

REPORT

THE ART OF THE DEAL
Trump, Donald J.
Arrow Books, London, 2016

Artero Abellán, Pablo Agustín. Complutense University of Madrid. Spain.
pabloagustinartero@ucm.es

Literature, in any within the amalgam of genres, will always be defined and have its ready, set and go! On the most elementary and yet unquestionable element: language. This is the case of *The Art of the Deal* by Donald Trump, where a presumably business book rejoices success, intentionally or not, from a series of linguistic features that per se are purposely standardized throughout the fourteen chapters that make the book.

The present review is doubly oriented. Each episode is isolated through individual comments within the lines of discourse analysis and multimodality. This, as an attempt to shed light on the key elements behind the success of a bestseller. Speaking of linguistics, many tropes are deliberately recast from stem to stern, and indeed for a non-coincidental reason: repetition generates persuasive effect. Those 'preferred' linguistic traits are next indicated when opportune.

Chapter 1-DEALING: A Week in the Life exemplifies an atypical plunge into the book: the very first paragraph consists of a compendium of traits that will be the flagship of the book: short and punchy sentences ("I don't do it for the money. I've got enough, much more than I'll ever need."), street language, ("that's how I get my kicks" (p. 1), "he stormed into the room and he said, «hey fellas...»" (p. 140), and an overflowing, some might say narcissist, use of the first personal pronoun 'I'. Rhetorical questions are as well part of the pack: "And if it can't be fun, what's the point?" (p. 2).

The beginning of the book is openly and admittedly dynamic, yet specifically chapters 1, 2 and 14 are crafted, pointedly, to reinforce this sentiment. Chapter one targets at, exactly, what its title suggests: the minutiae of a week, for which purpose Mr. Trump's Monday-Friday are explicitly broken up into hourly lapses. To prove such point, that alleged first-chapter's egocentrism sheds on a token count of 411 instances as far as pronoun 'I' is concerned; In other words, a substantial 16% of the total. If it were not enough, chapter one adds up to 44 pages of an overall of 367, meaning that, in brief, the 16% of 'I' are gathered in a 12% of the book. Somewhat expected, for chapter one is a narration of a self-week, this is no stand-alone detail. There exists intentionality, be it as simple as a sense of belonging or pertaining, a first-hand submersion into the story as the main character. This plays as a genuine and close grasp to the life of a millionaire.

By contrast, chapters two or three exhibit a lower result of 6.7% and 4.6%. Without a doubt, the *New York Times* quotation on the book cover 'Trump makes one believe for a moment in the American Dream again' hits the mark.

Another salient persuasive tool is the use of the present tense through chapters one and two and then less so yet steadily afterwards. The present brings about immediacy, and more precisely, a sentiment timeless events shaping into advice that lack an expiration date. For a taste, routine description or counselling are offered in the present tense.

A remarkable example is chapter one, which gives the appearance of having been composed after the following ones. This can be more easily understood through critical thinking upon the development of the book. Chapter number one, shows a, calls-wise, incapable Mr. Trump. He is not being able to handle the exceeding number of phone calls he gets. This is, he is already a successful businessman. By contrast, the chapters coming after tell of Trump's inception as a businessman.

Nevertheless, as above-mentioned, chapters where the past is paired up with the use of the present yet to a lesser extent, give the idea that events are not so outdated and still enjoy importance at the time the book was written: "I've come to believe Ed Koch is so incompetent and destructive to New York that someone has to stand up and say so, publicly" (p. 354). Ed Koch was the mayor of New York City between 1978 and 1989 when by all means the reader is led to believe he has been a recent mayor in regards to the book's publication date.

A core element as chapter one develops is the word and concept behind 'calls' as in a telephone call. Calls seem to be the cornerstone in Trump's life, and by extension, anybody aiming at becoming a millionaire: "I call back Judith Krantz" (p. 28). Once a prospective businessman has reached the podium, calls are what speak of a millionaire's accomplishments and prosperity: "my first call is to Alan 'Ace' Greenberg..." (p. 2); "Alan Greenberg calls" (p. 30).

That being said, syntactically speaking grammar is by and large trimmed down to the noticeably simple pattern of *Subject Verb Object*: "I say yes to two" (p. 15); "I like the casino business" (p. 16). This SVO construction, the present tense and first person pronoun result in a combo giving way to an unequivocal idea: the first stages into the book are typically designed for the broader public, to hook the reader. The fact is, there is no simpler morpho-syntax.

Chapter 2-TRUMP CARDS: The Elements of the Deal, for its part is where readers are either chased away or bewitched that anything is possible: "More than anything else, I think deal-making is an ability you're born with. It's in the genes. I don't say that egotistically. It's not about being brilliant. [...] Moreover, most people who do have the instincts will never recognize they do..." (p. 46-47).

A series of uplifting subsections split the chapter into paradigms: a framework of ideas that guide the reader to success. Orderly, they are *Think Big, Protect the Downside and the Upside Will Take Care of Itself, Maximize Your Options, Know Your Market, Use your Leverage, Enhance Your Location, Get the Word Out, Fight Back, Deliver the Goods, Contain the Costs* and finally *Have Fun*.

Although each share proposes authentic material, anecdotes or ideals, there seems to be always a moral of common characteristics for those aiming to inspire others. In essence, these messages have to do with positivity, originality, creativity, fearless and hardworking. What is clear nonetheless is that by contrast, Chapter two does re-orient the sight towards the reader, the subject on whom Trump aims at spending time and so assisting them in their way to wealth and success. As such, pieces of advice try to dwell on practicality; pragmatism and immediate application are fostered.

From chapters 3 to 13, all seem to be threaded by an invisible chord that unites all of them under the same pattern. If not a line of thought, for each chapter diligently and smartly output a different topic, there is a similarity in terms of language.

Acknowledging the ideas Mr. Trump figured out needed to be in the book for this review assesses Mr. Trump meets his goals, each chapter is devoted to the introduction and development of a different business deal. Whether the reader takes a liking or not to the particular instance it is their choice to move on and leaving 'deals' untouched. This fashion works. Readers into concrete policies, events or agreements can flick through in a matter of seconds.

Having said this, Mr. Trump appears as well to omit information at will for deals included in the book come out right for him. When, by the end of the book, a chapter (p. 14) is specifically put up to respond to seemingly disrupted deals, as in the case of the Moscow Hotel, the tying up of loose ends seems as well deficient, cut short (p. 364).

Back to persuasion, the narrative style follows classic narration conventions 'seasoned' by some linguistic resources as follows: a blend of simple and not so straightforward but rather elaborate language plus vulgar instances are remarkable all throughout: "but what the *hell*" (p. 13); «Irving said, "You go tell your father to pay his *f_____ing* rent or I'm going to *knock his ass off*"» (p. 87).

Having a less learned or polished register is far from a last minute call. The range of not so common phrasal verbs spread out through the whole book is for example self-explanatory; in many cases they stand for what is the trend or popular out there. The conclusion to be drawn is that such decisions make a bestseller: gobbled up (p. 68); bail out (p. 101); boarded apart (p. 135). Offensive language takes part of the overall too: lowlifes (p. 155), losers (p. 85), bullshit artists (p. 85). Yet for all that, elaborate language comes in dribs and drabs: "Unblemished background" (p. 204);

“serendipitous” (p. 211); “I was dumbfounded” (p. 60); “steadfastly” (p. 130), are some few examples.

Further illustration of simple yet effective language takes the shape of: Repetition –an overly seen figure of speech when it comes to persuading: “*Some were vain, some were crazy, some were wild, and many of them were phonies*” (p. 97), “The answer is no, Donald. No. No. No.” (p. 130), and brief punchy sentences: “So I waited” (p. 93); “Just like that” (p. 238); “No luck” (p. 312).

Further noticeable patterns are the insertion of quotes that give rise to genuine dialogues that bring up make-believe and message-strengthening anecdotes. They ooze freshness and boost plausibility among readers: “About an hour later [...] this huge guy, a monster, maybe 240 pounds, burst through the door. [...] The guy had murder in his eyes. I expected Irving, if he had any sense, to run for his life. Instead...” (p. 87-88).

Last but not least two unconventional earmarks operated by Mr. Trump draw the reader’s attention vigorously: Hyphens and Dashes. Space constraints and the amount of available data however result in a call for a longer and more exhaustive examination, a need for an article.

In looking for a close attention from the reader, a meaningful, or eye-catching ending, Mr. Trump builds up a last chapter where every point/building/case made formerly in the book is brought back to the spotlight. Accordingly, *Chapter 13-THE WEEK THAT WAS: How the Deals Came Out* displays an overall of 19 closing ‘tunes’. Each small section is gone through succinctly, approximately in 5-10 lines. By the time of reading completion, many of the ‘deals’ have been forgotten. This plays on Trump’s side. The reader may be moved to believe what told and/or overlook possible minor inconsistencies.

What’s Next, the concluding section in the book poses reflections as what a formal academic ‘Future lines of research’ would be. Yet, all in all, the subsection well deserves a distinction of a ‘smartly played space’, pages where Mr. Trump insinuates or advocates for a continuation. It does make sense in the end, for Mr. Trump’s last call reads: ‘I also plan to keep making deals, big deals, and right around the clock’. He never mentioned becoming President of the United States though.

Mr. Donald John Trump is the 45th and current president of the United States of America (2017-). Son to a successful entrepreneur and builder, before entering the world of politics he was a businessman and media personality. His early architectural accomplishments earned him so much popularity and media attention as to publish referential business and self-help/success books. Aside from his very first book, *The Art of the Deal*, he has published other *bestsellers* such as *The America We Deserve*, *Think Like a Billionaire: Everything You Need to Know About Success*, *Real Estate*, and *Life and Crippled America: How to Make America Great Again*.

Pablo Agustín Artero Abellán

PhD in English and contrastive English-Spanish linguistics from the Complutense University of Madrid. His thesis is framed in the analysis of political discourse, rhetoric and political communication around the figures of Mr. Donald J. Trump and Mr. Pablo Iglesias Turrión. In the academic years of 2016/2017 and fall / winter 2017 he was Assistant Professor at the Universities of Occidental College and Wesleyan University in the United States. He is currently Assistant Professor in New Caledonia. In addition, he is the author of the article '*La "casta" y el "cambio". El "diccionario podemos" o fetichismo lingüístico en la reinención de la retórica política a través del marco tecnológico: Twitter*'.

pabloagustinartero@ucm.es

<https://www.ucm.es/doctorado/doctorado-linguistica-inglesa//pablo-agustin-artero>

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4779-2506>

<https://scholar.google.es/citations?user=YaSHu-cAAAAJ&hl=es>

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Pablo_Artero4

<https://ucm.academia.edu/PabloAgust%C3%ADnArteroAbell%C3%A1n>

<https://publons.com/researcher/2947172/pablo-agustin-artero-abellan/>

<https://www.mendeley.com/profiles/pablo-agustn-artero-abelln/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/pablo-artero/>

IraLISID: **ESFFI4429**