

# A Comprehension Treatise on Epideictic Expressions Used in the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Speeches: A Case Study

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**Abstract**—The current study attempted to examine epideictic phraseology in King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz's Speeches. In particular, the study aimed to identify this kind of expressions involved in the King's speeches, the types of rituals and occasions that involve more or less these expressions and the role they play in strengthening the national unity of the Saudi people. In order to achieve these goals, the researcher used quantitative and qualitative methods that classify and analyze the epideictic phraseology. A sample of (15) speeches delivered by the King over the last six months was used. The selected sample of speeches was mainly downloaded from the websites of the concerned governmental bodies. In order to classify and describe the epideictic expressions, the researcher used a content analysis checklist categorizing these epideictic expressions. The findings of the study revealed that there is a variety of epideictic expressions in King Abdullah Bin Abdul Al-Aziz's speeches. The King used different types of epideictic expressions in different occasions in order to convey a certain message to the audience. Based on the research findings, the researcher drew some conclusions.

**Index Terms**—epideictic, speech, discourse analysis, qualitative, quantitative data

## I. INTRODUCTION

Discourse analysis considers how language, both spoken and written, work culturally and socially. It basically aims at analyzing the spoken and written texts in order to point out the meanings underlying those texts. "Discourse analysis sheds light on how speakers indicate their semantic intentions and how hearers interpret what they hear" (Johnstone, 2002, p.5). Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) say that discourse analysis is the analysis of different patterns and utterances of language used or followed by people when they get involved in various ways of social life like political discourse.

Obviously, the way language is distributed in discourse is more than merely formal. It is part of the meaning of utterances in so far as it influences the meaning-potential that can be created and exchanged. Distribution, organization, metamorphosis, functions of institutions and forms of language use in certain discourses are all the features of this level of discourse.

In recent times, there has been a strong rise of cultural and religious aspirations in political discourse around 'values', 'recognition' and 'identity'. We need to analyze a presidential speech in order to understand the principles held by the president and the historical context in which the speech was made.

The analysis of leaders and presidents speeches become important not only at the local level or for a specific community, but at the international level also because of the effects of dynamic international events on different countries and societies. The language of politicians is coded carefully in order to influence their audiences about the validity and relevance of their own messages and themes. Their speeches are very important to be analyzed since these speeches play important role in strengthening ties between the leader and the citizens, in addition to clarifying the country's attitude towards the whole international community.

This study framed with the idea that King Abdullah has a skillful use of epideictic phrases and they are closely associated with his overall political goals of holding up the Saudi values as a leading country in the Islamic and the Arab world. In addition, this study aims to demonstrate what can be understood behind these expressions and what does he want from the audience to know and believe.

### A. Statement of the Problem

The analysis of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques speeches is gaining a great importance because of its political and religious position as a leading country in the Islamic and the Arab world as well as to its position in the international community, without forgetting the role it plays as one of the most influential countries in the world economies. For these reasons, it becomes necessary for researchers to analyze the content of the king's speeches.

Epideictic discourse is to reconnect audience with values, history and hopes that tie people together into a fellowship of humanity. Without epideictic rhetoric, a community inevitably becomes alienated from itself and falls into factionalism and reutilization. In this sense, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Al-Aziz's speeches entail a lot of epideictic

expressions, as they are mindful to the spirit and the ideals that give the Saudi community its soul and heart. Thus, the King's speeches connect the Saudi community to its origins, its essence, its hopes, its aspirations, its loyalties and its ethics.

### *B. Purpose of the Study*

This study aims mainly at investigating the King's epideictic expressions. The researcher will go through selected speeches performed by the King within the last two years, whether written or spoken, to find out the different categories of epideictic phrases and to discuss their influence on the relationship between the King and his citizens. The study emphasizes the role of the political speech on the national unity. In addition, it reflects the King's attitude towards the Saudi people and the general attitude towards the whole world as a leader of an influential country in the international arena.

### *C. Research Questions*

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- To what extent do King Abdullah Bin Abdul Al-Aziz's speeches include epideictic discourse that enhances rhetorical skills?
- 2- On what type of rituals and occasions are there more or less epideictic phrases in the King's speeches?
- 3- How do these kinds of epideictic expressions strengthen the national unity in the country?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *A. Discourse Analysis*

According to Stubbs (1983), discourse analysis refers mainly to "the linguistic analysis of naturally occurring connected speech or written discourse" (p.25). Roughly speaking, it refers to attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts. It follows that discourse analysis is also concerned with language use in social contexts, and in particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers. This is exactly how the idea of epideictic phrases is performed by presidents and leaders. In other words, their epideictic expressions are used metaphorically in order to touch the audience feelings.

### *B. Political Discourse*

Political discourse is considered as one of the disciplines that attract a lot of researchers in the twentieth century. A lot of theories have been developed within this area. Many researchers and linguists paid a great attention for political speech analysis. They are motivated by some factors such as attempting to understand the speakers characters and find out what is deeply inside them (Arendt, 1958). It was also to present their results and findings to the audience who also paid a great attention to know more about them. This kind of analysis has a great acceptance in publishers, newspapers and journals since. Such studies are recognized as a good material for marketing. In addition, the political discourse analysis gains a great importance because recently politics became a subject of interest for the whole society in general. This analysis is basically a linguistic matter, but it is also connected in some ways to other disciplines such as philosophy, psychology and sociology.

### *C. Epideictic Rhetoric*

According to Aristotle, one of the three major branches of rhetoric: speech or writing that praises or blames (Gross & Kemmann, 2005). Known also as ceremonial discourse, epideictic rhetoric includes "funeral orations, obituaries, graduation and retirement speeches, letters of recommendation, and nominating speeches at political conventions" (Lausberg, 1998, p.18). Interpreted more broadly, epideictic rhetoric may also include works of literature.

According to Aristotle's conception of epideixis, "the present is the most important; for all speakers praise or blame in regard to existing qualities, but they often make use of other things, both reminding [the audience] of the past and projecting the course of the future" (Kimball, 1986, p. 22).

### *D. Purpose of Epideictic Rhetoric*

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) report that the purpose of an epideictic speech is to increase the intensity of adherence to values held in common by the audience and the speaker. The speaker engaged in epideictic discourse is very close to being an educator. Any society praising its own values is therefore bound to promote opportunities for epideictic speeches to be delivered at regular intervals: ceremonies commemorating past events of national concern, religious services, and eulogies of the dead and similar manifestations fostering a communion of minds.

### *E. Types of Epideictic Rhetoric*

According to Aristotle there are three types of epideictic rhetoric, which are deliberative, forensics and epideictic rhetoric. The term epideictic comes from the Greek word epideixis which means "appropriate discourse within pedagogical or ritual texts" (Sheard, 1996, p. 65). Epideictic rhetoric is also called ceremonial discourse. The aim of

epideictic rhetoric is to praise or to blame. Some examples of epideictic rhetoric are obituaries, funeral speeches, celebrating independence anniversaries and nominating speeches at political conventions (McCormack, 2002).

#### F. Empirical Research

Many studies and articles have been proposed to highlight the importance of political discourse analysis. Although the literature covers a wide point of view presented by linguists, discourse analysis also covers a wide variety of theories related to epideictic phraseology.

Owen (1998) analyzed the epideictic rhetoric of President William Jefferson Clinton's Inaugural. The researcher concluded that President Clinton's Inaugural Address: (a) unified the audience and reconstituted its members as the people; (b) rehearsed shared and traditional communal values drawn from a venerated past. The Address was delivered on a ceremonial occasion; the rhetoric employed expressed the artifices of praise and blame the speaker focused on the present, yet incorporated the past and the future. Therefore, the President urged contemplation, not action.

Huda (2011) identified the conceptual metaphors that have been used by President Obama and King Abdullah of Jordan and their entailments to explore the morality models that prevail in their speeches. She found that conceptual metaphors of motion, relation, essence, war, and strength prevail in both languages. This kind of study emphasizes the role of epideictic expressions used by leaders and presidents and how presidents employ metaphorical language in their speeches.

Ortega (2013) in a study entitled "President Barack Obama and the *Commencement* of a New Perspective on Epideictic Speeches. He found out that the President used strategies that would allow him to be the embodiment of the ideologies most closely related to the audience. By doing so, President Obama was able to create a sense of identification with his audience that invited them to subscribe to his perspective on the issues explored in his speeches. According to these findings, this thesis proposes to refine the functions of presidential ceremonial rhetoric to a unique function.

In the Saudi context, few studies tackle the King's speeches. They stated that the custodian of the two holy mosques uses frequent phrases that reflect his character and they emphasized that this character must be taken as an example and we must extend our researches about it.

Based on the abovementioned literature, it can be noticed that the speeches, especially the epideictic speeches, of Arab leaders were rarely investigated while the epideictic speeches of European and American leaders were extensively examined. The researcher noticed that the epideictic speeches of the custodian of the two holy mosques are not investigated until now. So, this research attempts to fill an academic gap by examining the use of these epideictic phrases in the King's speeches.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design

The current research uses quantitative and qualitative methods that classify and analyze the epideictic phraseology in King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz's speeches. The research design constructed, in this study, is based on the questions formulated. These questions were raised from the researcher's observation and from the literature.

#### B. Description of Samples

This research comprised a sample of (15) speeches made by King Abdullah Bin Abdul Al-Aziz. These speeches were delivered by the King at different national and international occasions. In addition, there were varying purposes beyond the delivery of such speeches. This variety was considered while selecting the sample of speeches in order to get a more comprehensive insight on the epideictic expressions used by the King and how these expressions relate to the occasions.

The selected sample of speeches was mainly downloaded from the websites of the concerned governmental bodies such as the website of the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the website of the King Abdul Aziz Centre for National Dialogue, and other official websites.

#### C. Instrumentation

In order to classify and describe the epideictic expressions used in the sample of speeches, this research used a content analysis checklist categorizing these expressions involved in the King's speeches. This checklist was compiled by the researcher based on the literature of epideictic rhetoric. Meanwhile this study used rhetorical strategies and linguistic strategies as textual analytic tools, probing implied meanings in order to identify discursive epideictic tools that appeared in the King's speeches.

Speeches were categorized according to the type of rituals or occasions. Content analysis is conducted to find out the different epideictic elements used in each type of occasion or ritual. The significance of epideictic phraseology is discussed in the sense how such rhetorical elements contribute to bringing connection and ties to the Saudi community and how they foster the bonds between the leadership and the people. In addition, the researcher examined, to what extent, the use of epideictic terms can connect the Saudi community to its origins, its hopes and its ethics.

#### D. Data Analysis

In order to collect sufficient data for the study, samples of the King's speeches were taken from various sources from the internet, in English. The tools for collecting data, in this study, were survey and observation. The data was firstly investigated and done with selecting and collecting sentences or phrases containing epideictic terms.

*E. Procedures of Applying the Materials and Instruments*

The procedure for the study was as follows:

1. Collecting and classifying data: Reading and collecting speeches made by the King as many as possible from sources that have been mentioned.
2. Sorting out the data: Taking notes and classifying the data of epideictic categories (hospitality, future concerns, unity, the positive feelings towards Arab people, taking responsibility, seeking more cooperation etc.).
3. Analyzing data: Pointing out the epideictic expression and its intended meaning as well as the occasion in which the speech is delivered.
4. The main data analysis techniques, used in this research, are frequency count and percentage.

IV. RESULTS

In order to answer these questions, the researcher collected the data from the sources mentioned in the abovementioned part. The researcher categorized the epideictic phrases involved in the King's speeches into different categories and sorted them out according to the occasions in which such speeches are delivered. The goal here is to identify what are the epideictic phrases and what are the occasions in which such phrases are delivered. Table 1 presents the research results according to the abovementioned categorization.

TABLE 1.  
EPIDEICTIC PHRASES INVOLVED IN KING ABDULLAH BIN ABDUL AL-AZIZ'S SPEECHES

Category of epideictic expressions	The epideictic expression	Intended meaning	The expression in Arabic	The expression in English	Occasion
The King hospitality	You are welcome in your second home	You are so welcomed	أرحب بكم في بلدكم الثاني	I welcome you in KSA	Speech in Al-Janadriyah Festival
Future concerns	the future of the nation	Take precautions against future threats	ما يشكل تهديدا على مستقبل الأمة	violations pose a threat to the future of the nation	King's speech on human rights
The Islamic world unity	The heart of one man	we are one nation as long as we are united	ما دمنا على قلب رجل واحد	as far as we are united	The annual reception for heads of Islamic countries, Hajj missions
The importance of Makkah	prophetic land, cradle of revelation	The start of Islam	ارض الرسالة ومهبط الوحي	This land was the start of Islam and revelation of the Quran	The annual reception for heads of Islamic countries, Hajj missions
Emphasizing the soldiers' role	The voice of their sacrifices	We still realize their sacrifices	لا زال صوت تضحياتهم	We have seen and continue to see the results of their sacrifices	Speech to the commanders of military sectors in Hajj 1434
Emphasizing the soldiers' sacrifices	martyrs of duty	Soldiers who died in duty	شهداء الواجب	Soldiers who scarifies their lives	to the commanders of military in Hajj 1434
Serving Muslims around the world		It's an honor to serve Muslims who came for Hajj	شرفها الله بخدمة حجاج بيت الله الحرام	Serving the pilgrims	Speech to the commanders of military Sectors in Hajj 1434
The Palestinian occupation	The violation of Palestinian rights	We are against any violation against Palestinians	والانتهاكات المستمرة لأبسط الحقوق الإنسانية والسياسية لشعب فلسطين	The violation by Israel against the Palestinians	Speech to the commanders of military Sectors in Hajj 1434
Positive feelings toward Arab people	Qatari people	He call them brothers because we consider them brothers	الإخوة الأشقاء في قطر	Our brothers in Qatar	Arab Summit in Doha
Taking responsibility	Let us deal with our unstable situation	Let's have solutions for the challenges we face	التعامل مع واقعا المضطرب	Dealing with unstable situation in the Arab world	Arab Summit in Doha
Taking action in crises	The situation can't be justified	You can't justify what's happening in Syria	الحدث أكبر من أن تبرره الأسباب	The situation in Syria can't be acceptable for any reason	Speech on Saudi television regarding Syria
Standing and supporting Arab world			المملكة تقف تجاه مسؤوليتها التاريخية نحو أشقائها		Speech on Saudi television regarding Syria
Seeking more cooperation	Take a step toward unity	He suggests the GCC countries become a union	أن نتجاوز مرحلة التعاون إلى مرحلة الاتحاد	Let's move from a cooperation to form GCC union	A speech in the 32 GCC Summit

Nationalistic attitude of the King	Saudi people don't accept anything other than moderation	The Saudi community is a moderate and avoid extremism in religion	الوسطية المعتدلة	Moderate community	Speech on Eid Al-Fitr
Against terrorism	Aberrant Ideologies that must be fought because it's the most dangerous thing we could face	Aberrant ideologies that affect on people thoughts and mentalities	الفكر المنحرف	Aberrant ideologies	Speech on Eid Al-Fitr
Praising the Saudi people	You were the main support for me	What the country reaches is because of your support	وكنتم عوناً لي بعد الله	You have supported me	Speech on the national budget for 2012
Stressing strong bond between the leader and Saudi community	brothers and sisters	He considers himself and all citizens as one family	إخواني، أيها الإخوة والأخوات	Dear brothers and sisters	Speech on Holy Month of Ramadan
Faithfulness and gratitude to Allah	after we put our trust in Allah	He believes that we can't rely on only ourselves	بعد التوكل على الله	put our full trust in Allah	Speech on Shoura's fourth year for the fourth session
Praising the prophet Mohamed Peace be upon him	Through the instructor of all mankind	He shows the role of the prophet in teaching people	مُعلم البشرية	instructor of all mankind	Speech on Eid Al-Fitr
Women in Saudi Arabia	The woman is my mother , sister , wife and daughter	He emphasizes the truth that women can't be neglected in any way	المرأة هي أختي وأمي وزوجتي وبنتي	The woman is my mother , sister , wife and daughter	Interview with BBC
The importance of Saudi Arabia in the Islamic world	Muslims love this country	He shows that all Muslims love this country because of the two holy mosques	تهوي إليه قلوب المسلمين	Muslims love this country because of the two holy mosques	Speech on Eid Al-Fitr

From the abovementioned table, it can be said that there is a variety of epideictic expressions in King Abdullah Bin Abdul Al-Aziz's speeches. The King used different types of expressions in different occasions in order to convey a certain message to the audience. There are (21) epideictic forms that can be distinguished in the King's speeches. These forms are categorized as per the purpose they are intended to convey.

TABLE 2.  
OCCASIONS OF EPIDEICTIC PHRASES

S	Occasion	Frequency	Percentage
1	Hajj missions	6	28.5%
2	Eid Al-Fitr	4	19%
3	Arab summits	3	14%
4	National budget	1	4.7%
5	Interviews	2	9.5%
6	Shoura sessions	2	9.5%
7	Ramadan	1	4.7%
8	Festivals	1	4.7%
9	Human rights	1	4.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

From table 2, it can be deduced that the epideictic phrases in the King's speeches are categorized in nine different occasions. Among the (21) epideictic expressions, (28.5%) of these expressions were delivered in Hajj missions, (19%) were used in Eid Al-Fitr occasion, (14%) were employed in Arab summits, (4.7%) were set up in the occasion of national budget, (9.5%) were involved in interviews, (9.5%) were utilized in Shoura sessions, (4.7%) were exploited in Ramadan, (4.7%) were invested in festivals, and (4.7%) were carried out in human rights occasions.

TABLE 3.  
CATEGORIES OF EPIDEICTIC PHRASES

S	Occasion	Frequency	Percentage
1	Hospitality	1	4.7%
2	Future concerns	1	4.7%
3	Islamic unity	4	19%
4	Supporting Arabs	3	14%
5	Responsibility	2	9.5%
6	Nationalistic attitude	3	14%
7	Terrorism & occupation	2	9.5%
8	Praising	2	9.5%
9	National bonds	3	14%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

From table 3, it can be mentioned that the epideictic phrases in the Kings' speeches are compiled in nine different groups. Among the (21) epideictic expressions, (4.7%) of the expressions were used to express hospitality of the King, (4.7%) of the expressions were introduced to express future concerns, (19%) of the expressions described the Islamic unity, (14%) of the expressions referred to the support for Arabs, (9.5%) of the expressions revealed the responsibility, (14%) of the expressions expressed the King's nationalistic attitude, (9.5%) of the expressions pointed out the refusal of terrorism and occupation, (9.5%) of the expressions involved praising, and (14%) of the expressions stressed national bonds.

Firstly, the King uses an epideictic expression of hospitality in order to welcome the guests in Al-Janadriyah festival. He is welcoming the visitors of the festival in their second home by saying "you are welcome in your second home". Also, the King employs another variety of epideictic expressions that denotes the future concerns in his speech on human rights. By the same token, he puts into words his future concerns over the future of the nation by saying "violations pose a threat to the future of the nation".

Secondly and thanks to the use of the epideictic phrase, the King stressed the Islamic world unity at the annual reception for heads of Islamic countries, Hajj Missions. He also used expressions of unity by saying "the heart of one man". In a similar speech, he uttered the importance of Makah by saying "prophetic land, cradle of revelation".

In other occasions of different nature, the King emphasized the soldiers' role in his speech to the commanders of military sectors in Hajj 1434 by saying "the voice of their sacrifices". In a similar occasion, he confirmed the soldiers' sacrifices by calling them "the martyrs of duty".

In his speech on Hajj season, the King resorted to the use of a typical epideictic form to denote serving Muslims around the world by saying "serving the pilgrims". On the same occasion, he included another epideictic phrase to point out the Palestinian occupation and refuse the occupation by saying "the violation of Palestinian rights".

Furthermore, the King expressed positive feelings toward Arab people in the Arab summit in Doha. He employed a specific expression "our brothers in Qatar" to convey the feelings of brotherhood towards the Qatari people. On the same occasion, he expressed taking responsibility during the Arab summit in Doha by saying "let us deal with our unstable situation".

On the other hand, the King in his speech on Saudi television about Syria has opted for another type of epideictic expressions to convey the message of taking action in crises by saying "the situation can't be justified". In the same way, the King expressed discursively the way of standing and supporting the Arab world by saying "the kingdom bears its historical responsibility towards its brothers". In the occasion of the thirty two GCC summit, the King adopted an epideictic speech for seeking more cooperation by using the expression "take a step toward unity".

In his speech on Eid Al-Fitr, the King resorted to the use of an epideictic phrase praising the prophet Mohammad (PBUH) by saying "through the instructor of all mankind". In the same occasion, he alluded to the importance of Saudi Arabia in the Islamic world by saying "Muslims love this country". Finally, in an interview with the BBC, the King emphasized epideictically the status of the Saudi woman in the kingdom by saying "the woman is my mother, sister, wife, and daughter".

## V. DISCUSSION

The King's usage of epideictic phrases to imply national values and accountabilities agrees with many scholars who reported that epideictic rhetoric is used in order to emphasize the shared values and principles (e.g. Condit, 1985; Hauser, 1999, and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969). Furthermore, the King has exceeded the traditional functions of epideictic rhetoric by extending its function to encompass the functions of expressing hospitality, future concerns, stressing unity, emphasizing the soldiers role and sacrifice, refusing occupation, showing positive feelings towards Arab people, supporting the Arab world, seeking more cooperation, expressing national attitude, refusing terrorism, stressing strong bonds between Saudi people and the leader and showing the importance of Saudi Arabia in the Islamic world.

On the other hand, the epideictic phrases were used less in occasions such as Al-Janadriyah festival, human rights occasion, national budget occasion, and Shoura council sessions. This difference in using epideictic phrases is attributed to the nature of the occasions themselves. The national and religious occasions, especially regular occasions, need more assertions of support, praise, calls for cooperation, calls for unity, etc. This matches with what Condit (1985) reported that the epideictic speech expresses and recreates identity by expressing and restructuring the symbolic repertoire around special events, places, persons, or times. She explained that the content of epideictic speeches tend to be relatively non-controversial and to focus on universal values.

The King made a strategic use of language in associating words with negative connotation with the path of terrorism and occupation, while associating words with positive connotation, or typically well accepted, with the path of unity and cooperation. This use of epideictic expressions allows orators to address their ideas to the community. For that reason, the formality of epideictic speeches requires speakers to discard their typical robes and to wear, literally, a different kind of gown.

Furthermore, the epideictic expressions used in the King's speeches play a significant role in strengthening the bonds between the Saudi community and the Saudi leadership. Also, such speeches call for cooperation, unity, and support between the Saudi people and the Arab nation in the general sense.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Epideictic expressions are used to perform many functions beyond praise and blame. Epideictic expressions are used to stress unity, cooperation, refusal of terrorism and occupation, expressing gratitude etc.
2. Epideictic expressions are used in different occasions whether religious, national, and political occasions. They serve different functions as per the intent behind the occasion.
3. Epideictic expressions have a role in strengthening the national identity and enhancing the bonds of unity and brotherhood. Also, epideictic devices are vital in promoting the shared values and responsibility.
4. Achieving absolute consensus is, of course, never possible while the goal of achieving some sense of collective understanding is assumed in most definitions of epideixis. Therefore, epideictic expression potentially works both to reinforce and to transform the community through creating a shared vision, even as it acknowledges the difference that ultimately creates the potential and the need for change.

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