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The Relation of Meaning to Wording in Mandela's Speech of Inauguration as President: A Systemic Functional Analysis of Rhetorical Devices, Marked Syntax and Appraisal

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Abstract

This article intends to analyse the main linguistic characteristics of one of Mandela's speeches: the address to the nation at the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President of the Republic of South Africa, Union Building, Pretoria, 10 May 1994. Having Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis as theoretical frameworks, this paper will explore the speech as an instance of the generalized system of meanings surrounding it by paying attention to the different rhetorical devices (parallelisms, enumerations, repetitions, and exclamations), to marked syntax, and to appraisal. This analysis will show how these resources allow the author to create a social reality through language, to contribute to the vividness of the speech, and to build the reality of the historical moment that the speech shows. Special attention will be given to the situational variable of tenor to describe the relationship that Mandela (the addressor) establishes with the audience (the addressee), to whom the speech is addressed to. The analysis will allow a conclusion that there is a clear relationship between language and meaning.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, rhetorical devices, context, Nelson Mandela, marked syntax, appraisal.

"I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die".

Mandela (1964) "I am prepared to die". Statement from the dock at the opening of the defence case in the Rivonia Trial, Pretoria Supreme Court, 20 April 1964.

1. Introduction: the relationship between language and social context

This article intends to analyse the main linguistic characteristics of one of Mandela's speeches: the address to the nation at the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President of the Republic of South Africa, Union Building, Pretoria, 10 May 1994. It is a well-known fact that Nelson Mandela is accepted as one of the most significant black leaders in South Africa. In addition, he is also famous for being a symbol of resistance as the anti-apartheid movement gathered strength because he refused to compromise his political position to obtain his freedom.

The speech under analysis is ideologically charged by Mandela's thoughts. He shares his ideology with the audience so that whoever is listening to him or reading the speech is moved; in other words, he tries to realign his beliefs with those of the audience. The tool he has to do it with is language. As a result, the selection of rhetorical devices, marked syntax and appraisal is very relevant for the expression of meanings.

The language used by Mandela is shaped by his context because the speech under analysis cannot be properly understood without reference to the context in which it occurs. At the same time, his use of language also shapes the context surrounding him since every utterance that is pronounced is also part of the context.

Following Malinowski (1923), the features of context that influence the forms of language selected must be observed. In order to do so, the article is organised in the following way: section 2 concentrates on the methodology followed for the analysis and on Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis as theoretical frameworks. Section 3 pays attention to the analysis of the main rhetorical devices and marked syntactic constructions found in Mandela's speech. Special attention will be given to the situational variable of tenor and to the system of appraisal (see section 4). The paper finishes with some conclusions based on the analysis.

2. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Having Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis as theoretical frameworks, Mandela's speech of inauguration as president will be explored as an instance of the generalized system of meanings surrounding it by paying attention to the different rhetorical devices (parallelisms, enumerations, repetitions, and exclamations), to marked syntax, and to appraisal. This analysis will show how these resources allow the author to create a social reality through language, to contribute to the vividness of the speech, and to build the reality of the historical moment that the speech shows. As a result, the focus of the study will be "how discourse is shaped by its context, and how discourse shapes its context" (Johnstone, 2002, p. 9). Moreover, this paper will point out that lexical and grammatical choices have an effect in semantics, in Butt's (2008, p. 68) words, "The semantic patterns are themselves a construct of specific coding 'choices' in the grammar and lexis (semantics realized in lexicogrammar). Every variant in the lexicogrammar has consequences for semantics because only all

strata taken together construct meaning". In other words, the analysis will pay attention to how the author uses language to construct the social context surrounding him, as Hewings and Hewings (2005, p. 34) declare, "the language produced shapes the culture of the group".

Once the speech was read several times, the main rhetorical devices and marked syntactic structures were selected in order to observe the relationship between them and the meanings that Mandela was expressing by their use (see the analysis done in section 3). In addition, the system of appraisal was used to describe the relationship that Mandela (the addressor) established with the audience (the addressee), to whom the speech was addressed (see the analysis done in section 4). Therefore, this methodology emphasizes that semantics runs together with the syntactic structures, the main rhetorical devices, and appraisal in the speech under analysis. In other words, grammar is connected with meaning because all the different choices in language are meaning determined (Paltridge, 2006; Carter *et al.*, 2008; van Leeuwen, 2008; Martínez Lirola, 2009; Kress, 2010a; Fernández Martínez, 2011). There is also a clear relationship between language and context in such a way that language can be understood not only as a tool for creating any meaning, but also as the basis to "support the performance of social activities and social identities and to support human affiliation within cultures, social groups, and institutions" (Gee, 2005, p. 1).

Systemic linguists and critical discourse analysts place considerable emphasis in the idea of choice, i.e., language is seen as a network of interrelated options from which speakers and writers can select according to their communicative needs (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). SFL studies the meaning potential (Halliday, 1978) i.e., all the possibilities that are available in language, and the instance that is chosen to fulfil a particular communicative end. In this sense, meaning beyond the clause receives special attention or paraphrasing Martin and Rose (2007, p. 1), the focus of this article will be the social aspect of language as it is constructed through texts, the constitutive role of meanings in social life.

This study will be helpful in understanding Mandela's human activity in his cultural context: the historical period of exploitation of the black population in South Africa during the apartheid period. This paper intends to concentrate on discourse analysis in order to observe the ways in which language is productive to describe a social reality (Blackledge, 2009; O' Grady, 2010; Teubert, 2010). The motivation of doing discourse analysis is very often a concern about the opaque patterns of social inequality and the perpetuation of power relationships, either between individuals or between social groups, although it is impossible to pre-judge moral correctness in many cases (Fairclough, 1995).

3. The relationship between grammar and meaning: rhetorical devices and marked syntax

This section will pay attention to the main rhetorical devices (parallelisms, enumerations, repetitions, and exclamations), and to several marked syntactic structures found in this speech (fronting, passive, and existential sentences).

These two aspects are crucial in the establishment of a relationship between Mandela and the audience.

There are several enumerations in which Mandela points out the changes that have taken place in South Africa and need to continue taking place, or the people who have taken part in those changes:

- [...] *a common victory for justice, for peace, for human dignity.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 69)
- *We trust that you will continue to stand by us as we tackle the challenges of building peace, prosperity, nonsexism, nonracialism and democracy.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 69)
- *We deeply appreciate the role that the masses of our people and their political mass democratic, religious, women, youth, business, traditional and other leaders have played to bring about this conclusion.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 69)
- *We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 69)
- *We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 70)

The previous enumerations show the events they are referring to as closely related, and they are presented as tied together in the enumerations. As a systemic linguist and a critical discourse analyst, I believe that any variation in language, or the recurrence of patterns such as enumerations or parallelisms make a difference in the construction of meanings, i.e., patterns of language are not used freely since they always have an effect on semantics. In Hasan's words (1989, p. 96): "We pay attention to the patterning of patterns when it is significant; and in order to be significant the foregrounding must have a semantic consequence".

Mandela emphasizes that the present time is very important for building a new South Africa by using the following syntactic parallelism. This is his way of pointing out that his being the president of South Africa will imply socio-economic changes in the country because this is the time to change:

- *The time for the healing of the wounds has come. The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come. The time to build is upon us.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 69)

The previous examples show that parallel clauses and enumerations are a ready means of controlling the sentence, and of guiding the reader by sharing with him/her the different facts that Mandela expects to take place in South Africa forever. Enumerations and parallelisms are two very significant patterns, and play a crucial role in the construction of Mandela's speech as discourse. As Hasan (1989, p. 12) states: "In a way, the working of the patterns and the text are one and the same thing, for without the work that the patterns of language are doing there would be no text, or at least there would only be a different text".

Repetitions involve restating a key word or phrase to reinforce the point being made. In this sense, the repetition of the structure *Let there be...in* in different parallel clauses at the end of the speech points out Mandela's desire of a better situation in South Africa forever. He states that his politics is going to consist of promoting freedom and respecting the freedom of others, of making sure that everybody has everything he/she needs:

- *Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all. Let each know that for each the body, the mind and the soul have been freed to fulfil themselves.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 70)

In the previous paragraph, Mandela shows that he is concerned with the fact that freedom becomes a reality that covers all aspects of human beings and of society by referring to a freedom that needs to be connected with the body, the mind, and the soul. Right after this, we find the following statement in which the repetition of the adverb *never* states Mandela's rejection of any of the practices characteristic of apartheid:

- *Never, never, and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 70)

Mandela points out the importance of a freedom that involves taking into consideration the freedom of others. In other words, readers (or hearers) are positioned not only to appreciate freedom but also to respect the freedom of every human being. As Martin (1999, p. 51) states: "[...] this involves more than an end to apartheid and reconciliation with its perpetrators. Ultimately it involves the reconfiguration of a global economic order which distributes resources so unevenly that it has to be propped up by all manner of unbearable regimes."

It is relevant that there is a lexical metaphor of freedom that consolidates Mandela's interpretation of this concept; this metaphor is elaborated through the following terms: *steps*, *walk tall* and *road*, as the example shows:

- *We succeeded in taking our last steps to freedom in conditions of relative peace. [...] We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts [...] Freedom is their reward. [...] We understand it still that there is no easy road to freedom.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 69)
- *Let freedom reign.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 70)

In this sense, this speech can be considered very personal because it focuses on the importance of freedom for the author; at the same time, it is also a spiritual speech because there is no doubt that Mandela was not only a politician, but also a spiritual person who cared for humanity, as Henderson (1996, p. 293) commented when he reviewed Mandela's autobiography, "it is as much a spiritual as a political work".

The use of repetitions, parallel clauses, and exclamations in the last paragraph of the speech shows how the author portrays strong feelings. The speech finishes with two exclamations that reinforce Mandela's feelings. The fact that the paragraph finishes in this way is important because exclamative sentences are one of the most common devices to express a feeling, and to emphasise emotions. This paragraph is full of expression due to the use of vocabulary with very clear positive connotations:

- *Let there be justice for all. [...] The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement! God bless Africa!* (Mandela, 2004, p. 70)

The recurrent use of *we* throughout the whole speech underlines the interaction between Mandela and his hearers (or readers) because he makes clear that he knows the difficulties that many of the people that were listening to him on that day have gone through; in other words, he sympathizes with them. At the same time, by using *we*, he makes the audience responsible of the changes that have taken place since apartheid finished. From what has just been said, it is evident that *we* refers to the people of South Africa in most cases, but in the following example it refers to Mandela alone:

- *We are both humbled and elevated by the honour and privilege that you, the people of South Africa, have bestowed on us, as the first President of a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist government.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 68)

Apart from the already mentioned rhetorical devices, Mandela also uses some marked syntactic structures. Sometimes a sentence is started with a dummy 'there' which serves to bring the existence of an entire proposition to the attention of the hearer or reader. These constructions are known as 'existential sentences'; they are introduced by an unstressed *there* and accompanied by the verb *to be*:

- *We understand it still that there is no easy road to freedom* (Mandela, 2004, p. 69)

The example already mentioned when talking about rhetorical devices such as repetitions is also very relevant. By using several existential sentences together Mandela points out what is necessary in the new South Africa:

- *Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 70)

Fronting is the term applied to the achievement of marked theme by moving an item into initial position which is, otherwise, unusual there. The speech starts with fronting of *today*, which sets the speech in time and space. Since this is the hyper-theme of the speech, it shows the importance of the present moment:

- *Today, all of us do, by our presence here, and by our celebrations in other parts of our country and the world, confer glory and hope to newborn liberty.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 68)

In the following example, the fronting of the object *all this*, refers to the hopes and glorious life Mandela desires for everybody. By using fronting, he makes his statement more emphatic in the first example. By fronting the indirect object in the second example, Mandela emphasizes to whom he is talking. In the third example, the fronting of the adverbial of time shows the importance of this historical period in South Africa:

- *All this we owe both to ourselves and to the peoples of the world who are so well represented here today.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 68)

- *To my compatriots, I have no hesitation in saying that each one of us is intimately attached to the soil of this beautiful country as are the famous jacaranda trees of Pretoria and the mimosa trees of the bushveld.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 68)
- *Each time one of us touches the soil of this land, we feel a sense of personal renewal.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 68)

Mandela selects the passive voice four times in this speech. The use of the passive voice fits very well with the information principle, i.e., most commonly, the subject contains given information (it is *we*, i.e., Mandela and the audience in these examples) and the agent has new information. In three of the four examples, Mandela takes up the option of showing the agent involved. The use of the passive voice is a very good way to give solemnity to the narration, and a way of highlighting what is being asserted by Mandela:

- *We are moved by a sense of joy and exhilaration when the grass turns green and the flowers bloom.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 68)
- *[...] and as we saw it spurned, outlawed and isolated by the peoples of the world, [...].* (Mandela, 2004, p. 68)
- *[...] we, who were outlaws not so long ago, have today been given the rare privilege to be host to the nations of the world on our own soil.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 68)
- *We are both humbled and elevated by the honour and privilege that you, the people of South Africa, have bestowed on us, as the first President of a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist government.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 68)

Whenever Mandela uses modality in the speech, he uses *must*. It is deontic modality because with these examples Mandela intends to influence or direct the addressees' behaviour. This has a lot to do with Mandela's attitude towards the events that need to take place in the new South Africa: he is very assertive, and feels obliged to work hard so that freedom and human rights are real in his country.

- *Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 68)
- *Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must provide an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity's belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for a glorious life for all* (Mandela, 2004, p. 68)
- *We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world.* (Mandela, 2004, p. 70)

There is a clear relationship between semantics, the different marked syntactic structures, and rhetorical devices in this speech because grammar is the means by which the author makes meaning (Martínez Lirola, 2009). In Martin's words (1997, p. 421): "Language makes the power. And this is very hard to explain. Unless we talk about grammar." Since SFL is a semantically motivated model of language, every lexicogrammatical choice is motivated and has specific semantic properties (Kress, 2010b).

4. Tenor: The Relationship between Mandela and the Audience

Tenor refers to the set of role relationships among the participants in the interaction (Halliday, 1978, p. 110). According to this definition, when analysing the notion of tenor, it is necessary to take into consideration the social relations between the participants in the linguistic exchange because social relations affect the use of language: the sender is Mandela, and the receiver is the South African population, or anybody reading the speech.

Poynton (1985) points out that we find three dimensions inside the notion of tenor, to which I shall refer briefly: the power dimension has to do with whether the relations between the participants are equal or not. In the case of this speech, Mandela has power on the people listening to him, and he tries to encourage them to be active participants in the construction of a new South Africa.

The contact dimension makes reference to the existence or not of a contact relation between the participants. At the time when the speech was delivered (10 May 1994), there was a direct contact between Mandela and his audience. Now that anybody can read the speech, although there is no direct contact with the author, a relationship is established with him because any reader can be aware of the author's ideology and desires.

The affective involvement dimension refers to the extent to which the participants are emotionally involved in, or committed to a situation. Mandela tries to involve his audience, and he wants them to be active participants while he is the president of South Africa.

There is an attitude encoded in the text through 'attitudinal or evaluative lexis', i.e., feelings, attitudes, and judgement are encoded in the speech. For this reason, appraisal will be analysed, i.e. the kind of attitudes and feelings that are negotiated in a text. In Martin and Rose's words (2007, p. 16):

"Appraisal is concerned with evaluation: the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned. Appraisals are interpersonal kinds of meanings, which realize variations in the tenor of social interactions enacted in a text".

From the previous quotation, it can be deduced that the system of appraisal is very relevant for tenor relationships, and for the relation of meaning to wording since language is a resource used by Mandela to establish a relationship with the audience. Appraisal is important from an interpersonal perspective because it pays attention to the way in which language makes us feel. As Martin (2004, p. 326) points out, appraisal is a resource for negotiating solidarity, and the speech under analysis is a good example of this: Mandela makes it clear that the positive changes that have taken place in South Africa have been possible thanks to the efforts of all South Africans.

Appraisal is divided into three systems: engagement, attitude and graduation (Martin and White, 2006). This section will be concerned with the system of attitude, which is divided into three categories: affect, judgement and appreciation. Affect is concerned with positive or negative emotions, with the expression of feelings (fear, happiness, etc.). By the use of affect, the writer

wants to establish an interpersonal relationship with the reader so that the reader understands or agrees with his emotions. Affect is the predominant category in this speech because Mandela wants to create empathy with the reader; in other words, the reader is invited to share with the author a positive view of South Africa at the time in which the speech is delivered, with Nelson Mandela as president.

The analysis shows that most of the feelings are positive and affect is expressed as 'process':

- *Confer glory and hope*
- *Reinforce humanity's belief in justice*
- *Strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul*
- *Sustain all of hopes for a glorious life for all*
- *We feel a sense of personal renewal*
- *We are moved by a sense of joy an exhilaration*
- *Tear itself apart*
- *Feel fulfilled*
- *We deeply appreciate* (in this case the feeling is amplified by using the adverb 'deeply' to show how strongly Mandela feels)
- *We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people*
- *We succeeded in taking our last steps to freedom*
- *We commit ourselves*
- *We have triumphed in the effort to implant hope*
- *Assured of their inalienable right to human dignity*
- *Suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world*

Affect can also be expressed as 'quality' with a positive epithet or nominalised thing, as in the following examples:

- *The healing of the wounds*
- *Without any fear in their hearts*

Under judgement we express moral judgement of people's behaviour as positive or negative. Judgement is made according to a system of social norms or ethics, i.e., judgement makes sense inside a determined cultural and ideological situation. This means that a specific word will not always have the same judgement value. Judgement depends on the culture the individual belongs to, and on the personal experiences and beliefs of the individual. This category allows the writer to influence the reader's opinion about people or facts. When analysing judgement, we pay attention to language that praises or criticises the behaviour of groups of people or individuals.

- *Humanity will be proud* (it is a positive moral judgement) *spurned, outlawed and isolated*
- *We trust that you will continue to stand by us*
- *We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation*
- *We shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall*
- *We dedicate this day to all the heroes and heroines in this country and the rest of the world who sacrificed in many ways and surrendered their lives so that we could be free*
- *Freedom is their reward*

- *We must therefore act together as a united people*

Appreciation relates to evaluations of objects, people's appearance, and other phenomena. Under appreciation we are concerned with expressing assessments of objects valued by society such as artwork, material circumstances, states of affairs or people (but not their behaviour):

- *newborn liberty*
- *experience of an extraordinary human disaster*
- *a glorious life*
- *this beautiful country*
- *famous jacaranda trees*
- *that spiritual and physical oneness*
- *the depth of the pain*
- *terrible conflict*
- *pernicious ideology*
- *distinguished role*
- *blood-thirsty forces*
- *the continuous bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination*
- *complete, just and lasting peace*
- *a rainbow nation of peace*
- *a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist government*
- *beautiful land*
- *the oppression of one by another*
- *so glorious a human achievement!*

As it can be observed in the previous classification, some lexical items are clearly evaluative in the speech. The evaluation can be positive or negative. It is obvious that positive evaluation is the one that predominates in this speech. Appraisal is found all throughout Mandela's inauguration speech rather than being confined to a particular part of it, which means that the author shares his feelings and emotions with the reader from the beginning to the end of the speech. In this way, we can talk about evaluative coherence since the writer is consistent in the way he evaluates the topic of the speech (Thompson & Zhou, 2000).

The relation of meaning to wording observed paying attention to appraisal shows that Mandela has a clear sense of audience. In this speech, Mandela 'constructs' his own system of beliefs through language; at the same time that he establishes a relationship with the people listening to him. In this way, as Fairclough (1992) states, discourse is itself 'constitutive' or 'constructive' of social structure.

Mandela establishes an author-reader relationship by an accurate use of the pronouns 'we', 'I', and 'you' in his speeches, which points out the interaction between the speaker and the hearer. In this speech, he uses mainly *we* as a way of showing communion and identifying himself with the audience. In this sense, a dialogic relationship is established because there are several voices in the text through which Mandela builds a clear relationship with his hearers. Mandela is the leader, but he understands that listening to other opinions and

taking them into consideration comes with leadership, as Martin (1999, p. 47) states: "Mandela's rhetoric of engagement makes us feel included rather than instructed".

The correctness of Mandela's ideas and his ability to express his opinions and feelings are essential for this speech to be effective and persuasive because the way he communicates as a speaker in a given situation affects his rhetorical status, or the perception of the persuader by the audience member. He establishes an interpersonal relationship with his listeners by using different resources that contribute to the rhetoric of the speech and to the expression of feelings, as Martin (2004, p. 337) acknowledges:

"But we have to keep in mind that feelings are always about something- they are always interpersonal attitudes to ideational experience. And the investment of attitude in experience has to be stage-managed – by textual resources – because negotiating community is a dynamic process, played out as texts unfold in the myriad of discourses materializing the communion of everyday and institutional life".

5. Conclusion

Mandela's inauguration as president speech shows that he fought to stop the racial discrimination that black people suffered in South Africa during apartheid, and demanded justice. Reconciliation and reconstruction were some of the most important things Mandela wanted to accomplish in his life.

Mandela's use of language has a function that is connected with the context in which the speech is delivered. In other words, the speech constructs the social reality. With this speech, Mandela promoted a politics of freedom, not only for South Africa but also for everybody in the world. Mandela's speech is a linguistic object that expresses its meaning through language. Therefore, its language is not used at random because it is determined by the sort of meanings beings expressed and by the situation surrounding the meanings. Consequently, the language used by Mandela carries the social meaning the author wants to share with the reader.

His use of language has a clear purpose that contributes to the way the meaning of the text is expressed by the author and perceived by the reader. He tries to move the audience and to make them participate in the construction of the new South Africa by the different rhetorical devices, some marked syntactic structures, and appraisal. He wants to make the audience feel that a change has taken place in society and at the same time, he shares his concept of freedom. For this reason, he uses so many positive terms, i.e., he uses attitudinal lexis. He also adds solemnity to the speech by the use of the passive voice in some moments.

This paper shows that context and language are interdependent because the language used creates the social reality that surrounds the author. Mandela creates the atmosphere of the speech, which is related to the atmosphere that surrounded South Africa in that moment: a period of socio-economic changes in which blacks and whites are considered equal and live in peace theoretically.

The systemic description of Mandela's speech provided has been an attempt to describe that the language chosen goes together with what the author

does with that language and with the message he wants to share with the society of his time. This analysis has tried to uncover the ideological significance of Mandela's linguistic choices showing the relationship between linguistic form and function, in Halliday's words, "the view that linguistic form is to be explained as the reflex of linguistic function" (Halliday, 1984, p. 7).

The rhetorical and lexical features analysed reinforce Mandela's position as a pacifist and as a strong believer in freedom. His use of language is a tool for action. This is a speech that encourages people to be positive and to be active in the construction of a better South Africa. At the same time, this speech is inspirational to think about the importance of freedom, peace and hope in any society.

This article has offered an interpersonal perspective of the speech focusing on appraisal and the rhetorical power of language. Each clause in the text contributes to the creation of the whole text, and the speech represents the culture in which it is framed: the struggle for peace, justice and freedom in South Africa.

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