

John Wilson. (2015) *Talking with the President: The Pragmatics of Presidential Language*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Reviewed by Yi Sun and Mengjiao Zhang (Xi'an International Studies University)

Pragmatics is the discussion of language understanding and expression, which is necessary not only to involve the speaker and the listener, but also to take into account the function and influence of the meaning of discourse contextual factors. In other words, pragmatics is the investigation of language in authenticity. It is now indispensably pivotal for any theory that attempts to explain human language and the methods in which we digest and interpret the relationship between “what we say” and “what we mean” (Austin 1962; Grice 1967, 1989). It is also significant to our manipulation of all aspects of everyday communications since our comprehension of what is said in context depends heavily on the knowledge types beyond pure linguistics.

The book, *Talking with the President*, with the authorship of distinguished Professor John Wilson, mainly recounts the relationship between pragmatics and the language of American presidents, exploring how pragmatics dodges insight into particular new forms and employments of presidential language. Without being incorporated into any existing theoretical framework, the author employs an ecological approach and invokes a range of pragmatic theories and devices to explicate the language phenomenon. The pragmatic perspective put forward in the monograph could be considered an important step towards expanding our insights on how participants (inter)act in real-life political settings and on how they make sense of the politics around them.

Initially, from the perspective of linguistics, the author alleges some theories proposed by linguistic researchers, by citing the President George W. Bush's utilization of metaphor in his inaugural speech as an example to illustrate how Relevance Theory is bestowed and to reveal what manifests when pragmatics theories face the real-world discourse (Levinson, 1989; Cappelen and Lepore, 2007). In the broadest sense, the author also demonstrates the definitions of pragmatics and exerts pragmatic resources, utilizing the explanation of selected examples of presidential language, where the assessment of the value of a pragmatics analysis is how it facilitates exploring the techniques that presidents administrate language in the exercise of their roles and duties as “leaders of the free world”.

Kennedy's famous phrase "I am not the Catholic candidate for president. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for president who happens to be a Catholic" is explicated in Chapter Two. His phrases and speeches have both been touted in historical, theoretical, and rhetorical analysis as a transparent separation between the church and the state. The author bestows us with a pragmatic analysis to facilitate exploring the technique in which personal, social and professional roles may be delimited linguistically for political purpose. He also highlights the intersection of language, logic and representation in the employment of referential forms through detailed explanation.

In Chapter Three and Five, the author delineates a transparent statement about some language instances of presidents Nixon and Clinton. For these two presidents, they both encounter the impeachment and are accused of lying under oath and obstruction of justice, for which reason language becomes crucial to their explanations, defenses and the justification of their wrongdoings.

Firstly, as for Nixon, he frequently challenges the linguistic formulation of questions imposed to him during deposition, by prevaricating and articulating various alternative interpretations of context and situations that could provide non-threatening or even positive political readings of his own or others' actions. It is unscrambled that his employment of pragmatics to defend himself is a mirror of the possibilities available on the scene.

Like Nixon, Clinton confronts the prospect of impeachment even still as a sitting president of the US. From the illustrated examples, we can observe that Clinton could invoke both his legal training and his considerable political skills to sidetrack, challenge, or reinterpret any accusations imposed upon him, with his pragmatic style indicating his positioning, or his "stance". According to John Du Bois (2007, 32), "stance" is something that you take with respect to other participants, objects and topics. Via a considerable proportion of instances, the author intends to illustrate how Clinton pushed the pragmatics of language as far as he could.

In Chapter Four, Reagan prefers to employ the style of storytelling to connect with his audience and enliven often dull-and-dusty facts and figures, this genre of application of pragmatics facilitating us to reckon how some linguistic techniques and formats might be particularly appropriate to the political ends. We can behold, from this chapter, that a story presented within a political speech can be an especially powerful motivation for conveying a specific message (Riessman 2004). Nevertheless, because of the message in the modality of a story presented for the audience, it allows presidents to expand their own assumption and knowledge to discriminate and assess the story.

In Chapter Six, the analysis, to my mind, works best when describing President George W. Bush and his political messages by applying a pragmatic perspective. The author succeeds beautifully in capturing Bush's language directly and focuses

on his particular penchant for perpetrating linguistic errors. Then, he explores Bush's language administration and his inferential content in both elucidating why he is nominated as the president and why he launches the war in Iraq. Thus considering the problems and issues that Bush exerts in his utilization of language is the main work in this part, and we rethink how pathological or reflective of a personal ideology that eschews formality and intellectualism for simplicity and myth.

The last chapter concerns Barack Obama, the first African-American president. According to Sam Leith (2012), we can acknowledge the mechanics of Obama's speech, because he prefers to employ rhetorical techniques, from anaphora to "trichodon", and his famous "Yes we can" chant, this category of rhetorical style assisted in sweeping him to power, not once but twice, fostering solidarity between the president himself and the audience. In multiple political contexts from the standpoint of pragmatics, the author explores the quality of Obama's rhetorical skills. By applying interconnected techniques, Obama exploits his own personal family stories to capture the underlying core of the American dream or the enduring American ideology, prompting the American people to convince that every person, through arduous work and efforts, may achieve his or her dreams, and everyone is equal before opportunity.

Throughout the book, three main advantages could be extracted and acknowledged: firstly, the author has penned a genuinely compelling read that should appeal not only to scholars of the subject but to anyone willing to think beyond the simple surfaces of the world. Avoiding any technical language, he takes what could have been an arcane topic full of pragmatic jargons and makes it accessible to a broad audience. When the author recommends the idea "expressive" of Potts (2007), he manipulates the metaphorical language to elucidate, "This is a bit like saying a three-legged dog may well be a dog but it is not dog under conditions which define a dog as a four-legged animal" (P. 218), demonstrating the complicated definition more vivid and effortlessly understandable. Secondly, we can realize multitude diverse theories that transparently share core underlying components contributing to various higher levels of cognitive and social debate. Meanwhile, pragmatics can supply many details to the analysis of presidential language from a sequence of different perspectives and theories. Thirdly, it was noteworthy that there were almost no book-length studies of the pragmatics of presidential language accessible, let alone those which focused on several individual presidents; this book successfully filled in the gap. Moreover, a nineteen-page reference will certainly steer keen researchers towards further in-depth research in this field, whether at the level of individual case studies or at the standard of comparative analysis across generations of presidents.

However, the discursive practice of the structure is somewhat disappointing. It may be sometimes burdensome for readers to ascertain the author's intention.

Additionally, the tedious and repeated length of the examples drove the readers confused and averse, so they may not complete it patiently. Besides, the absence of a consistent theoretical framework to some extent negatively influenced the credibility of the author's analyses and their persuasiveness. Overall, nevertheless, this is a volume of academic research that bridges a crevice in the sphere of pragmatics, which keeps us abreast of new, emergent ideas for probing into the presidential language with outstanding social impact.

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Reviewers' addresses

Yi Sun
Research Center for Linguistics and Applied
Linguistics
Xi'an International Studies University
Xi'an, Shaanxi, PRC
sytony9728@163.com

Mengjiao Zhang
School of English Studies
Xi'an International Studies University
Xi'an, Shaanxi, PRC
390209180@qq.com