

# DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST JAPANESE EMPIRE: BUILDING HEROES THROUGH PASSIVIZATION AND LEXICALIZATION

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**Abstrak:** The substantial attention of the analysis on the use of passive sentences has generally been paid to the style. Although grammatical categories can be seen as an interesting area for stylistic analysis, the focus usually circles around the grammatical phenomena of the roles of the actor, action, patient, location, and so on. Similarly, in the analysis of lexical choice, diction is generally defined as choosing the right words in a speech or writing that should be accurate, appropriate, and understandable so that nothing will confuse an audience. Applying the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and the theory of ideology proposed by van Dijk (1995; 2000) and drawing on the theory of passivization and political diction, it is argued that when combined tactfully, grammatical phenomena of passive voice and thoughtful diction related to the naming can produce fruitful rhetorical ideological effects in building heroes in the people's minds to obtain political assent in a speech. Specifically, purposive passive construction and the insightful diction by naming and labelling the actor in some certain expressions will be highlighted. It is found that that the way FDR makes use of both passives combined with political dictions have been effective in his Declaration of War against Japanese Empire. Further linguistic analyses by applying the same method using other theories are also recommended.

**.Kata Kunci:** *heroes, lexicalization, passivization, people's assent*

## PENDAHULUAN

In many views, the Declaration of War against Japanese Empire (hereinafter, DWJE) was intended for two purposes; (1) to get the Congress to declare war on Japan soon, and (2) to get the American people to support and rally in favor of the war (Gabby, 2017, pp. 1-3). In such political and rhetorical speech, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

(hereinafter FDR) managed to make Japan to look wicked and evil, like the devil, and ultimate American enemy in the eyes and the minds of the American people. With such declaration, FDR was successful in pulling more attention from the American people and made his message was loud and clear enough to stimulate the people's emotion. Hence, the speech gave the American people an assurance that the Americans would

come out strong and victorious.

FDR's speech is also seen as the response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a horrific attack that (has also been seen as) no American can forget. Also named as "The speech after Pearl Harbor", this is considered one of the most recognizable and significant speeches in American history (Sparrow, 2015, pp. 1-3). It was this that brought America into World War Two and solidified America's status as the premier world superpower for the next half-century. Given the day after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the objective of this speech was, firstly, to urge Congress to declare war on Japan. The country was still in shock after hearing the news of the bombing and the tone of this speech was similar to that of President Bush's speech immediately following the attacks on the World Trade Centers.

Secondly, the speech was intended to get the American people to support and rally in favor of the war against Japanese Empire. In this, FDR's argument is mostly based on pathetic arguments constructed in such a way by combining "passive statements" and "diction by naming" the actor to stimulate the emotional nature of this event (see: Dlugan, 2012, pp. 1-3). In Critical Discourse Analysis (hereinafter CDA) or other linguistic discussions, the two things are generally termed as

"passivization" and "Lexicalization". As a result, it makes sense that FDR's speech is heavily constructed to stimulate the emotions of the American people and government.

To do this, the tone of the speech was made to direct people to the extreme seriousness of the situation at hand. When one hears someone speaking in a very serious tone, one will automatically pay attention and are more likely to care about what is being said. In such, FDR goes on to explain how the attacks were clearly premeditated and that there had been severe damage done to American forces and many lives had been lost. FDR further states that the attack serves to strike into the very hearts of the American people. As a result, the rhetorical speech was successful in making American people 'very angry' about the attacks and eager to retaliate.

## **REVIEW OF THE THEORIES: PASSIVIZATION AND LEXICALIZATION**

Passivization involves changing an active sentence into a passive sentence and vice versa. The object of the active sentence is changed to the subject of the corresponding passive sentence. In Crystal's view (2008, p. 353), it is the transformation of a sentence from its active into its passive form. A verb or sentence which undergoes such a process is said to passivize. The term 'passive' is a term used in the grammatical analysis of voice to refer to a sentence, a clause, or a verb

form where the grammatical subject (the word or phrase which controls the verb in the clause; which the verb agrees) is typically the recipient or ‘goal’ of the action denoted by the verb. It is in contrast with the term ‘active’ where the subject is the actor or the doer of the action (see also: Larson, 1984, pp. 199-203; Longacre, 1983, pp. 156-57).

The case of passive and passivization are not circling around the process or transformation of active sentences into passive. In fact, at least in Saeed’s view (2016, pp. 150-58), the terms active and passive voice allow for greater flexibility in sentence construction, as either the semantic agent or patient may take the syntactic role of subject. While in many views passive voice may also be used to avoid showing too specifically the ‘agent’ of an action, in Saeed’s view the use of passive voice allows speakers to organize stretches of discourse by placing figures other than the agent in subject position. This may be done to foreground the ‘patient’, ‘recipient’, or other thematic roles (Butler, 2012, pp. 480-90). In his discussion, Butler argues that the adoption of the notions of the terms ‘subject’ and ‘object’ as valid categories needed to demonstrate the need of syntactic functions to make explicit grammatical relations. For more language-specific and construction-specific

privileged syntactic argument, to see the role played by syntactic functions, however, he proposes the “Role and Reference Grammar” system in making stronger predictions about the relationships between syntax and semantics.

In some linguistic theories, thematic relations, also known as semantic roles, are the various roles that a noun phrase may play with respect to the action or state described by a governing verb, commonly the sentence’s main verb (Payne, 2007, pp. 1-3). For example, in the sentence “Susan ate an apple”, Susan is the doer of the eating, so she is an ‘agent’, the apple is the item that is eaten, so it is a ‘patient’. While most modern linguistic theories make reference to such relations in one form or another, the general term and the terms for specific relations varies like “participant role”, “semantic role”, and “deep case” have also been employed with similar sense.

In Semantic Roles, agent is defined as the semantic role of a person or thing who is the doer of an event (Longacre, 1983, pp. 156-157). In traditional grammar an agent is usually the grammatical subject of the verb in an active clause. It is crucial here to note that a prototypical agent is conscious, acts with volition (on purpose), and performs an action that has a physical, visible effect.

While the term patient is also very common in semantic roles, Longacre uses the term experiencer in his discussion. He

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defines the term experiencer as “the semantic role of an entity (or referent) which receives (accepts, experiences, or undergoes) the effect of an action (Longacre, 1983, p. 155). In his view, an agent or experiencer is normally an entity that receives a sensory impression, or in some other way is the locus of some event or activity that involves neither volition nor a change of state (see also: Payne, 1997, p. 50).

Instead of the term ‘predicate’ as in traditional grammar, in semantic roles the term ‘goal’ is more often used. Goal is defined as the place to which something moves or the thing toward which an action is directed (Fillmore, 1975, pp. 25-6; Larson, 1984, pp. 199-203; Longacre, 1983, pp. 163-4). An example of goal is the phrase ‘the raft’ in the sentence “Deena swam to the raft” or the word ‘me’ in the sentence “He threw the book at me”.

While based on the above views on passivization can be seen as a process to obtain more linguistic and semantic functions, lexicalization can also be seen as a process in gaining more than lexical functions of words or phrases. Quoting Cabrera’s view, Perez (2013, pp. 97-121), states that lexicalization implies a “historical” change where the process involves “a process creating lexical items out of syntactic units”. Thus, it is not simply a process of adoption or

incorporation of unchanged elements into the inventory that proceeds from syntax/grammar to the lexicon that results in a complex syntactically-determined word or phrase.

In Kempen and Huijbers’s view (1983, pp. 185-209), cognitive process of linguistic utterances involves lexicalization. That is, a process under which the mental lexicon is retrieved from the sentence being constructed (abstractly) by supplying a set of syntactic features. Such processes of lexical selection and sentence construction, in their view, must be sensitive to the intention (as well as the conceptualization) in the speaker’s mind. The process covers both the syntactic and the phonological forms from which the sound shape of the utterance can be computed.

Quoting van Dijk’s view Deygan (2016, pp. 40-6) states that lexicalization is the selection of strongly negative words to describe the ‘others’ or the ‘actions of the others’. Lexicalization in van Dijk’s view (1995, p. 154), can be seen as an ideological strategy in expressing positive ‘self’ or negative ‘others’ through the semantic features (also: van Dijk, 1998, pp. 126-128). In van Dijk’s model of two major strategies, it can be expressed by saying positive things about ‘Us’ and negative things about ‘Them’ (2000, p. 44). The positive ones are materialized through discursial moves like compassion, disclaimer, implication, national

self-glorification, polarization, presupposition, or vagueness, while negative ones are made for ‘others’ by selecting (strongly) negative words like *terrorism*, *destroy*, *extremism*, *jihadist*, et cetera to describe ‘Them’ or their actions (van Dijk, 1995, p. 154). In other words, to construct ‘hero’, a person or a group should be described in positive ideological statements, and to build ‘enemy’ a person or a group must be described in negative ideological statements. In doing so, one of the considerations is by passivization and lexicalization.

## Methodology

The text of the “Declaration of War against Japanese Empire” as the fourth “Top 100 Speeches” of the twentieth century (see: Eidenmuller, 2020, pp. 1-3) was selected as it was hypothesized that passivization and lexicalization were the two most important elements that made it the 4<sup>th</sup> best speech. Four passive sentences and some the words bearing ideological strategies for expressing positive ‘self’ or negative ‘others’ in terms of van Dijk’s (2000, p. 44) semantic features were selected for analysis. Possible reasons were also discussed based on the proposed theories to prove that the combination of such passive constructions and the lexical

choices offer stronger linguistic-semantically positive or negative senses so that the speech was capable of altering the American people’s minds from being reluctant into supporting the act of going to war against Japanese Empire to defend the country. For easy analysis and discussion, the terms statement, expression, and sentence are purposively used interchangeably and to make a clear distinction from the text, the data that are in words, phrases, sentences, or fragments are put in between quotation marks.

## Analysis and Discussion

After saluting the Vice President, the Speaker, the Members of the Senate, and the House of Representatives, FDR began his speech saying, (1) “Yesterday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan”. There are two points which give more gravity to this opening statement; the use of passive voice and the innate semantic features of the words “infamy”, “suddenly”, “deliberately”, and “empire”, and the use of the passive. The use of passive construction in the statement is not simply the process of converting active into passive entities. Instead, as Billig (2008, pp. 783-800) states, the underlying process is to ascribe actions to human agents (see also:

Saeed, 2016, pp. 150-58). Thus in the part of the first passivized statement, “the United States of America” is the party who is the recipient or the goal of the action denoted by the verb (being attacked) by the actor (the Empire of Japan) as the doer of the action (see: Butler, 2012, pp. 480-90; Larson, 1984, pp. 199-203; Longacre, 1983, pp. 156-57).

The word “infamy” is derived from the stem ‘fame’ which can be roughly translated as ‘gone bad’. In this particular case however, the term ‘fame’ means strong condemnation and public reproach caused by Japanese act (see: Rosenberg, 2019, pp. 1-3). While the word “suddenly” translates in synonymy with unexpectedly or without any prior notice, the word “deliberately” leaves no question that the attack was neither an error nor a misguided overreaction.

Differently, the use “Empire of Japan” instead of Japanese Country leaves a sense that Japan looks wicked and evil, like the devil. Besides, the term “empire” also tells American people that Japan is trying to acquire more land from other nations as well, and this will further show why America should go to war with these evil people. In some online dictionaries (Merriam Webster, Lexico.com, Collins, Oxford, to mention some), the word “empire” is defined an extensive group of states or countries ruled over by a single

monarch, an oligarchy, or a sovereign state as in the name ‘the Roman Empire’. As a ‘mass noun’ this word also means ‘supreme political power over several countries when exercised by a single authority’. More sensitively (also in some online dictionaries), this word is also defined ‘a major political unit having a territory of great extent or a number of territories or peoples under a single sovereign authority’, especially one having an emperor as chief of state (see also: Sullivan, 2020, pp. 1-3). Thus, the use of this particular term can be seen as a process of lexicalization—by making United States one of the Japanese territories—which is capable of stimulate American people’s irritation.

The next statement worth analysis reads, (2) “It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago”. In this construction, the use of passive in the statement is—as Saeed (2016, pp. 15058) argues—not just the result of transformation from its active form. Instead, it is capable of showing the syntactic role of the agent (or the doer) of the action (the attack). In other words, the syntactic function of the use of the passive in this statement can be seen, as Butler (2012, pp. 480-90) points out, to make more explicit the syntactic as well as semantic roles played by Japan in the event. In the part of the noun Japan instead of the phrase “Japanese Empire”, was used that seems intended to

make distinction between the two terms semantically. More clearly, Japan might be intended to mean geographical distance, while Japanese Empire can be intended—as in the previous passive usage—to be more ideological. The same distinction can also be felt from the use of the word “recorded” instead of noted where the verb is capable of leaving a sense that the agent (to use Michaelis’ term) dynamically of documenting (maybe by giving chronicle) and writing the event historically (see: Michaelis, 2011, pp. 1359-400). Further than that, the statement can be felt as more emotional with the use of the words: “obvious” (which lexically mean clear and apparent), “attacked” (which easily means violence), and the phrase “deliberately planned” which in Lipka’s view (1992, pp. 1-13) in terms of graphemic, phonological, and morphological processes can produce some certain semantic deviation.

Another statement that was made in passive is (3) “I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost”. The grammatical subject of this sentence—“very many American lives”—is the patient, the recipient or the goal of the action “lost” as denoted by the verb (see: Crystal, 2008, p. 353; Larson, 1984, pp. 199-203; Longacre, 1983, pp. 156-57). Using such thematic roles of “very many American lives” as the subject as well as

the patient, recipient, goal, or the victim of the event of being “lost” FDR seemed to report to American people that “American lives” are more important than the other things in his speech (see: Butler, 2012, pp. 480-90). Putting patient of the action in such construction is also capable of echoing that Japanese Empire is the agent of the event while the United States is the victim of the action (see also: Lipka, 1976, pp. 118-141; Payne, 2007, pp. 1-3).

Meantime, the use of the word “regret” (the feeling of being guilty) in the first half of the sentence, can stimulate stronger emotion from the listener of the speech (in Grierson [2017, pp. 1-3], this word is described a mental distress. The meaning ranges from mere disappointment to painful sense of dissatisfaction or self-reproach, as over something lost or done). Besides, the addition of the word “very” before “many” is capable of producing a sense that number of the “lives” that “have been lost” is in a big number. Further than that, the use of the word “lost” instead of killed, might leave an impression that other than being killed in the event some of the Americans are nowhere to be found or gone astray.

The last statement that is passivized in FDR in the declaration is, (4) “In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu”. As the statement can be felt, the use of the passive voice in this



statement might be more than just victimizing the “American ships” in the event of the torpedoing. It can also be seen that—although the agent is left out—the doer of the action (Larson, 1984, pp. 199-203; Longacre, 1983, pp. 156-57; Payne, 1997, p. 50) is still too obvious. Besides, as Longacre states, it is also clear that the doer of the action—as being capable of doing the torpedoing—the can be felt as prototypically conscious, acting with volition (intentionally planned), and performing the action with physical and visible effect.

By putting the phrase “in addition” at the beginning of the sentence FDR leaves a negative sense that there are other actions taken by Japanese Empire in attacking the United States than just merely “torpedoing” the American ships. More seriously, the use of the phrase “high” seas is capable of stimulating even further negative sense; the torpedoing was made by Japan not only in one place (as the distance between Japan and Honolulu is about eight to nine hour flight). This phrase is related to maritime law which means every part of the bulk of the saltwater surrounding the globe but that every part is not the territory of a state (Editors, 2020, pp. 1-3). The use of this term, therefore, can stimulate the sense that there are many American ships that have been torpedoed by the Japanese

empire in the open sea.

On top of those four passivized statements, in the speech, FDR mentioned that the Japanese government attacked Malaya, Japanese forces attacked five other places including, Hong Kong, Guam, the Philippine Islands, Wake Island, and Midway Island. In mentioning what Japanese attacked, however, FDR did not make it in within one sentence. Instead, FDR mentioned them each state in separate sentences. While in stating about Malaya he used the phrase “launched an attack”, in stating about the other places he used “Japanese forces attack” or “Japanese attack”. These were the lexicalizations that FDR use to deliver the Congress and the American people. This seemed to leave an impression that (7) seven different attacks within 24 (twenty four) hour time period is too much to be purely a coincidence of the Japanese military actions. Instead, these details proved that these acts were well-coordinated, premeditated attack. It seemed that FDR used this number of coordinated attacks as the reason to strike back now as otherwise possible risk of being attacked again. Especially in a world where image is of supreme importance, if the United States would not strike back, the United States would have be seen as weak and impotent, and possibly leading to invasions by other countries. In short, by mentioning the details of the attacks FDR seemed to want to pull more attention to build an image that



Japan is the real enemy while America is a real hero who is responsible to defend—not only his own country but—all those countries he mentioned in the speech. As a result his message is heard loud and clear, and was successful in making the speech more emotional instead of a logical one. Some even viewed that Japan just woke ‘A Sleeping Giant’.

While building hero can made through lexicalization; by way of—as van Dijk (2000, p. 44) suggests—constructing linguistic utterances cognitively by supplying a set of syntactic features, the common sense of being hero can be reiterated by intensifying the use of negative words about ‘others’. The word deceive for example, in the speech was constructed in a long phrase to read “deliberately sought to deceive” which more or less vulgarly in the same meaning as ‘intentionally wanted to betray’. The phrase became much more offensive when it is put side by side with another longer and more irritating phrase “false statements and expressions of hope”. Ultimately, such negative perceptions were made stronger—as Kempen and Huijbers (1983, pp. 185-209) suggest—by constructing the phrases into “--- the Japanese government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace”. As a result, this

statement can be seen as very effective—to use van Dijk’s theory—to describe the ‘others’ or the ‘actions of others’ negatively (see: Deygan, 2016, pp. 40-6; van Dijk, 1995, p. 154). In terms of rhetorical speech (particularly in this historical speech), this strategy can be viewed as echoing the animosity about the Japanese Empire. As an effect, Japan looked as more antagonistic and the United States looked more heroic.

A similar reiteration in this way was made in the speech by lexicalizing the word “offensive”. In the speech, this word was put in a much longer phrase; initiated with “surprise” as an adjective by followed with “extending throughout the Pacific area”, making the phrase to read “surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area”. This phrase alone is capable of leaving a sense that the attack was not only surprising but also outspreading all the way through the Pacific area (which is the deepest and the largest in the planet). Then, this long phrase was then further (to use van Dijk’s term) ‘materialized through discoursal moves’ in the statement “Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area”. In this construction, the use of the word “undertaken”, instead of its dictionary form ‘started’ or ‘commenced’ seemed to be intentional. More precisely, it means that the attack was still at the beginning and not at its peak yet. On the whole, therefore, this particular statement is very strong to build

Japanese Empire's actions as being the real enemy and very powerful to stir the emotion of the American people.

Once the ideological views have been built—that Japan is the real enemy and United States is the awaken sleeping giant—the views in the speech were still further assured using the words “might” and “victory”. The word might which more or less means power, strength, or capacity is initiated with “righteous” which means moral, upright, or honorable, resulted in upright power. This phrase is then put in a sentence side by side with the phrase “absolute victory” which means the victory is complete or unconditional. The combination of the two phrases makes the statement reads, “---, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory”. This statement can be seen as to assure that the United States and the people are strong ‘heroes’ who are ready to go to war to battle the ‘enemy’, Japanese Empire.

In the final part of the speech, FDR also used the word “triumph” initiated with an adjective “inevitable”. The lexicalization is then put into an ideological statement to express (using van Dijk's idea [1995, p. 154]) positive ‘self’ in a sentence “---, we will gain the inevitable triumph”. It is important to note that in the speech FDR uses the words “victory” and “triumph” in different statements. At a glance the two

words sound similar. A deeper look into the spirituality, however, will explain the difference between the two words. Victory is an instance of having won a competition or battle while triumph is a conclusive success following an effort, conflict, or confrontation of obstacles; victory; conquest. Triumph is usually evident in the forms of jumping, dancing, or yelling to show the feeling of happiness. In some other sources, victory is (rare) to achieve a while triumph is to prevail over rivals, challenges, or difficulties (see: Chavda, 2007, pp. 79-82). Thus, in a sense, it can spiritually be predicted that using the word “victory” in the former statement, FDR meant to say that the “victory” gained from the war against Japanese Empire should come first place, before American people could finally live triumphantly ever after. As such, the two statements are very effective in building hero in the American spirit.

## CONCLUSION

Applying the method of CDA and using the theories of lexicalization, the present study has made a thorough analysis of “Pearl Harbor Address to the Nation” (also known as the “Declaration of War against Japanese Empire”). It is noted that the 4 (four) passivized statements and the lexicalization of some selected words under discussion were very successful in winning the assent of the Congress and the American people. That is to say that the statements

enabled FDR take advantage of Congress and the American people in a good way at—according to some sources—a very emotional situation time.

Based on the result of the analysis and discussion, this present study proves that both passivization and lexicalization have been proven effective in producing ideological statements in rhetorical speech. It means that reconstructing some sentences that are in active voices into passive voices tactfully and combine them with selected words that are constructed strategically in thoughtful arrangements, then use them in thoughtful statements, are effective in influencing the audience. In other words, both linguistic processes in combination are very effective in investing the ideologies into the audience. In this study, it is found that linguistic aspects are very dominant in rhetorical speech, particularly in the “Declaration of War against Japanese Empire”. That is not to say that linguistic aspects are the only factors that make a rhetorical speech effective. Other aspects, such as political, social, and economy might play their own factors. It is proposed, therefore, that further study on the same object by applying different methods and theories should be carried out.

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