

Mood Choices and Modality Patterns in Donald Trump's Inaugural Presidential Speech

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Abstract : The controversies that trailed the political campaign and eventual choice of Donald Trump as the American president is so great that expectations are high as to what the content of his inaugural speech will portray. Given the fact that language is a dynamic vehicle of expressing intentions, the speech needs to be objectively assessed so as to access its content in the manner intended through the three strands of meaning postulated by the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG): the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. The focus of this paper, however, is on the interpersonal meaning which deals with how language exhibits social roles and relationship. This paper, therefore, attempts to analyse President Donald Trump's inaugural speech to elicit interpersonal meaning in it. The analysis is done from the perspective of mood and modality which are housed in SFG. Results of the mood choice which is basically declarative, reveal an information-centered speech while the high option for the modal verb operator 'will' shows president Donald Trump's ability to establish an equal and reliant relationship with his audience, i.e., the Americans. In conclusion, the appeal of the speech to different levels of Interpersonal meaning is largely responsible for its overall effectiveness. One can, therefore, understand the reason for the massive reaction it generates at the center of global discourse.

Keywords : interpersonal, modality, mood, systemic functional grammar

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