



Unveiling Persuasive Strategies: Analyzing Meghan Markle's Advocacy Speeches

Usama Hassan¹, Sajda Jabeen², Hashim Khan^{*3}

¹Elementary School Teacher, Federal Directorate of Education, Islamabad, Pakistan.

²Lecturer, Department of English, School of Science and Technology, Foundation University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

^{3*}Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Bahria University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Corresponding author: hashim.buic@bahria.edu.pk

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This research looks at Meghan Markle's advocacy speeches for women's rights through the lens of Richard Perloff's (2017) "Dynamics of Persuasion" theory. The study aims to highlight the components of persuasive messaging found in Meghan Markle's advocacy speeches given at the Girl Up Leadership Summit, the University of South Pacific, the United Nations, One Young World Summit, and the 125th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand. The transcripts of these speeches are retrieved from online sources and analyzed considering Perloff's five persuasive components: Message Structure, Message Content, Framing, Language, and Emotional Appeals. Descriptive Qualitative methodology is used for the in-depth exploration of persuasive strategies employed in her selected speeches. The findings include different persuasive strategies used by Markle in her selected speeches to build credibility and motivate young women around the world to create incredible futures for themselves and others.



1. Introduction

Meghan Markle is widely known as the American actress and the wife of British Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex. After marrying Prince Harry, she has become a prominent and controversial figure on social media. Her marriage is viewed as the symbol of openness, modernity, and change towards egalitarianism. People perceived this royal wedding as a sign of the triumph of love over discrimination and she became the hope of an egalitarian world (Rodriguez, 2018).

In the activism world, she has made her name in the number of humanitarian projects. She has been granted the title of Advocate for UN women, global ambassador of world vision, and counselor for One Young World (Clancy & Yelin, 2018). Her advocacy speeches are noticeable because of her status as a former member of Britain's Royal Family. Due to her royal status, her vocal stance on women's empowerment resonates strongly within feminist discourse (Weidhase, 2022). The royal status has given her an unprecedented platform to address a vast audience.

The combination of Meghan Markle's multifaceted ancestry and identity with the customs of the royal family captured global attention, ushering in a new era of inclusiveness and tolerance (Rodriguez, 2018). Meghan Markle's admission as the Duchess of Sussex was heralded as a historic event since it defied long-standing traditions and was the first time that the royal family had welcomed a member of mixed race (Hirsch, 2018). In addition to marking a break from the past, this historic union also represented a positive move towards greater equality (Gibbs, 2017). Before Markle and Harry started their royal duties, they kept breaking conventions and inspiring millions of people with their dedication to compassion and advancement by utilizing their position to speak up for causes that were important to them (Boone, 2017). Their union therefore serves as both a celebration of the transforming power of love, and a driving force for improvement inside the esteemed institution of the British monarchy (Scarlett, 2024).

As a woman's advocate, she delivered a significant speech at the United Nations in 2015, in which she declared herself to be a feminist (Mahfouz, 2018). Markle's discourse shows her great rhetorical commitment to feminist principles (Gibbs, 2017). The analysis of her rhetorical strategies in her speeches hopes to contribute to the noticeable efforts of other NGOs' leaders, advocating women's rights.

2. Literature Review

Ghasemi (2021) has established a body of work on persuasion by exploring Hassan Rouhani's and Barack Obama's speeches through qualitative content analysis. The researcher drew upon online databases and analyzed them through the lens of Aristotle's three modes of persuasion: ethos, logos, and pathos. The researcher concludes that pathos and logos are often employed as persuasive techniques in presidential addresses, whereas ethos is less frequently used. Obama acknowledged his opponents without criticizing them, displaying the traits of a great leader and displaying dignity in triumph. Conversely, Rouhani stayed away from discussing his rivals and concentrated on the current state of affairs. However, a significant void lies in the investigation of

powerful and powerless ways of communication, narratives, etc., and paving the way for additional research on persuasive strategies employed by the speakers.

Nurkhamidah (2021) has made significant contributions in the sphere of persuasion by examining how President Joe Biden employed persuasion strategies during his inauguration speech, using Aristotle's rhetorical philosophy. Through descriptive qualitative technique, the researcher reveals that Joe Biden used Aristotle's three persuasive appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos: within logos, Joe Biden used enthymeme and examples to persuade the audience while in terms of ethos, he demonstrated intelligence, virtuous character, and benevolence. His use of pathos includes emotions such as rage, tranquility, friendliness, fear, confidence, and adoration. Importantly, he avoided using terms like "hatred" and "envy" in his speech. The researcher comments on his findings that government leaders persuade the people in their inaugural speeches to gain public support for their programs and policies. A substantial research absence is evident in the exploration of framing of messages and the use of narratives, this paved the way for additional research on persuasion and the present research will fill this gap.

Puong and Yen (2023) analyzed 19 speeches by Donald Trump through the lens of weaponized communication and bonding-bridging rhetoric according to the frameworks of Levitsky (2018) and Schwartzman, (2021). The data used were the transcripts of his speeches collected from the White House and Trump's campaigns. Through the content analysis of these speeches, the results reveal that Trump uses weaponized communication which refers to tactical deployment of knowledge to shape public opinion while destabilizing opponents for personal gain. This research landscape lacks a comprehensive understanding of the content, structure and framing of the communicative message, highlighting the need for dedicated investigation.

Amairah (2023) conducted a rhetorical analysis of 14 of King Abdullah II's English speeches during the crisis of COVID-19, taken from the official website of King Abdullah II. The researcher uses both qualitative and quantitative analysis for these speeches. AntConc software is used to explore the frequency of some lexical items used by King Abdullah II in his speeches. The rhetorical analysis is based on Aristotle's concept of persuasion; logos, ethos and pathos. The study reveals that by using ethical appeals, King Abdullah II identifies himself with the listeners and by quoting the Holy Quran used as premises to make logical arguments to motivate the audience to fight against COVID-19. A significant research deficiency exists in the exploration of other aspects of persuasive messages such as using narratives, drawing conclusions, message-sidedness etc. and the present study hopes to fill this gap.

Shabrina (2016) conducted research on Hillary Clinton's speeches during her political campaign, and aims to figure out the persuasive strategies used by Hillary Clinton in her speeches through Aristotle's persuasion. The transcripts of the speeches are taken from the digital archives. By using qualitative research methods, the findings reveal that she used all of the three persuasive strategies of Aristotle. Within logos, she uses facts and logical arguments to support her views, with the use of pathos, she controls the emotions of her audience and within ethos, she displays

her good image to persuade her audience. A critical gap lies in the investigation of other aspects of communication such as framing, concluding etc., which paved the way for the current study.

Ru-Fei (2023) studied rhetorical strategies in Former Britain Prime Minister Winston Churchill's speeches. He selected four speeches delivered on different occasions. The speeches are analyzed through the lens of Aristotle's theory of persuasion. A qualitative analysis has been done for this study. The results show that in the logos, Churchill uses facts and practical examples to support his arguments. Within ethos, he uses his intelligence and shows competency in making his people agree that he is a responsible and trustworthy leader. In the pathos, with the use of emotions, he gained the sympathy of his people. A glaring inadequacy exists in the exploration of the use of narratives and framing, providing a stage for further studies.

Afzal and Hassan (2023) selected the victorious speech of Imran Khan in the 2018 general elections of Pakistan. The researchers use qualitative methods to analyze the persuasive techniques used by Imran Khan in the speech. Aristotle's concept of logos, ethos and pathos is used as a theoretical framework for this study. The findings reveal that by using Aristotle's rhetoric, Imran Khan presents a positive image of himself while putting his opponents in a negative light and by using personal pronouns, he tries to change the political views of people. The study lacks how framing and narrative building can be used to shape public opinion.

The above-mentioned studies show that studies have been conducted using Aristotelian foundational work on persuasion to analyze the persuasive message conveyed by different speakers on different occasions. The Aristotelian persuasion theory has been exhausted and now the present study is transitioning to an innovative persuasive model, "Richard Perloff's theory of persuasion" which offers enhanced insights and understanding of persuasion strategies. The present study will answer the following research questions, using Perloff's persuasion theory:

- How does Markle organize her arguments?
- How does Markle use examples and evidence to support her arguments?
- How does Markle frame her message?
- What linguistic strategies and emotional triggers has she used?

3. Research Methodology

The study aims to analyze Meghan Markle's selected speeches through the lens of Richard Perloff's persuasive message components, described in his book *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century*. This study looks at how these components give Markle an edge over other celebrities in the arena of persuasion which is a new kind of celebrity advocacy for women's rights.

A qualitative research approach is used to interpret the data and study any social phenomenon by exploring subjectivity, insights, and meanings (Denzin, 2018). Qualitative research is useful in revealing hidden meanings, and challenges and gives a voice to marginalized groups (Tracy, 2019). Within the qualitative approach, the present research will employ a



descriptive qualitative method to interpret the data. According to Patrick Regonial, descriptive qualitative analysis is used to explore what has not been explored in detail and it will help to explore a yet-to-be-analyzed phenomenon (2023). Using a descriptive qualitative method to analyze Meghan Markle's advocacy speeches through the lens of Richard Perloff's persuasion framework is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, qualitative analysis provides a detailed insight into the phenomenon and allows for a nuanced exploration of the rhetorical strategies employed by Markle. Secondly, by employing Perloff's persuasion framework, the research aims to systematically examine Markle's utilization of persuasion techniques. The tools for this analysis would include using Perloff's components (message structure, message content, framing, language, and emotional appeals. on coded transcripts of Markle's speeches and highlight the persuasive appeals, identify key themes and rhetorical devices. Through this approach, the study can uncover the persuasive mechanisms underlying Markle's advocacy.

3.1 Data Collection

The speeches that Markle gave, which included the Girl Up Leadership Summit, One Young World Summit, The University of South Pacific, Robert Clack School, and the 125th anniversary of women, will be directly accessed from their official websites The transcript of the selected speeches will be taken from the following links:

| Data of the study | Link |
|--|---|
| 1: University of South Pacific (2018) | https://www.townandcountrymag.com/society/tradition/a24172122/meghan-markle-education-speech-fiji-full-transcript/ . |
| 2: United Nations (2015) | https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/life-and-relationships/the-girl-power-speech-that-put-meghan-markle-on-the-map-20181009-p5081b.html |
| 3: One Young World Summit (2022) | https://people.com/royals/meghan-markle-keynote-address-one-young-world-summit/ |
| 4: Girl Up Leadership Summit (2020) | https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/meghan-markle-girl-up-leadership-summit-speech-transcript |
| 5: 125th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand (2018) | https://www.townandcountrymag.com/society/tradition/a24363377/meghan-markle-feminism-speech-new-zealand-transcript/ |

Markle's speeches, which she gave as a public figure, offer insight into her leadership style, values, and beliefs which make it worth studying for those interested in leadership, celebrity culture, and public persona.



3.2 Analysis Procedure

In the selected speeches, firstly the structure of these speeches was explored by looking at how conclusions are drawn and the message-sidedness in these speeches. Secondly, the content of the selected speeches was explored to examine how evidence and narratives are used to persuade the audience. Thirdly, how messages were framed in the selected speeches will be studied. Fourthly, the researcher explored different linguistic strategies used by Markle in the selected speeches. Lastly, the emotional appeals were explored to see how Markle used emotional appeals in her speeches to drive her audience.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

This study uses Richard Perloff's work on communication and persuasion as its theoretical/analytical framework. In his book, *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century* (2017), he presents an extensive vision of communication strategies. According to him, persuasive messages consist of five factors: Message structure, message content, framing, language, and emotional appeal. These factors are described below:

3.3.1 Message Structure

The message content consists of two parts. The first part deals with concluding, firstly on how to conclude the message and secondly, with message-sidedness, which highlights if the speaker presents both perspectives of an issue or just one - his own. (Perloff, 2017)

3.3.2 Message Content

The message content deals with two core factors: evidence and narrative. Evidence comprises factual statements, logical reasoning, quotes, statistics, or opinions from reliable sources. Hinyard and Kreuter (2007) define narrative as a story with a beginning, a middle, and a conclusion that talks about characters, scenes, a conflict, and a resolution. Using evidence and narratives, the speaker builds credibility, engagement, and emotional connection with the audience.

3.3.3 Framing

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, framing means the process of shaping and molding something. Framing is the standpoint or prime focus which refers to the process of presenting information to the intended listeners. According to Perloff, framing is selecting, organizing, and making sense of information. Perloff explains two kinds of frames: gain frame and loss frame. The gain frame depicts the positive aspects of the issue while the loss frame presents the negative aspects of the issue. For instance, a gain frame is used to explain that eating vegetables and fruits results in sound health, and a loss frame is used to show that eating foods rich in fats leads to dangerous diseases (Perloff, 2017).

3.3.4 Language

Speakers use words in different ways to convince the audience and to influence their attitudes. In daily communication, different linguistic features are utilized to communicate meaning. These language components include the use of metaphors, figurative language, and powerful versus powerless language (Perloff, 2017).

Metaphors are used in speeches to persuade the listeners and to develop emotional connections. For example, in the 1980s, the British feminist, Gay Byrant used the metaphor “Glass Ceiling” for women, which explains the barriers women faced to reach executive positions (Benchop, 2009).

Perloff also talks about “powerless speech” which consists of forms of hesitation, hedges, tag questions, and disclaimers while the “powerful speech” is distinguished by the absence of these elements.

3.3.5 Emotional Appeals

Perloff believes that speakers influence the audience by using emotions and/or emotive language which he calls emotional appeals. There are two important components of emotional appeals: fear appeal and guilt appeal. The first component, fear appeal deals with the communication that aims to scare the audience and tries to change their attitudes by visualizing negative impacts which occur if the message is not followed. The second component is guilt appeal which aims to invoke guilt in the audience.

In light of these elements, the study will look at the message Meghan Markle sends, whether emotive or not in and of itself, but will not determine the influence of the emotional appeals on the audience because it will be outside the scope of the study. As a communicator, Markle hopes to use her messages to symbolically persuade her audience. Therefore, to better understand Meghan Markle's effective use of persuasive techniques in her speeches at, the *Girl Up Leadership Summit*, *The University of South Pacific*, *One Young World Summit*, *the United Nations*, and *the 125th Anniversary of Women’s Suffrage in New Zealand*, the researcher will take help from.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Message Structure

According to Richard Perloff, the structure of the message should be clear, simple, and cohesive. Message structure deals with two factors: drawing conclusions and message-sidedness. The conclusion should be explicitly wrapped up clearly. Message sidedness refers to one-sided message and two-sided message: One-sided message deals with the speaker’s perspective and two-sided message deals with the speaker’s as well as the audience’s perspectives as reflected in the speech or message (Perloff, 2017).

Markle draws the conclusion of her speeches very precisely, reviewing the main arguments, which enables the listeners to understand the main idea of her message and visualize



the future of the world. In her speech at the University of South Pacific, she ended her speech with the following remarks, “The Association of Commonwealth Universities, which Her Majesty the Queen is Patron of, supports universities to promote equality in their institutions” (Markle, 2018). Here, in the conclusion of her speech, she talks about the Association of Commonwealth Universities, which is a charitable organization initiated in 1913, for the promotion of higher education internationally (Gill, 2021). Markle mentions Queen Elizabeth II who is the financier of this organization and strives to uphold gender parity in the educational institutions. Through the platform of the “Association of Commonwealth Universities”, two new grants are awarded to the “The University of South Pacific and Fiji National University” whose aim is to carry out different workshops and activities which will give strength and potential to the “female faculty” so that they can motivate others to pursue higher education. The main message, that of giving women access to higher education, is reflected in the concluding lines and highlights the importance of women’s higher education as this will give them a chance to become a part of the decision-making process at leadership positions. She also assures that “training and skills” through these grants will make women’s roles more constructive and develop their leadership skills so that they will gain access to leadership and be “recognized at the most senior level”. In her conclusion, she is showing a way to women to develop their skills through these grants to reach at the leadership positions. Despite continuous efforts to promote gender parity, women are still marginalized in leadership positions (Baird, 2023). Markle is making efforts to eliminate gender biases by talking about different opportunities available for the empowerment of women through different workshops and training to motivate them to pursue higher education and reach leadership positions.

In the speech at the 125th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand, she concludes her speech with a quote by Kate Sheppard: “All that separates, whether race, class, creed, or sex, is inhuman, and must be overcome” (Markle, 2018). Kate Sheppard is recognized as the supporter of the women's rights movement in New Zealand, who fought for women's suffrage and her efforts paid off in 1987, when all women in New Zealand got the right to vote (Tennant, 1993). Markle ends the speech with her quote, which means discrimination is inhuman and causes suffering and violence whether it is based on sex, class, creed, or sex. This quotation leaves the audience with the message that gender discrimination should be ended and create a room for a just world. Markle makes her conclusion more effective for the people of New Zealand, celebrating the 125th Anniversary of women's suffrage, by quoting the suffragette, Kate Sheppard, this makes them recall their national activist, whose continuous struggles for gender equality makes New Zealand, the first country who gives women the right to vote.

Message sidedness refers to one-sided message and a two-sided message: One sided message deals with the speaker’s perspective and the two -sided message deals with the speaker’s as well as the audience’s perspectives as reflected in the speech or message (Perloff, 2017).

Markle uses a one-sided approach in her speeches by giving her own perspective on the issue of gender inequality. In the Speech at University of South Pacific, by using a single perspective, she emphasizes the fact that education should be afforded by every person but more



importantly, women have the right to receive education when she says that “for women and girls in developing countries, this is vital. Providing them with access to education is the key to economic and social development” (Markle 2018). She declares that providing women with education will make social and economic progress in the developing countries. Education equips the women with the ability to create a better tomorrow for themselves and for the communities they live in. She does not mention any challenges or opposing arguments throughout her speech, staying true to her own perception and focuses on the beneficial aspects of providing education to women.

While addressing the 125th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand she says, “Women’s suffrage is about feminism, but feminism is about fairness” (Markle, 2018). Here, Markle explains feminism, according to her own perspective that the women's right to vote is related to feminism. Feminism is the movement to attain equality in social, political and economic grounds (Raina, 2020). Markle highlights the women’s political rights that they have the right to vote, and this was one of the main objectives of the feminist movement. Markle emphasizes that the feminist movement can create a fair and just world where everyone is treated equally. Using a one-sided approach, Markle builds a strong case in favor of gender equality without acknowledging opposing viewpoints and criticism.

4.2 Message Content

Richard Perloff discusses two important aspects in the message content: evidence and narratives (Perloff, 2017)

Markle uses evidence in her speeches to support her arguments and deliver her message more effectively. In her speech at the University of South Pacific, while talking about women’s right to education, she said, “And for women and girls in developing countries, this is vital. Providing them with access to education is the key to economic and social development” (Markle, 2018). Markle highlights the significance of giving women access to education with respect to developing countries, and how they can play a vital role in the social and economic development. Providing women with financial and educational opportunities in third-world countries can give them the confidence to make meaningful decisions, and become a vital part in the progress and economy (Abdi, 2019). She builds her argument stronger by connecting women’s education to the socio-economic development of the country, which aims to empower women to participate in leadership roles to initiate policies through their meaningful decision-making abilities which can change the future of their countries.

While addressing the UN Women about the issue of gender inequality and women’s participation in politics, Markle uses numerical figures to support her claim: “The year 2030 is the expiration date for gender inequality, the studies show that at the current rate, the elimination of gender inequality won’t be possible until 2095” (Markle, 2015). Markle emphasizes the elimination date for gender disparity that 2030 is the end of gender inequality, mentioning studies that indicate, gender equality will not be attainable up till 2095, if its progress continues at the present rate. She also identifies fewer women’s participation in leadership roles by mentioning the



percentage of female parliamentarians globally has only increased by 11 per cent since 1995. By mentioning this evidence, Markle supports her argument of increasing the efforts for the elimination of gender parity, and without women's political participation, bringing effective change will not be possible. As evidence, she also points out the efforts of the President of Rwanda, who supports women in politics: "To have leaders such as President Kagame of Rwanda continue to be a role model of a country which has a parliamentary system of 64 per cent female leaders". Markle mentions the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame as an inspiration, whose parliament consists of the highest percentage of 64 per cent women leaders in the world. Highlighting 64 percent of women leaders in Rwanda's parliament motivates her audience to participate in politics and play their roles in the development through their sound decision making ability. Markle uses this evidence as a source of inspiration for her audience.

While addressing women in the United Nations, Markle shares her story, when she "accidentally became a female advocate" at the age of eleven. She had watched a commercial for dish-washing liquid on TV, with the tagline, "Women all over America are fighting greasy pots and pans", two of her boys' class fellows started to make fun of women that they belonged in the kitchen; this distressed and infuriated her. She discussed this matter with her father, who suggested to her to "write letters" to the powerful people of that time. She wrote letters to "first lady, Hillary Clinton, Linda Ellerbee who hosted a kids' news program, and then to powerhouse attorney Gloria Allred and at the end, to the soap manufacturer". She received letters of motivation and incitement, a camera crew visited her to cover her story and after a month, the soap manufacturer changed the tagline to "People all over America are fighting with greasy pots and pans". Markle shares her personal story to inspire and motivate women to raise and fight for their rights and collective action, they can create a larger impact just like her, who created "a small level of impact by standing up for equality" at the age of eleven.

4.3 Framing

Perloff describes framing as the frame of reference or focal point of the message. It deals with the presentation of the information in a way which highlights different perspectives of the issue, influencing the listeners' interpretation of the message. It is described as a powerful communication tool to shape the perception of the audience (Perloff, 2017). According to Perloff, speakers usually use two kinds of frames: Gain frame and Loss frame. Gain frame focuses on the positive aspects of the issue while loss frame depicts the negative aspects or loss

Markle uses mostly gain frames in her speeches to empower, motivate, and inspire her audience. In a speech at the University of South Pacific, while addressing the importance of education for women, she said, "And for women and girls in developing countries, this is vital. Providing them with access to education is the key to economic and social development" (Markle, 2018). Here Markle, with the use of gain-frame, indicates the benefits of providing education to women which results in the development of the world. She describes the role of women in the country's development. If they are given access to education and equal opportunities in educational institutions, they can make progress on social and economic grounds using their sound decision-



making abilities and leadership roles. Through the gain frame, she motivates the women to acquire contemporary skills and “create incredible futures, not only for themselves but also for those around them”. Markle tries to “enter higher education, and that more women become part of the decision-making process in academic institutions. While interacting with the female faculty members, she boosts their confidence in motivating the other women to pursue higher education. It will open a room of opportunities, such as becoming an integral part of the decision-making process. Using a gain frame, she visualizes the bigger picture of opportunities for women at the executive level gained through the educational pathway.

Markle uses a loss frame, while addressing young girls at the Girl Up Leadership Summit, to indicate the fears and challenges of women that stop them from availing certain opportunities and says that “there will always be negative voices, and sometimes those voices can appear to be outsized (Markle, 2020). She empowers the young girls to continue their struggle for equality and keep challenging the hurdles while achieving their dreams. Using the loss frame, Markle highlights the negative opinions and painful failures that women encounter in different spheres of life, but they need to be consistent in raising their voices against gender injustice which will “drown out negative noises”

4.4 Language

According to Perloff’s theory of persuasion, the language component of the message is concerns lexical choices employed by speakers to persuade their listeners. The language component consists of the following elements: speed of speech, use of metaphors, figures of speech and powerful versus powerless language (Perloff, 2017).

4.5 Use of Metaphors

Markle uses metaphor to motivate women to create opportunities for themselves, instead of waiting for the opportunities, “Women need a seat at the table, they need an invitation to be seated there, and in some cases, where this is not available, well then, you know what, they need to create their own table”. Here “seat at the table” refers to the opportunities provided to women, Markle emphasizes that there are some opportunities provided to women in some spheres of life and they should avail of those, but now they do not need to wait for the opportunities she compares creating one’s own table to creating one’s own opportunity and space. This metaphor implies that instead of waiting for the opportunities created by others, women should create their own table, their own opportunities, and spaces that they control. It indicates self-empowerment and taking control of one’s own destiny.

In the speech at the Girl Up Leadership Summit, Markle uses metaphor to deliver her message persuasively as she uses the metaphor to encourage women to make positive changes in their communities: “Our communities are the drawing board for our change”. Here she compares a community or society to a drawing board which stands for a painting waiting for creative input. By using this metaphor, Markle suggests that women should start making positive changes in their communities, just like an artist begins with a black canvas. She empowers women to raise their

voices for gender justice and equality in their communities first. These positive changes in the communities will lead to the world's progress.

4.5 Figures of Speech

Perloff does not list any specific figures of speech used to persuade the audience, the researcher picks out the following lexical-related figures of speech from the selected speeches of Markle, which she used to persuade her audience.

4.6 Allusions

It is defined as the act of referencing someone or something indirectly (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1993). Markle uses allusions in her selected speeches such as in the speech at the United Nations while discussing women's empowerment she asks the audience to "create you're [their] own table" which alludes to the round table in the legend of Excalibur (the sword the king had to take out of the stone to become the king), where women were not allowed to sit and only men had the privilege to be seated and take part in the decision-making process of the kingdom.

4.6 Repetition

It refers to a word or expression repeated multiple times (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1993). In the speech at the United Nations, Markle repeats the expression, "equality means", many times to emphasize the significance of equality and to encourage the women audience to think critically about what equality means. For instance, she said, "equality means; a wife is equal to her husband and a sister to her brother", this implies that everyone is equal to each other in every area of life, so everyone should be provided with equal opportunity. This will create a sense of understanding and equality in the audience.

4.7 Rhetorical Question

It refers to a question that does not require any answer, intended to create a dramatic effect (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1993). In the speech at One Young World Summit, Markle said, "You know what? We don't have to be satisfied with the current speed of progress", here "you know what" is a rhetorical question to persuade and engage them to realize that they need to enhance their speed in making progress in the world.

4.8 Powerful Versus Powerless Language

According to Perloff, powerful language consists of strong words and assertive statements to show authority and credibility. Powerful language gains the audience's attention while maximizing their ability to attend to the speaker's arguments. Powerless language consists of hesitation forms and hedges which makes the speech less persuasive (Perloff, 2017).

In the speech at the University of South Pacific, Markle uses powerful ways of communication to highlight the importance of higher education. For instance, she said, "The journey of higher education is an incredible, impactful and pivotal one. Here words like "incredible", "impactful" and "pivotal" are used to show the importance of higher education to



motivate women to pursue higher education. Markle also prioritizes education for developing countries, she said “in developing countries, this is vital” and “key to economic and social development”. Here strong words like “vital” and “key” show the significance of education for women in underdeveloped countries. Through these powerful words, she encourages the women of developing countries to use education

4.9 Emotional Appeals

According to Perloff, emotion is the tool used to engage the audience and to make the content more relatable. There are two kinds of emotional appeal: Fear appeal and Guilt appeal. Fear appeal evokes the feeling of fear in the audience about the adverse outcomes if they do not follow the message. Guilt appeal evokes the unpleasant feeling of guilt to encourage and inspire the audience to adopt a particular behavior (Perloff, 2017).

In the Speech at the University of South Pacific, Markle uses fear appeal when she emphasizes the challenges faced by women and girls in developing countries. She says, “Providing them with access to education is the key to economic and social development”, this implies that without education women and girls may be immersed in the poverty cycle. Through the fear appeal, she is encouraging women and girls to support education to prevent these negative outcomes of poverty and limitations.

While addressing the United Nations, Markle invokes fear in the audience by stating that “at the current rate, the elimination of gender inequality won’t be possible until 2095”, this implies that if no action is taken against gender disparity timely, then it will persist for generations to come. At another point, she states that “women make up the world’s population, so it is neither just not practical for their voices to go unheard at the highest level of decision-making”, this signifies that despite gender equality efforts, the marginalization of women persists in executive positions but studies have shown that leadership styles of women will bring more benefits to the world and they are believed to be a symbol of modernity (Celestine, 2024). Through the fear appeal, Markle invokes fear in the audience that if today, this balance is not addressed, women’s ideas and perspectives will continue to be neglected and ignored. In another instance, she mentioned that “we cannot implement change effectively without women’s political participation”, this evokes fear that without the political involvement of women, it will be difficult to address pressing issues and to establish equality and justice for all members of society.

While addressing the United Nations, Markle evokes guilt in the audience, while talking about the 11 per cent increase in female parliamentarians globally, she states “11% in twenty years? Come on...this must change”, provoking guilt for not adequately participating in politics to reach the leadership positions and encouraging the audience to take part in politics to bring positive change in the world. At another point, while highlighting the significance of empowering women, she said, “We need to remind girls that their small voices...can affect change”, which creates guilt in the audience that today we forget the importance of empowering girls which is required to remind young women about their potential and power. Through this guilt appeal,



Markle is creating a sense of responsibility in the audience that they have to uplift and bolster young women around the world.

In the speech at the One Young World Summit, Markle evokes guilt in the audience when she shares her personal experience on the platform of One Young World, where she was surrounded by world leaders and humanitarians, expressing her sentiments of being overwhelmed and uncertain of her position at the table. She states, “I wasn’t sure that I belonged...” which shows that even those in positions of leadership encounter doubts and uncertainties. By sharing her story of doubts, she encourages her audience to embrace their susceptibilities and take responsibility for bringing positive changes around the world despite their fears.

5. Conclusion

Persuasion has remained a productive area of research to incorporate textual analysis and Aristotle, Sherif, Festinger, and Chaiken have theorized on it and a vast number of researchers studied this phenomenon. This study is an exploration and analysis of persuasion strategies employed in Markle’s advocacy speeches through the lens of Perloff’s theory of persuasion. The present study reveals that Markle uses the strategy of concluding explicitly, one-sided message technique, the use of narratives and evidence, framing technique, the use of metaphors, other figures of speech, powerful ways of communication, and fear and guilt appeals in her selected speeches to persuade her audience. The analysis also brings to light the emergence of a new kind of feminism, which has now motivated celebrities, who have made a name for themselves in the arena of film and television, to raise their voices. They are using their persona as celebrities to speak on different platforms to promote women's rights. This is giving way to a new brand of feminism; Celebrity Feminism, in which celebrities use their celebrity status and the clout that they carry due to that status, to raise their voice for promoting women's rights, and this phenomenon is consistently being witnessed even in a country like Pakistan when Mahira Khan, a Pakistani actress, spoke for women education on Global Education and Skill Forum (Hafsa, 2017).

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