

Reframing female leadership through accommodation strategies: A feminist stylistic lens on public speaking

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Abstract: Feminist leaders often adopt unique language styles tailored to connect with or distance themselves from their audiences. This study seeks to explore these stylistic variations using feminist stylistics, focusing on how accommodation is achieved through two strategies: convergence and divergence. Analyzing six public speeches by Hooks [1] and Obama [2] the research identifies 21 convergence and 19 divergence feminist stylistic devices (FSDs) operating at phonological, semantic, and syntactic levels. These devices illustrate how language adapts to draw closer to or distance itself from listeners. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the application of feminist stylistics to analyze accommodation strategies in public speeches by female leaders has not been previously studied, highlighting a gap that this research aims to address. The study applies Feminist Stylistics and Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) to analyze convergence and divergence strategies in six public speeches. The Theoretical Framework is based on multiple theories including Giles [3] Communication Accommodation Theory, Mills [4] Mills' Feminist-Stylistic theory, Galperin [5] stylistic theory, Palmer [6] theory on mood and modality, Jeffries [7] Critical Stylistic theory, Filimonova's theory of Filimonova [8] as well as Burke [9] theory of Identification in Rajan [10].

Keywords: Communication Accommodation Theory, Convergence, Divergence, Feminist Stylistic Analysis, Hillary Clinton, Michelle Obama.

1. Introduction

The investigator seeks to respond to the subsequent questions:

- 1) What is the range of feminist stylistic devices that speakers use to either deepen audience connection or establish a critical distance, and the implications for reinforcing or challenging gender norms.
- 2) Which accommodation strategy the more commonly used strategy in public speaking, contrasting with divergence as a tactic specifically adapted to particular audiences.
- 3) What are the convergence and divergence devices (e.g., inclusive/exclusive pronouns, direct address, repetition, parallelism, hedging, contrast) that have most frequency in feminist public speaking to achieve either engagement or critical distance.

The questions, the aim of this paper is to:

- 1) Examining the range of feminist stylistic devices that speakers use to either deepen audience connection or establish a critical distance, and the implications for reinforcing or challenging gender norms.
- 2) Investigating convergence as the more commonly used strategy in public speaking, contrasting with divergence as a tactic specifically adapted to particular audiences.
- 3) Analyzing which convergence and divergence devices are most frequently used in feminist public speaking to achieve either engagement or critical distance.

The following steps are included in the research procedures:

- 1) Reviewing the relevant literature on critical linguistics, feminist stylistics, and the concept of criticality and its related terms.

- 2) Introducing communication accommodation theory, its strategies to familiarize the reader with them.
- 3) Considering the relationship between feminist stylistics and accommodation theory in general and the way they are employed in Hillary Clinton's and Michelle Obama's speeches.
- 4) Choosing six speeches three from each speaker to be the data of the present study.
- 5) Analyzing the extracts chosen from the two speakers both qualitatively by means of the eclectic model of accommodation designed in the present study for this purpose, and quantitatively through applying some appropriate statistical means.
- 6) Discussing the results of the qualitative and the quantitative analyses to put forward some conclusions,

2. Literature Review

2.1. *A Brief Overview of Critical Linguistics*

Critical linguistics analyzes texts to uncover hidden power dynamics and ideologies, often through critical discourse analysis, which links language to its social context [11]. Feminist stylistics, rooted in this approach, examines how language reflects and reproduces societal power structures [4].

2.1.1. *Criticality*

In linguistics, criticality involves analyzing language to challenge assumptions and expose power dynamics. Rooted in critical linguistics, it examines how language reflects and shapes social structures and ideologies [12]. Influenced by theorists like Michel Foucault, it explores the interplay between power and knowledge in shaping social realities [13].

2.1.2. *Ideology*

Ideology, a core element of social movements, is central to critical linguistics as language both shapes and reflects ideological forces. Critical linguists examine linguistic choices to uncover ideologies influencing perception and reinforcing hierarchies [14] & [15].

2.2. *Feminism*

Feminism refers to a set of socio-political movements and philosophies that seek to define and promote gender equality in politics, economics, personal relationships, and society [1, 16, 17]. Feminism asserts that societies prioritize the male point of view and that women are treated unfairly in these civilizations. Efforts to address this include combating gender stereotypes and enhancing women's educational, professional, and interpersonal opportunities and outcomes [18, 19].

2.2.1. *Feminist Ideologies*

Feminist ideologies vary in their focus on change and the intersection of gender with other systems of dominance. The two main branches are:

- (1) Radical Feminism: Advocates for dismantling patriarchal structures entirely, viewing male supremacy as the root of women's oppression. It rejects reforms within existing systems as insufficient [18, 20].
- (2) Liberal Feminism: Seeks gender equality through legal and political reforms, emphasizing equal rights, pay, and opportunities within the current societal framework [21].

2.3. *Feminist Stylistic Analysis*

In Fairclough [22] Norman Fairclough examines how language sustains power dynamics and gender inequalities, revealing patterns that shape identities and reinforce power structures Fairclough [22]. Rajan [10] highlights that women's struggles are closely tied to their portrayal in language, influencing societal perceptions Rajan [10]. Stephens [23] argues that language not only reflects but actively shapes social processes. Similarly, Cameron and Shaw [24] explores feminist theories addressing the social construction of gender, emphasizing language's role in shaping gendered identities and roles Cameron and Shaw [24]. Montoro [25] credits Mills [4] with fully articulating feminist

stylistics, despite not being its pioneer, and coining its terminology Mills [4] and Montoro [25] extends feminist stylistics to analyze gendered power relations beyond micro-level aspects like sexist language, focusing on discourse-level structures, such as direct or indirect speech, and their use in referencing male and female characters [14].

2.4. *The Act of Public Speaking*

Public speaking is a speaking skill that aims to enlighten, influence, persuade, or entertain listeners so that the speaker becomes the center of attention for those around him. It was also defined as an action in which the speaker aims to deliver a message orally to the listener. Furthermore, public speaking is done not only offline, but also through electronic communication facilities, which nevertheless aim to convey information, persuade, and entertain to offer a certain image [26]. Public speaking is classified into three types based on the objective of the speech: informational, persuasive, or entertaining. This study focuses on informed and persuasive public speaking [27].

2.5. *Political Discourse*

The relationship between politics and language is longstanding; Aristotle noted humans as political beings using language to achieve goals. Political institutions rely on symbolic communication to persuade individuals to cooperate, suggesting language and politics evolved together. Political discourse serves various functions, such as persuading, legitimizing, and protesting, guiding public views and actions like voting. Politics aims to acquire power to control societal resources, with language tactics having significant consequences, including war. Effective political communication demands managing language to influence public perception. In a mediatized era, political representatives strive to stay on message, as seen in New Labour's governance style, shaped by language use [22].

2.5.1. *Feminist Political Discourse*

Political discourse intersects with feminism in advocating for gender equality and social justice. Feminist rhetoric challenges stereotypes, critiques power structures, and seeks to influence public opinion and policy. Strategies include emotional appeals and narratives that humanize abstract ideas, promoting empathy and illustrating real-world impacts [28]. Through intersectionality and modern communication tools, feminist political discourse remains a powerful force for change in the 21st century [29].

3. **Methodology**

This section presents comprehensive procedures for data analysis to meet study objectives

3.1. *Gile's Accommodation Communication Theory (CAT)*

The term "accommodation" is linked to Howard Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), though it predates this theory, appearing in the works of Krashen [30] in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Krashen [30] and Murphy [31] and Labov [32] in Sociolinguistics. In CAT, accommodation refers to adjusting communication behaviors to converge or diverge with a conversational partner's style, including speech rate, accent, or language choice [33, 34].

3.2. *Convergence Strategy*

In CAT, convergence involves adjusting one's communication to match the partner's, like using simpler speech for foreigners or children, or adopting catchphrases within a group [3].

3.3. *Divergence Strategy*

Divergence emphasizes differences in communication, such as accent or speech rate, to assert individuality, maintain group identity, or signal disapproval [35].

3.4. Sara Mills Feminist Stylistic Models

Stylistic analysis often excludes discussions on gender, race, and class, creating challenges for feminist linguists and critics aiming to integrate gender considerations into their work Mills [4] presents a feminist stylistic model with three levels of analysis:

3.4.1. Word Level

This model addresses sexism in language, focusing on individual words and their role in promoting gender inequality and negative stereotypes. Mills emphasizes the effects of repeated exposure to sexist language, advocating for language change that fosters inclusivity and equality. Key elements include generic nouns, pronouns, hedging, and insult words, all analyzed to uncover how language perpetuates gender stereotypes [4].

3.4.2. Phrase/ Sentence Level

This model examines how context and historical usage shape the meaning of words and sentences. It includes components like transitivity, metaphor, politeness, and hedging, providing a deeper understanding of how gendered language operates at the sentence level [4].

3.4.3. Both Word and Phrase/ Sentence Levels

This model examines how context and historical usage shape the meaning of words and sentences. It includes both the word and the sentence form for the same linguistic purpose.

3.5. Jeffries' Tools of Analysis

This model provides a brief review of textual-conceptual functions, many of which are familiar to those working in stylistics or linguistics in general. The important aspect is that [7] tries to reframe them within a larger context of textual meaning. These tools are denoted as follows: Naming and Describing, Representing Actions/Events/States, Equating and Contrasting, Exemplifying and Enumerating, Prioritizing, Assuming and Implying, Negating, Hypothesizing, Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants, Representing Time, Space and Society, Questioning [7].

3.6. Galperin's Stylistic Levels

Galperin's theory classifies language expressions into three levels: phonological, lexical/semantic, and syntactical. Phonetic features like alliteration and assonance add musical qualities to language [33] while lexical methods like metaphor, analogy, and hyperbole enhance imagery, and syntactical methods like parallelism and inversion affect the flow and emphasis of sentences [5].

3.6.1. Phonetic Stylistic Devices

This level focuses on how sound patterns, such as alliteration, assonance, and onomatopoeia, create mood and atmosphere. For example, alliteration creates musical effects, while assonance evokes a harmonious or melancholic tone [5].

3.6.2. Syntactical Stylistic Devices

These devices, such as parallelism, inversion, and repetition, alter sentence structure to enhance expressiveness. They help create balance, emphasize key ideas, and intensify focus. Other devices include ellipsis, antithesis, and juxtaposition, which further enhance meaning and rhythm [5].

3.6.3. Semantic/ Lexical Stylistic Devices

At this level, word choice and arrangement shape meaning and expressiveness. Metaphors, similes, irony, and hyperbole enhance imagery and convey deeper meanings. Devices like metonymy, understatement, and anecdotes add context and emotional depth, enriching the tone and mood of the text [5].

3.7. Inclusive and Exclusive Pronouns

3.7.1. Clusivity Theory by Filimonova

Elena Filimonova's clusivity theory explores the distinction between inclusive and exclusive first-person plural pronouns. In inclusive languages, the hierarchy is (Speaker = Addressee) whereas in exclusive languages, it is (Speaker > Addressee). The categorization is as follows:

- (1) Inclusive: Dual – I + you (sg.), Plural – I + you (pl.)
- (2) Exclusive: Dual – I + he/she, Plural – I + they

Filimonova's research analyzes how social and communicative contexts influence the use of these pronouns, impacting relationships and power dynamics in communication [36].

3.7.2. Exclusive Pronouns by Langacker

Ronald Langacker's concept of the "egocentric perspective" in cognitive linguistics highlights how the pronoun "I" reflects a speaker's subjective viewpoint. The word "I" represents an exclusive, self-centered perspective, distinct from others, symbolizing the speaker's unique cognitive representation. Langacker's work on this idea was foundational in cognitive grammar [37].

3.8. Direct Address in Burke's "Identification in Rhetorics" Theory

In Burke's theory of identification 1950, direct address is a rhetorical strategy that fosters consubstantiality by engaging the audience personally through second-person references. It dissolves the boundary between speaker and listener, aligns values, and enhances persuasion by positioning the audience as active participants in the discourse [9].

3.9. Modality in Palmer's "Mood and Modality" Theory

Palmer [6] categorizes modality into three types: dynamic, epistemic, and deontic, each conveying different nuances of meaning [6].

3.9.1. Dynamic Modality

Dynamic modality reflects a speaker's judgment of someone's ability or willingness to act, based on internal or situational factors. For instance, "can" expresses ability, while "could" reflects both possibility and physical aptitude [6].

3.9.2. Deontic Modality

Deontic modality involves expressions of obligation, necessity, or permission. It represents social norms or rules, with verbs like "must" indicating obligations imposed by external authority or cultural standards [6].

3.9.3. Epistemic Modality

The term epistemic modality expresses a speaker's judgment on the likelihood or truth of a statement. For example, "She might be at home" reflects uncertainty and conveys the speaker's confidence in the claim [6].

3.10. Model of Analysis

In the researcher's exploration of feminist stylistic devices, this analysis explores feminist stylistic devices through two accommodation strategies: convergence and divergence. These strategies determine how stylistic devices influence the relationship between speaker and audience, as well as their rhetorical impact.

3.10.1. Convergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices

Convergence strategies aim to build rapport and unity by adapting speech to the audience's language and values. Examples include:

- *Inclusivity*: Inclusive pronouns, direct address, and dynamic modality create belonging.
- *Relatability*: Anecdotes, metonymy, and exemplifying resonate with the audience's experiences.
- *Clarity and Simplicity*: Repetition and parallelism enhance understanding.

- *Emotional Engagement*: Devices like metaphor and rhetorical questions evoke shared emotions.
- *Shared Values*: Quotations and assumptions strengthen unity.
- *Rhythm and Harmony*: Parallelism and alliteration create flow.

3.10.2. Divergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices

Divergence strategies emphasize differences, creating intellectual or emotional distance. Examples include:

- *Emphasizing Differences*: Exclusive pronouns, irony, and paradox highlight "otherness".
- *Creating Ambiguity or Complexity*: Hedging and ellipsis introduce uncertainty.
- *Eliciting Varied Emotional Responses*: Sarcasm and juxtaposition provoke contrast.
- *Highlighting Specificity*: Personal allusions focus on unique details.
- *Establishing Hierarchies*: Prioritizing ideas reinforces power dynamics.
- *Encouraging Skepticism*: Questioning and irony foster critical thinking.

Convergence promotes closeness, while divergence increases distance. Below is a comparison of both strategies:

Table 1.

Convergence and Divergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices as opposites in Function.

Convergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices	Divergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices
Inclusive Pronouns	Exclusive Pronouns
Direct Address	Hedging
Metaphor	Irony
Analogy	Paradox
Symbolism	Sarcasm
Parallelism	Juxtaposition
Alliteration	Antithesis
Epithet	Ellipsis
Epistrophe	Paralipsis
Historical/ Cultural Allusion	Personal Allusion
Historical/ Cultural Anecdote	Personal Anecdote
	Metonymy
Questioning: Rhetorical Questions	Questioning: (Direct) Non-Rhetorical Questions
Repetition, Exemplifying and Enumerating, Exclamatory Words/ Phrases, Quotation.	Hyperbole, Euphemism, Litotes.
Representing Time/ Space/ Society	Prioritizing
Equating	Contrasting
Assuming and Implying	
Dynamic Modality	Epistemic Modality
Deontic Modality	

Based on all of this, the analytical model has the following shape:

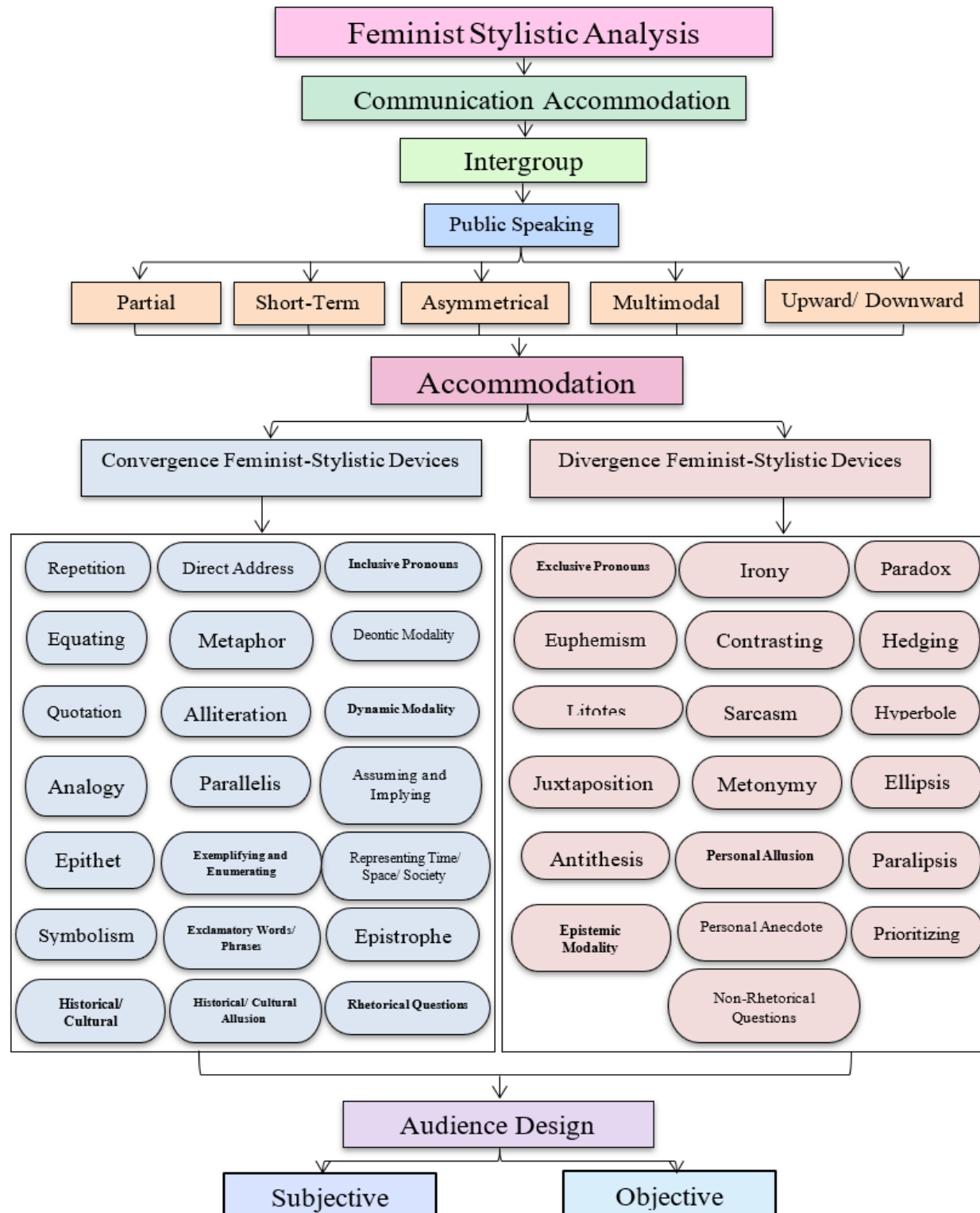


Figure 1.
An eclectic model of analysis.

4. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The model is applied to the selected data in this section.

4.1. Data Selection and Collection

The two speakers are prominent figures and members of the Democratic party, a liberal political party, and one of the two major contemporary political parties in the United States which is known for valuing feminism and advocating for social justice and equality, as well as addressing the challenges facing modern society while ensuring that individual rights and freedoms are upheld. The three occasions that are selected for each speakers are chosen subtly for their public value, as iconic speeches, and their importance for feminist advocacy. Therefore, they reflect these two female leaders' overall orientations. The researcher has selected 30 extracts as a whole from the six speeches to be analyzed by the eclectic model. The extracts were selected purposefully, with the researcher choosing the most notable and well-known lines and paragraphs that best represent each speaker's feminist ideologies, including inclusivity, encouragement, equality, and social justice.

4.2. The Procedures of Analysis

The analysis methodology is a guide for the analyst to follow when analyzing the data of the research study. It is divided into two sections qualitative and quantitative.

4.2.1. Qualitative Analysis

This analysis involves a close, detailed examination of textual features to identify patterns and interpretations. It uses the following steps:

1. Reviewing feminist stylistic models and communication accommodation theory to frame the research context.
2. Selecting and analyzing thirty extracts from six public speeches by Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama to identify convergence and divergence strategies.
3. Examining stylistic devices and accommodation strategies qualitatively with an eclectic model designed for this purpose.

4.2.2. Quantitative Analysis

This analysis supports the qualitative findings by offering statistical validation and visual representation through the following methods:

1. Presenting the results in tables and figures, detailing convergence and divergence devices.
2. Conducting comparative discussions between the speakers to highlight variations in their use of feminist stylistic devices.

4.3. Data Analysis

4.3.1. Qualitative Analysis

4.3.1.1. Hillary Clinton

Occasion (1): Democratic National Convention Speech

New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University, May 20, 2018

Hillary Rodham Clinton delivered the keynote address for Yale's Class Day, an event celebrating the graduating seniors of Yale College. The audience included students, their families, faculty, alumni, and other distinguished guests. As a Yale Law School alumna, Clinton shared a personal connection with the institution. Her speech highlighted themes of resilience, perseverance, and civic engagement, drawing from her own challenges, including her 2016 presidential campaign and the political landscape.

Extract: "And I am honored that this class has invited me to be your speaker. Now, I see looking out at you that you are following the tradition of over-the-top hats, so I brought a hat, too [applause] a Russian hat. [applause] Right? [applause] I mean if you can't beat them, join them.

But maybe some of you are reluctant to leave. I understand that. It's possible to feel both, because the class of 2018 is graduating at one of the most tumultuous times in the history of our country, and I

say that as someone who graduated in the 60s. I recently went back and looked up those famous lines from Charles Dickens in "A Tale of Two Cities," because you know I usually end after saying, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," but it goes on, "It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness. It was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity. It was the season of light, it was the season of darkness. It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair". "

Explanation: This extract, from the beginning of the speech, combines convergence and divergence feminist-stylistic devices to engage the audience, convey a meaningful message, and highlight the speaker's differences from the audience. By referencing Charles Dickens and her own experiences graduating in the 1960s, Hillary Clinton provides historical context that resonates with the graduating class of 2018. Inclusive pronouns, analogy, and metaphor foster unity, while historical and cultural allusions add intellectual depth and rhetorical impact. Emphasizing unity and resilience, the extract encourages reflection on current challenges and opportunities, empowering graduates by linking their struggles to historical contexts and reinforcing their capacity to navigate present issues.

4.3.2. Convergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices

Inclusive Pronouns: "Our country" includes the audience, fostering unity.

Direct Address: "Maybe some of you are reluctant to leave" directly engages the audience.

Repetition: Repeated phrases like "It was" create rhythm and connection.

Assuming and Implying: Phrases like "I understand that" convey empathy.

Representing Time/Space/Society: Mentions of the 1960s and current upheaval connect eras.

Equating: Dickens' contrasts link historical and present challenges; "if you can't beat them, join them" humorously highlights adaptation.

Parallelism: Structured repetition, as in "It was the [adjective] of times," adds rhythm and clarity.

Historical/Cultural Allusion (continued): References to A Tale of Two Cities and the "Russian hat" connect historical and political contexts, adding depth and humor.

Historical/Cultural Anecdote: Referring to Dickens creates shared cultural understanding.

Symbolism: The "Russian hat" symbolizes humor and tradition; phrases like "spring of hope" and "winter of despair" evoke optimism and hardship.

Metaphor: The hat represents political commentary; Dickens' phrases symbolize contrasting emotions.

Analogy: Comparing Dickens' era to modern times highlights similarities in turbulence.

Quotation: Directly citing Dickens adds intellectual and rhetorical weight.

Exclamatory Words/Phrases: Dramatic contrasts like "season of light" and "season of darkness.", emphasize societal shifts.

Dynamic Modality: "I brought a hat, too" reflects willingness to engage with tradition.

Deontic Modality: "I am honored" signals obligation and gratitude

(2) Divergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices:

Exclusive Pronouns: Frequent use of "I" highlights the speaker's individuality.

Contrasting: Dickens' contrasts, like "the best of times, the worst of times," juxtapose opposites.

Prioritizing: Emphasizing 2018's challenges underscores their importance but risks confusion.

Antithesis: Dickens' contrasts, such as "age of wisdom, age of foolishness," highlight contradictions.

Paradox: Dickens' quotes reveal truths in contradictory statements.

Irony: The "Russian hat" humorously critiques 2016 election controversies; Dickens' contrasts mix optimism and pessimism.

Sarcasm: "If you can't beat them, join them" humorously references political challenges.

Personal Anecdote: Mentions of Clinton's 1960s graduation and experiences connect her history to the audience.

Hedging: Words like "maybe" suggest uncertainty.

Hyperbole: “Over-the-top hats” exaggerates for humor.

Metonymy: “Russian hat” represents broader political issues.

Ellipsis: “If you can’t beat them, join them” implies unspoken details.

Epistemic Modality: Phrases like “maybe some of you” reflect the speaker’s judgment.

Occasion (2): *International Women’s Day Speech*

Washington, D.C., March 12, 1997

Hillary Rodham Clinton delivered a speech in observance of International Women’s Day, an annual global event celebrated on March 8 to honor women’s achievements and advocate for gender equality. The audience included policymakers, gender equality advocates, women’s rights activists, international delegates, and NGOs. As First Lady of the United States from 1993 to 2001 and a champion of women’s and children’s rights, Clinton highlighted the progress made in advancing women’s initiatives. She emphasized the ongoing need to promote gender equality, ensure equal opportunities for women, and protect them from abuse and discrimination.

Extract: “*While all of these require our attention and commitment, today I have come to advance a simple idea. That is the seamless inclusion of girls’ and women’s needs in American foreign policy. Despite the work they do, the families they raise, the communities they hold together, too many of the world’s women, particularly in developing nations, live on the outskirts of opportunity and equality. But let me be clear: This challenge is not confined to the developing world. We still have plenty of work to do here in the United States and in other advanced economies of the world to ensure that women have a full stake in democracy. One goal in every country should be to see that all citizens, regardless of race or gender or ethnicity or religion, have a full place at their society’s table.*”

Explanation: This extract is located at the beginning of the speech. The integration of these convergence and divergence feminist stylistic devices in this extract enriches the speech by illustrating the urgency and complexity of promoting gender equality in foreign policy and society. It emphasizes the critical roles women play in families, communities, and societies while highlighting the disparities they face in opportunities and equality. The speech calls for action to ensure that women, regardless of their background, have equal representation and participation in society and governance. The speech extract effectively uses stylistic devices to convey a message of inclusivity, urgency, and commitment to advancing gender equality globally, emphasizing the importance of integrating women’s needs into foreign policy and societal frameworks.

4.3.3. Convergence Feminist-Stylistics Devices

Inclusive Pronouns: “We” and “our” foster unity, promoting collective responsibility.

Direct Address: “Let me be clear” ensures clarity, directly engaging the audience.

Repetition: Repeated use of “women” reinforces their multifaceted contributions, adding rhythm.

Assuming and Implying: Highlights women’s often overlooked work, inviting reflection.

Exemplifying and Enumerating: Specific examples emphasize inclusivity and broaden the scope.

Representing Time/Space/Society: Global context emphasizes gender equality as a worldwide issue.

Equating: Equates the need for gender equality in both developed and developing nations.

Parallelism: Creates a rhythmic structure with repeated patterns, enhancing engagement.

Metaphor: “Live on the outskirts of opportunity” highlights marginalization.

Analogy: “A full place at their society’s table” symbolizes equal societal participation.

Epistrophe: Repeated phrases emphasize the widespread nature of the issue.

Deontic Modality: “Should be” calls for collective responsibility in advancing gender equality.

4.3.4. Divergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices

Contrasting: Shifts focus from gender inequality in developing nations to industrialized economies, challenging assumptions.

Prioritizing: Emphasizes women’s inclusion in foreign policy, which may exclude other societal concerns.

Antithesis: Highlights the contrast between women’s societal roles and exclusion from opportunities, deepening divides.

Paradox: Contradictory recognition of women's roles versus their exclusion from opportunities creates complex interpretations.

Juxtaposition: Highlights disparities in opportunities for women across different nations, provoking diverse reactions.

Occasion (3): Class Day's Graduation Commentary

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 28, 2016

The 2016 Democratic National Convention, held from July 25-28, marked Hillary Clinton's formal acceptance as the first female presidential nominee of a major American political party. The event brought together Democratic delegates, leaders, activists, elected officials, journalists, and millions of viewers via television and the internet. As a former First Lady, Senator, and Secretary of State, Clinton delivered a speech emphasizing her public service experience. Her address was pivotal in her campaign against Republican opponent Donald Trump, focusing on unity, a vision of a stronger America, and the collective effort to address national challenges.

Extract: "My friends, we've come to Philadelphia – the birthplace of our nation – because what happened in this city 240 years ago still has something to teach us today.

We all know the story.

But we usually focus on how it turned out – and not enough on how close that story came to never being written at all.

When representatives from 13 unruly colonies met just down the road from here, some wanted to stick with the King.

Some wanted to stick it to the king, and go their own way".

Explanation: This extract is located at the beginning of the speech. It is taken from Hillary Clinton's speech, where she predominantly uses convergence feminist stylistic devices to emphasize unity, historical allusion, and collective responsibility. The inclusive pronouns and repetition create a sense of shared purpose and history. Directly addressing the audience establishes a personal connection, while assuming a shared understanding of American identity and values. The speech uses metaphors to emphasize the challenges facing the nation and the importance of unity in overcoming them. Overall, the tone is affirmative and forward-looking, urging the audience to embrace collective action and uphold the foundational principles of the United States.

4.3.5. Convergence Stylistic Devices

Inclusive Pronouns: "We" and "our" foster unity, involving the audience in the narrative.

Direct Address: "My friends" creates a personal connection, engaging the audience conversationally.

Repetition: "Stick with the King" and "stick it to the king" emphasize contrasting perspectives, building drama and intensity.

Assuming and Implying: Assumes shared American values, implying the need for unity and action.

Exemplifying and Enumerating: Highlights diverse colonial opinions and Founding Fathers' courage, engaging the audience with relatable examples.

Representing Time/Space/Society: Connects historical events in Philadelphia to present-day challenges, engaging the audience with context.

Equating: Comparing Founders' challenges to modern issues, fostering inclusivity and relatability.

Historical/Cultural Allusion: References the Constitutional Convention, drawing parallels between past and present to emphasize enduring principles.

Historical/Cultural Anecdote: "What happened in this city 240 years ago" grounds the speech in shared heritage, reinforcing themes.

Metaphor: "Stick with the King" and "stick it to the king" vividly illustrate contrasting views, making abstract concepts tangible.

2) Divergence Stylistic Devices:

Contrasting: Compares colonial division with unity through compromise, but subtle contrasts may be overlooked by the audience.

Prioritizing: Emphasizes the hardships of nation-building, but overemphasis on certain aspects may create

imbalance.

Juxtaposition: Highlights differing attitudes (“stick with the King” vs. “stick it to the king”), but unclear contrasts may confuse the audience.

Metonymy: “Stick it to the king” uses “the king” to symbolize British rule, but metonymy may be misunderstood across cultures.

4.3.6. Michelle Obama

Occasion (1): Democratic National Convention Speech

Tuskegee, Alabama, Tuskegee University, May 09, 2015

Michelle Obama delivered the keynote address during Tuskegee University's Class Day, honoring its graduating seniors. The event featured various activities, including award ceremonies and keynote speeches, attended by students, families, faculty, alumni, and community members. As the First Lady of the United States and honorary degree recipient, Obama reflected on Tuskegee's historical significance and the struggles and triumphs of African Americans. Her speech focused on perseverance and resilience, urging graduates to face challenges with determination and pride in their heritage.

Extract: OBAMA: “Now, on this day before Mother’s Day, I’ve got to give a special shout-out to all the moms here. (Applause.) Yay, moms! And I want you to consider this as a public service announcement for anyone who hasn’t bought the flowers or the cards or the gifts yet -- all right? I’m trying to cover you. (Laughter.) But remember that one rule is “keep mom happy”. (Laughter.) All right? (Applause.)

And finally, most of all, I want to congratulate the men and women of the Tuskegee University Class of 2015! (Applause.) T-U!

AUDIENCE: You know!

OBAMA: I love that. (Applause.) We can do that all day. (Laughter.) I’m so proud of you all. And you look good. (Applause.) Well done!”.

Explanation: This extract is connected with the beginning of the speech and uses convergence feminist-stylistic devices to engage and celebrate with the audience, while employing divergence techniques like hyperbole, hedging, and personal allusion to maintain a divergence of the self and reflecting beliefs during the speech, however the convergence devices in this extract is way more than the divergence devices making it more indulging.

4.3.7. Convergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices

Direct Address: “I’ve got to give a special shout-out to all the moms here” engages the audience, creating a personal connection with mothers. The advice on Mother’s Day gifts also strengthens this relationship.

Repetition: The phrase “All right?” is repeated for emphasis, engaging the audience further.

Representing Time/Space/Society: “Now, on this day before Mother’s Day” situates the speech in time, while acknowledging “all the moms here” and the class of 2015 reflects the social context.

Assuming and Implying: The speaker assumes mothers are present and implies that some may have forgotten gifts for Mother’s Day, creating a humorous, relatable connection.

Exemplifying and Enumerating: Lists Mother’s Day gift options (flowers, cards, gifts) to emphasize the variety of choices.

Alliteration: “Commencement ceremonies” uses alliteration to enhance the speech’s rhythm and engagement.

Symbolism: The special shout-out for Mother’s Day symbolizes its significance and enhances the relatability of the occasion.

Exclamatory Words/Phrases: “Yay, moms!” adds enthusiasm, creating a light-hearted, playful tone.

Epithet: “Promising aerospace engineer” and “talented young man” add descriptive depth to the speech, making it more engaging.

Deontic Modality: “I’ve got to give a special shout-out” expresses the speaker’s intention, while “keep mom happy” suggests a mild obligation or rule, reinforcing shared values.

Divergence Feminist Stylistic Devices:

Non-Rhetorical Questions: “And I want you to consider this as a public service announcement for anyone who

hasn't bought the flowers or the cards or the gifts yet – all right?" issues a directive rather than seeking engagement.

Prioritizing: The emphasis on university experiences (studying, sports, organizations) prioritizes their importance in shaping the students' lives.

Hedging: "Maybe have a little fun along the way" softens the statement, acknowledging varied experiences among the audience.

Hyperbole: Exaggerates the importance of buying gifts for Mother's Day, adding humor to the occasion.

Personal Allusion: Refers to specific university traditions and experiences, alluding to shared aspects of university life.

Occasion (2): Tuskegee University Commencement Speech

Washington, D.C., March 08, 2016

Michelle Obama delivered a speech in honor of International Women's Day, a global event celebrating women's achievements in social, economic, cultural, and political spheres while advocating for gender equality. Speaking as First Lady of the United States and a women's rights activist, Obama addressed a diverse audience of women leaders, policymakers, activists, and international officials.

In her address, she encouraged women and girls to stand up for their rights and emphasized the importance of achieving equality in all areas of life, advocating for equal opportunities and well-being for women worldwide.

Extract: "... Little girls being brutally assaulted on their way to school, being forced to marry and bear children when they're barely even teenagers. Girls in every corner of the globe facing grave danger simply because they were full and equal human beings – that's what they decided – worthy of developing their boundless potential.

And the more I traveled and met with girls and learned from experts about this issue, the more I realized that the barriers to girls' education isn't just resources. It's not just about access to scholarships or transportation or school bathrooms. It's also about attitudes and beliefs – the belief that girls simply aren't worthy of an education; that women should have no role outside the home; that their bodies aren't their own, their minds don't really matter, and their voices simply shouldn't be heard".

Explanation: Located in the middle of the speech, this extract primarily uses convergence feminist-stylistic devices such as inclusive pronouns, direct addressing, and exemplifying to create a sense of shared experience and collective emotional response. The use of metaphor and representation of time/space/society further connects the audience with the global issue of girls' education. The extract includes moments of divergence through prioritizing and contrasting, highlighting the disparities between the audience's privileges and the struggles faced by 62 million girls worldwide. Overall, the speech fosters unity and empathy while emphasizing the urgency and importance of the issue.

4.3.8. Convergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices

Inclusive Pronouns: "Each of us here today has a story" includes everyone, fostering shared experience. "Our heart first broke" and "we realized" involve the audience in emotional moments.

Direct Address: Directly speaking to the audience, e.g., "And I know that each of us here today," acknowledges their involvement.

Repetition: Repeated words like "first," "girls," "terrorists," and "education" emphasize key themes and emotional responses.

Assuming and Implying: "Each of us here today has a story" assumes shared experience, implying common horror and urgency.

Exemplifying and Enumerating: "The moment our heart first broke" and listing examples like "Malala Yousafzai shot" illustrate the issue's scope.

Representing Time/Space/Society: "62 million girls worldwide" represents the global issue, while "our heart first broke" marks personal engagement.

Equating: "Girls who are just as smart and hard-working as we are" equates girls with the audience, emphasizing shared potential.

Metaphor: "The moment our heart first broke" and "drumbeat of horrifying stories" create vivid, emotional

images.

Parallelism: "The moment our heart first broke or we felt that first flare of outrage" adds rhythm, reinforcing emotional impact.

Quotation: "Malala Yousafzai shot in the head" provides emotional weight and relatability.

Historical/Cultural Allusion: Allusions like "Malala Yousafzai" connect the audience to a broader narrative of girls' education struggles.

Historical/Cultural Anecdote: "For me, it was the drumbeat of horrifying stories" humanizes the issue.

Symbolism: "Grown men trying to snuff out the aspirations of young girls" symbolizes oppression, while "heart first broke" symbolizes deep emotional response.

Dynamic Modality: "We realized" indicates an awakening, calling for emotional engagement.

Deontic Modality: "That women should have no role outside the home" and "Their voices simply shouldn't be heard" express moral condemnation.

4.3.9. Divergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices

Exclusive Pronouns: "For me, it was the drumbeat of horrifying stories" personalizes the narrative, creating divergence.

Contrasting: Phrases like "just as smart and hard-working as we are" contrast girls' potential with their lack of opportunities, emphasizing disparity.

Prioritizing: "For me, it was the drumbeat of horrifying stories" focuses on the speaker's personal emotional response, excluding broader perspectives.

Juxtaposition: "Just as smart and hard-working as we are – aren't getting the opportunities" highlights unfairness.

Ellipsis: "The moment our heart first broke..." and "...worthy of developing their boundless potential" invite reflection but may be unclear.

Hyperbole: "Grown men trying to snuff out the aspirations of young girls" exaggerates to heighten emotional impact, though it may alienate some listeners.

Epistemic Modality: "The more I realized" and "It's not just about access to scholarships..." reflect the speaker's developing certainty, which could cause divergent emotional responses.

Occasion (3): International Women's Day Speech
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 28, 2016

The 2016 Democratic National Convention, held from July 25–28, was focused on nominating Hillary Clinton as the Democratic Party's presidential candidate. The event brought together delegates, Democratic leaders, elected officials, supporters, journalists, and millions of viewers from across the country and around the world.

Michelle Obama, the First Lady at the time, delivered a powerful speech emphasizing themes of unity, hope, and the significance of leadership. Known for her oratorical skills and influence, she highlighted the qualities that define a nation and the personal traits required in a president.

Extract: "With every word we utter, with every action we take, we know our kids are watching us. We as parents are their most important role models. And let me tell you, Barack and I take that same approach to our jobs as president and first lady because we know that our words and actions matter, not just to our girls, but the children across this country, kids who tell us I saw you on TV, I wrote a report on you for school.

Kids like the little black boy who looked up at my husband, his eyes wide with hope and he wondered, is my hair like yours?

And make no mistake about it, this November when we go to the polls that is what we're deciding, not Democrat or Republican, not left or right. No, in this election and every election is about who will have the power to shape our children for the next four or eight years of their lives.

And I am here tonight because in this election there is only one person who I trust with that responsibility, only one person who I believe is truly qualified to be president of the United States, and that is our friend Hillary Clinton".

Explanation: This extract from Michelle Obama's speech, situated at the beginning, uses stylistic devices to emphasize leadership, responsibility, and trust in shaping children's futures. Inclusive pronouns and direct address

engage the audience in a shared narrative of parental and national responsibility. Exemplifying and metaphors highlight the personal impact of leadership on children nationwide. The clear, straightforward language and focus on shared values amplify the emotional impact, appealing to empathy and national unity. Overall, these devices strongly endorse Hillary Clinton as a presidential candidate based on trust and shared leadership values.

4.3.10. Convergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices

Inclusive Pronouns: “We”, “our”, and “us” create a sense of shared responsibility and collective involvement, making the audience feel included.

Direct Address: “Let me tell you” and “make no mistake about it” engage the audience directly, fostering a conversational tone.

Repetition: “Our kids”, “our words and actions” reinforce the message about the importance of role models, adding rhythm and clarity.

Assuming and Implying: Assumes shared values and responsibilities in parenting and leadership, implying their influence on children.

Exemplifying and Enumerating: Examples like “Kids who tell us I saw you on TV” show the personal and national impact of leadership.

Representing Time/Space/Society: “This November when we go to the polls...” situates the message in a specific time (election) and societal context (shaping children's futures).

Equating: “I am here tonight because in this election there is only one person I trust...” equates trust with presidential responsibility, encouraging collective effort.

Metaphor: “With every word we utter, with every action we take...” symbolizes the powerful impact of words and actions on children and the nation.

Symbolism: “His eyes wide with hope” symbolizes the inspiration children find in role models and clarifies abstract ideas.

Analogy: “A little black boy who looked up at my husband, his eyes wide with hope” exemplifies how children are inspired by seeing themselves in leadership positions.

4.3.11. Divergence Feminist-Stylistic Devices

Exclusive Pronouns: “I” in “Only one person who I trust...” emphasizes the speaker's personal perspective, separating it from others.

Questioning: “Is my hair like yours?” highlights identity and representation issues, especially in children.

Contrasting: “Not Democrat or Republican, not left or right” contrasts leadership's impact on children's futures with partisan politics, stressing a broader societal responsibility.

Prioritizing: Emphasizes leadership qualities and trust, which may create division among the audience based on political affiliation.

Irony: “With every word we utter, with every action we take...” ironically highlights the scrutiny on role models, contrasting with irresponsible behavior elsewhere.

Personal Anecdote: “Kids like the little black boy who looked up at my husband” shares a personal story that may not resonate with all audience members.

Ellipsis: “Kids like the little black boy who looked up at my husband...” omits extra details to focus on the key moment, potentially creating ambiguity.

Paradox: “This November when we go to the polls...” contrasts the election's personal impact with partisan divisions, adding depth to the message.

Epistemic Modality: “I trust Hillary to lead...” expresses the speaker's personal belief, which may unify some but create divisions among others.

4.3.12. Quantitative Analysis

The following tables and figures present a quantitative analysis of convergence and divergence stylistic devices

in the speeches of Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama. Using statistical methods like frequency distribution and percentages, the data highlights the prevalence of specific devices. The analysis reveals patterns in stylistic strategies, showing how each leader tailors their communication to engage the audience. This approach complements qualitative findings, providing numerical evidence of trends and variations in feminist stylistic devices, emphasizing the role of linguistic adaptation in achieving rhetorical goals.

4.3.12.1. Hillary Clinton

Table 2.

Frequency and percentage of Convergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Clinton's Occasion 1.

Accommodation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Convergence	9	25%
Divergence	27	75%
Total	36	100%

Table 3.

Frequency and percentage of Convergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Clinton's Occasion 2.

Accommodation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Convergence	13	65%
Divergence	7	35%
Total	20	100%

Table 4.

Frequency and percentage of Convergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Clinton's Occasion 3.

Accommodation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Convergence	11	73.3%
Divergence	4	26.7%
Total	15	100%

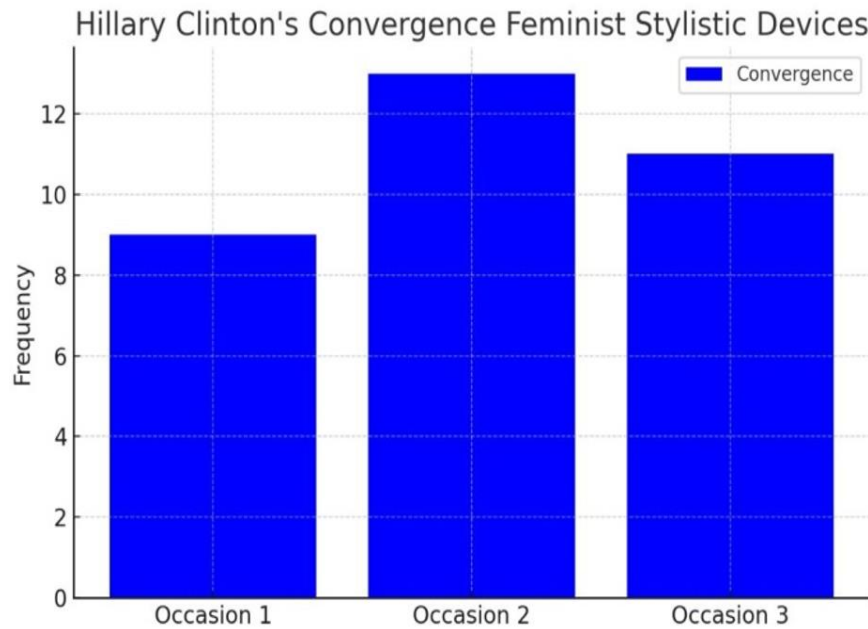


Figure 2.
Frequency of Convergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Clinton's Speeches.

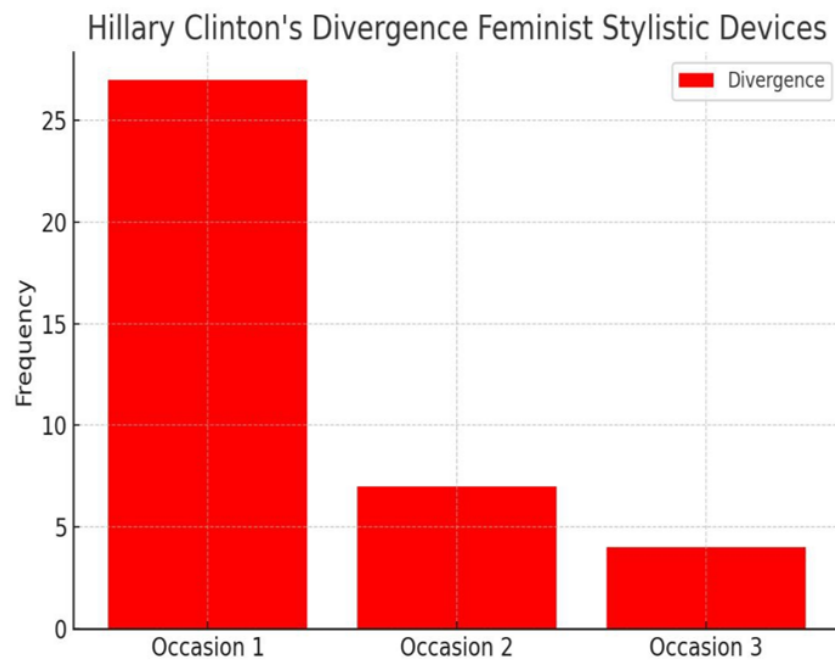


Figure 3.
Frequency of Divergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Clinton's Speeches

4.3.12.2. Michelle Obama

Table 5.

Frequency and percentage of Convergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Obama's Occasion 1.

Accommodation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Convergence	10	66.7%
Divergence	5	33.3%
Total	15	100%

Table 6.

Frequency and percentage of Convergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Obama's Occasion 2.

Accommodation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Convergence	15	68.2%
Divergence	7	31.8%
Total	22	100%

Table 7.

Frequency and percentage of Convergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Obama's Occasion 3.

Accommodation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Convergence	11	55%
Divergence	9	45%
Total	20	100%

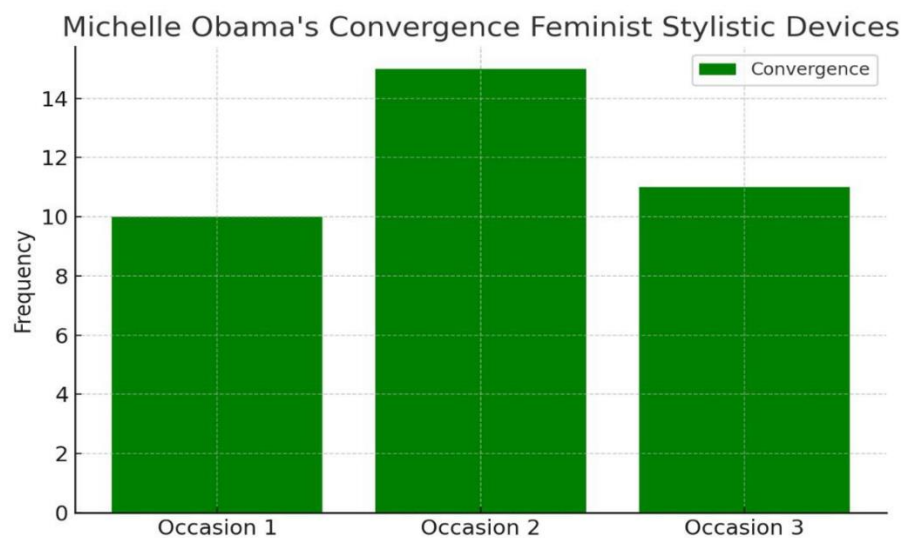


Figure 4.

Frequency of Convergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Obama's Speeches.

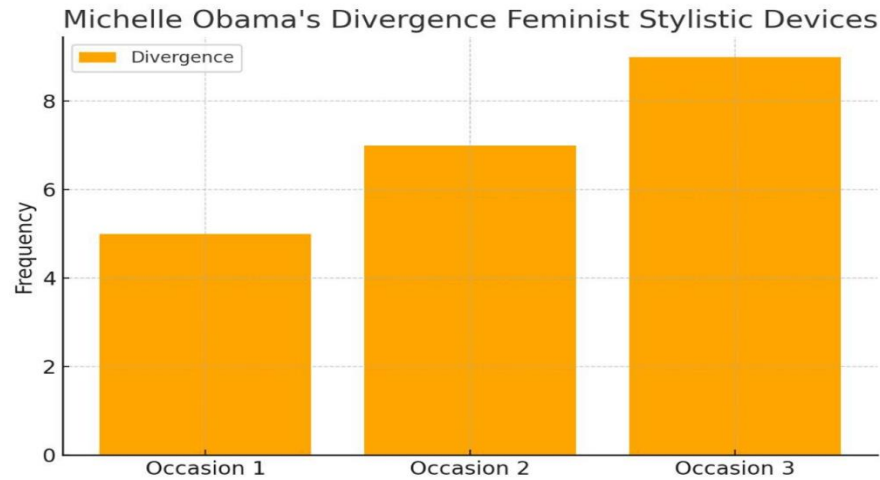


Figure 5.
Frequency of Divergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Obama's Speeches

These figures that are presented previously categorize and visualize the specific convergence and divergence stylistic devices employed in the analyzed speeches. Devices such as inclusive pronouns, direct address, and metaphors are highlighted for their role in fostering unity and emotional connection with the audience. They serve as detailed breakdowns of how these devices operate at different linguistic levels, reinforcing the importance of convergence strategies in public speaking.

4.4. Comparison of Results

This figure provides a side-by-side comparison of the stylistic devices used by Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama. It identifies both similarities and differences in their approaches, reflecting their unique rhetorical styles and objectives. The comparative analysis underscores the adaptability of feminist stylistic strategies in addressing diverse audiences and contexts.

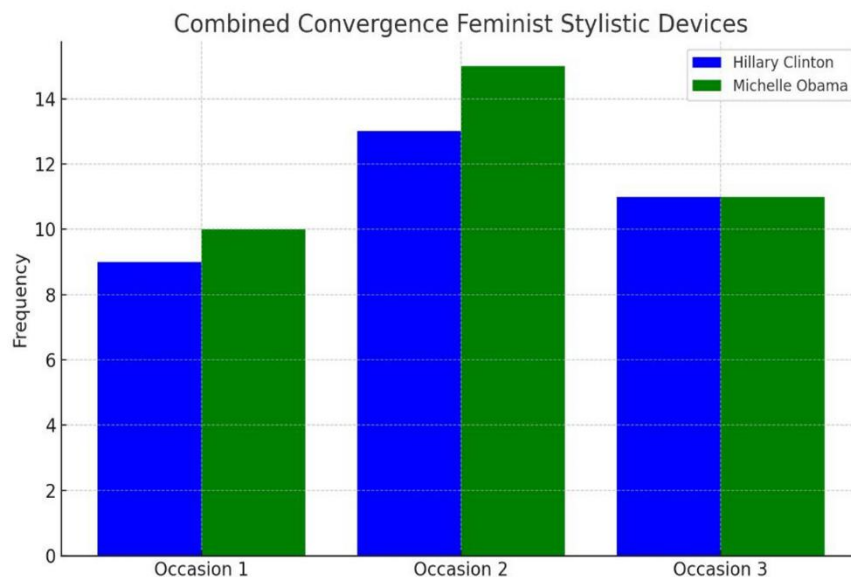


Figure 6.
Frequency of Convergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Speeches of the Two Speakers.

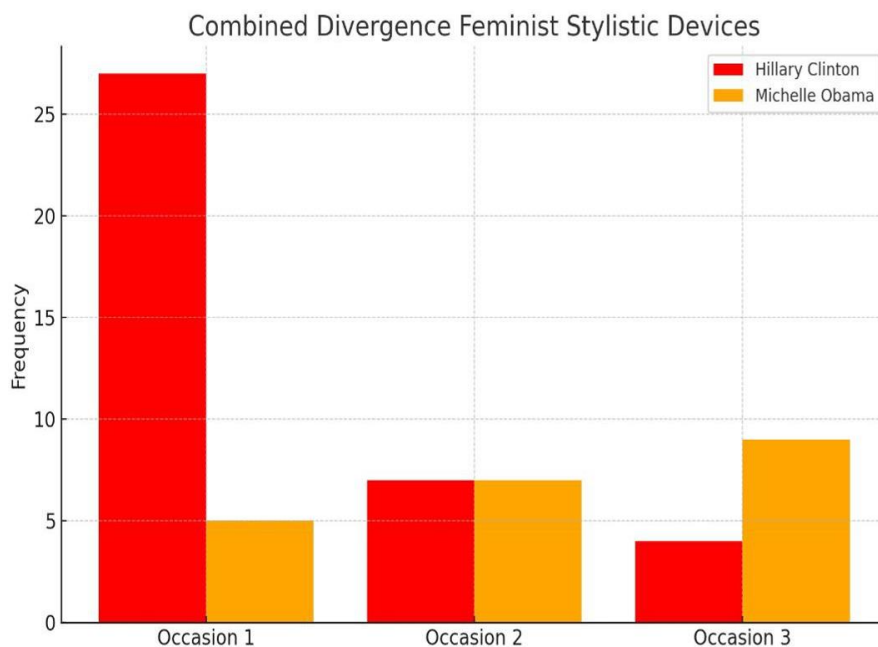


Figure 7.
Frequency of Divergence Feminist Stylistic Devices in Speeches of the Two Speakers.

Hillary Clinton: Total Convergence vs Divergence

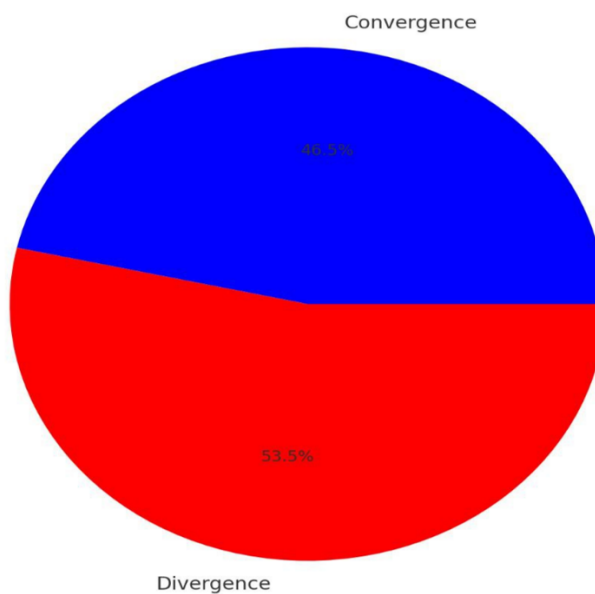


Figure 8.
Frequency of Convergence and Divergence in Obama's Speeches

Michelle Obama: Total Convergence vs Divergence

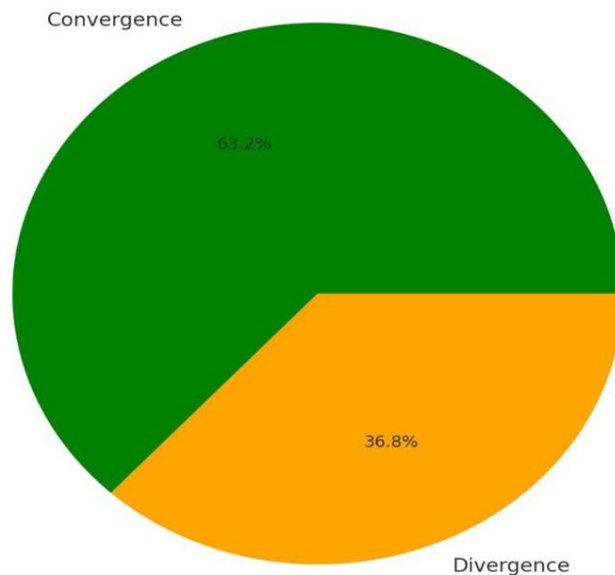


Figure 9.
Frequency of Convergence and Divergence in Obama's Speeches

These pie charts illustrate the frequency distribution of feminist stylistic devices in Clinton's and Obama's speeches. They highlight the most commonly used devices and their prevalence, offering insights into the rhetorical priorities of the speakers. The frequency analysis provides a quantitative perspective on the strategic use of language, complementing the study's qualitative findings.

5. Conclusions

After analyzing the data, the following conclusions are arrived at:

1. Both speakers employ a diverse range of FSDs, such as inclusive pronouns, metaphors, and direct address to build rapport, or exclusive pronouns, irony, and juxtaposition to critique norms and assert their positions.
2. Convergence strategies are more frequently used to align with the audience's values, while divergence strategies are applied selectively based on context to challenge social norms. For example, Clinton uses more divergence in political contexts, while Obama often prioritizes convergence through inclusivity and motivational language.
3. Both speakers tailor their language to the audience and occasion. For instance, formal settings like the Democratic National Convention emphasize policy and authority, while events like International Women's Day focus on inclusivity, solidarity, and gender equality.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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