS' are negative and based on hostility since they have different socio-political norms, identities, interests and goals. These relations are also based on enmity, conflict, opposition, belligerence and contrasting agendas.

Polarization occurs when a dichotomy of 'US' vs. 'THEM' portrays adversarial, conflicting or evil ideologies, based on the American system of beliefs and values. It has been found out, in this regard, that construing the world involves a process of ordering the world in terms of our categories, organizing and classifying it and actively bringing it under control in some way. This means that when we encounter the other, we actively assimilate it and transform it in terms of our categories of understanding. In the present study, Clinton classifies non-democratic countries and countries in transition according to her perception of the world as well as the US norms and values. We understand and evaluate the other from perspective. As such, in processing any discourse, people position other entities in their world by positioning these entities in relation with themselves.

It can be stated, in this regard, that language users engage in text and talk as members of multiple social categories. They display social identities in discourse. At the micro level, it has been noticed that, at the discourse level, there are conflicts of interests between democrats and non-democrats to promote their agendas and values. Struggle for gender equality and religious freedom has also been observed in Hillary Clinton's political discourse. At the macro level, political institutions attempt to resolve conflicts of interests and work to ensure the power of dominant groups, in this case American democracy promoters. A powerful group may control the action and cognition of other groups by limiting the freedom of others to think and act. In short, modern effective power is mostly cognitive, and it is exerted via discourse.

6. Conclusion

One can recapitulate that attitudes are a mixture of personal opinions, derived from personal experiences or old models, and more general opinions, stored in the socially shared attitudes of some social groups and sub-groups. Although their general knowledge is constant, people construct different models representing different angles and points of view of the same entity. SRs control our construction of models, and, thus, influence discourse production and understanding. As such, discourse can be considered a mirror that reflects the

speakers' attitudes. As these attitudes are arranged around a core or a cognitive concept, they are ego-centered because people evaluate entities according to their perspectives and norms.

One can also conclude that at the discourse level, factive presupposition, and epistemic modality uncover the speaker's background knowledge, her perception of Tunisia's revolution and her conception of human rights and democracy. At the cognitive level, the discourse emitter's values, attitudes and mental models reflect the personal, social and political cognition of Hillary Clinton and her epistemic community. At the social level, group relations establish a mental map based on polarization, dividing the world into three spheres, mainly democracies, countries in transition and anti-democracies. As such, CDA, more specifically van Dijk's (1995) discourse-cognition-society triangle, has demystified Clinton's perceptual and conceptual worlds discursively, cognitively and socially.

The major contribution of the current research is that it provides needed evidence on the link between factive presupposition and epistemic modality and their role in building the epistemic world of the speaker. This study sheds more light on the personal, social and political cognition of politicians. This, however, leads to investigating whether factive presupposition and epistemic modality express 'de-facto' factual knowledge, or whether they are used by politicians to just promote or sell ideological assumptions in political discourse?

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Appendix A

Clinton's Attitudes towards Human Rights and American Values

Excerpt N	Clinton's Attitude	Date & Ref.	Excerpt N	Clinton's Attitude	Date & Ref.
(1)	Positive towards the Tunisian revolution	Feb.25.2.12 Ap.B,p25	(18)	Positive towards Tunisia's success	Feb25'. 12 Ap. B, p 26
(2)	Positive towards peace, prosperity, dignity and democracy	Feb.25.12 Ap.B,p19	(19)	Positive towards Tunisia's democratic transition and the protection of human rights	Jan14.11 Ap. B, p 1

(3)	Positive towards Tunisia's strategic location.	Feb.25.12 Ap.B,p21	(20)	Positive towards the American ideals and values	Dec.6.12 Ap.B,p38
(4)	Negative towards extremists.	Feb.25.12 Ap.B,p23	(21)	Positive towards the US foreign diplomacy	Oct.12. 12 App.B,p37
(5)	Positive towards dignity, respect and democracy	Feb.25.12 Ap.B,p24	(22)	Positive towards solidarity, democracy, and stability	Mar17. 11 Ap.B,p8
(6)	Negative towards oppressive regimes	Dec.6.12 Ap.B,p41	(23)	Positive towards humanitarian intervention after Tunisians' illegal immigration to Europe	Feb.28'.11 Ap.B,p1
(7)	Positive towards democratic transitions	Sept.21.12 Ap.B,p30	(24)	Positive towards youth empowerment	July1.11 Ap.B,p15
(8)	Negative towards human rights abuse in Libya and Tunisia in the past	Oct.12.11 Ap. B, p 36	(25)	Positive towards human rights, like a decent life.	Feb.28'.11 Ap. B, p 2
(9)	Positive towards women rights and human rights in Tunisia	Oct.12.11 Ap. B, p 36	(26)	Negative towards Internet videos that are offensive to religions	Sep.28. 12 Ap. B, p 32
(10)	Negative towards movements against LGBT community.	Dec. 6.12 Ap. B, p 41	(27)	Positive towards democratic transitions	Feb28'.11 Ap. B, p 2
(11)	Positive towards religious freedom	Dec.6.12 Ap. B, p 39	(28)	Positive towards human rights, like dignity	Feb.28'.11 Ap. B, p 1
(12)	Positive towards human rights and universal values	Dec. 6.12 Ap. B, p 44	(29)	Positive towards religious freedom	Feb.25.12 Ap. B, p 23
(13)	Positive towards Muslim Americans	Feb.25'.12 Ap. B, p 25	(30)	Positive towards cooperation between youths and security forces for security reasons	Oct.12.12 Ap. B, p 35
(14)	Positive towards democratic change in the Arab world	Feb.25'.12 Ap. B, p 18	(31)	Positive towards establishing an Independent Electoral Commission	July 1.11 Ap. B, p 15
(15)	Negative towards human rights abuses	Dec.6.12 Ap. B, p 41	(32)	Positive towards American values or universal values	Dec.6.12 Ap. B, p 37

(16)	Positive towards Tunisia's humanitarian aid to Libya	Mar 17 ²⁰¹¹ .11 Ap. B, p 13	(33)	Negative towards corruption	Mar 17.11 Ap. B, p 8
(17)	Positive towards emerging democracies and against any setbacks to democracy	Jul 1.11 Ap. B, p 16	(34)	Positive towards youth role in determining Tunisia's future	Feb.25.12 Ap. B, p 17