# A Discourse Analysis of President Barack Obama's Speeches Following Mass Shootings, Terrorist Attacks and Natural Disasters in the United States

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## ABSTRAKT

Hlavním cílem této práce je provést diskurzivní analýzu prezidentských projevů Baracka Obamy vztahující se k masovým střelbám, teroristickým útokům a přírodním katastrofám ve Spojených státech amerických. Tato práce zkoumá rétorické prostředky, které používal k získání, uklidnění a ovlivnění publika a také strukturu jeho proslovů. Teoretická část charakterizuje diskurz, jeho význam, druhy a použití. Dále popisuje jazyk v politické sféře a vybrané rétorické prostředky, které se v Obamových proslovech objevují nejvíce. Praktická část analyzuje samotnou strukturu proslovů a podává konkrétní příklady vybraných rétorických prostředků a objasňuje důvod jejich použití.

Klíčová slova: diskurzivní analýza, politické projevy, Barack Obama, rétorika, rétorické prostředky, tragédie, Spojené státy americké

## ABSTRACT

The main objective of this work is to perform a discourse analysis of Barack Obama's presidential speeches related to mass shootings, terrorist attacks and natural disasters in the United States. This work examines the rhetorical devices used to acquire, calm down and influence the audience, as well as the structure of his speeches. The theoretical part provides characteristics of discourse, its meaning, its types and uses. It further describes language in the political sphere and selected rhetorical devices that most frequently appear in Obama's speeches. The practical part analyzes the structure of the speeches and gives concrete examples of the selected rhetorical devices and explains the reason for their use.

Keywords: discourse analysis, political speeches, Barack Obama, rhetoric, rhetorical devices, tragedies, United States

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

Tears, sadness, helplessness, dozens of injured or dead people, dozens of those who lost their family members or homes. Tragedies that were caused by the human hand as well as by the power of nature. Survivors who need comfort and encouragement. This is how a scenario after tragedies where people are scared, broken and do not know what to do, may look like. Therefore, they need someone to give them information, tell them what happened, what the next step will be and, above all, calm and support them. They need a leader who takes responsibility, unite all the people and guide them through these difficult times.

I decided to make the analysis of presidential speeches of Barack Obama which followed tragedies in the US. Over the last few years, America had to face serious attacks and natural disasters that maintained the importance of safety. After all, last year, the US experienced the deadliest mass shooting in their history and they had to survive a natural disaster which required the biggest financial to cover the cost of the damage in 2016. This thesis will discuss how Obama comforted people, how he encouraged them, what strategies helped him to achieve these two objectives and also what the structure of the speeches was, in what order the information were given, what he mainly focused on. The work is divided into the theoretical and practical part.

The theoretical part gives descriptions of the main concepts which are essential for the analysis. Firstly, it defines discourse and discourse analysis. Although this work focuses on spoken speeches of Barack Obama, it works with their written form. Therefore, theoretical part also analyzes differences between spoken and written discourse and lists their features. Then, it focuses on what language politicians use, what the features of Obama as a speaker are and lastly it provides information about the strategies which he mostly used.

The practical part specifies the method of the analysis and the speeches which create the corpus. Thereafter, basic information about the types of tragedies that this part deals with is given. The body of the practical part consists of the analysis and concrete examples of the rhetorical devices that were found in Obama's speeches, namely metaphor and metonymy, parallelism, use of pronouns, contrastive pairs and three-part list, and how they helped him to influence human emotions and behavior.

# I.        THEORY

# 1   DEFINING DISCOURSE

Cambridge Dictionary (2016) provides a basic definition that discourse is a transmission of the information either orally or in writing. However, Widdowson extends this definition by explaining that discourse does not only transfer the information from the producer to the receiver, but also expresses feelings of people and serves as a tool of persuasion. (Widdowson 2007, 6) According to him, each person can understand the text differently. That is why context plays such a crucial role while interpreting discourse. Right insertion of the text into the context can help to determine its main objective. (Widdowson 2007, 4) Gee agrees and further develops this idea. Communicating the thoughts and ideas surely helps not only to human convergence within social groups, but also works as a connection of different cultures. Nevertheless, he questions whether the context or the language comes first and comes to a conclusion that they both work reciprocally. (Gee 1999, 11)

Paltridge works with the concept where discourse is perceived as a dance. It is created by groups of words, beliefs, tools, and as well as dance performances, it is a bit different every time. He explains it on the example of a rap singer. The way the singer presents himself, his choice of clothing, how he communicates with other people while performing, a language he uses, it all forms his rapper identity. (Paltridge 2012, 10-11) As Gee continues, choice of words people use in a sentence and their order can help users of language to determine what the main part of the information is or how they should perceive the information and finally who the sender is. (Gee 2014, 17)

Therefore, discourse is described as a language in use, meaning that analysis cannot be done without a right amount of context. (Gee 2014, 19) Fairclough defines discourse as "a language in use above the level of the sentence" and states that pragmatics is often used as an equivalent of language in use. (Fairclough 2003, 3) Text does not function as a single unit detached from the outside world. It needs to be set in the context which is created by the everyday life situations, for instance, by the places people visit or work in and by other people they interact with. (Widdowson 2007, 19) Fairclough suggests that the analysis of the text should not include only what is directly said or written, but take the assumptions that the producers have about receivers into the account as well. According to him, when analyzing the discourse, not only understanding the meaning, but also creation of an evaluation takes place, such as credibility of a person. (Fairclough 2003, 11)

Thinking about language in use and how people actually use it in a real life leads to the fact that while interacting with each other, people do not always speak in complete sentences or in grammatically correct sentences. As long as receivers understand what the sender wants to say, spoken communication works without problems. Thus, the relation between grammar and discourse can be looser in a spoken language. However, it does not apply in written discourse because the receiver often does not have a possibility to ask for an immediate clarification of the text.

Different types of discourse exist. From relatively short discourses, such as an order in a restaurant, a small talk in the street, to novels or interviews. As Cook points out, discourse cannot be examined only from the point of view of an individual because what might seem understandable to one person may be completely unclear to the other. Along these lines, discourse focuses rather on how the communicated text is understood and treated by the group of people. (Cook 1989, 7) Widdowson suggests that what the producers mean by the text is usually influenced by their ideas of the world and of course, the text concerns topics which are important to the senders. (Widdowson 2007, 7)

## 1.1 Spoken and Written Discourse

Spoken discourse is based on the interaction between the speakers. According to Cameron, spoken discourse relies on the fact that people are confident in using the language and they know the language well. (Cameron 2001, 7) Jones suggests that people who carry out actions are always part of spoken discourse. Those actions may be important and serious or may not. Spoken discourse does not include only the information that is communicated, but also people's assumptions of what the most important part of the information is or what part the sender emphasizes the most. (Jones 2016) Another feature of spoken discourse as Widdowson suggests is that once the information is said, it disappears and it is not as easy to return to it. In other words, one word emerges, the other disappears. Of course, the person can ask for a repetition or clarification, but the information can be conveyed slightly differently this time. (Widdowson 2007, 7)

While producing a spoken discourse, speakers also rely on the reactions of listeners, checking if they agree, disagree, if they are listening or not. (Sindoni 2014, 27) As Cameron and Panovic add, while talking, it is, in most cases, clear who *she* or *he* is, who *they* are, *where* they are, what *this* is referring to, etc. from the context because people who are communicating are both in a real time. (Cameron and Panovic 2014)

The main objective of spoken discourse is to clarify and highlight the information that is not clear and also how talking can affect the whole society. (Cameron 2001, 7) Sindoni points out that the speech is more likely to be influenced by other participants of discourse. In the sense that when explaining the issue or clarifying the information, the participants can contribute to the discussion and together may find a new solution or another way of doing something. (Sindoni 2014, 26) As spoken discourse does not take place only in the linguistics field, but also in education, psychology, sociology, law, etc. (Cameron 2001, 7)

Cameron and Panovic state that writing and reading are subjects of learning. They are not humans' natural abilities. Writing ensures the information remains stored as long as possible or needed, so it can then be verbally communicated. (Cameron and Panovic 2014) Written discourse tends to be more stable and provides more options how the text can be treated. Receivers can read the words or gain some understanding even from looking at the pictures, which accompany the text. On the other hand, when reading and understanding the written discourse, people are more reliant on themselves. They cannot ask for immediate clarification because the producer is usually not present at the time of reading the text. So, it is necessary to provide precise descriptions of who *she* or *he* is*, who *they* are, *where* they are, what *this* is referring to, etc. (Ghasemi and Jahromi 2014, 153) Sindoni adds that writing needs to be well planned, otherwise readers will get confused because it is not as automatic as speech. (Sindoni 2014, 22)

According to the characteristics of written and spoken texts mentioned above, it is clear that they both require a different approach. Ghasemi and Jahromi have summarized several of the main differences, grounded in the works of Bartsch and Paltridge. They present a view by Bartsch who recognizes "five factors on variations between speech and writing: paralinguistic signals, preciseness, organization, deviations from default orders and frequency of repetition." (Ghasemi and Jahromi 2014, 149-150)

As far as paralinguistic signals (paralanguage) are concerned in spoken discourse, they include, for instance, pause, tempo, rhythm, quality of voice, gestures, which of course, help to create or complete a certain opinion of the conveyed information and of the producer as well. While focusing on preciseness, Ghasemi and Jahromi claim that spoken discourse is frequently accompanied by hedges such as *sort of* and *kind of*, as well as by colloquial vocabulary, for instance, *guy* or *stuff*. (Ghasemi and Jahromi 2014, 150) Considering the frequency of repetition and organization of texts, spoken language tends to repeat words, phrases and it often takes a longer time to express the idea

correctly and concisely. Spoken language, especially informal, has a tendency to depart from the established rules of grammar, as seen in this example: *You like? That is my favourite one.* The absence of the auxiliary verb *do* may be accepted while speaking, but in most of the cases, not in writing. As Sindoni claims, in spoken discourse, it is common to use phrasal verbs, contracted forms or abbreviations. (Sindoni 2014, 28)

While analyzing written discourse, Cameron and Panović understand writing as a visual portrayal of a language. (Cameron and Panovic 2014) Furthermore, it is often accompanied by multimodals, such as pictures, graphs, charts. Apart from multimodal features, the written texts include paralanguage as well, for instance, page layout or font of letters. (Widdowson 2007, 8) Written discourse is often clearer and more coherent than spoken, as the producer has more time to think of appropriate linking words that will ensure the text holds together. However, the immediate clarification or feedback is usually not possible. While producing written discourse, producers of texts usually know what the reader is expecting, for instance, he or she wants to be educated or entertained. This means that producers have a certain idea and assumption of the readers of the text and thus they can adapt the text to its potential readers. (Sindoni 2014, 26)

## 1.2  Discourse Analysis

Harris came with the first definition of discourse analysis in the early fifties of the twentieth century and defined it "as an analysis of connected speech or writing." (Harris 1952, 1) Even nowadays, scholars work with this concept, for instance, Gee, who describes discourse analysis as "a way in which sentences connect and relate to each other across time in speech or writing." (Gee 2014, 18) Brown and Yule stress the importance of context. According to them, a text cannot be examined only as an isolated unit. Cultural and social contexts need to be included in the analysis. (Brown and Yule 1983, 11) In addition, discourse analysis enables analysts to understand how recipients perceive the text, if it influences them and if they can relate to it. (Paltridge 2012, 1)

Gee states that discourse analysis examines how people adopt the language in their life and how they use it. (Gee 2014, 8) He also suggests that at least two ways how to approach discourse analysis exist. One approach focuses on the topics that people deal with, what subjects they are interested in. The other approach draws the attention to the structure of discourse, meaning how grammar is used to communicate a certain idea or issue. (Gee 2014, 8) Gee compares these approaches to painting a picture. While creating a painting, an artist has to think through what composition he chooses, what colors, what will be

displayed in the picture, so in the end, it clearly expresses his idea or intention. (Gee 2014, 17)

Paltridge agrees with the study of Harris who argues that a model of what language means people use in specific situations exists. (Paltridge 2012, 2) However, Paltridge draws attention to the fact that the understanding of contexts may vary from person to person. Therefore, contexts are subjective matters of each individual and ongoing communication between recipients may change the contexts, enlarge or narrow them down. (Paltridge 2012, 3) They have no limitations and are regarded as subjective because people's cultural manners or beliefs can differ. (Gee and Handford 2012)

Paltridge explains that discourse analysis helps to understand why a person has produced such a text, what its main message is and what outcome the receivers should have. (Paltridge 2012, 3)  According to Gee and Handford, people create meaning while interacting with each other in groups, not individually. (Gee and Handford 2012) Thus, studying of various social groups is considered as a key part of the whole analysis. However, the way how the text is analyzed also depends on the given amount of context. If the context is widened, discourse analysis changes. (Gee and Handford 2012)  Chilton and Schäffner claim that discourse analysis focuses on three objectives. Firstly, how people achieve the goals they have set, secondly, how they behave in certain situations and lastly, their involvement in events. (Chilton and Schäffner 2002, 18) All of these are done through communication. (Paltridge 2012, 7) To support the division on three main objectives of the analysis, Gee explains the subjects of a discourse analysis by asking questions, such as: how a language is used to make certain things significant or which activities are feasible in which context. (Gee 2005, 11)  Discourse analysis helps to understand why people use specific linguistic features and what they want to achieve. It provides a complete picture of the entire text. (Paltridge 2012, 12)

Discourse analysis can also be divided into certain categories, depending on what it is focused on. It can mainly focus on grammar. However, when mentioning grammar, a question arises. Gee and Handford come with an example during a wedding ceremony: "I pronounce you husband and wife." It clearly states what just happened, but it does not clearly state from when and where this claim becomes effective. (Gee and Handford 2012) Apart from grammar, discourse analysis examines how political or social matters influence the texts themselves. (Gee and Handford 2012) This type of analysis is referred to as *critical discourse analysis* and will be described in chapter 1.2.2

### 1.2.1 The Scope of Study of Discourse Analysis

As suggested in the previous subchapter, not only one view through which the discourse can be analyzed exists. Paltridge states that every scientific discipline can work with a slightly different definition of discourse. (Paltridge 2012, 6) He distinguishes two main perspectives through which the discourse is usually seen and analyzed in linguistics, namely textually and socially oriented discourse. (2012, 6) According to him, textually oriented discourse focuses more on which linguistic features one uses and what effects they have on the receivers. On the other hand, socially oriented discourse deals with cultural or historical references and focuses on underlining the social and historical values. (Paltridge 2012, 7)

Gee distinguishes two approaches to the analysis. (Gee 2014, 8) One examines what the text is about, what information it gives to the receiver. The other one focuses rather on what linguistic features the author uses and why, on a form and structure. The approaches to the analysis differ from each other by how they look at grammar and meaning, which brings us to the division of discourse analysis to descriptive and critical. While descriptive discourse analysis deals with on which principles a language works and why, the critical approach goes further. Critical discourse analysts do not just want to answer this question, but they actually want to put their work in practice. (Gee 2014, 8)

### 1.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

As Gee and Handford suggest, critical discourse analysis (CDA) examines "relation of discourse and other social elements (ideologies, institutions, social identity)." (Gee and Handford 2012) Fairclough agrees with this statement by claiming that the analysis does not focus only on discourse itself. (Fairclough 2010, 4) According to him, CDA should not only provide a description, but also show ways of solution to problems. Horváth mentions that the language people use is influenced by the environment they live in and CDA focuses on social and cultural aspects in a relation to the text. (Horváth 2009, 45) According to Fairclough, CDA is divided into three categories: relational, dialectical and transdisciplinary. (Fairclough 2010, 3)

Relational CDA focuses on the relations between discourse and other objects, for instance, people who communicate with each other, relations between "concrete communicative events (for instance, newspapers articles)". (Fairclough 2010, 3) Dialectical CDA focuses on relations between objects which are different but do not

operate completely separately. Transdisciplinary is based on fact that CDA is not only a part of linguistics but also other disciplines. It sets the methodology, how the analysis should be performed. (Fairclough 2010, 4)

According to Wodak and Meyer, power plays a crucial role in CDA. They state that language supports the power of a person to make power even more significant. Therefore, critical discourse analysis examines how language connects dominance, power and control. (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 10) Machin and Mayer specify that one of the purposes of the critical discourse analysis is to point out to a social problem and make a change about it. (Machin and Mayer 2012, 4) As Locke claims, the word *critical* in critical discourse analysis suggests that it takes into account all the social impacts the receiver may get into or via which the text urges the receiver to subscribe to the idea. (Locke 2004, 9)

## 2 LANGUAGE AND POLITICS

As this work deals with the discourse analysis of presidential speeches, it is essential to clarify the meaning of *politics*. It is characterized as a set of different activities through which the heads of the governments are determining the direction of the states. (Cambridge Dictionary 2016) Politics should ensure a certain level of a living standard for everyone (Gee 2014, 8) Politicians need to try hard to gain a power and status.

Various types of political leaders appear on a political scene, but according to Charteris-Black, the more democratic system, the better persuasive skills politicians need to have, so that people regard them with favour. (Charteris-Black 2011, 1) Politicians are aware that they have to provide powerful arguments and persuade the audience through the emotions. How the politician is perceived by the general public, what language he or she uses, partly depends on to which political party he or she belongs to. (Utych 2012, 2)

### 2.1 Political Discourse

The main objective of political discourse (PD) is to examine the connection between politics and language. (Dunmire 2012, 735) Political discourse analysis (PDA) is a subcategory of a discourse analysis (Van Dijk 1997, 13) and when dealing with the term *political discourse* itself, its function may vary depending on the political system, ideology, idea, etc. (Drábková 2012, 159) Chilton and Schäffner claim that context plays a crucial role in political discourse. (Chilton and Schäffner 2002, 17)

A text may be considered political, if, for instance, heads of the states, members of the parliament or members of the political parties occur in its context. (Chilton and Schäffner 2002, 16) Fairclough and Fairclough confirm this statement by claiming that the fundamental part of understanding and interpreting a political discourse correctly is a context. (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 17) In other words, PD analyzes the relationships between its participants, who they actually are and on which occasion they communicate. (Chilton and Schäffner 2002, 225) Even though the majority of political discourse analyses in the United States focus on presidential speeches, politicians are not alone in a field of political discourse. Various recipients, meaning different groups of the public, create a significant part of it as well. Chilton and Schäffner recognize various genres of political discourse, for instance: "parliamentary debates, international treaties, peace negotiations." (2002, 225)

PDA also focuses on what the political talk wants to deliver to the audience. If it wants to convince the listeners that something is right or wrong or what feelings the audience

should have while listening to a political talk or while reading a text. While dealing with political discourse, the term *text* refers to written discourse and *talk* refers to spoken discourse. Talks are often recorded in writing, in order to analyze it (Chilton and Schäffner 2002, 16) and they will be the matter of analysis of this work as well. Fairclough and Fairclough suggest that it is necessary to understand the classical, Aristotle's approach of how language and politics are connected to get a better understanding of nowadays approaches to political discourse. (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 18)

Aristotle defines speech as "serving to indicate what is useful and what is harmful, and so also what is just and what is unjust." (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 19) People are more likely to think about actions which affect or concern them. (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 19) Humans usually set down the goals they want to achieve and just then possible ways to get them. They know what they want the audience to feel, to think, what message they want to deliver and then they think about the means which will help them to achieve it. (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 19)

Chilton and Schäffner discuss the frame of a political text when delivering the speech to the audience. Speakers usually summarize the basic facts about the situation or event and then express their personal views on the whole situation, their attitude and beliefs. (Chilton and Schäffner 2002, 211) Eventually, they use different linguistic strategies to manipulate the audience. According to Chilton and Schäffner, to make the information relevant, the speakers need to know who will be the audience, especially what their beliefs are and whether the audience needs to hear words of comfort or words of encouragement. (2002, 213) Thus, political discourse needs to take into account all the "socially shared political representation that control political actions, processes and systems." (Chilton and Schäffner 2002, 234)

## 2.2 Rhetoric

Toye explains that the beginnings of rhetoric are associated with Athens around the fifth century BC, particularly with Sophists who charged high salaries for teaching rhetoric. (Toye 2013, 7) As Livingston suggests, *The Rhetoric* written by Aristotle has become a basis of all the rhetoric. (Livingston 2010, 27) Charteris-Black defines it as a set of human persuasive skills, meaning how well a person is able to influence others to be inclined to his or her opinions. Thus, persuasion and rhetoric stand constantly alongside. (Charteris-Black 2005, 8) Yet, Aristotle argues that to persuade the audience to agree with the speaker's ideas and arguments should not be the main objective of rhetoric. It

should rather set the path to achieve success or to solve a problem. (Aristotle 2010, 6) According to Charteris-Black, rhetoric evaluates how politics dominates the speech from the audience point of view and persuasion reveals how well a speaker can use the persuasive strategies and what impact the strategies have on the audience. (2005, 9) Aristotle sees rhetoric as a skill that can observe practically any object because the group of subjects is not specified. The group of subjects which can be observed is not specified in rhetoric as strictly as, for instance, in medicine. (2010, 7) Barilli further extends this concept by stating that rhetoric works with discourses that practically relate to all human beings and their activities. (Barilli 1989, 8) Whether the speech was successful or not is recognized by the reaction of the audience. A politician may be considered as a poor rhetor when the audience expresses disagreement or not enough support to him. (Charteris-Black 2011, 7)

However, Charteris-Black claims that not all the speeches are made by politicians themselves. (2011, 5) Politicians usually have people who give them advice about the speeches or they even write the speeches for them. As a result, it may be difficult for the audience to know if the politician is sincere and trustful. As Charteris-Black states, political marketing has become popular these days. Even Barack Obama is not an exception. He publicly introduced a person who assisted him with writing speeches. (Charteris-Black 2011, 5) Writers of the speeches need to bear in mind that the speech has to complement politician's personality and a style of expressing. Using plural *writers* because usually, it is a work of more than one person and a politician can intervene at any time if he or she is not satisfied with the structure of the speech. (Charteris-Black 2011, 6) However, as Charteris-Black clarifies, even if in the most cases, the speaker is not the author of a speech, ownership is attributed to him. (2011, 6) Barilli suggests, writers also have to keep in mind that the audience will not listen to the speech until its very end if it feels that the speaker impose great intellectual demands on the audience. Speakers need to provide space for the audience to engage their imagination to follow the speech. (Barilli 1989, 9)

### 2.2.1 Ethos, Logos and Pathos

Aristotle states that persuasion in rhetoric is based on three main components. The first component takes into account the speaker himself or herself, his or her nature and a style of a communication. The second component classifies the audience into a certain category and the third deals with the speech itself, a right choice of words and the evidence

which would support the speaker's argument. (Aristotle 2010, 7) These components are referred to as *ethos, logos and pathos*. (Livingston 2010, 27) As Blakesley and Hoogeveen explain, ethos, logos and pathos help writer while determining what the content of the speech will be and how he or she delivers the information to the audience. (Blakesley and Hoogeveen 2012, 11) Rhodes and 'tHart claim that if the speaker uses these modes well, it demonstrates his or her rhetorical skills and experience. However, they also point out that what the speaker can afford to say is largely influenced by the audience. (Rhodes and 'tHart 2014) Aristotle argues that it is the personality of the speaker, which most influences the audience. The importance of the personality of the speaker is reflected especially in the cases where people have different opinions on the subject. (Aristotle 2010, 7)

Blakesley and Hoogeveen understand *ethos* as a speaker's relation to the subject. He or she expresses a personal view and should offer several other views how the case may be perceived. (Blakesley and Hoogeveen 2012, 11) Rhodes and 'tHart explain that the writer tries to gain credibility and evoke the feeling in the audience that he or she can be trusted. It helps the audience to approach a personality of the speaker. (Rhodes and 'tHart 2014) Livingston suggests that to become credible for the audience, people must believe the speaker has only the best intentions and want to change their lives for the better. (Livingston 2010, 27) She expands that to gain this feeling in the audience the speaker should have perfectly studied the topic and should not read the paper notes. (Livingston 2010, 28)

Connors suggests speaker and author have both different options to become trustworthy. He claims that the sympathy of the audience to the speaker may be influenced by the way the rhetor is dressed, what gestures he or she uses, how loudly or softly he or she is talking during the speech. (Connors 1979, 285) However, writer's options are limited as he or she does not stand face to face to people. Connors states that the credibility depends on how the text is structured if it is organized and comprehensible and also on how well the writer explains the idea. (1979, 285)

Blakesley and Hoogeveen explain that *logos* relies on statistics, pictures, etc., which hold the speech or text together and give reasonable and logical arguments. (Blakesley and Hoogeveen 2012, 11) Livingston claims that this component of persuasion plays a crucial role when the speaker has to convince someone who looks at the matter differently. She states that evidence-based argument should lead to the conclusion of the speech. (Livingston 2010, 30) Connors suggests that the rhetors have to be repetitive

and repeat the evidence at least three times because it helps the audience to store the information for a longer time. He also suggests that the rhythm of speech should be slower for the audience to understand all the evidence, statistics, etc. (Connors 1979, 288-289)

According to Blakesley and Hoogeveen, *pathos* serves as a connection to the emotions of the reader or listener with the author. (Blakesley and Hoogeveen 2012, 11) Livingston claims that the speaker should convince the audience that his or her principles and what he or she considers important are identical to the people's needs. (Livingston 2010, 36) Blakesley and Hoogeveen claim that *pathos* invites the audience to act through emotions. (2012, 11) Connors states that the speaker can follow people's reactions to his or her arguments and evidence and adjust the speech to it. However, the writer cannot. He or she has to have some ideas and assumptions about potential readers. (Connors 1979, 286)

## 2.3 Structure of Political Speeches

According to Wodak and Koller, speech is a compilation of sentences and statements summarizing and commenting on a particular event, situation, etc., where a speaker expresses his or her own position and opinion on the matter. (Wodak and Koller 2008, 243) It is intended either to a known or unknown audience. Structure, content and elocution of the speeches may vary, depending on which situation or event it applies to, also on the authors of the speeches, on what the outcomes of the speeches should be and, of course how well they are prepared. Although the speeches are usually written down in advance, their oral presentation may differ. (Wodak and Koller 2008, 243)

According to Wodak and Koller, the speaker is the only one talking during the speech, which indicates that speech could be considered as a monologue, but it is not because its content often encourages people to act. (2008, 256) They mention some speeches which may encourage people to act, for instance, a speech that commemorates an important date or event in the history, suggesting that the speech should bring people together, to unite them. Or during the political debate where politicians interrupt each other and take turns. Politicians are required to manage the art of argumentation, but how the speaker is seen in the audience's eyes is also influenced by the speaker's appearance, gestures and behavior. (2008, 256)

Charteris-Black claims that the segmentation of the speech, what the politician says firstly, what lastly, is also essential because it can affect its success. (Charteris-Black 2011, 2) According to him, a speaker firstly attracts the attention of the audience by saying

shocking or surprising information, and after he gains their attention, proceeds further in the speech. (2011, 8)

Charteris-Black divides the structure of the speeches into the following parts. In the introduction, a speaker tries to get the audience on his or her side. He or she is most likely to use pronoun *we*, to express that the speaker and audience are equal and that the presented issue applies to all of them. (Charteris-Black 2011, 8) As Livingston claims, the speech should be inventive because that is how the solutions are usually found and the speech can begin by asking a question to the audience or by telling a powerful story. The introduction is considered to be a sort of preview of what will follow. (Livingston 2010, 37) According to Charteris-Black, the speech continues by serving a variety of evidence to prove that his or her argument is correct. As he suggests, precedents or analogies are often used in this part of the speech. (2011, 8) Livingston adds that speaker's arguments can be supported by various statistics, practical examples, etc. (Livingston 2010, 37) Speaker may then express criticism and disagreement and finally he or she summarizes the most important parts of the speech. (Charteris-Black 2011, 9)

The goal of politicians is to make their speeches impressive to influence masses of people and provide the audience with the feeling that they can relate to the speech. According to Livingston, speakers should avoid topics that are irresolvable or on which they cannot find solutions even with the audience's help because it could weaken their leadership. (Livingston 2010, 38) Charteris-Black explains that before the speaker begins the speech or before the speaker appears on the stage, typically some basic information is provided about him or her for the audience to know what to expect from the content of the speech. (2011, 10)

### 2.3.1 President Obama as a Speaker

Elected January 2009, Barack Obama was the 44$^{th}$ president of the United States and first Afro-American to hold the position of the most powerful man in the United States. (Berlin and Fetzer 2012, 193) Kusnet claims that Obama was using more splendid language than Bush and he did not stick strictly to the structure of the speech as Clinton did. In addition, Obama's listeners were Americans from various social classes. (Kusnet 2016) His speeches often referred to the US constitution and to the previous presidents. According to Kusnet, Obama was known for trying to fulfill the statement from the US constitution: to unify America even more. (Kusnet 2016)

A creation of a compact union was one of his main presidential objectives. As Kusnet continues, Obama often included also characters or events from the Bible in his speeches. (2016) Gallo expands that Obama used the following public-speaking techniques, which helped him to capture the attention of the audience: "transcendence, repetition, gesture and voice." (Gallo 2012) Transcendence helped him to portray a realistic picture of the event as he wanted listeners to imagine the situation. Gallo explains that audience needs to hear a concrete solution to the situation, not only general statements. (2012) Repetition emphasizes the most important parts of the speech, so it helps people to remember the main message. Whole sentences or only single words can be repeated. Since Obama was an experienced speaker, he knew that gestures confirm the audience that the speaker knows what he or she is talking about, highlight the speaker's confidence and they accompany the flow of speaker's thoughts. (Gallo 2012) However, Achenbach argues that Obama as a president did not have any characteristic phrase or sentence that people would connect with him. (Achenbach 2013) He mentions his first inaugural speech, claiming that its content was nothing exceptional or memorable, but people felt that he stood there to put forward common values. (Achenbach 2013)

According to Achenbach Obama was considered a good speaker because he knew how to work with his voice so that the speech was trustworthy and believable. He paused to emphasize the important parts of the speech, so people had time to absorb the information and think about it. Obama learned that the main idea of the speech needs to be simply said, yet coherent and that he had to move on from general statements to concrete situations. (Achenbach 2013)

# 3   RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN POLITICAL SPEECHES

Charteris-Black suggests that all great speakers have in common the desire to inspire others, to create social and moral values and American speakers, in particular, offer a helping hand to those who need it. (Charteris-Black 2014, 16) At the same time, speakers know that different audiences require using a different language, which the speaker needs to learn. Nowadays, most of the speeches are mediated by mass media. Therefore, Charteris-Black states that media can contribute to the distortion of the speaker's personality and thus contribute to a success or a failure of the speech. (2014, 6) McGuigan suggests that four objectives of rhetorical strategies are *to persuade, to inform, to express* and *to entertain*. (McGuigan 2011, 9)

Politicians may persuade their audience by targeting people's emotions, by referring to the authorities or by the involvement of human imagination. Another purpose of political speeches is to inform people about what happened, where, why, etc. (McGuigan 2011, 9) McGuigan suggests that if the speakers want to acquaint the audience with a difficult problem, they may use the rhetorical devices which could help to simplify the problem. He suggests that expressing the idea is very similar to its informative function. The speaker needs to express his or her opinions and thoughts in the original way to captivate the audience. (2011, 9-10) Lastly, he claims that the rhetorical strategies may be used in different ways either to make the audience cry or laugh. He argues it is all about how the speaker presents the ideas. (2011, 10)

According to Charteris-Black, politicians need to choose the right pattern of the speech and the right techniques so that the speech reaches its objectives. (Charteris-Black 2011, 13) The techniques which can help not only to politicians but the speakers in general. They can help to reassure the audience that the speaker has studied the topic and they enable a smooth transition from one idea to the other. These techniques can also tell how close relationship the speaker has to the topic (McGuigan 2011, 3-4) and they will be discussed in the following chapters.

## 3.1   Metaphor

Kovecses understands a metaphor in terms of domains. He recognizes two domains which need to participate in helping the receiver of the text to understand one idea in terms of the other. These domains are so called *source and target*. (Kovecses 2010, 4) The whole concept is called conceptual metaphor theory. (Musolff and Zinken 2009, 2) According to Kovecses, the source domain provides the expression which is being comprehended

in the target domain. (2010, 4) He illustrates this on the example: *Love is a journey*, explaining that *love* serves as a target domain and *journey* as a source domain which contributes to the understanding of the whole concept of love. (Kovecses 2010, 6)

Charteris-Black considers metaphors to be a strong persuasive feature because they usually include both words which people encounter every day and abstract words, so called unconscious mythical elements. (Charteris-Black 2011, 50-51) To put it into a context of politics, politicians usually combine those nonconcrete, intangible things with tangibles, for instance, *the road to victory*. (Charteris-Black 2011, 34) According to Charteris-Black, politicians use metaphors to describe both positive and negative things. They adopt them to look good and reflect themselves properly at all times, whether in front of their audience or opponents. (Charteris-Black 2011, 33) Kovecses provides the examples of target domains which appear in the field of politics and they are usually associated with power, for instance: *They forced the opposition out of the House* or *The fight erupted over abortion*. (Kovecses 2010, 25)

Lakoff and Johnson claim that metaphors cannot be perceived as an additional part of people's life or as something extra because a metaphor is used on daily basis. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 3) According to Charteris-Black, speakers usually lay the basis of metaphor on something that is well known to people, something that concerns them, and thus, in the end, they can better understand matters related to the whole society. He demonstrates this on Margaret Thatcher's speech when discussing the state budget. She started talking about the budgets of individual people, so they could better relate to the topic relating to the whole country. (Charteris-Black 2011, 36)

Davidson compares understanding of metaphors to the perception of dreams while arguing it both involves imagination and creativity. (Davidson 1978, 31) He claims that no procedure according to which a metaphor could be evaluated by its popularity or even by what the expression means, exist. (Davidson 1978, 31) Charteris-Black agrees with him by stating that restriction which word can be used as metaphoric and which cannot, does not exist. (Charteris-Black 2011, 31) Semino and Demjén claim that metaphors can be perceived as trying to understand one thing through the eyes of the other. (Semino and Demjén 2017) Charteris-Black states that it is the strength of metaphors because everyone can understand and interpret them differently. (2011, 38) Kovecses suggests that metaphors can be understood in two major ways, so called *online and offline understanding*. (Kovecses 2010, 41) Online understanding appears practically immediately

while talking, in opposite to offline understanding, which is a long process involving a memory as well. (Kovecses 2010, 41)

According to Charteris-Black, to create a metaphor, the typical usage of the word has to be changed and a person needs to know the literal meaning of the words. (Charteris-Black 2011, 31) Kovecses agrees with him by stating that metaphors usually rely on people's understanding of concepts. (2010, 42) Charteris-Black explains that metaphors have the ability to influence people's emotions towards the speech or a speaker. (2011, 32)

## 3.2 Metonymy

Metonymy usually occurs in the text together with a metaphor. As Degani, Frassi and Lorenzetti explain, metonymy allows understanding of one thing by its relation to something else. (Degani, Frassi and Lorenzetti 2016, 71) Powel and Cowart claim that through the material things metonymy points out to the intangibles, as seen in the example *blood, sweat and tears* used by Winston Churchill when referring to pain. (Powel and Cowart 2013) Shoesmith claims that those two concepts have to be linked. (Shoesmith 2016, 87) Zilienski suggests that people, depending on their culture, social background or the society they live in, determine which word will be a metonymy. (Zilienski 2012, 11)

However, this approach does not necessarily work every time, as seen in the example: *Smoke is coming out of her ears*. (Zilienski 2012, 12) He continues that to understand it properly both source and the target are needed. (2012, 12) Metonymy is used to arise people's emotions. Shoesmith shows this in the example when combining the words "terrorist and Muslim", which suggest negative emotions. (2016, 87) Zilienski states that metonymy appears in the political speech to render things, events or people at their best or, conversely, in the worst light possible. (Zilienski 2012, 12)

## 3.3 Pronouns

According to Gocheco, personal pronouns help speakers to establish contact with the audience and also distance themselves from their opponents. (Gocheco 2012, 5) Personal pronouns can be described as "a grammatical form referring directly to the speaker (first person), addressee (second person) or others involved in an interaction (third person)." (Al-Faki 2014, 191) According to Bramley, pronouns are approached in different ways. They are perceived simply as a part of speech which stands instead of nouns or as features which "refer to speech participants, the first person represents the speaker and the second person represents the addressee." (Bramley 2001, 16) Bramley

argues that instead of pronouns being used as an objective component of the speech, they rather portray speaker's position towards those who agree with him or her and to those who do not. (2001, 16)

Al-Faki states that the main purpose of speeches is to attract the audience and thus, politicians should outline their solution to the situation as clearly and concretely as possible because it is easier to persuade people to share the same opinion. (Al-Faki 2014, 190) He agrees with Bramley that politicians usually use pronouns in order to render themselves in a favorable light and want the shadow to fall over their opponents and personal pronouns help them accomplish this purpose. (2014, 191) According to Al-Faki, the most frequent personal pronouns in political speeches are: *I, you, we, they* and their forms. (2014, 191)

Bramley claims that politicians use *we* to give people the feeling they are part of a bigger entity, bigger group, which obviously carries both positives and negatives. The speakers give people the feeling of being in all of this together, meaning it all concerns them the same so that looking for a solution should be carried out together. (2001, 126) As Al-Faki suggests, if a politician uses *we*, it is very likely that pronoun *they* will soon appear in the speech as referring to the opposition party because politicians use *they* to identify the others. (2014, 191) Bramley notes that "the others" either refer to a concrete group of people, to a general public or to a group of people which is not further defined. (2001, 213) Mostly, politicians use personal pronoun *they* when they want to address a concrete group of people. *They* may be also used when talking about only one person, but not wanting to reveal any further information about that person, for instance, gender or age. *They*, which refer to the specific group of people, is mostly used when politicians want to maintain a neutrality and keep the distance towards people. *They* referring to the general public can be mostly seen when discussing a sensitive issue. (Bramley 2001, 214-216) According to Bramley, personal pronoun *you* is used similarly. It works as a tool of expressing disapproval or a different opinion on the discussed matter. (2001, 180) In addition, possessive pronouns such as *my* or *their,* are widely used when politicians explain their own attitudes or beliefs. (Al-Faki 2014, 191)

## 3.4   Three-part list

Mercer defines a three-part list, also known as the rule of three, as a feature that highlights the main ideas of the speech by using three parts which are connected to each other and follow each other. (Mercer 2000, 74) According to Atkinson, three-part lists are

used in political speeches because they help the speech to be cohesive. (Atkinson 1984, 57) The words in the list need to be logically connected and consistent with the context. The last word in the list is considered as the beginning of a new thought. Three-part lists prove that the speaker is sure about his or her thoughts, he or she believes in it. (Atkinson 1984, 58-60) Mercer also claims that while a speaker is saying the three-part list and is making pauses to enlarge the effect, the listeners can guess when the list ends and may reward the producer with the applause or some other natural reaction. (Mercer 2000, 75)

The three-part list can include either three same words or three different ones. Atkinson offers an example of a speech of Hugh Gaitskell, who was the head of Labour Party: "*We shall fight, fight and fight again to save the party we love*", where the three-part list highlights the message he wanted to convey. (Atkinson 1984, 60) Nonetheless, politicians rather use lists of three different words as seen in the speech of George Wallace after his election for Alabama governor in 1963: "…and I say segregation *now*, segregation *tomorrow* and segregation *forever*." (Atkinson 1984, 60) The timing of three-part list is essential, as well as a pause that the speaker makes between the words.

## 3.5 Parallelism

Parallelism is used to emphasize politicians' beliefs and attitudes. According to Al-Faki, its main function is to express different ideas, which are, however, similarly structured. (Al-Faki 2014, 192) Livingston compares parallelism to repetition. She claims that different ideas are arranged according to a similar structure because of the rhythm. (Livingston 2010, 43) Words that create the parallelism usually belong to the same semantic field. (Montgomery 2007, 220)  Al- Faki claims that speaker uses parallelism when connecting several similar ideas which have the same degree of importance, as seen in the Party Conference speech by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1984:

"*It is the law of the land, the heritage of the people. No man is above the law and no man is below it. Obedience to the law is demanded as a right, not asked as a favour.*" (Al-Faki 2014, 192)

From the example of Margaret Thatcher's speech, it is seen that parallelism makes the speech more coherent, convincing and accurate. Therefore, the audience has a greater chance to remember the important passages of the speech. According to Montgomery, when politicians use parallelism, they want to target human emotions and three types of parallelism can appear in the speech, namely syntactic, lexical and phonological. (Montgomery 2007, 220)

Syntactic parallelism is created by "a pair of parallel words, one in each section of the text." (Forraiová 2011, 17) As Montgomery suggests, syntactic parallelism focuses on the structure of sentences and on sentences which have the same syntactic form. It is a typical feature of political speeches. Lexical parallelism focuses on the meaning of the words in the sentences and phonological parallelism means how the sentences sound if they have for example the same sound at the beginning. (Montgomery 2007, 220)

## 3.6 Contrastive pairs

Al-Faki defines a contrastive pair or also called antithesis, as a combination of two words which are opposites of each other. (Al-Faki 2014, 182) As Powell and Cowart explain, different variations of antithesis exist. In one type of antithesis, only one word is an antonym to the other, e. g. *Make love, not war*. (Powell and Cowart 2013) Other contrastive pairs include two words with opposite meanings, as seen in this example: "*I hate Louisiana politics, but I love Louisiana*." (Powell and Cowart 2013) As Mercer suggests, this type of a contrastive pair is widely used because it makes the speech unique and memorable. (Mercer 2000, 75) Another type of antithesis is the inverted antithesis, which can be seen in the speech by J. F. Kennedy: "*Ask not what your country (A) can do for you (B), ask what you (B) can do for your country (A)*." (Powell and Cowart 2013)

To underline the strength of a statement and to gain the greatest possible impact of the contrastive pair, the politician has to place it in the right position in the speech. According to Powel and Cowart, the part that the speaker wants to highlight the most should be placed at the very end of the contrastive pair. They also suggest that both parts of the contrastive pair should be balanced. One part should not be longer or include more words than the other. (Powell and Cowart 2013) Mercer claims that contrastive pairs, as well as three-part lists, help the speaker to connect with his or her audience so that the listeners keep the attention to the very end of the speech. (Mercer 2000, 76)

# II. ANALYSIS

# 4 METHODOLOGY

This part of the thesis will analyze speeches of the former US president Barack Obama after mass shootings, terrorist attacks and natural disasters. Each type of tragedy will consist of three approximately same long speeches (2-3 A4 pages), apart from the Baton Rouge Flooding, which is six pages long because the questions from journalists are included in the speech as well. Obama's full speeches are available on the enclosed CD.

The practical part of the work will focus on the rhetorical strategies which were described in the theoretical part. The strategies will be located in the texts and then explained why Obama used such a strategy, what he wanted to achieve and what reactions the strategy was to induce among the audiences. The work will evaluate what rhetorical strategies Obama mostly used and if there are any differences in expressing himself in the speeches after natural disasters and in expressing himself in the speeches after mass shootings and terrorist attacks.

## 4.1 Corpus of Political Speeches

The corpus includes nine speeches all of which relate to the national tragedies in the United States during the time of Obama's presidency and they are dated from the years 2011–2016. All the speeches are addressed to the general public. This work deals with the speeches following tragedies in which high numbers of victims were recorded and which sparked the greatest wave of reactions. Obama had commented on some of the events more than once, such as the Boston Marathon Explosions, but for the purpose of this work, only his first statement, which he delivered immediately after the tragedy was chosen. Following speeches will be analyzed:

Speeches after Mass Shootings:
- Remarks on the Shooting Tragedy in Aurora, Colorado
- Statement on the Shooting at Charleston Emanuel AME Church
- Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings in Newton, Connecticut

Speeches after Terrorist Attacks:
- First Statement on the Boston Marathon Explosions
- Statement on the Orlando, Florida Shootings
- Statement on the Explosions in New York and New Jersey

Speeches after Natural Disasters:

- Remarks by the President on Hurricane Matthew
- Baton Rouge Flooding Press Statement
- Remarks by the President after Touring Tornado Damage in Joplin, Missouri

The speeches, as well as all the statements, used as examples in the thesis, were taken from the website http://americanrhetoric.com/, apart from the Remarks by the President after Touring Tornado Damage in Joplin, Missouri and Remarks by the President on Hurricane Matthew, these speeches come from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/.

# 5 ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECHES AFTER TRAGEDIES

This chapter outlines the issue of the national tragedies in the USA and provides background information on the types of tragedies which are being analyzed in this work. According to Berkowitz et al, mass shootings in the United States are mostly caused by people who hold the guns legally. (Berkowitz et al 2017) However, Ingraham points out that various definitions of mass shootings exist. They mainly differ in the number of victims and in the use of weapons. An incident is most frequently classified as a mass shooting if three and more people die or are seriously injured, but an attacker is usually not counted in this number. (Ingraham 2015) Ingraham also mentions that three categories of mass shootings exist: "public shootings, domestic violence and gang violence." (Ingraham 2015) This thesis will focus on the analysis of public shootings. Another type of tragedy that will be covered is speeches after terrorist attacks.

Mosher and Gould suggest that one American dies every year because of terrorist attacks caused by murderers who were born in foreign countries and death of six Americans is caused by the Islamic terrorists every year. (Mosher and Gould 2017) Nonetheless, terrorism lacks a united definition. Mailto and Libaw provide features of terrorism, namely "violence, noncombatant targets, intention of spreading fear, and political aims." (Mailto and Libaw 2001) They continue with the statement made by Yonah Alexander, a terrorism expert and director of the Institute for Studies in International Terrorism at the State University of New York, who claims that terrorists do not venerate any laws. (Mailto and Libaw 2001) However, not all tragedies are caused by the hands of humans, such as natural disasters.

Natural disasters can, of course, kill or injure hundreds of people, but also destroy houses, entire neighborhoods, etc. Riley states that according to the 2016 statistics made by a German reinsurance firm Munich RE, the worst and financially most expensive natural disaster in the USA that also took away hundreds of lives, was hurricane Matthew. Riley continues with a statement of the head of Munich RE's Geo Risks Research Unit that these catastrophes are only going to be more frequent in the future as a result of changes in the world's climate. (Riley 2017)

## 5.1 Structure of Obama's Speeches after Tragedies

After tragedies, people need to hear words of comfort, they need to gain back their confidence and a feeling that they are not alone in the situation and have someone to rely on. Barack Obama was well aware of it. Along these lines, this subchapter will focus on the speeches delivered immediately after or in the case of natural disasters also during the tragedies, and examine their structure, what the former president said in the introduction, what followed, how he concluded the speeches and how he calmed down not only the survivors but all the Americans.

### 5.1.1 Introductions and Bodies of the Speeches

These paragraphs represent the introductions of Obama's speeches after tragedies and natural disasters and they all began with references to the authorities of the national security forces and to the Governors.

(1) *I spoke with Governor Malloy and FBI Director Mueller.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting, 2012)

(2) *I spoke with, and Vice President Biden spoke with, Mayor Joe Riley and other leaders of Charleston.* (Obama, Statement on the Charleston Emanuel AME Church Shooting, 2015)

(3) *I just finished a meeting with FBI Director Comey and my homeland security and national advisors.* (Obama, Statement on the Orlando Shooting, 2016)

(4) *I just received an update from our FEMA Director, Craig Fugate, as well as the rest of our national security team.* (Obama, Remarks by the President on Hurricane Matthew, 2016)

By mentioning their names, Obama added credibility not only to the speeches themselves but mainly to himself as a speaker. As mentioned in the subchapter 2.2.1, the personality of the speaker, called *ethos*, plays a crucial role while delivering the speech. In the cases of mass shootings and terrorist attacks, Obama was forming his personality by condemning these acts, which was indicated by the choice of adjectives, for instance, *heinous* or *senseless* crimes. These adjectives should have, of course, maintain

the monstrosity of the crimes but also draw the audience's attention and encourage them to continue to listen.

When delivering the speeches during or after natural disasters, he could not condemn any acts as the tragedy was not caused by a human hand. Therefore, Obama reminded people to do not underestimate the power of such element and that people should listen to and follow the instructions given by the national security forces to stay safe as seen in the example (5). At the same time, he expressed gratitude to those who helped, for instance, to take care of the injured people, which can be observed in the statements (6) and (7):

(5) *And so I just want to emphasize to everybody that this is still a really dangerous hurricane; that the potential for storm surge, flooding, loss of life and severe property damage continues to exist.* (Obama, Remarks by the President on Hurricane Matthew, 2016)

(6) *I want to thank the outstanding work that Governor Nixon, the Mayor, all the congressional delegation, as well as the First Lady have done -- and the Red Cross -- in helping people to respond.* (Obama, Remarks by the President after Touring Tornado Damage in Joplin, Missouri, 2011)

(7) *Well, to begin with, I just want to say thank you to the outstanding officials behind me who have been on the ground, working 24/7 since this flood happened.* (Obama, Baton Rouge Flooding Press Statement, 2016)

The introduction should also indicate the direction the speech will take and what will follow. In all the speeches, Obama suggested that he was ready to care for the victims. He also expressed sadness so that the listeners expected he would aim to unify people. Furthermore, from the position of the president, he put himself into the role of authority, which gave people the feeling that he was trustworthy, that he cared for them and he would hide them under his protective wings. The fact that Obama portrayed himself as the leader can be seen in this part: *my condolences on behalf of the nation*, in this part: *not just on behalf of Michelle and myself, but the entire American family* or in this part: *I come here, first and foremost, to say that the prayers of the entire nation are with everybody who lost loved ones.* However, he realized that the transition from the authority to being one

of the people, who are hurting, was needed, so he tried to get closer to people, as seen in these statements:

(8) *We've endured too many of these tragedies in the past few years. And each time I learn the news I react not as a President, but as anybody else would – as a parent.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings, 2012)

(9) *My daughters go to the movies. What if Malia and Sasha had been at the theater, as so many of our kids do every day?* (Obama, Remarks on the Shooting Tragedy in Aurora, Colorado, 2012)

The statements above suggest that he left the role of the president, the authority and moved to the position of a parent, which brought him closer to the people. He tried to get even closer to the audience by underlining the pain they, as parents, suffered and by using another strong adjective *overwhelming*, as seen in this part: *I know there's not a parent in America who doesn't feel the same overwhelming grief that I do*. Obama said this from the position of the parent of two daughters, which certainly helped him to gain more credibility.

He maintained his position of a father in the Aurora Tragedy Speech as well: *My daughters go to the movies. What if Malia and Sasha had been at the theater, as so many of our kids do every day?* In the Charleston Church Speech and Orlando Shootings Speech, he did not focus on the importance of the family as such, but on the importance of American nation as one community, which again leads to the point that Obama was keen on fulfilling the statement from the US Constitution, to unify the country, as seen in the statements:

(10) *And at some point it's going to be important for the American people to come to grips with it, and for us to be able to shift how we think about the issue of gun violence collectively.* (Obama, On the Shooting at Charleston Emanuel AME Church, 2015)

(11) *As a country, we will be there for the people of Orlando today, tomorrow and for all the days to come.* (Obama, Statement on the Orlando, Florida Shootings, 2016)

(12) *And as they do, the American people will be with them every single step of the way.* (Obama, First Statement on the Boston Marathon Explosions, 2013)

After the introduction, the speaker is expected to leave some space for the audience's imagination. The involvement of the imagination can be seen in the statements (13) and (14) below when he referred to the children's future. Obama wanted the audience to think with him and to realize what was in the store for those children. He also wanted the audience to realize that those people played different roles in their lives, in which they cannot continue. By naming all of these different roles that people had in their lives, he was also establishing *pathos,* aiming on people's emotions because when people realized that those could have been their family members, it touched their emotions and they agreed with Obama that together they need to protect their children, the future of the country.

(13) *The majority of those who died today were children – beautiful little kids between the ages of 5 and 10 years old. They had their entire lives ahead of them – birthdays, graduations, weddings, kids of their own. Among the fallen were also teaches – men and women who devoted their lives to helping our children fulfill their dreams.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings, 2012)

(14) *The people we lost in Aurora loved and they were loved. They were mothers and fathers; they were husbands and wives; sisters and brothers; sons and daughters, friends and neighbors.* (Obama, Remarks on the Shooting Tragedy in Aurora, 2012)

### 5.1.2   Evidence

Mass shootings and terrorist attacks are certainly sensitive topics that need to be treated carefully. Those crimes were condemned by most of the public and therefore, providing more statistics or evidence could hurt the people and survivors even more. Statistics are expected in cases in which people do not share the same views

and the speaker needs to uphold his or her statements. Despite this fact, Obama provided some examples.  He claimed that there have been too many similar tragedies during the last months, which can be observed in the statement (15) and (16) below.

After the introduction part of the speeches following the mass shootings and terrorist attacks, he usually talked a little bit about the attackers, but as seen in the statements (17) and (18) below, he did not display too much information. However, in the case of natural disasters, Obama wanted to provide as much information as possible, mainly where, for instance, the hurricane or storm was heading, what cities were in danger, etc., which can be seen in the statement (19).

(15) *Whether it's an elementary school in Newtown, or a shopping mall in Oregon, or a temple in Wisconsin, or a movie theater in Aurora, or a street corner in Chicago.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings, 2012)

(16) *Many of you will remember Hurricane Sandy.* (Obama, Remarks by the President on Hurricane Matthew, 2016)

(17) *Now, we're still gathering all the facts about what happened in Aurora, but what we do know is that the police have one suspect in custody.* (Obama, Remarks on the Shooting Tragedy in Aurora, 2012)

(18) *The Attorney General has announced plans for the FBI to open a hate crime investigation. We understand that the suspect is in custody.* (Obama, On the Shooting at Charleston Emanuel AME Church, 2015)

(19) *First, what we're seeing now is Matthew having moved above South Florida and some of the largest population centers, working its way north.  And the big concern that people are having right now is the effects that it could have in areas like Jacksonville on through Georgia.* (Obama, Remarks by the President on Hurricane Matthew, 2016)

After or during the natural disasters, Obama usually told a story of a family or a person who survived the disaster, as seen in the statement (20), to let people forget

for a moment about the horror some of them had to endure and show that there are also stories with happy endings or at least stories that appeal emotions, as in the example (21).

>    (20) *I met an 85-year-old gentleman who has a -- still has a lawn service. He explained how he had just gotten his chicken pot-pie out and the storm started coming and he went into the closet, and came out without a scratch.* (Obama, Remarks by the President after Touring Tornado Damage in Joplin, Missouri, 2011)

>    (21) *I was just speaking to a young woman whose husband died shortly after the birth of her second child, and she was talking about her daughter trying to gather all the keepsakes that she had in her bedroom, but reminded her of her father.* (Obama, Baton Rouge Flooding Press Statement, 2016)

By remembering all of these events and by providing the evidence about the tragedies, along with reassuring the audience that the security forces were working to protect the nation, he established *logos*. However, a concrete solution to the problem or a specific proposal for a solution was not heard in any of the speeches. Obama only emphasized the need to unite and stick together as a nation to survive those horrific times.

### 5.1.3 Conclusions of the Speeches

When reaching the end of the speeches, Obama used to refer to God, to Bible or to the authorities, for instance, to Martin Luther King, as seen in the statements below. He wanted to suggest that there is a greater power that would unite all the people and would help them to survive any difficult times that would come.

>    (22) *May God bless the memory of the victims and, in the words of Scripture, heal the brokenhearted and bind up their wounds.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings in Newtown, 2012)

(23) *That, certainly, was Dr. King's hope just over 50 years ago, after four little girls were killed in a bombing in a black church in Birmingham, Alabama.* (Obama, On the Shooting at Charleston Emanuel AME Church, 2015)

(24) *May God bless the Americans we lost this morning. May He comfort their families. May God continue to watch over this country that we love. Thank you.* (Obama, Statement on the Orlando, Florida Shootings, 2016)

(25) *And so we've all got to put together because here but for the grace of God go I. Thank you very much, everybody.* (Obama, Remarks by the President after Touring Tornado Damage in Joplin, Missouri, 2011)

## 5.2 Rhetorical Devices in Obama's Speeches after Tragedies

A repetitive usage of some of the rhetorical devices may be found in Obama's speeches. This chapter will focus on the strategies mentioned in the theoretical part, namely three-part list, metaphor and metonymy, parallelism, contrastive pairs and the use of pronouns. It will explain what were the functions of the strategies in the speeches and in which occasions Obama mostly used them.

### 5.2.1 Three-part List

Barack Obama used three-part lists frequently. Along with the use of pronouns and parallelism, three-part lists are dominant strategies which appear in his every speech. As suggested in the subchapter 3.4, three-part lists should highlight the main ideas of the speech and help the speaker to emphasize that he or she is serious about the statements. It is necessary the words in the list are somehow connected and they follow the speaker's thoughts as seen in the statements:

(26) *Investigate this heinous crime, care for the victims, counsel their families.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting in Newton, 2012)

(27) *And to say our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families, and their community…* (Obama, On the Shooting at Charleston Emanuel AME Church, 2015)

In the example (26), Obama suggested that first, they will *investigate* what happened during that day, who did it and why. Then it will be time to *care* for people who lost their loved ones and if necessary, they will *counsel* them. It is obvious that words used in this three-part list have both logical and temporal sequence. In the example (27), a shift from the smallest to the largest unit can be observed, firstly prayers for the people who were murdered would take place, then for *their families*, and then for *their community*. Thereby Obama also wanted to present a shift towards the most important thing, the community, which refers to the fact that the unification of America xwas his priority.

(28) *For the parents and grandparents, sisters and brothers of these little children, and for the families of the adults who were lost.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings in Newtown, 2012)

(29) *Love across Charleston today, from all races, from all faiths, from all places of worship.* (Obama, On the Shooting at Charleston Emanuel AME Church, 2015)

In the statement (28), the use of three-part list indicates the roles that the murdered people played in their lives. In the example (29), there is not a reference to the people's roles in lives, but it suggests that no matter the role in the life, no matter the race, the faith, people needed to come together and help each other to overcome such a difficult time. By using these combinations of words, Obama also left space for the audience's imagination, so they could actually portray all of the victims and what they could experience if a murderer did not take their lives away.

(30) *To remind them that we are there for them, that we are praying for them, that the love they felt for those they lost endures not just in their memories but also in ours.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting in Newtown, 2012)

(31) *For the people who knew them and loved them, for those who are still struggling to recover, and for all the victims of less publicized acts of violence*

*that plague our communities every single day.* (Obama, Remarks on the Shooting Tragedy in Aurora, 2012)

(32) *The good news is I am confident that the outpouring of unity and strength and fellowship and love across Charleston today...*(Obama, On the Shooting at Charleston Emanuel AME Church, 2015)

Obama also used a three-part list when offering a helping hand and a prayer to those directly affected by the tragedy as seen in the statements (30), (31) and (32). It certainly helped him to be portrayed as a great authority in the eyes of the audience and it evoked the feeling that he could be trusted. In the statements (33) and (34), it can be observed that not only single words but also sentences can create the three-part list.

(33) *…cooperating with state and local officials rapidly and with attention to detail, and keeping families who've been affected uppermost in their minds.* (Obama, Baton Rouge Flooding Press Statement, 2016)

(34) *We're going to be going to a memorial service and try to help comfort the families and let them know that were praying for them and thinking about them.* (Obama, Remarks by the President after Touring Tornado Damage in Joplin, Missouri, 2011)

However, as seen in the statements above, when using whole sentences in the three-part list, it is more demanding for the audience to keep up with the speaker's thoughts.

### 5.2.2 Use of Pronouns

The use of pronouns, especially personal pronouns, is a significant phenomenon in Obama's speeches following national tragedies. This subchapter will mainly focus on the usage of personal pronouns *we, they,* their forms *us* and *them* and also personal pronoun *I* because these most frequently appeared in his speeches. As suggested in the theoretical part, pronouns help politicians to make the greatest impression on their audience and clearly determine which side the speaker is inclined to.

### 5.2.2.1 Personal Pronouns We/Us

At the beginning of the speeches following mass shootings and terrorist attacks, Obama was most likely to use a pronoun *we* as he wanted to suggest that as a leader, he was in a close cooperation with security forces. It helped him to get into the position of one of the members of the national security forces and evoked a feeling among audiences that he and the security forces tried to find all the answers needed to solve the crime, which can be seen in the examples (35), (36) and (37).

> (35) *We are still learning all the facts. We've reached no definitive judgment on the precise motivations of the killer.* (Obama, Statement on the Orlando, Florida Shootings, 2016)

> (36) *We're still gathering all the facts about what happened in Aurora, but what we do know is that the police have one suspect in custody.* (Obama, Remarks on the Shooting in Aurora, Colorado, 2012)

> (37) *We don't yet have all the answers. But we do know that multiple people have been wounded, some gravely, in explosions at the Boston Marathon.* (Obama, First Statement on the Boston Marathon Explosions, 2013)

The investigation of such crimes should proceed cautiously, but Obama did not want to sound as an incompetent leader, as they still did not have much evidence and therefore, his speeches after tragedies had a similar structure, which may be seen in the examples (36) and (37). They did not have all the information, but at least they had a suspect in custody or knew how many people were hurt, which would make people feel like they were working hard on the case and that other information would come.

However, no such usage of a pronoun *we* or no similar structure appears in the speeches following natural disasters. It may not be obvious what damage the hurricane, flooding or tornado inflicted, but it can be predicted how long it will take until it disappears or what its direction is. Obama preferred to emphasize the work of organizations or individuals that were helping to clear the damage or taking care about the survivors.

(38) *Today, as Americans, we grieve the brutal murder…* (Obama, Statement on the Orlando, Florida Shootings, 2016)

(39) *Instead, we will stand united, as Americans…* (Obama, Statement on the Orlando, Florida Shootings, 2016)

(40) *And at some point it's going to be important for the American people to come to grips with it, and for us to be able to shift…* ( Obama, On the Shooting at Charleston Emanuel AME Church, 2015)

Examples (38) and (39) illustrate that Obama used a pronoun *we* also when he wanted to become one of the citizens, one of the families who lost their members and show people that these tragedies are not tragedies only for individuals, but for the whole American nation. Not only he argued that it affected every American, but he again put himself into the position of the leader and authority that people could look up to. It can be observed in the example (40). First, he specified who he was talking about and in the next part of the sentence he was already using a pronoun *us*, which gave the audience the impression that they belonged to a larger group, whom they could depend on.

(41) *Michele and I will do what I know every parent in America will do, which is hug our children a little tighter and we'll tell them that we love them, and we'll remind each other how deeply we love one another.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, 2012)

(42) *Michele and I will be fortunate enough to hug our girls a little tighter tonight.* (Obama, Remarks on the Shooting Tragedy in Aurora, Colorado, 2012)

(43) *Michelle and I know several members of Emanuel AME Church.* (Obama, On the Shooting at Charleston Emanuel AME Church, 2015)

As illustrated in the examples above, Obama used *we*, when he was referring to himself and his wife. It helped him get closer to people, show them that he was one of them and that he was hurt as much as they were. By using specific names, he also created a more personal relationship and wanted to be a good example for the people, show

people the way they should go, meaning be grateful for their children and take care of them.

### 5.2.2.2 Personal Pronouns They/Them

In political speeches, pronouns *we* and *they* or their forms *us* and *them*, usually follow each other or are close to each other in the sentence. This is because the speaker wants it to be clear right from the beginning, which side he or she takes. Personal pronoun *they* was in Obama's speeches used to address a concrete group of people, assailants and murderers, which can be observed in the examples (44) and (45), from which he wanted to distance not only himself but also other Americans who behaved according to the laws. However, he did not use *they* only with the association with the criminals, but also when he referred to people who lost, for instance, their homes and families during the natural disasters or during the mass shootings, as seen in the statement (46).

(44) *They are trying to hurt innocent people, but they also want to inspire fear in all of us.* (Obama, Statement on the Explosions in New York and New Jersey, 2016)

(45) *...get their hands on a weapon that lets them shoot people in a school, or in a house of worship, or a movie theater, or in a nightclub.* (Obama, Statement on the Orlando, Florida Shootings, 2016)

(46) *They need all of us right now.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, 2012)

The examples (44) and (46) show Obama's arrangement of pronouns. Firstly, he used pronoun *they* and ended the sentence by pronoun *we*, even though, in the first example *they* refers to the attackers and in the second example to the families of the victims. Nonetheless, he placed *we* towards the end of the sentence to illustrate that the community they, as Americans have, is stronger than the attackers and is capable of providing a helping hand to whoever needs it.

### 5.2.2.3 Personal pronoun I

The personal pronoun *I* appears most frequently in Obama's speeches after natural disasters than in other two types of tragedies.

(47) *I want to thank them all for their leadership.* (Obama, Remarks by the President on Hurricane Matthew, 2016)

(48) *I want to thank the outstanding work that Governor Nixon, the Mayor…* (Obama, Remarks by the President after Touring Tornado Damage in Joplin, Missouri, 2011)

(49) *I just want to say thank you to the outstanding officials behind me…*(Obama, Baton Rouge Flooding Press Statement, 2016)

It can be observed from the statements above that he used personal pronoun *I*, when expressing gratitude to those who helped to put the cities hit by the natural catastrophes back on their feet. He put himself into the role of the authority and as the most powerful man in the country, he wanted to thank for a good job because from such a position people would appreciate the praise more.

(50) *I spoke with Governor Malloy and FBI Director Mueller.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, 2012)

(51) *I was briefed by my homeland security team on the events in Boston.* (Obama, First Statement on the Boston Marathon Explosions, 2013)

(52) *I've just been briefed again by FBI Director Comey.* (Obama, Statement on the Explosions in New York and New Jersey, 2016)

When delivering a speech after mass shootings and terrorist attacks, he was most likely to use *I* while referring to his conversation with national security forces, which can be seen in the examples above. As mentioned in the subchapter 5.1.1, Obama often mentioned concrete names of the people working for the national security forces as it would add him credibility and it would persuade people that he was providing verified information.

### 5.2.3 Contrastive Pairs

As discussed in the subchapter 3.6, contrastive pairs are combinations of words which stand as opposite to each other and the most important part of the information should stand at the very end of the pair, which can be seen the Obama's statements:

(53) *We can always replace property, but we can't replace lives.* (Obama, Remarks by the President on Hurricane Matthew, 2016)

(54) *They're okay. But they've been displaced.* (Obama, Remarks by the President after Touring Tornado Damage in Joplin, Missouri, 2011)

(55) *...not just on behalf of Michelle and myself, but the entire American family.* (Obama, Remarks on the Shooting Tragedy in Aurora, Colorado, 2012)

(56) *I react not as a President, but as anybody else would, as a parent.* (Obama, Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, 2012)

It can be seen in the example (53) that he wanted to remind people that materialistic things are useless when people's lives are at risk and people can only start to think about property and other materialistic things when those who suffered are finally safe, which can be observed in the example (54). In the speeches following natural disasters, Obama used contrastive pairs mostly to highlight the value and importance of human lives.

In the speeches after mass shootings and terrorist attacks Obama used contrastive pairs rather to illustrate the importance of the American nation as one community and family that holds tightly together, meaning that an individual is too weak to survive this horrific time alone, but as one community, it is possible, as suggested in the statement (55). That is also why he put the *American family* to the very end of the sentence. He considered it more important than the individual person. Statement (56) has a similar structure. The word *parent* stands at the end because when innocent children were killed during the massacre, people would expect comfort and consolation rather from the position of a parent than from the position of the authority and leader. Moreover, as seen in the given statements, Obama did not use only single words that would contrast each other. He rather

used whole sentences that stood as opposite because it provided better coherence of the text.

### 5.2.4  Metaphor and Metonymy

A metaphor is considered to be one of the most important and the most used strategy while delivering a speech because it helps to evoke emotions among audiences and it also inclines people on the speaker's side. Metonymy has a very similar function. Metaphor, as well as metonymy, helps the audience to understand the abstract things through material things. That is to say, the hypothesis of this work was that the analyzed speeches would include various metaphoric phrases, however, neither metaphors nor metonymy, are dominant features of Obama's speeches after national tragedies which are being analyzed in this thesis. Nonetheless, few examples are listed below:

> (57) *...all of us can extend a hand to those in need.* (Obama, Statement on the
> Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, 2012)

> (58) *They opened their doors to strangers.* (Obama, On the Shooting at Charleston
> Emanuel AME Church, 2015)

> (59) *People can think that they're out of the woods...* (Obama, Remarks by the
> President on Hurricane Matthew, 2016)

> (60) *They are continuing to lose ground in Iraq and in Syria.* (Obama, Statement
> on the Explosions in New York and New Jersey, 2016)

As seen in these examples, when Obama used a metaphor, it was not a complicated or difficult one that would force the audience to think hard about what he was saying or what he was referring to. It was rather a usual phrase or saying that people use in everyday communication. All the metaphors in the statements (57), (58), (59) and (60) refer to some kind of act. The metaphor used in the example (57) urges people to provide help. Example (58) suggests that in the past some action took place as well and the worshipers of a small community decided to accept someone new and opened up their hearts. When thinking about those two examples, they both require courage. Whether it is

providing help to a stranger or opening a heart to a new member and both of these do not have to pay off.

> (61) *...do what you can to help get families and local businesses back on their feet.* (Obama, Baton Rouge Flooding Press Statement, 2016)

> (62) *We are not going to stop until Joplin is fully back on its feet.* (Obama, Remarks by the President after Touring Tornado Damage in Joplin, Missouri, 2011)

> (63) *FEMA has worked diligently to pre-position resources, assets, water, food, commodities.* (Obama, Remarks by the President on Hurricane Matthew, 2016)

> (64) *And the FBI can give you further details in terms of how that is proceeding.* (Obama, Statement on the Explosions in New York and New Jersey, 2016)

The statement (63) is an example of metonymy. FEMA as an inanimate thing is not capable of providing water, food, etc. It stands for the employees or volunteers of the agency who were working on all of these activities. A similar feature can be seen in the example (62), where *Joplin is fully back on its feet*, does not necessarily mean only the recovery of the town, but also the people who were affected by this catastrophe. It can be observed in the example (61) that Obama used metaphors in speeches after natural disasters mostly when he wanted to integrate people into the helping process, address their emotions and suggest that without the help of all they will not move forward.

### 5.2.5 Parallelism

Another rhetorical device that helps politicians to make their beliefs and attitudes even more powerful is parallelism. In the subchapter 3.5, parallelism was described as a connection of various ideas which carry the same importance and have a similar structure. Parallelism may be found in most of Obama's analyzed speeches because it enabled him to connect multiple ideas that helped to uphold his arguments. He often achieved parallelism by using contrastive pairs or three-part lists, which is illustrated in the following examples:

(65) *We are going to continue to go after them. We're going to take out their leaders. We're going to take out their infrastructure.* (Obama, Statement on the Explosions in New York and New Jersey, 2016)

(66) *We will get to the bottom of this. And we will find who did this; we'll find out why they did this.* (Obama, First Statement on the Boston Marathon Explosions, 2013)

(67) *They had hopes for the future and they had dreams that were not yet fulfilled.* (Obama, Remarks on the Shooting Tragedy in Aurora, Colorado, 2012)

(68) *When there were laws banning all-black movement church gatherings, they conducted services in secret. When there was a nonviolent movement to bring our country closer in line with our highest ideals…* ( Obama, On the Shooting at Charleston Emanuel AME Church, 2015)

(69) *We're going to do everything we can to continue whatever search and rescue remains. We are doing everything we can to make sure that folks get the shelter that they need, the support that they need.* (Obama, Remarks by the President after Touring Tornado Damage in Joplin, Missouri, 2011)

Parallelism in Obama's speeches was mostly created by anaphora, when most of his sentences began by *we're going to, we will, they had,* etc. Therefore, it created a repetition and a natural flow of thoughts which helped people to better remember his ideas. The logical connection between the words in the sentences which eventually created parallelism will be illustrated on the examples (65) and (66). When delivering speeches after mass shootings and terrorist attacks, Obama firstly assured people that the root of the tragedy would be found.  Then, they would find out who the culprit was or if there were more of them, then, they would be caught and lastly, they would discover why they committed the crime. Parallelism helped him to calm people down and he also wanted to point out that the security forces in the state would work even beyond their capabilities, and he, as a president and authority would be at the forefront, which fortified his position as a leader.

The example (69) comes from the speech after tornado Joplin and it shows how extensively Obama worked with parallelism. Not only that anaphora *we're going or doing everything we can* appears there, but the power of his words was also underlined when he added: *the shelter that they need, the support that they need*. That is to say, parallelism in speeches after natural disasters was used to evoke a feeling of solidarity, awaken a helping spirit in people and ensure the survivors that everyone would get the helping hand.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this work was to define rhetorical devices which the former president of the US Barack Obama most frequently used in his speeches following national tragedies. Discourse analysis was used to examine the speeches according to predefined criteria, namely three-part list, use of pronouns, contrastive pair, metaphor and metonymy, parallelism and also to find out if the use of these devices is different in the speeches after mass shootings and terrorist attacks and in the speeches following natural disasters. The thesis focused on the structure of Obama's speeches as well.

As for the structure, the speeches began with the references to the work of the national security forces. By mentioning concrete names, Obama not only wanted to praise them for their good work, but he mainly wanted to achieve credibility among the audience. In the case of mass shootings and terrorist attacks, Obama condemned the acts and in the case of natural disasters he often reminded people to be careful and to stay safe. All of this helped him to create ethos which meant that he became trustworthy in the eyes of the public. His speeches after tragedies aim to achieve three main objectives, to give a helping hand to people who were hurt, care for the survivors and most importantly, unite the American nation, meaning to create a one big community that will hold together. Obama wanted to accomplish these goals by creating a closer relationship with people, for instance, moving from the role of the leader to the role of a parent and by mentioning his children and wife. In the conclusions of the speeches, he often mentioned God or authorities as to suggest that a greater power which can unite them, exist.

As far as rhetorical devices are concerned, three-part list served as a confirmation that Obama was sure about his statements. The former president mostly used it when he wanted to outline the roles that the victims played in their lives and also when he wanted to suggest what the next steps in investigation or in clearing the damage after natural disasters will be. Another device that helped him to make his ideas clear and highlight the most important ideas was contrastive pair, which he mainly used to present the values of people's lives in the case of natural disasters and to highlight the importance of the united American nation in the case of mass shootings and natural disasters. These two devices, three-part list and contrastive pair were used to create parallelism which connected various ideas with similar structure together. To make the statements even more powerful and to make sure that people will remember as much as possible from the speech, parallelism was mostly created by anaphora, which generated repetition. When delivering

the speeches after mass shootings and terrorist attacks, parallelism was a device that helped Obama to calm people down and after natural disasters it helped him to establish a feeling of solidarity and a helping spirit.

As stated in the theoretical part, metaphors and metonymy are widely used in the political speeches. However, in the analyzed speeches after national tragedies, Obama did not use these two devices regularly. When he decided to put a metaphor or metonymy into his speech, it was a common one, not one which would force the audience to think hard about it. Metaphors which he used urged people to provide some kind of action. Metonymy, which he used were connected to the cities that were hurt by the natural catastrophe or to the organizations that helped the cities with cleaning the damage and people with the return to their lives. The main objective of these two devices was to integrate people to help those who were hurt or suffered. What side Obama defended or to which side he was more inclined, was clear from his use of pronouns. Personal pronoun *we* helped him to point out the close relation and cooperation with the national security forces. It also enabled him to create a bigger community and count all the Americans into it and finally, by using pronoun *we* he referred to himself and his wife as it served as a proof that he is not only the authority but someone on who the people may rely on. In the case of mass shootings and terrorist attacks, personal pronoun *they* referred to the assailants or murderers, however, in the speeches after natural disasters *they* was used to address people who were hurt and needed help. Personal pronoun *I* was usually used at the very beginnings of the speeches when Obama was talking about the cooperation with the national security forces and mostly when he was expressing gratitude to the people that were involved in the helping process, whether in the case of mass shootings, terrorist attacks or natural disasters.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDA    Critical Discourse Analysis

PD      Political Discourse

PDA    Political Discourse Analysis

AME   African Methodist Episcopal Church

FEMA  Federal Emergency Management Agency

## APPENDICES

Obama's full speeches are available on the enclosed CD.