FURTHER ORAL ACTIVITY

LANGUAGE AND MASS COMMUNICATION

- BY ABOON AND SPARSH
**TASK**

We have critically analysed Martin Luther King’s speech “I Have a Dream”.

Side-by-side, we have applied our understandings of his speech to write our own speech on Islamic discrimination in the United States.

This is a study of **Stereotypes, Language and study of speeches and campaigns, and use of persuasive language**.
Learning Outcomes

- Show an awareness of the potential for educational, political or ideological influence of the media.

- Show the way mass media uses language and image to inform and persuade.
We are not conducting a textual analysis, but instead considering the speech’s effect on a listener... Not a reader...
Something that we want to induce into every listener.

Something that is memorable.

My name is Muhammad, and I am not a terrorist!

This is powerful because it is neither too explicit nor too implicit.
Why is the opening special?

It was just an empty assertion if you think about it.

From his confidence, it seems as if he knew August 28, 1963, will be marked as a historical date in the history of Negro independence.

“I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.”
The opening is all really about Lincoln. By standing on the Lincoln Memorial, MLK made the man who ended slavery a literal backdrop of the event. So location is important too.

Through the Emancipation Proclamation, he reminds the people of the promises that were made to them about freedom. The metaphor “great beacon light” emphasizes this.

What he is doing really is setting a scene. He is talking about where it all started.

“Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.”
W R I T I N G  a n  I N T R O D U C T I O N

Making a confident assertion. As if you dictate the future... **It is with great honour to be a part of what our children..............will regard as the greatest contribution to Islamic liberalization .........**

Set a scene... **Decades ago, American social studies textbooks portrayed a Muslim as a horseman carrying a sword in one hand and the Quran in the other, conquering and forcibly converting. But, as the majority........refrained from being the shadow of violence, terrorism, extremism, anti-feminism and polygamy, our values were clarified..........**
See something else that we have utilized?

**Imagery!**

“A SYMBOLIC SHADOW”

“SEARED IN FLAMES”

“JOYOUS DAYBREAK”

“LONG NIGHT OF CAPTIVITY”

“HORSEMAN CARRYING A SWORD IN ONE HAND AND THE QURAN IN THE OTHER”

“CONQUERING AND FORCIBLY CONVERTING”

“SHADOW OF ... POLYGAMY”

“JOLLY BLESSING”

We have employed his extraordinary use of imagery to describe intangible forces to our listeners.
He moves from past to present with pessimism (Good to bad)

"But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition."

He does not just verbally emphasize something, he emphasizes phrases by repeating at the beginning of sentences. It is technique we call Anaphora. Here it is "one hundred years later". This keeps 'hammering' how critical this situation is. In fact, psychological research suggests that when you say something twice in such a manner, the listener expects to hear it a third time.

- "One hundred years later..." [Paragraph 3]
- "Now is the time..." [Paragraph 6]
- "We must..." [Paragraph 8]
- "We can never (cannot) be satisfied..." [Paragraph 13]
- "Go back to..." [Paragraph 14]
- "I Have a Dream..." [Paragraphs 16 through 24]
- "With this faith, ..." [Paragraph 26]
- "Let freedom ring (from) ..." [Paragraphs 27 through 41]
"But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition."

"In the corners of American society" is a powerful imagery as it adds visual dimension to our idea of negro decline. We can imagine a black beggar sitting at the corner of a building, while the rest of the society prospers.

"An exile in his own land" is a biblical allusion to "stranger in a strange land", but "own land" reminds the listeners that America, along with the whites, belongs to the black men.

Hence, King creates a contrast between ‘what the listeners were promised’ and ‘what they have received’
Let’s move from past to present with pessimism

But today, the Quran is stained by the smudge of brutality, destruction and oppression. Today, when an American rates a kufi..., the kufi is deemed colder than a mainline protestant. Today, we are known as catalysts of the turbulent tides that hold back the prospering boat of humanity.

Anaphora is employed through “Today”, as we keep emphasizing the deteriorated reputation of Islam in the United States. Similarly to King, we verbally emphasize the anaphora too.

The second line refers to an actual survey which concludes that Americans rate mainline protestants as warmer than Muslims. It adds credibility to the speech.

We used a metaphor in “catalysts of the turbulent tides that hold back the prospering boat of humanity”. Through this, we created a very powerful imagery about Islam being perceived as the waves that prevent the progress of a boat or ship. We have materialized intangible opinions of people, so our listeners can understand and remember.
Then, he sheds light into the darkness by lighting a candle of hope

"But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice."

“But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we’ve come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.”

‘But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt’. Puts an end to the pessimism.

A strong visual imagery in ‘bank of justice’, and ‘vaults of opportunity’.

‘Insufficient funds’ attracts those who struggle with money. King is involving the financially troubled in the mission.
Let us shine light into the darkness too

We refrain from staying put in this pit of appalling circumstances. We refrain! For this is not a pit encompassing quick sand........... So here we are, holding onto a rope, a rope of hope. A rope that will pull us out of this cavity.

We repeat “rope” to emphasize that there is a way out from all this chaos.
Emphasizes the urgency to take action. But, hasn’t asked to take action just yet.

“Hallowed spot” refers to the Lincoln Memorial where the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. Again, King uses the location as a tool.

The counterpoint of “fierce urgency of now” with the “luxury of cooling off” and the “tranquilizing drug of gradualism” makes both a visual and ironic statement. He could be asking higher authorities to take action rather than ignoring the Emancipation Proclamation.

See the Anaphora again in “Now is the time”.

There are 5 imageries in the red part alone. Rise from the dark, desolate valley of segregation, sunlit path of racial justice. Quicksands of racial injustice, Solid rock of brotherhood.

“We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God’s children.”
Let’s stress the urgency to take action. But, don’t ask the listeners to take action yet.

From this moment on, no weeks, no days, no hours, no seconds shall we waste. This is the moment to lift this mask. . . . . . This is the moment to shed light on the real Quran within us, which does not abide with violence, terror, blasphemy and extremism, but is a pot full of love, happiness, prosperity, and mercy. From this moment, . . . . . . This is the moment. . . . . . This is the moment to take back what is truly ours.

We show the urgency of the matter using no weeks, no days.

Lift this mask exemplifies that the inner teachings of Islam are hidden.

We created a contrast between the perceived values of the Quran and the actual values.

We described Islam to a pot because a tangible object enables listeners to form images in their mind, which are more memorable. This is a common technique used in political campaigns and speeches.

We have used the Anaphora This is the moment 4 times.
No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

After this line, Martin no longer looked at his speech. He let the inspiration and emotion of the moment to carry him forward like an extemporaneous orator.

The next part of the speech has a more personal and less intellectual, more heartfelt and less academic tone.

Improvisation is an effective technique in campaigns and speeches because according to research, 38% of a speech’s effectiveness comes from the feeling and attitude the word are spoken with. Only 7% comes from the diction that is used.
Acknowledges the presence of the people and what they’ve have to go through

“I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of ‘creative suffering’. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.”

There is a Litote in “Not unmindful”.

King acknowledges the presence of what the listeners have gone through. This is important on political grounds because here, the speaker identifies with his audience.

“Creative suffering” gives us an impression of the barbaric treatment the blacks received. So, it highlights what black people have endured so far.

In the last sentence, he calls for action by asking them to go back to their states and believe in this movement. King believes this demonstration “will” have an impact and change the lives of blacks.
Now let us acknowledge our audience, and show them that we are a part of them all my fellow brothers and sisters that stand with me on this historic ground, bear in mind I am not unthoughtful of your presence. You all have been through many ordeals...........turning to the television, only to watch the constant bashing that redhead gives islam............Persist and endure.....Go back to that state, to that city, to that town, to that slum, to that street, to that very spot, where exist even a tint of Islamic discrimination.

The underlined text helps us establish an emotional connection with our audience.

Then, we call for action through repetition “to that”.
“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of “interposition” and “nullification” -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; “and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.”

Repeating an inspirational theme 8 times makes the speech a song. It is a crescendo and King says “I have a dream” immediately following his previous lines.

“The aura that is created by the usage of repetition cannot be achieved through any other device. It has the ability of making a simple sentence sound like a dramatic one. It enhances the beauty of a sentence and stresses on the point of main significance.” Interestingly, this part of the speech was not on the script.
Now Imagine...

We are all at the American Mohammedan Society in Brooklyn, New York. It is the Nation’s first Muslim organisation, established in 1907. News reporters and other Media are present in the hall.

The heat of Islamic discrimination in the United States has crossed its limits.

So, here are two Muslim public speakers, presenting a speech to catalyse a revolution.
Bibliography

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