



ISSN: 1994-4217 (Print) 2518-5586(online)

Journal of College of Education

Available online at: <https://eduj.uowasit.edu.iq>

Dr. Abbas Idan Obaid

Directorate of Wasit  
Education

Email:

[abbasedan2005@yahoo.com](mailto:abbasedan2005@yahoo.com)

Keywords:

strategy, maneuvering,  
criticizing, speech

Article info

Article history:

Received 22.May.2023

Accepted 18.Jun.2023

Published 20.aug.2023

Strategic Maneuvering of Criticizing in Mitt Romney's Speech:  
A CDA

## A B S T R A C T

the current study examines the realization of the criticizing moves that the speaker (Mitt Romney, US Senator) conducts in discourse. The discursive moves tackled in the current study are manifested as strategic maneuvering of criticizing in discourse, extracted from Mitt Romney's speech in his election campaign in 2011(available on [www.presidency.ucsb.edu](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu)). The main tenet derived from the data analysis is that the speaker conducts a manipulative discursive strategies to persuade the hearers of his policy, and gain political advocacy and support. The study aims at investigating the discursive moves that frame the strategic maneuvering of criticizing. The study also sheds light on the ideological tendencies derived from the text. The study is qualitative in trend, tackling a single full speech for analysis, and comes out with a set of moves, manifesting the textual framing of the criticizing strategies which the speaker manipulates in the text to convince his hearers of his good deeds and the mischievous intentions and deeds of his opponents, represented by Obama and his party. These criticizing strategies are: trigger of problem, problem exhibition, figure of problem, suggestion for solution and promising for solution.

© 2022 EDUJ, College of Education for Human Science, Wasit University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31185/eduj.Vol52.Iss1.3530>

المناورة الإستراتيجية للإنتقاد في خطاب ميت رومني: دراسة تحليل خطاب نقدي

م.د. عباس عيدان عبيد

مديرية تربية محافظة واسط

الملخص:

تعمل الدراسة الحالية على ادراك خطوات الإنتقاد التي يحذوها المتكلم في حديثه. تتجلى الخطوات الإستراتيجية التي تم تناولها في الدراسة الحالية في إنها مناورة استراتيجية للإنتقاد في الخطاب، مستخلصة من خطاب ميت رومني (و هو سيناتور أمريكي) في حملته الإنتخابية عام ٢٠١١. المبدأ الرئيسي المستمد من النص هو إن المتحدث يزاول إستراتيجيات إستراتيجية مراوغة لإقناع سامعيه بسياسته ، و كسب التأييد والدعم السياسي. تهدف الدراسة إلى تقصي الخطوات

الاستطرادية التي توطر المناورة الاستراتيجية للإنتقاد. كما تسلط الدراسة الضوء على المقاصد الأيديولوجية المستمدة من النص. الدراسة نوعية في توجهها وخرجت بمجموعة من الخطوات التي تُظهر التأطير النَّصِّي لإستراتيجيات الإنتقاد التي يراوغ بها المتحدث في النص لإقناع سامعيه بأعماله المستحسنة من جانب والنوايا والأفعال الرديئة، متمثلة بنوايا أوباما وحزبه، من جانب آخر. هذه الإستراتيجيات هي: حافز المشكلة، عرض المشكلة، صاحب المشكلة، إقتراح للحل، وواعد بالحل.

الكلمات المفتاحية : إستراتيجية ، مناورة ، انتقاد، خطاب.

## 1- Introduction

The present study deals with the strategic maneuvering of criticizing in Mitt Romney's speech as part of his election campaign (Remarks Announcing Candidacy for President in Stratham, New Hampshire June 2, 2011) . To this end, the study draws on Nguyen's model (2013) of criticizing, but it takes into consideration that criticizing is a style of discourse, rather than a speech act, because perlocutionary act is not contingent in a criticizing figure of speech, and not necessarily enacting a word-world effect of a speech act. Simply, criticism, as indicated in the present study, is directed toward a third person agent, rather than a hearer or a listener. A principle strategy that political parties exploit to attract and gain public approval is to criticize their opponents. The participants of the study are categorized into in-group (those who hold the floor of speech), out-group (those whom the criticism is directed against) and the sub-ordinate group (comprising the addressees whom the speech is produced to gain their approval). Strategic maneuvering manifests itself in political discourse in the choices that are made of the topical potential of criticism available at a certain stage in the discourse, in audience-directed framing of the criticizing moves, and in the purposive use of presentational devices. The speeches of political election campaigns almost embody ideologically biased discourses, with a manifestation to polarize the representation of us (in-groups) and them (out-groups) (Van Dijk, 2001b, p. 103).

The present study examines the way criticizing moves are embodied through the text and the ideologies derived from discourse. The study aims at identifying the textual framing of criticizing moves through discursive succession and intends to explore the following demands:

- 1) What maneuvering strategies (pragmatic criticizing moves) a speaker may conduct in criticizing others,
- 2) What misleading tendencies the criticism can burden and how they are manipulated in the text.
- 3) What are the ideologies that can be derived from such maneuvers.

In line with these inquires, it is hypothesized that:

- 1) There are specific strategic maneuvering moves of criticizing, shifting the course of interaction from the opponents' deteriorations to the speaker's own ameliorations.
- 2) The strategic maneuvering of criticizing takes the form of comparison and contrast due to using praising cues for the in-group and disparaging cues for the out-group.

The study is limited to the critical discourse analysis drawing on the pragmatic views of strategic maneuvering and criticism in Mitt Romney's speech in his election campaign (2011).

Rationality of selecting the text in hand is exposed in the tenet that election campaigns are fertile soil for manipulating social mind and gain social and political advocacy. That is due to the political competition among electoral candidates, for each tries to overthrow the other. Up to the researchers knowledge, the criticizing moves as strategic maneuvering have not been tackled in political election campaigns; so, this study is supposed to fill this gap.

## 2- Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Political Discourse and CDA

As van Dijk (2001a, pp. 360, 362) puts it, CDA research is often interested in the study of ideologically biased discourses, and the ways these polarize the representation of us (in-groups) and them (out-groups), and that is clear cut in the criticizing discourses manifested in the political speeches of election campaigns. In linguistics, discourse studies and pragmatics, political discourse has received attention outside the more theoretical mainstream. As a social practice, election campaigns exhibit political speeches of ordered rhetoric, persuasive and manipulative discourses, because such speeches may draft the publics favoritism or derogation towards a coalitional group.

### 2.2 Strategic Maneuvering in Criticizing Discourse

Strategic maneuvering is a systematic integration of rhetorical considerations into a dialectical framework of analysis. There are several techniques of persuasion used by speakers attempting to ingratiate heterogeneous audience that constitute the subordinate group in discourse. The overall strategy is the combined implementation, at all levels of the text, of the positive presentation of the in-group and the negative presentation of the out-group. There are 'segmental techniques' that speakers use in the arrangement of the text in sequence and speak in turn to the different sub-audiences, seeking a positive response as a consequence to their strategic maneuvering. Speakers may use presentational devices such as metaphor, irony, simile, ambiguous language, as criticizing techniques of strategic maneuvering, with the potential to be particularly effective for the heterogeneous audience of the political discourse (Brown and Levinson 1978, pp. 262-3; van Dijk, 2001a, p. 362; van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 2002, p. 135; Pietrucci, 2012, pp. 292-3).

Three spheres can be derived from strategic maneuvering in a criticizing discourse, identified in the choices made by the criticizer (i.e. the speaker in a political election campaign): topical potential of the criticizing moves available at a stage of discourse, the audience directed framing of those criticizing moves, and finally, in the appropriate use of presentational devices. Thus, strategic maneuvering can take place in making an expedient choice from the options constituting the *topical potential* associated with a particular stage, in selecting a responsive adaptation to *audience demand*, and in exploiting appropriate *presentational devices*. A speaker can take a certain policy to maneuver strategically in advancing his criticisms (van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 1999, p. 484; 2002, p. 383; 2010, p. 119).

A presentational device is a variety of strategic maneuver; van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2001, p. 152) call it “the phrasing of moves in light of their discursive and stylistic effectiveness”. Making use of presentational choices as manifestation of strategic maneuvering refers to utilizing the pragmatic strategies as a variation to direct the discourse toward the achievement of certain communicative and interactional effects. Obvious examples of formal devices are subordination, repetition and paratactic, and hypotactic constructions, as well as informal devices including the tropes, the various kinds of metaphors, rhetorical questions, etc. (van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 2010, p. 119).

### 2.3 Criticism and Criticizing Others

Criticizing is a topical potential and an aspect of the strategic maneuvering in the political discourse of election campaigns. The present study is not concerned with the traditional conception of the speech act of criticism towards hearers, but the criticizing (giving negative evaluation) of others who are not involved in the speech interaction, i.e. not addressees or hearers, but an out-group, due to maneuvering strategies. Hence, criticizing in the political speech, as a communicative purpose related to strategic moves, does not necessarily indicate the conventional procedures associated with the speech act of criticism, though sharing many principles and purposes with it, such as to negatively evaluate other persons or actions, to express negative comment or dissatisfaction, to express disapproval of, disagreement with, and dislike of an out-group or to find faults for which they are deemed responsible, so as to influence their future actions and career. The speaker is a criticizer, not a critic (Tracy, Van Dusen and Robinson, 1987, p. 56; Hyland, 2000, p. 44; Nguyen, 2005, p. 7; 2013, p. 111).

Nguyen (2013, p. 111) proposes a model for criticism realization strategies, which embody subcategories, and modifiers:

- a) Direct criticism
  - a. An explicit statement of a problem, or an explicit expression of disapproval of, disagreement with, and dislike.
  - b. Warning about the consequences of H's choice, actions etc.
- b) Requests for change
  - a. Giving advice or suggestions for changes and improvements or encouraging changes and improvement in H's choice, actions, work, etc.
  - b. Insisting that changes be made, or indicating standard and expectations,
- c) *Hints*, including
  - a. Presupposing or asking H's opinion of his/her own choice, actions, work, products etc. to raise H's awareness of the inappropriateness,
  - b. Other kinds of hints, light teasing or sarcasm.

"Criticizing", as a speech act, rather than a style of speech, was tackled by Al-Dakhs et al. (2019), testing Nguyen's model of the speech act of criticizing, conducted on Saudi university teachers. It concentrates on forms of disapproval and correction as patterns of criticism. This study answers the question of "what", i.e., 'what are the criticizing forms used by participants?'. Whereas the present study works on answering the question of "How" criticism is constructed throughout discourse.

### 3- Methodology

The present study is a qualitative CDA that intends to explore the maneuvering moves of criticizing derived from the discursive maneuvering with which the speaker intends to criticize his opponents and convince his addressees of his criticism by manipulating their minds. That is in addition to the set of ideas, beliefs, ideologies derived from the text due to the maneuvering moves that construct the criticizing framework. The following is an eclectic model, drawing on the above mentioned models (van Eemeren & Houtlosser's, 2010 and Nguyen's, 2013) with modifications. Five basic moves are suggested to embody the strategic maneuvering of criticizing throughout the text, as seen in figure 1 below. These moves are analyzed in terms of the problems identified, those affected by them, and solutions proposed (see Machin & Mayer, 2010, p. 177).

#### Strategic Maneuvering of Criticizing

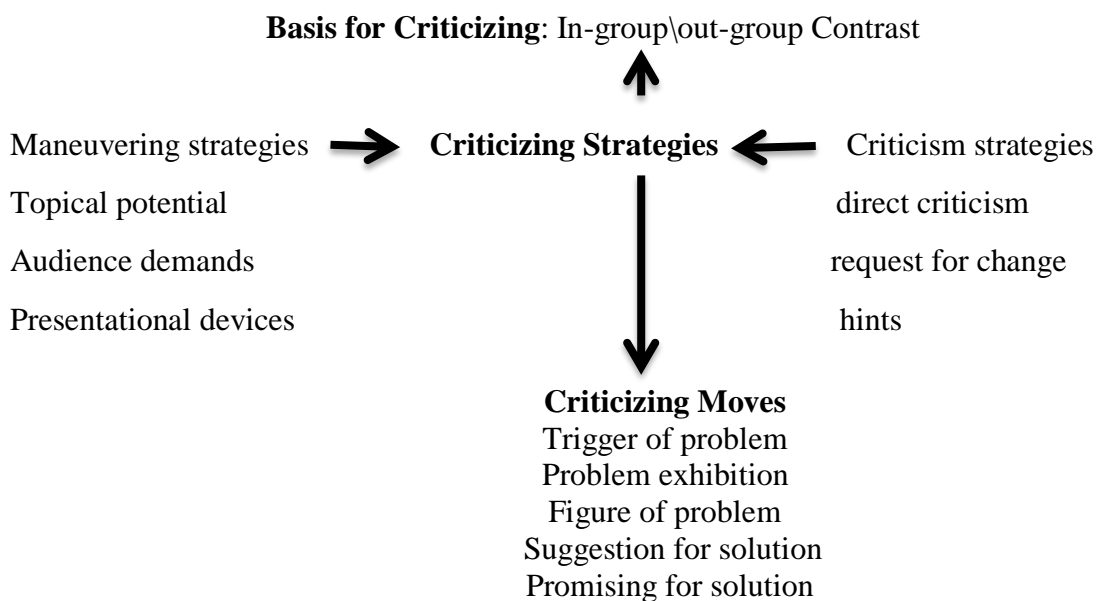


Figure 1: Strategic Maneuvering of Criticizing

This model indicates that criticizing moves are an aspect of the maneuvering strategies of criticizing. The discursive framework of criticizing is portrayed in the social or political implications of the speaker, inspired by the variant strategies in the communicative interaction. The criticizing moves are logical steps with premises of triggers that anchor the basis for the problem(s) enacted by an "out-group". Problem exhibition is an explanation of what the problem would be as well as its social effects on "Us". The figure of problem embodies the principals engaged in the social issues. The agents role of amelioration is commenced in suggesting solutions and promising to achieve solutions.

### 4- Data Analysis and Discussion

In the following steps the researcher presents a manifestation of the variant discursive strategies enacting the criticizing framework of the text in hand based on the eclectic model.

### 1) Aspects of Strategic Maneuvering

1. Topical potential
  - a. economic issues: taxes, unemployment, prices, national debt, economy.
  - b. political issue: dependent regime.
2. Audience demands: better living and self- ruling
3. Presentation devices: direct criticism, hints, Wh questions, request for change.

The speaker shows his positive position from the diverse issues and the role of his opponents in turn to these issues. The issues of the topical potential are the prominent points that give rise to the contrasting cues between in-group and out-group.

### 2) In-group\Out-group with Cues of Contrast

The flowing table exhibits the interaction strategies of positive self-presentation and negative other presentation.

Table 1: The polarized political identities

#	You (in-group)	Us (in-group):Romney	Them (out-group): Obama
1	You rule	The true strength of America is self-rule (L.11)	monarchy(L. 15), aristocracy (L.16), dynasties (L.17) (rule).
2	the United States of America is not ruled by a monarchy or controlled by an aristocracy (L. 15)		folks in Washington might act otherwise (L. 16).
3		I (Mitt Romney, known) came home to Massachusetts (L. 115).	Someone (Barack Obama) we hadn't known (L. 29).
4		we'd have to raise taxes but I refused (L. 119)	he raises their taxes (L. 94).
5	our ..... economy past every other nation on earth (L. 164)		He (Obama) made it (economy) worse (L. 37).
6	Families---- sacrificed for neighborhood (L. 54).		neighborhood is being crushed by this Obama economy (L. 55).
7		a president who cares more about America's workers (L. 127).	he does (care) about America's union bosses (L. 148).

Criticism along the text is based on the contrastive cues between Mitt Romney and the public on the one hand and Obama on the other hand. Romney and the public are ascribed with ameliorating traits while Obama is ascribed with deteriorating traits. Political dichotomy of in-group and out-group is portrayed with the topical potential, taking the positive side with *Us* and negative side with *Them*. These cues of contrast inspire the criticizing moves, incarcerated in the topical potential of discourse. Cues of comparison are mostly adjacent or can take different positions due to their role in the criticizing moves, e.g., one can take a role of a trigger while the other holds for a solution.

### 3) Moves of Criticizing

#### 1. Trigger of problem

- i. Monarchy (L. 15) , aristocracy (L. 16), dynasties (L. 18)
- ii. someone (Barack Obama) we hadn't known for very long, who didn't have much of a record but promised to lead us to a better place. (L. 30)
- iii. Families are buried under higher prices for food and higher prices for gasoline (L. 46).
- iv. the President seems to take his inspiration not from the small towns and villages of New Hampshire but from the capitals of Europe (L. 91).

The speaker exposes the kind of régime lead by Obama, being over the public, vague, confiscating others' rights, and fatal to the public. Thus Obama is the source of the problems that encounter the country.

#### 2. Problem exhibition

##### a. Hints

- i. This country ..... is in peril (L. 27).
  - So, there is a need to free this country
- ii. .... unemployment is still above 8% (L. 41-).
- iii. .... foreclosures are still at record levels.
- iv. .... the prices of homes continue to fall.
- v. .... our national debt has grown nearly as large as our entire economy (L. – 45).
  - These require economic reformation.
- vi. A family ... sacrificed to buy a home in a good neighborhood (L. 54).
- vii. First their neighbors started losing their jobs...and then their homes. And all around them now are abandoned houses... and abandoned dreams (L. 57).
  - The citizens are highly effected by the policy of Obama's regime.

##### b. Wh. Question.

- i. Who rules this great nation? (L. 19)
  - Obama does.

##### c. Request for change

- i. things aren't right, and they're not getting better (L. 101).
- ii. the economy is in crisis today, and unless we change course, it will be in crisis for all of us tomorrow (L. 135).

Explanation of how things can turn with Obama is in consequence with the triggers of the problem. " Monarchy , aristocracy, dynasties" are the triggers of the crisis of the ruling régime and the "peril". Obama's vagueness is the prelude to unemployment, foreclosure, falling prices and debt, and thence vague destiny of society. Proximately, ten line separate between triggers and exhibitions which are interwoven as the speaker elaborates on premises of "crisis" which can only be avoided by changing "Obama", being a disloyal stranger, and the prime trigger for all problems.

### 3. Figure of the problem

- a. Direct criticism
  - i. Barack Obama has failed America (L. 36).
  - ii. These failing hopes make up President Obama's own misery index. It's never been higher. And what's his answer? He says this: "I'm just getting started" (L. 48).
  - iii. No, Mr. President, you've had your chance (L. 50)
  - iv. neighborhood is being crushed by this Obama economy (L. 55).
  - v. President Obama sees a different America and has taken us in a different direction (L. 78).
  - vi. He hesitated to speak out for the dissidents in Iran (L. 80).
  - vii. He seems firmly and clearly determined to undermine our longtime friend and ally (L. 83).
  - viii. He's treating Israel ..... with suspicion, distrust and an assumption that Israel is at fault (L. 85).
  - ix. President Obama's European answers are not the right solution to America's challenges (103).

The figure of the problem is incarcerated in the principal of Obama. The speaker describes Obama with variant negative traits and attributed many malfunctions to his work as a president of the USA, and that is in both, the interior affairs and exterior affairs of the USA.

### 4. Suggestions for solutions

- i. You do (rule) (L. 20).
- ii. We are here today (L. 27).
- iii. We ..... are just getting started (L. 51).
- iv. In the campaign to come, the American ideals of economic freedom and opportunity need a clear and unapologetic defense, and I intend to make it—because I have lived it ( L. 104).

The suggestion for solutions is to transfer ruling from *Them* to *Us*. The speaker speaks in behalf of the public with the statement that his voice is the voice of the public and in case he rules, then the public rule. So, to make of Romney the only choice in the elections is the public's route for reform, and that is from the speaker's point of view.

### 5. Promising for solution

- i. I will ..... finally balance the budget (L. 139).
- ii. My generation will pass the torch to the next generation, not a bill (L.140).
- iii. I will insist that Washington learns to respect the Constitution (L.141).
- iv. We will return responsibility and authority to the states (142).
- v. I will make business taxes competitive with other nations (L. 146).

The voice of the first person and the future tense is clear cut in the consummation of the speaker's being the forthcoming choice of the public. All the social, political and economic problems are terminated when the public make of "Romney" their preferable candidate for the forthcoming elections. For Mitt Romney to be the only solution to get rid of the "peril" is taken for granted, from the speaker's point of view.

- 4) **Derived ideologies:** Repercussions of electing a president:
- a. Choosing Obama for the second term means:
    - i. monarchy, aristocracy, dynasties
    - ii. Worse economy
    - iii. Bad life conditions
    - iv. Dependency
  - b. Choosing Romney for the second term means:
    - i. Democracy
    - ii. Better economy
    - iii. Better life conditions
    - iv. True strength of America

Three issues are the concentration of discourse: political, economic and social. The speaker's ideological presuppositions, applied to in-group and out-group, are taken for granted from his own point of view. The speaker, through strategic maneuvering of criticizing Obama, is tactful to convince the audience (receivers) to abandon Obama and elect him for the next Presidency.

## 5- Conclusion

Criticizing, as a style of discourse (a figure of speech), may lack the perlocutionary force by itself, manifesting backtracking indications of the criticized principals with negative implications. The maneuvering strategies of criticizing are in consequence and interwoven throughout the discursive structure of the text. The triggers of the problem are posed in the commencement of discourse and each is followed by an exhibition explaining the rationale for criticizing *Them* as a figure of the problem. Comparative cues specifically obtain their interactional functions or meanings because they become salient through contrast or difference between in-group and out-group. The following are the prominent conclusions of the study:

- 1- The criticizing strategies exhibit manipulative mode of maneuver for persuading the addressees of the in-group goodness by mean of showing the out-groups disparaging. The competing parties use the 'compare and contrast strategy' over the text by means of praising cues for the in-group and disparaging cues for the out-group. The moves of the strategic maneuvering are tactful, presenting premises for criticizing, conclusions, solutions and end with promises. Thus, five moves are derived: trigger of problem, problem exhibition, figure of problem, suggestion for solution and promising for solution. This validates the first hypothesis.
- 2- The speaker conducts maneuvering strategies of criticizing to manipulate his receivers' mind, convincing them of the positive representation of *Us* and negative representation of *Them*. These strategies are manifested throughout three discursive aspects: the topical potential and audience demands, the contrasting cues between *Us* and *Them* and the criticizing moves, interwoven in the text with logical consequences. This validated the second hypothesis.
- 3- The proposed model is applicable and can present a precise description of the text and can leads to discursive interpretation.

- 4- The discursive framework of the discourse in hand (a speech in an election campaign) is constituted in the manipulative strategies of criticizing, taking a schematic organization of text structure and rhetorical moves. The speaker raises a set of political, economic and social issues which are problematic for the public and exhibits the reasons for these issues, interwoven with cues of contrast between in-group and out-group. While he presents Obama as the figure of the problem of all issues, the speaker presents himself as the only solution that can rescue the country from the "peril". The speaker manipulates the hearers' mind (ideologies, ideas and beliefs) and changes their convection of the President Obama and takes the role of the savior for the country, so that he can gain their advocacy for his election campaign.

## References

- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1978). Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena. In E. Goody (ed.), *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in social interaction* (pp.56-310). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press
- El-Dakhs, D.A.S., Ambreen, F., Zaheer, M. & Gusarova, Y. (2019). A pragmatic analysis of the speech act of criticizing in university teacher-student talk. *Pragmatics* 29 (4), 493–520
- Farnia, M & Abdul Sattar, H, Q. (2015). A Sociopragmatic Analysis of the Speech Act of Criticism by Persian Native Speakers. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies* (Vol. 2, pp. 305 – 327).
- Hyland, K. (2000). *Disciplinary discourses: Social interactions in academic writing*. London: Longman.
- Nguyen, M. (2005). *Criticizing and responding to criticism in a foreign language: A study of Vietnamese learners of English*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Auckland: The University of Auckland.
- Nguyen, M. (2013). An exploratory study of criticism realization strategies used by NS and NNS of New Zealand English. In W. de Gruyter (ed.), *Multilingua*, 32(1),103-130.
- Pietrucci, P. (2012). Strategic Maneuvering through shifting Ideography in Political Speeches. In *Journal of Argumentation in Context*. 1 (3), 291 – 311. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Tracy, K., Van Dusen, D., Robinson, S. (1987). Good and bad criticism: a descriptive analysis. *Journal of Communication*. 37, 46–59.
- van Dijk T. A. (2001a). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen & H. E. Hamilton (eds), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 352–71).Oxford: Blackwell.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001b). Multidisciplinary CDA: a plea for diversity. In Wodak, R. & Meyer, M. (eds) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 95-120) London: Sage.
- van Eemeren, F. H. & Houtlosser, P. (1999). Strategic maneuvering in argumentative discourse. *Discourse Studies*. (Vol 1(4), pp. 479–497). London SAGE Publications
- van Eemeren, F. H. & Houtlosser, P. (2001). Managing Disagreement: Rhetorical Analysis within a Dialectical Framework. *Argumentation and Advocacy* 37, 150–157.
- van Eemeren, F. H. & Houtlosser, P. (2002). Strategic Maneuvering: A Synthetic recapitulation". *Argumentation*. 20 (4), 381 – 92.
- van Eemeren, F. H. & Houtlosser, P. (2010). *Strategic maneuvering in argumentative discourse. Extending the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation*. Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

## Internet source

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-announcing-candidacy-for-president-stratham-new-hampshire>.

## Appendix

### Mitt Romney's Speeches

#### Oration A

#### Remarks Announcing Candidacy for President in Stratham, New Hampshire June 2, 2011

Thank you for coming. And I want to thank Doug and Stella Scamman for hosting us on their beautiful farm.

You know, everyone here today can tell a different story. We have different backgrounds and we wake up in the morning and go to different jobs ... or, look for different jobs. We go to different churches or maybe don't go to church so much. I bet some of you have families who go back 200 years or more in New Hampshire. And there must be some who just snuck in across the border, from Massachusetts. I hear the taxes are better over here.

But here we are on a beautiful June day coming together to begin a process that we often, quite naturally, take for granted. But it is really one of the great achievements in the history of the world. For all of our country's wealth and influence, those are not the source of our greatness. The true strength of America is self-rule, and a government that answers to a free and independent people.

We live in the most powerful nation that ever existed. And it all goes back to a few men and women who had the courage to stand - and even die - for their belief in liberty and equality. Because of their vision, the United States of America is not ruled by a monarchy or controlled by an aristocracy. Though sometimes folks in Washington might act otherwise, we don't have a House of Lords with inherited power. And as the Red Sox like to remind the New York Yankees, there are no dynasties in America.

Who rules this great nation?

You do. Every four years you decide who will give that State of the Union address, who will set the course of the country, who will be Commander in Chief.

What's true right here in this New Hampshire farm has always been true in America. Though each of us is different, though each of us will choose to walk a different path in life, we are united by one great, overwhelming passion: We love America. We believe in America.

Today we are united not only by our faith in America. We are united also by our concern for America.

This country we love is in peril. And that, my friends, is why we are here today.

A few years ago, Americans did something that was, actually, very much the sort of thing Americans like to do: We gave someone new a chance to lead; someone we hadn't known for very long, who didn't have much of a record but promised to lead us to a better place.

At the time, we didn't know what sort of a President he would make. It was a moment of crisis for our economy, and when Barack Obama came to office, we wished him well and hoped for the best.

Now, in the third year of his four-year term, we have more than promises and slogans to go by.

Barack Obama has failed America.

When he took office, the economy was in recession. He made it worse. And he made it last longer.

Three years later, over 16 million Americans are out of work or have just quit looking. Millions more are underemployed.

Three years later, unemployment is still above 8%, a figure he said his stimulus would keep from happening.

Three years later, foreclosures are still at record levels.

Three years later the prices of homes continue to fall.

Three years later, our national debt has grown nearly as large as our entire economy.

Families are buried under higher prices for food and higher prices for gasoline.

It breaks my heart to see what's happening in this country.

These failing hopes make up President Obama's own misery index. It's never been higher. And what's his answer? He says this: "I'm just getting started."

No, Mr. President, you've had your chance. We, the people on this farm, and citizens across the country are the ones who are just getting started.

I visited with a family, Kathy and Dave Tyler, who live in a suburb north of Las Vegas, Nevada. You probably know families just like them. They're in their early forties, a couple who had worked hard, sacrificed to buy a home in a good neighborhood, the sort of place they wanted their daughter Allie to grow up. But now that neighborhood is being crushed by this Obama economy. First their neighbors started losing their jobs...and then their homes. And all around them now are abandoned houses... and abandoned dreams.

When the Tylers wake up in the morning and get Allie off to school and then go to work and do everything they can to make it to the end of the month and hold their lives together, it doesn't matter if they are Republican or Democrat, Independent or...Libertarian. They're just Americans. An American family.

And across the richest, greatest country on earth, there are millions of American families like the Tylers. Folks who grew up believing that if they played by the rules, worked hard, that they would have the chance to build a good life, with steady work and always that possibility to work a little harder and get ahead.

And in that America, you don't wonder if your children will have a better life. You know they will. You know it the same way we know that tomorrow morning the sun is going to come up in the East right over this field.

That confidence in a better tomorrow defines us as Americans.

When generations of immigrants looked up and saw the Statue of Liberty for the first time, they surely had many questions and doubts about the life before them, but one thing they knew without a doubt is that they were coming to a place where anything was possible—that in America, their children would have a better life.

I believe in that America. I know you believe in that America. It is an America of freedom and opportunity. A nation where innovation and hard work propel the most powerful economy in the world. A land that is secured by the greatest military the world has ever seen, and by friends and allies across the globe.

President Obama sees a different America and has taken us in a different direction.

A few months into office, he travelled around the globe to apologize for America.

At a time of historic change and great opportunity in the Arab world, he is hesitant and uncertain. He hesitated to speak out for the dissidents in Iran, but his Administration boasts that he is "leading from behind" in Libya.

He speaks with firmness and clarity, however, when it comes to Israel. He seems firmly and clearly determined to undermine our longtime friend and ally. He's treating Israel the same way so many European countries have: with suspicion, distrust and an assumption that Israel is at fault.

To his credit, the President ordered the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. In Afghanistan, the surge was right, announcing a withdrawal date was wrong. The Taliban may not have watches, but they do have calendars.

Here at home, the President seems to take his inspiration not from the small towns and villages of New Hampshire but from the capitals of Europe.

With the economy in crisis, his answer is to borrow money we can't afford and throw it at Washington bureaucrats and politicians. Just like Europe.

Instead of encouraging entrepreneurs and employers, he raises their taxes, piles on record-breaking mounds of regulation and bureaucracy and gives more power to union bosses.

Instead of recognizing the states rightful authority to solve problems, he seizes power from them and rams through a disastrous national health care plan.

This President's first answer to every problem is to take power from you, your local government and your state so that so-called "experts" in Washington can make those choices for you. And with each of these decisions, we lose more of our freedom.

You and I understand this. We look at our country, and we know in our hearts that things aren't right, and they're not getting better.

President Obama's European answers are not the right solution to America's challenges. In the campaign to come, the American ideals of economic freedom and opportunity need a clear and unapologetic defense, and I intend to make it—because I have lived it.

Twenty-seven years ago, I left a steady job to join with some friends to start a business. Like many of you, it had been a dream of mine to try and build a business from the ground up. We started in a small office a couple of hours from here and over the years, we were able to grow from ten employees to hundreds.

My work led me to become deeply involved in helping other businesses, from innovative startups to large companies going through tough times. Sometimes I was successful and helped create jobs, other times I was not. I learned how America competes with companies in other countries, what works in the real world and what doesn't.

I left my business in 1999 to help put the Salt Lake City Olympics back on track. And when the Games were over, I came home to Massachusetts and served as governor.

I'd never held office before but I went at it like I ran businesses and the Olympics: ask tough questions and take on the toughest problems first, because they'll only get worse.

When I took office, I faced a nearly \$3 billion budget hole. My legislature was over 85% Democrat. The expectation was that we'd have to raise taxes but I refused. I ordered a review of all state spending, made tough choices and balanced the budget without raising taxes. That sent a message that business as usual was over.

Over the next four years, we consolidated agencies, cut programs, sold state property and cut taxes nineteen times. The state was giving away over a billion dollars in free health care, much of it to people who could have paid something but were gaming the system. You won't be surprised that a lot of Democrats thought we should be giving away even more.

I took it on and hammered out a solution that took a bad situation and made it better. Not perfect but it was a state solution for a state problem. At the end of four years, it took over 800 vetoes but we balanced every budget, restored a \$2 billion dollar rainy day fund and kept our schools first among all 50 states.

All of these experiences -- starting and running businesses for 25 years, turning around the Olympics, governing a state -- have helped shape who I am and how I lead. Of course, if I ran through a list of all my mistakes, Ann would find it hilarious, and we'd be here all night. But I've learned a lot.

Turning around a crisis takes experienced leadership and bold action. For millions of Americans, the economy is in crisis today, and unless we change course, it will be in crisis for all of us tomorrow.

Government under President Obama has grown to consume almost 40% of our economy. We are only inches away from ceasing to be a free market economy. I will cap federal spending at 20% or less of the GDP and finally, finally balance the budget.

My generation will pass the torch to the next generation, not a bill.

I will insist that Washington learns to respect the Constitution, including the 10th Amendment. We will return responsibility and authority to the states for dozens of government programs - and that begins with a complete repeal of Obamacare.

From my first day in office my number one job will be to see that America once again is number one in job creation. You know, if you want to create jobs, it helps to have had a job. I will make business taxes competitive with other nations, modernize regulations and bureaucracy and finally promote America's trade interests. It's time for a president who cares more about America's workers than he does about America's union bosses.

Over the last thirty years, I can't tell you how many times I've heard a situation is hopeless. But I've never been very good at listening to those people and I've always enjoyed proving them wrong.

It's one of the lessons I learned from my Dad.

My father never graduated from college. He apprenticed, as a lath and plaster carpenter, and he was darn good at it. He learned how to put a handful of nails in his mouth and spit them out, point forward. On their honeymoon, he and Mom drove across the country. Dad sold aluminum paint along the way, to pay for gas and hotels.

There were a lot reasons my father could have given up or set his sights lower. But Dad always believed in America; and in that America, a lath and plaster man could work his way up to running a little car company called American Motors, and end up Governor of a state where he had once sold aluminum paint.

For my Dad, America was the land of opportunity, where the circumstances of birth are no barrier to achieving one's dreams. Small business and entrepreneurs were encouraged, and respected, and a good worker could almost always find a good job.

The spirit of enterprise, innovation, pioneering and can-do propelled our standard of living and economy past every other nation on earth.

I refuse to believe that America is just another place on the map with a flag. We stand for freedom and opportunity and hope.

These last two years have not been the best of times. But while we've lost a couple of years, we have not lost our way. The principles that made us a great nation and leader of the world have not lost their meaning. They never will.

We know we can bring this country back.

I'm Mitt Romney. I believe in America.

And I'm running for President of the United States.