

# THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IN AMERICAN PRESIDENCY DISCOURSES FROM GEORGE W. BUSH TO BARACK OBAMA: A POLITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS STUDY

VICKY TCHAPARIAN  
vicky.tchaparian@hotmail.com

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to analyze the speeches and discourses given to Armenian-American citizens by both President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama before and during presidency in the last one and a half decades.

It is hypothesized that the literal meaning of the speeches of both presidents concerning the Armenian Genocide is not the same as the intended meaning. Thus, this study will analyze different forms of discourse (a letter, oral speeches, and an interview) in different places at different times (before and during presidency) and will shed light on the discourse changes that have caused distress among the American-Armenians.

The aim of this research is to reflect on and scrutinize both presidents' discourses using three different methods: critically through Blommaert's theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), pragmatically using Austin's Speech Act Theory (SAT) and semantically using Jacobson's Communication Model Theory (CMT).

The analysis in the paper will only cover the text of discourses; anything related to non-verbal cues such as facial expressions or body language will not be analyzed. Two discourses by each president, one before and another during presidency will be studied in depth and anatomized to reveal the difference between the literal meaning and the intended meaning of these discourses.

## INTRODUCTION

Twenty-two states of the world have officially recognized the Armenian Genocide. However, one of the basic targets of the Armenians regarding the Armenian Genocide is to make the USA recognize it and, through its influence over Turkey, make the Turkish government admit that the Ottoman Empire committed genocide against the Armenians.

During the last one and a half decades, the Armenian community in the USA cast its votes for the last two US presidents, George W. Bush (twice elected US president 2000-2008) and Barack Obama (twice elected in 2007 and 2011) to get recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the USA in return.<sup>1</sup> Both presidents made promises and pledges, but neither one kept his word.

Before becoming president in 2000, George W. Bush, the governor of Texas, wrote to his Armenian friend at Harvard Business School saying: "... the Armenians were subjected to a genocidal campaign that defies... all decent people to remember... an awful crime... against humanity." He went so far as to say: "If elected president, I would ensure that our nation properly recognizes the tragic suffering of the Armenian people."<sup>2</sup> Seven years later, although Bush was elected

twice as US president, the USA had not defined the annihilation of the Armenian people as genocide.

After becoming president, in 2007, Bush, expressed his regret about the tragic sufferings of the Armenian people that began in 1915 but said that the “resolution is not the right response to these historic mass killings.” Bush told reporters that its passage would do great harm to US relations with “a key ally in NATO and in the global war on terror.”<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, Egemen Bagis, member of the Turkish parliament, told CNN Turk TV, “If our ally accuses us of crimes that we did not commit, then we will start to question the advantages of our co-operation.”<sup>4</sup> Having this in mind, one can see that it would not have been possible for the president to put his words into action concerning the Armenian Genocide.

The experience of the Armenian-American community with the Illinois Senator Barack Obama did not differ much. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2008, two days before the California primary, Obama said, “... As president I will recognize the Armenian Genocide.”<sup>5</sup> However, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April, 2009, after the presidential elections, when Obama went to meet President Abdullah Gull in Turkey and during an interview with the *Chicago Tribune* reporter Christi Parsons, his discourse reveals a new phase where he does not use the word “genocide.” This extremely important word, which the American-Armenian community expected to hear from its president, has not yet been used by him since he became president. Instead, on Armenian Memorial Day, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2009, he switched for the word “*medz yeghern*”, which means “Great Calamity” in Armenian, for the word “Genocide” to avoid any reference to the word “genocide” or “*tseghasbanoutyoun*,” its Armenian equivalent.

Thus, investigating President Bush’s discourse through the political discourse analysis<sup>6</sup> perspective, it can be revealed that although he promised to recognize the Armenian Genocide while he was running for the presidency, President Bush changed his discourse later, after becoming president.

As for President Obama’s discourse, he used the word “genocide” earlier in his campaigns to gain the votes of the Armenian-American community, yet he failed to do so later after becoming president. Moreover, during his visit to Ankara, Obama avoided discussing the recognition of the massacres the Armenian people were subjected to in World War I.

This study intends to analyze the political language of both presidents, shedding light on the differences in their discourses earlier, during their presidential campaigns, and later, during their presidency. The questions that will be discussed are: What are the causes of the change in the presidents’ speeches? What did the presidents say and what did they mean? And why are their discourses different before and after being elected president?

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The dilemma is the seeming withdrawal of the pledge given to Armenian-American citizens by both presidents before presidency. The basic challenge is that the literal meaning in the discourses of both presidents concerning the Armenian Genocide is not the same as the intended meaning. They both said something when meaning another thing.

Based on the application of Blommaert's theory of CDA, Austin's SAT, and Jacobson's CMT, this study hypothesizes that both US presidents intentionally used propositional meanings different than the illocutionary meanings to reach their political goals.

Henry Morgenthau, the American ambassador to the Ottoman Empire during 1913-1916, while describing the Armenian Genocide said, "I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared with the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915."<sup>7</sup>

Deprived of food and water and often stripped of clothing, the Armenians fell by the hundreds of thousands in the Syrian deserts, "Ultimately, more than half the Armenian population 1,500,000 people were annihilated."<sup>8</sup> According to the Genocide Education Project, in this manner the Armenian people were expelled from their homeland of several millennia in 1915. Although more than ninety-five years have passed, the Armenians are still campaigning for the recognition of these massacres, known as the Armenian Genocide, as it is not still acknowledged by many nations in the world.<sup>9</sup>

The *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity* considers the denial of the Armenian Genocide as "the most patent example of a state's denial of its past."<sup>10</sup>

Genocide includes "deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group."<sup>11</sup> However, Turkey rejects calling the Armenian deaths during WWI genocide, maintaining that many Turks also died in ethnic violence associated with WWI.<sup>12</sup> Gregory Stanton, vice-president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars and president of Genocide Watch, notes that the Armenian genocide denial "is like Holocaust denial."<sup>13</sup>

Notably, 20 out of 193 (10%) United Nations member states, 11 out of 27 (41%) European Union member states, 4 out of 12 (33%) Union of South American Nations member states have recognized the Armenian Genocide.<sup>14</sup>

As for The United States of America: 43 out of 50 US states have recognized the Armenian Genocide; as of May 2011 this includes every state in the Union with the exception of Alabama, Mississippi, West Virginia, Indiana, Iowa, Wyoming, and South Dakota.<sup>15</sup>

However, a major obstacle for wider recognition of the genocide in the world is the position of Turkey, which states that there was no will to exterminate the Armenian population, and that the 1915 massacres were the consequences of WWI.<sup>16</sup> Turkey rejects the conclusions of historians and the term genocide, alleging that the deaths of the Armenians were not premeditated, nor systematically implemented.<sup>17</sup>

It is worth mentioning that in December 2008 a group of Turkish intellectuals launched an online petition for people who want to apologize in a personal capacity for the Genocide their country committed. The writers of the petition used the word "the Great Catastrophe" regarding the events.<sup>18</sup> The petition, gained more than 10,000 signatures in a matter of days. In face of a backlash, the Turkish president defended the petition, citing freedom of speech. An opposition group soon launched a website gaining an even higher number of signatures. The PM

sided with the opposition, and a national debate ensued.<sup>19</sup>

The historic position of the United States concerning the Armenian Genocide has been affirmative. In fact, several official documents released in 1975, 1984 and 1996 describe the 1915 events as “genocide”. President Ronald Reagan described the events as “genocide” in a speech on April 22, 1981. The US House Committee on Foreign Affairs also recognized the massacres of 1915 as “genocide” on March 4, 2010.<sup>20</sup>

The American-Armenian community is well aware that it means a lot for an American presidential candidate (whether a Democrat or a Republican) to get the votes of the Armenian-American citizens, who number more than 1,270,000.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, since the position of the USA towards the Armenian Genocide has historically been positive Armenian-Americans counted on their president.

Thus, since the USA has historically recognized the Armenian Genocide (though not all states have recognized it)<sup>22</sup>, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) along with the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) have, as their “main lobbying agenda”, pressed Congress and the President of the United States for an increase in economic aid to Armenia and the reduction of economic and military assistance to Turkey. However, it should be mentioned that “The White House warned against the possibility of Turkey restricting airspace as well as ground-route access for US military and humanitarian efforts in Iraq ...”<sup>23</sup> Moreover, as a result of ANCA and AAA pressures on their government, Turkey “ordered their ambassador to the United States to return to Turkey for ‘consultations.’”<sup>24</sup>

#### SOCIOLINGUISTIC DISCOURSE ANALYSIS THEORIES

Like any other subject in sociolinguistics, language discourse analysis has been the interest of many researchers. Different sociolinguistic theories will be discussed to reveal how these theories apply to the discourses of both US presidents in different places at different times.

According to Thomas Jefferson, and the other founders of the American Republic, “political discourse has to be the heart of democracy.”<sup>25</sup> Moreover, political discourse is “the formal exchange of reasoned views as to which of several alternative courses of action should be taken to solve a societal problem.”<sup>26</sup>

According to Van Dijk, the vast bulk of studies of political discourse are about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidents and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, both at the local, national and international levels.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps the first sociolinguist to draw attention to the political potential of language was George Orwell. In his classic article *Politics and the English Language*, Orwell considers the way in which language may be used to manipulate thought and suggests, that “political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible.”<sup>28</sup> His examples are types of “inverted logic and they echo through much of the present work on political discourse.”<sup>29</sup> The word “pacification”, which was used to refer to the “bombing of the defenseless villagers,” and “rectification of frontiers”, used to refer to the relocation or simply removal of thousands of peasants from their homes, are two examples. The word

“fog” was used to refer to the “political gobbledegook.” Another example that Orwell refers to is when the American navy described high waves as “climatic disturbances at the air-sea interface.” Moreover, in 1970 President Nixon’s press secretary coined the phrase “biosphere overload” to refer to “overpopulation.” Although Orwell had referred to such examples earlier in his 1969 book, such inverted words have been used by US President Obama every year since 2009 on Armenian Memorial Day, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, during his speech to the American-Armenian community. The president’s word switch will be analyzed later.

Fairclough, another sociolinguist (1989), criticized discourse as a “form of social practice with a malign social purpose”.<sup>30</sup> According to *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* “examples of this malign social purpose are highlighted in the political discourse of what has been referred to as “nukespeak” (the language of the nuclear mindset). The title “nukespeak” is formed by “analogy with Orwell’s famous ‘newspeak,’ where Orwell’s assumption was that if one could manipulate or limit what was possible in language then one could manipulate or limit what was possible in thought”.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, Chilton argued that “in the political discourse of nuclear weapons efforts are made to linguistically subvert negative associations”.<sup>32</sup> For example as Montgomery mentioned, *strategic* nuclear weapon refers to a large nuclear bomb of immense destructive power, *tactical* nuclear weapon refers to a small nuclear weapon of immense destructive power, *enhanced radiation weapon* refers to a neutron bomb (destroys people not property), and *demographic targeting* refers to killing the civilian population.<sup>33</sup>

In the above examples Montgomery is “performing a type of translation” in which he explicitly attempts to show how “language is manipulating reality as represented by the translation of language”<sup>34</sup> to another kind of discourse that may have another effect on its listeners. For Montgomery, the language of nuclear weapons is clearly “obscurantist and euphemistic”; it is deliberately vague and unclear. Moreover, using a range of analytic techniques, Chilton argues that in the political discourse of nuclear weapons efforts are made to “linguistically subvert negative associations”.<sup>35</sup> As for the way linguistic subversion is related to the political discourse of the US presidents and this study, it will be analyzed later.

Another critic, John Wilson, reveals in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*<sup>36</sup> that it is not simply manipulation that is at issue in the case of political language; it is the goal of such manipulation which is seen as problematic.

To illustrate this, Wilson gives an example from Goodman:<sup>37</sup>

**Actions**

a. The soldier fired  
(Actor) (material process: action)

**Transactions**

b. The soldier killed innocent villagers  
(Actor) (material process: transaction) (goal)

**Event**

c. Innocent villagers died  
(goal: material process) (material process: event)<sup>38</sup>

So, the soldier (the actor) fired and killed (action) the innocent villagers

(goal). As a result of this action of the actor, the innocent villagers died, which is the event.<sup>39</sup> Goodman comments that there might be possible reasons behind such selections. He suggests:

Writers with a technical interest in weaponry (in a specialist magazine) might have an interest in obscuring the pain and destruction that weapons cause. Writers who are on the same side as the soldiers might also have an interest in obscuring their army's responsibility for the death of innocent civilians.<sup>40</sup>

This reveals that language can have different effects, according to the way discourse is used and analyzed.

According to Fairclough, although many of Goodman's claims may be true, such claims are often built around single, isolated utterances, taking no account of the textual or historical context of production. For example, the sentences highlighted by Goodman can be sequencing the events for the listener in a specific way, such as:

"Innocent villagers died last night. It was the soldiers who fired on them. It was the soldiers who killed them!"

Thus, the same sentence can be uttered in different ways:

- a- Taking sides with the soldiers, diminishing the bitterness of their action or
- b- Taking sides with the innocent villagers and revealing the bitterness of the action committed against them."<sup>41</sup>

Blommaert, in his book *Discourse: Key Topics in Sociolinguistics*, defines linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics in five different ways. Blommaert's definition of language is the most useful for highlighting the language use of the two US presidents. Below are Blommaert's five different definitions of sociolinguistics.

**Definition 1:**

According to Blommaert "In analyzing language-in-society, the focus should be on what language use means to its users." He adds that we must start from the observation that "language matters to people, that people make investments in language, and that this is a crucial part of what they believe language does for them and what they do with language."<sup>42</sup>

**Definition 2:**

The second definition Blommaert gives to language anthropology and sociolinguistics is that "language operates differently in different environments," and that, "in order to understand how language works, we need to contextualize it properly." He adds that to establish the relations between the use of language and the particular purposes for which it operates language should be "critically checked against the specifics of the case we are investigating. This goes for language, its structure, and functions, but also for society, power, history, and so on."<sup>43</sup>

**Definition 3:**

According to Blommaert, sociolinguistic analysis is "*the actual and densely*

*contextualized forms in which language occurs in society.*” He adds “We need to focus on varieties in language, for such variation is at the core of what makes language and meaning social. We shall have to address rather complex, equivocal, messy forms of language”.<sup>44</sup>

The language taken into consideration in this thesis is not any language but language used by presidents. Initially they address their fellow citizens in the best way they can to impress them so as to be elected president. Later, during their presidency, they use language in such a way as to concentrate on the complex messy forms of language so that the community forgets about its meaning.

**Definition 4:**

Another definition through which Bloemmart defines sociolinguistics is that “language users have *repertoires* containing different sets of varieties” and that these repertoires will determine what people can do with language because people are not entirely ‘free’ when they communicate. “[T]hey are constrained by the range and structure of their repertoires, and *the distribution of elements of the repertoires in any society is unequal.*” Thus, “discourse will be conditioned by their sociolinguistic background.”<sup>45</sup>

**Definition 5:**

The fifth definition Blommaert gives sociolinguistics is the conception of communication of events as “ultimately influenced by *the structure of the world system.*”<sup>46</sup> He notes that in an era of globalization, “the threshold of contextualization in discourse analysis or sociolinguistics can no longer be a single society but needs to include the relationships between different societies and the effect of these relationships on repertoires of language users and their potential to construct voice. The world system is characterized by structural inequality, and this also counts for linguistic resources.”<sup>47</sup>

Although the claims of the three sociolinguists Orwell, Wilson, and Fairclough are important, Blommaert’s definitions best describe the effect of political language as used in the discourses of both US presidents before and during presidency.

**The Corpus**

A- Discourses of President Bush before and during his presidency to be analyzed:

1- A letter by Bush, before presidency, to his two Armenian friends at the Business School of Harvard dated February 19, 2000.

2- A speech by Bush during his presidency on October 10, 2007.

B- Discourses of President Obama before and during presidency to be analyzed:

1- A speech by Obama two days before the California primary on January 18, 2008.

2- An interview by *Chicago Tribune* journalist Christi Parsons with Obama during his presidency on April 7, 2009.

Considering the fact that the literal meaning in the speeches of both presidents

concerning the Armenian case is not the same as the intended meaning, different forms of discourse (a letter, oral speeches, and an interview) will be analyzed in different places at different times and will shed light on the changes that have caused a problem along with the reasons how and why they happened.

For example, on February 9, 2000, the Texas Governor George Bush said, “The Armenians were subjected to a genocidal campaign....” Later, on January 19, 2008, US Senator Obama said, “as president I will recognize the Armenian Genocide....” However, both candidates changed their discourses later when they became presidents.

Taking both US presidents’ discourses into consideration, it can be deduced that both presidents said something but meant something else. I will present proof that both presidents made promises but did not keep their promises.

On the other hand, two discourses during their presidency are chosen to stress the fact that their discourses as candidates are completely different than their discourses as presidents.

The speech by Bush after elections is chosen because it clearly states that the resolution concerning the Armenian Genocide is not at all the right answer to those “tragic sufferings,” although he had said “The Armenians were subjected to a genocidal campaign” earlier, before becoming president. Moreover, the interview with Obama by Parsons is chosen because the interviewer directly asks Obama if he has changed his views and is not using the word genocide anymore.

The analysis section consists of three parts:

**Part 1:** Analysis of both presidents’ discourses according to the definitions of different sociolinguists especially according to Blommaert’s theory, as it is the most useful definition for both presidents’ discourses.

**Part 2:** Analysis of Bush’s letter before presidency.

Analysis of Obama’s speech before presidency.

**Part 3:** Analysis of Bush’s speech during his presidency.

Analysis of Obama’s interview during his presidency.

Since the literal meaning both presidents used was different from the meaning they intended in their discourses, the second and the third part of the analysis section will be pragmatically analyzed<sup>48</sup> according to Austin’s SAT.<sup>49</sup>

Along with the pragmatic analysis, the second and the third part of the analysis section will also semantically<sup>50</sup> analyze different verbs and their functions according to Jacobson’s CFT.<sup>51</sup>

Both presidents presented a “societal problem”, which was the Armenian Genocide, and both presented their “reasoned views”, namely acceptance of the genocide, before election to gain the American-Armenian community’s votes. Later they changed their views for political reasons.

In *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* Orwell discussed the political potential of language.<sup>52</sup> He gave examples of types of “inverted logic” that “echo through much of the present work on political discourse.”<sup>53</sup> Although Orwell referred to examples of “inverted logic” and “coined phrases” in his 1969 book, yet these inverted words are applicable to the words President Obama has been using every year since 2009 on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April during his speeches referring to the Armenian-American community on Armenian Memorial Day. He has been

using the English word “Genocide” with the Armenian word “*Medz Yeghern*” over and over again every year.

Three samples from Obama’s speeches taken from the immediate releases of the office of secretary of the White House from 2009 till 2011 will be given below.

**Statement of President Barack Obama on Armenian Memorial Day in April 24, 2009:**

Ninety-four years ago, one of the great atrocities of the 20th century began. Each year, we pause to remember the 1.5 million Armenians who were subsequently massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. The **Medz Yeghern**<sup>54</sup> must live on in our memories, just as it lives on in the hearts of the Armenian people ... Nothing can bring back those who were lost in the **Medz Yeghern**.

**Statement of President Barack Obama on Armenian Remembrance Day, April 24, 2010:**

On this solemn day of remembrance, we pause to recall that ninety-five years ago one of the worst atrocities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century began. In that dark moment of history, 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire... Today is a day to reflect upon and draw lessons from these terrible events... The **Medz Yeghern** is a devastating chapter in the history of the Armenian people, and we must keep its memory alive in honor of those who were murdered and so that we do not repeat the grave mistakes of the past... While nothing can bring back those who were killed in the **Medz Yeghern**, the contributions that Armenians have made around the world over the last ninety-five years stand as a testament to the strength, tenacity and courage of the Armenian people.

**Statement of President Barack Obama on Armenian Remembrance Day, April 24, 2011:**

I support the courageous steps taken by individuals in Armenia and Turkey to foster a dialogue that acknowledges their common history. As we commemorate the **Medz Yeghern** and pay tribute to the memories of those who perished, we also recommit ourselves to ensuring that devastating events like these are never repeated... The United States has deeply benefited from the significant contributions to our nation by Armenian-Americans, many of whom are descended from the survivors of the **Medz Yeghern**.

Thus, Obama is trying to refer to the Armenian Genocide by the word “*Medz Yeghern*”. This is comparable to President Nixon’s press secretary who coined the phrase “biosphere overload” to refer to overpopulation in 1970 and when the American navy used the words “climatic disturbances in the air-sea interface” to refer to “high waves.” However, the word switch President Obama is using here is affecting the expectations of a whole nation in their hope that after recognizing the genocide, the US will put pressure on Turkey to admit it.

According to another linguist, Montgomery, “politicians seem to want to hide the negative within particular formulations such that the population may not see the truth or the horror before them.”<sup>55</sup> Thus, according to Montgomery, politicians will hide the truth so that people will not see it. Analyzing both presidents’ words

in terms of what Montgomery said, the presidents said one thing to mean another.

The language on the left of the dash is intended to mean something different than the language on the right of the dash.-

**President Bush on October 10, 2007**

*“We all deeply regret the tragic suffering of the Armenian people that began in 1915”* - meaning the Armenian Genocide

**President Obama on April 24, 2009**

*“The Medz Yeghern must live on in our memories”* - meaning the Armenian Genocide

**President Obama on April 24, 2010**

*“1.5 million Armenians... massacred”* - meaning the Armenian Genocide

All three sentences above reveal that, “language on the left of the dash is manipulating reality as represented by the translation on the right”.<sup>56</sup> This is because the president is using different forms of discourse to avoid using the word genocide. The bitterness of the word “Medz Yeghern” that President Obama used, is much less than the word “tseghasbanutyun” or its English equivalent which is “genocide.”

As mentioned earlier “the system of ‘transitivity,’ provides a set of choices for describing “what is going on in the world.” One such choice is referred to as a “material process,” where what is going on may be described as an *action, transaction, or event.*”<sup>57</sup>

Goodman’s material process of action, transaction, and event is highlighted in the case of the Armenian Genocide in what President Obama said below:

In his January 19, 2008 speech before the California Primary Obama said,

**line 17:** .... America deserves a leader who speaks

**line 18:** truthfully about the Armenian Genocide and responds forcefully to all genocides.

**line 19:** I intend to be that President.

Although President Obama’s goal was at first to be “that president who speaks truthfully” after gaining the presidency his goal changed. This change is revealed during his visit to Ankara to meet President Abdalla Gull. On April 7, 2009 Parsons of the *Chicago Tribune* interviewed President Obama. Below is an excerpt from the interview.

**Christi Parsons:**

**line 21:** “So if I understand you correctly, your view hasn’t changed, but you’ll put in

**line 22:** abeyance the issue of whether to use that word in the future?”

**Mr. Obama:**

**line 23:** “What I’d like to do is to encourage President Gull to move forward with what

**line 24:** have been some very fruitful negotiations. And I’m not interested in the United

**line 25:** States in any way tilting these negotiations one way or another while they

are

**line 26:** having useful discussions.”

Do the above mentioned excerpts by Obama before and during presidency reveal Obama’s goal? Was his goal to become “that president?” First he thought that “America deserves a leader who speaks truthfully about the Armenian Genocide”, and he intended to be that leader. However, during presidency his goal has changed to “I’m not interested in the United States in any way tilting these negotiations one way or another.”

Thus Goodman’s theory of action, transaction, and event, can be applied on the change revealed in President Obama’s discourse before and after gaining the presidency.

Now, let us apply Blommaert’s five different definitions of sociolinguistics along with the way these definitions are related to the language use of both US presidents during the last decade:

### **Definition 1**

Blommaert’s first definition is applicable to the language use of both US presidents, since both made “investments” in language. Presumably, had it not been for the letter Bush wrote to his friends and which was read to the Armenian community before the presidential election, he would not have gotten the votes of the Armenian-Americans. Such is also the case with President Obama; had it not been for his promise to the community during the California primary (where most of the Armenian-Americans live), he would not have gotten the votes of so many Armenian-American citizens.

Bush’s letter written on February 19, 2000, before he gained the presidency (Appendix A), states:

**line 2-3:** ... The twentieth century was marred by wars of unimaginable brutality,

**line 3:** mass murder and genocide.

**line 7-8:** bloody crimes against humanity. If elected President, I would ensure that our

**line 8-9:** nation properly recognizes the tragic suffering of the Armenian people.

Prior to his election, in the California Primary, on January 19, 2008, Obama said:

**line 9:** ... As a senator, I strongly support

**line 10:** passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution (H.Res.106 and S.Res.106), and

**line 11:** as President I will recognize the Armenian Genocide. Genocide, sadly, persists

**line 12:** to this day, and threatens our common security and common humanity.

In the aforementioned excerpts from both presidents’ discourses before presidency, it is obvious that both presidents made “investments” in language since both promised to recognize the Armenian Genocide to get the votes of the American-Armenians. However, they did not keep that promise later after becoming presidents.

### **Definition 2**

Blommaert's second definition is applicable to Bush's letter "Dear Vasken and Edgar" written to his two friends on February 19, 2000 before becoming president.

Below are lines 4, 5, 6, and 7 from the letter, which reveal the president's use of language that operated for particular purposes in the Armenian "environment" at that time,

**line 4:** ... The Armenians were subjected to a

**line 5:** genocidal campaign that defies comprehension and commands all decent people to

**line 6:** remember and acknowledge the facts and lessons of an awful crime in a century of

**line 7:** bloody crimes against humanity.

The specific case being investigated concerning the use of language by Bush targets the society he is addressing; he uses the power which he will come to have after presidency through which he will be able to help the Armenians. He is also using a historical fact which is crucial to each and every Armenian. Moreover, Armenians had been waiting to reveal "Man's inhumanity to Man"<sup>58</sup> since WWI.

Thus, it can be said that language operates differently in different environments. Since the American-Armenian community has a special case or a special environment, the president is concentrating on it and is manipulating his speech accordingly.

### **Definition 3**

Blommaert's third definition of language discourse is relevant to language used by the two presidents to address their fellow citizens in the best way they could to impress them. Their first aim was to be elected president, and later, after gaining the presidency, they used language in such a way that they concentrated on the complex messy forms of language so the community would forget about its meaning.

Examples from both presidents before and during presidency are:

Excerpts from Bush's letter before presidency on February 19, 2000:

**line 1:** Thank you for your inquiry to my campaign regarding issues of concern to

**line 2:** Armenian-Americans. The twentieth century was marred by wars of unimaginable

**line 3:** brutality, mass murder and genocide. History records that the Armenians were the

**line 4:** first people of the last century to have endured these cruelties.

President Bush during his presidency in October 2007:

**line 1:** We all deeply regret the tragic suffering of the Armenian people that began in

**line 2:** 1915 but this resolution is not the right response to these historic mass killings,

Obama before presidency on January 19, 2008:

**line 10:** ...the Armenian Genocide Resolution (H.Res.106 and S.Res.106), and as  
**line 11:** President I will recognize the Armenian Genocide. Genocide, sadly, persists to  
**line 12:** this day, and threatens our common security and common humanity.

President Obama during his presidency on April 24, 2011:

“As we commemorate the **Medz Yeghern** and pay tribute to the memories of those who perished...”

All these examples reveal that both presidents focused on varieties of language to impress their fellow citizens, and through the power of their discourse, they were able to attract and convince the Armenian-Americans to vote for them. Since the language they used was associated with a particular community in the country of which these candidates would be presidents, they used formal language that suited a presidential candidate.

#### **Definition 4**

Blommaert’s fourth definition pertaining to repertoires of word-switching skill can be applied to Armenian Memorial Day on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April every year during Obama’s presidency. Examples of this word switching are:

Part of President Obama’s Memorial Day speech on April 24, 2009:

“The **Medz Yeghern** must live on in our memories, just as it lives on in the hearts of the Armenian people.”

Part of President Obama’s Memorial Day speech on April 24, 2010:

“The **Medz Yeghern** is a devastating chapter in the history of the Armenian people.”

Part of President Obama’s Memorial Day speech on April 24, 2011:

“As we commemorate the **Medz Yeghern** and pay tribute to the memories of those who perished.”<sup>59</sup>

Thus, it can be seen that the president has used word switching in discourses conditioned by “sociolinguistic background”; the president has considered well the sociolinguistic background of his addressees. These examples reveal that President Obama’s speeches have been conditioned by his addressees’ sociolinguistic background since every year he has been using the same word from the native language of his addressees.

#### **Definition 5**

Blommaert describes the conception of communication events as “ultimately influenced by *the structure of the world system*.” Below is an excerpt from the interview with President Obama, after he gained the presidency, on April 7, 2009.

**Christi Parsons:**

**line 1:** As a US senator you stood with the Armenian-American community in calling

**line 2:** for Turkey’s acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide and you also

supported

**line 3:** the passage of the Armenian Genocide resolution. You said, as president you

**line 4:** would recognize the genocide. And my question for you is, have you changed

**line 5:** your view, and did you ask President Gull to recognize the genocide by name?

**Mr. Obama:**

**line 6:** “Well, my views are on the record and I have not changed views. What I have been

**line 7:** very encouraged by is news that under President Gull’s leadership, you are seeing

**line 8:** a series of negotiations, a process, in place between Armenia and Turkey to

**line 9:** resolve a whole host of longstanding issues, including this one.

On January 19, 2008 during his California primary before presidential elections Obama had said that “The Armenians were subjected to a genocidal campaign.” However, the president changed his discourse because the “structure of the world system” obliged him to set aside his promise to the Armenians, considering the fact that Armenia is a small country and Turkey is one of the most important allies of the US. Thus, the president’s discourse changed accordingly.

Although what Orwell, Wilson, and Goodman claimed is important, Blommaert’s claim best highlights the effect of political language used in the discourses of both US presidents before and during presidency. Both presidents made investments in language; through their discourses they tried to gain the votes of the Armenian-American community but in return did not give them what they had promised.

It can be deduced that the words and expressions the US presidents Bush and Obama used in their discourses reflect a literal meaning that is different from the meaning they intended.

Literal meaning, according to Nordquist’s<sup>60</sup> language dictionary, is accurate meaning which denotes that all words are in strict accordance with their original meanings. However, according to the same dictionary, intended meaning is intentional or planned, and expressive. So, it can be said that the literal or accurate meaning the presidents used was very different than the planned meaning they wanted to express.

Presenting different views by different sociolinguists, this paper will try to highlight the differences between the literal meaning of words and expressions, and the intentions of both presidents, who used political discourse to reach their political goals.

To prove the fact that the presidents’ discourses changed before and during presidency, I will here cite a few statements printed in Armenian-American as well as American magazines and newspapers, written by both Armenian and non-Armenian-American citizens at different times (during President Bush’s presidency/during President Obama’s presidency) and in different places.

**Example 1:**

Type: American Magazine & Newspaper *Artvoice*  
Date: Wednesday, October 31, 2007.  
Article by: Dimitri Anastasopoulos (American)  
Title: Armenian Genocide Denial: An American Problem

According to the above-mentioned magazine, during his presidency George Bush declared that the last thing Congress should be doing was deciding the “history of an empire [= the Ottoman] that doesn’t even exist anymore.”<sup>61</sup> In his article Dimitri Anastasopoulos says, “Evidently, Bush has forgotten that he promised in 2000 to officially recognize the genocide if elected president.”<sup>62</sup> Accordingly, he adds, that “Bush once again got his history wrong. The Armenian Genocide resolution actually includes the post-Ottoman period up until 1923.”<sup>63</sup>

Moreover, he claims that “Turkey spends millions each year in an effort to deny the genocide before our Congress, in our media and at our universities.”<sup>64</sup> He gives the example of Microsoft Company that became embroiled in a controversy after being pressured by the Turkish government to whitewash the genocide in its *Encarta Encyclopedia*. According to Anastasopoulos, “There is indeed a concerted effort to ‘cleanse’ American recognition of the genocide - not only in our Congress but in our culture as well.”<sup>65</sup>

**Example 2:**

Another example, taken from an Armenian newspaper published in the USA, is by Harout Sassounian in October 6, 1980.

Type: Armenian-American Newspaper *Asbarez*  
Date: Tuesday, 4/12/2011  
Article by: Harout Sassounian (Armenian-American)  
Title: Armenians Should Confront Obama during his California Visit

According to Sassounian, President Reagan used the words Armenian Genocide on April 22, 1981, “almost 30 years to the day of President Obama’s visit to Los Angeles!”<sup>66</sup> According to Sassounian, the publisher of *The California Courier*, a weekly newspaper based in Glendale California, “Armenians do not need to beg the President to utter the words Armenian Genocide.”<sup>67</sup> According to Sassounian, the only reason to protest Obama’s visit would be to let him know that Armenians will no longer be duped when politicians make false campaign promises to gain their support, and ignore them after the election! The Armenian slogan for the 2012 presidential election should be: “Not one vote and not one penny for Obama!”<sup>68</sup>

In his article Sassounian presents a list of “President Obama’s multiple sins on Armenian issues.” A few examples are;

1. He repeatedly pledged to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide during the 2008 presidential campaign and did not keep his word after the election.
2. To make matters worse, his administration actively opposed the adoption of the 2010 congressional resolution on the Armenian Genocide.
3. He significantly cut the amount of foreign aid given to Armenia and Artsakh (Karabagh), contrary to his campaign promise. Moreover, his administration did

- not spend the full amount of aid Congress allocated to Artsakh.
4. He pressured Armenia in 2009 to sign the infamous “Protocols” with Turkey.
  5. He and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton did not respond to repeated requests to meet with Armenian-American community leaders to hear their concerns.

The results reveal the social and human injustice along with the fact that politicians such as these two US presidents took advantage of the votes of a whole community through the power of their political discourses.

**ANALYSIS PART 2: SEMANTIC & PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF BOTH US PRESIDENTS’ DISCOURSES BEFORE PRESIDENCY**

To reveal the change in the discourses of both US presidents Bush and Obama, before and during presidency, this paper will study the speeches of both presidents, pragmatically according to Austin’s SAT<sup>69</sup> and semantically according to Jacobson’s CFT.<sup>70</sup>

According to Austin, “a speech act is a minimal functional unit in human communication. Just as a word is the smallest free form found in language ... the basic unit of communication is a speech act (the speech act of refusal).”<sup>71</sup> Jaworowska’s approach is a bit different: “speech act theory attempts to explain how speakers use language to accomplish intended actions and how hearers infer intended meaning from what is said.”<sup>72</sup>

According to Austin’s theory, what we say has three kinds of meaning:

- 1- Propositional meaning - the literal meaning of what is said *it’s hot in here*.
- 2- Illocutionary meaning - the social function of what is said *it’s hot in here* could be:
  - an indirect request for someone to open the window
  - an indirect refusal to close the window because someone is cold
  - a complaint implying that someone should know better than to keep the windows closed (expressed emphatically)
- 3- Perlocutionary meaning - the effect of what is said *It’s hot in here* could result in someone opening the windows.<sup>73</sup>

**Table 1:** Pragmatic analysis of Bush’s letter

Line #	Propositional meaning	Illocutionary meaning	Perlocutionary meaning
1	“Thank you for your inquiry to my campaign regarding issues of concern to Armenian Americans”	Can be an indirect way of saying that something was lacking in the campaign had it not been for the inquiry	It can result in taking care of the Armenian-Americans and their problems
3-4	“The twentieth century was marred by wars of unimaginable brutality, mass murder and genocide”	Can be an indirect way of admitting the Armenian Genocide	It can result in realizing the Armenian dream, which is the acceptance of the Armenian Genocide by the US government
4-5	“History records that the	Can be an indirect way of	It can result in realizing

	Armenians were the first people of the last century to have endured these cruelties”	admitting the Armenian Genocide	the Armenian dream, which is having the USA recognize the Genocide
5-6	“The Armenians were subjected to a genocidal campaign”	Can be a direct acceptance that a crime as harsh as a genocide had been committed against the Armenian people	It can result in realizing the Armenian objective, which is having the USA recognize the genocide
6-8	“commands all decent people to remember and acknowledge the facts and lessons of an awful crime in a century of bloody crimes against humanity”	Can indirectly mean that only decent people can remember that an awful crime took place	It can result in realizing the Armenian objective, which is having the USA recognize the Genocide
9-10	“If elected President, I would ensure that our nation properly recognizes the tragic suffering of the Armenian people.”	Can be a direct promise to the Armenians to recognize their genocide	It can result in making Turkey admit the crime it committed
13-5	“The United States must actively support the independence of all the nations of the Caucasus by promising the peaceful settlement of regional disputes and the economic development of the region.”	Can indirectly mean that the Armenian nation, being a nation of the Caucasus, will have independence and economic development	It can result in the acceptance of the Armenian Genocide
16-7	“American assistance to Armenia to encourage the development of democracy, the rule of law and a tolerant open society is vital. It has my full support”	Can indirectly mean that the US president will fully support the Armenian Cause	It can result in the acceptance of the Armenian Genocide
19-20	“The United States should work actively to promote peace in the region and should be willing to serve as a mediator”	Can indirectly mean that US will resolve Armenian problems	It can result in having peace in Armenia
23-4	“I appreciate the tremendous contribution of the Armenian community to the United States”	It can indirectly mean the Armenian community in the US is to be praised	Can result in having the Armenian community well treated because of its dedication
24-5	“The Armenian community has been and will continue to be a model of dedication to values of faith and family”	It can indirectly mean the Armenian community in the US is to be praised	Can result in having the Armenian community well treated because of its dedication

**Table 2: Pragmatic analysis of Obama’s speech before presidency**

Line #	Propositional meaning	Illocutionary meaning	Perlocutionary meaning
1-2	“As a U.S. Senator, I have stood with the Armenian-American community in calling for Turkey's acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide”	It can indirectly mean that Obama has had good relation with the Armenian people and their history since ages.	It can result in making the US government recognize the Armenian Genocide if the senator becomes president.
2-5	“Two years ago, I criticized the Secretary of State for the firing of US Ambassador to Armenia, John Evans, after he properly used the term "genocide" to describe Turkey's slaughter of thousands of Armenians starting in 1915.”	It can indirectly mean that Mr. Obama intends to use the word “genocide” later after he becomes president	It can result in making the US government recognize the fact that genocide was committed against the Armenian people
6-8	I shared with Secretary Rice my firmly held conviction that the Armenian Genocide is not an allegation, a personal opinion, or a point of view, but rather a widely documented fact supported by an overwhelming body of historical evidence	It can indirectly mean that Mr. Obama firmly accepts that the Armenian Genocide is a historical fact and not a personal opinion or point of view.	It can result in the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the US government
10-12	As a senator, I strongly support passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution (H.Res.106 and S.Res.106), and as President I will recognize the Armenian Genocide	It can indirectly mean that the president is willing to support the Armenian Cause.	It can result in making Turkey admit the fact that it really committed a genocide against the Armenian people after the president’s recognition of that Genocide.
13-16	Tragically, we are witnessing in Sudan many of the same brutal tactics - displacement, starvation, and mass slaughter - that were used by the Ottoman authorities against defenseless Armenians back in 1915	It can indirectly mean an accusation that the Turkish government committed the Armenian Genocide.	It can result in making Turkey admit the fact that it had committed genocide against the Armenian nation.
18-20	America deserves a leader who speaks truthfully about the Armenian Genocide and responds forcefully to all genocides.	It can indirectly mean that the American president has to speak truthfully about the Armenian Genocide	It can result in making the US government recognize the Armenian Genocide
20	I intend to be that President	It can indirectly mean that Mr. Obama is going to be that unique	It can result in making the Armenian-Americans vote for

		president who will forcefully respond to all genocides.	such a president who will realize the Armenian objective
20-21	I look forward, as President, to continuing my active engagement with Armenian-American leaders on the full range of issues of concern to the Armenian-American community	It indirectly means that, if elected president, Mr. Obama will work for the Armenian Cause	It can result in making the Armenian-Americans vote for Mr. Obama to become president

The above pragmatic analysis of both presidents' discourses before presidency according to Austin's SAT shows that both presidents' discourses are full of verbs that have different communicative functions. Different verbs and their functions will be identified and analyzed semantically according to Jacobson's communication function.

According to Van Valin, different semantic features that arise from the use of Jacobson's communication model, beyond its apparent formants – addressee, speaker, referent, etc. - is “based on the consideration of the relations among these formants.” Jacobson calls these relations communication functions.<sup>74</sup>

The Communication functions are:

1. The referential function, which is oriented towards the context, is the relation between the message and the referent. (The message is the acceptance of the Armenian Genocide and the referent is the Armenian-American community.)
2. The emotive function, which is oriented towards the speaker, is the relation between the speaker and the message. (The relation between the presidential candidate and the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.)
3. The connective function, which is oriented to the addressee, is the relation between the addressee and the message. (The relation between the Armenian-Americans and the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.)
4. The poetic function, which is the relation of the message with itself. (The promise of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.)
5. The metalinguistic function, which is the relation between the code and the message. (The relation between the code “Medz Yeghern” and the message of the president to recognize the Armenian Genocide.)
- 6- The factive function, which is the relation between the speaker and the addressee. (The relation between the US presidential candidate and the Armenian-American community.)<sup>75</sup>

However, each of these functions conforms to the semantic features that are basic in characterizing semantically and syntactically particular sub-domains. According to Valin, “as a very preliminary and partial proposal for the semantic architecture of the domain,” big sub-domains can be identified.<sup>76</sup>

Below are samples from the sub-domains of the emotive verbs which can be defined by Jacobson's communicative functions:<sup>77</sup>

**Emotive Verbs**

The emotive verbs are also divided into sub-categories which are:

- a. Verbs of ‘expressing praise or recognition to the addressee’ (X said to Y ‘I think

you did something good, I want you to feel good because of this). Examples of these verbs are: “to congratulate”, “to acknowledge”, “to praise”, “to acclaim”.

b. Verbs of ‘expressing disapproval to the addressee’ (X said to Y ‘I think you did something bad, I want you to feel bad because of this’). Examples of such verbs are: “to reproach”, “to recriminate”, “to censor”, “to reprove”, “to criticize”.

c. Verbs of ‘expressing self recognition’ (X said to Y ‘I think I did something good’). Examples of such verbs are: “to brag”, “to take great pride”, “to show off”, “to boast”, “to glory in”, “to be proud of”.

d. Verbs of ‘expressing something new’ (X said to Y ‘I think you don’t know Z’, ‘I want you to know it’). Examples of such verbs are: “to inform”, “to let someone know”, “to notify”, “to prevent”, “to warn”, “to announce”, “to spread out”.

e. Verbs of ‘expressing the attribution of someone’s responsibility about some action’ (X said to Y ‘I think Z did something bad’). Examples of such verbs are: “to blame”, “to accuse”, “to denounce”, “to make someone responsible for”, “to attribute responsibility”, “to impute”, “to assign guilt”.<sup>78</sup>

**Table 3:** Different emotive verbs and their sub-domains taken from Bush’s letter

Line #	Verbs of praise/ recognition to the addressee	Verbs expressing disapproval to the addressee	Verbs expressing self recognition	Verbs expressing something new	Verbs of ‘expressing the attribution of someone’s responsibility about some action’
1	<b>I thank</b> you				
3		(history) <b>was marred</b>			
4				<b>endured</b> (these cruelties)	
5				<b>subjected</b> (to a genocidal campaign)	
6	<b>acknowledge</b>		<b>Defies</b>		
6			<b>commands</b> (decent people)		
7			(decent people) <b>remember</b>		
7			(decent people) <b>acknowledge</b>		
7			<b>If elected</b>		
8			<b>I would ensure</b>		
8				(Our nation properly) <b>recognizes</b>	
11				(our nation)	

				<b>must actively support</b>	
12				<b>promising</b> (the peaceful settlement)	
15			<b>has</b> (my full support)		
15-16			<b>I am encouraged</b>		
17					United States <b>should work actively</b> to promote peace
20	<b>appreciate</b>				<b>should be willing to serve</b> (as a mediator)
21					(peace) <b>must be negotiated</b>
21					(peace) <b>must be sustained</b>
23			<b>I appreciate</b>		
24	(Armenian community) <b>has been and will continue to be</b> (a model of dedication to values of faith and family)				

The 23 emotive verbs which are mentioned above belong to 5 sub-categories: only 4 verbs reveal praise to the addressee. On the other hand there are 9 verbs that express self-recognition and praise of Bush to himself. Bush also used 4 auxiliary verbs to express US responsibility towards the Armenian people and the Armenian case. However, all these responsibilities were not met out by the candidate when he became the president of the US.

**Table 4:** Different emotive verbs and their sub-domains taken from Obama's speech before the elections, on January 19, 2008

Line #	Verbs of praise or recognition to the addressee	Verbs expressing disapproval to the addressee	Verbs expressing self recognition	Verbs expressing something new	Verbs of 'expressing the attribution of someone's responsibility about some action'
1			<b>I have stood</b> (with the Armenian-American community)		

2			<b>calling</b> (for Turkey's acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide)		
3			<b>I criticized</b> (the Secretary of State)		
5-6			<b>I shared</b> (with Secretary Rice my firmly) held conviction (that the Armenian Genocide is not an allegation)		
7-8	(Genocide... is a fact) <b>supported</b> (by an overwhelming body of historical evidence)				
10-1			(As a senator,) I <b>strongly support</b> (passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution)		
11-2			(as President) I <b>will recognize</b> the Armenian Genocide		
12					(Genocide, sadly,) <b>persists</b> to this day
13					<b>threatens</b> (our common security and common humanity)
14					we <b>are witnessing</b> (in Sudan many of the same brutal tactics)
16			<b>I have visited</b> (Darfurian refugee camps)		
17			<b>I have pushed for</b> (the deployment of a robust multinational force for Darfur)		
18			<b>I have urged</b> (divestment from companies doing business in Sudan)		

18-9				(America deserves a leader who) <b>speaks</b> truthfully (about the Armenian) Genocide	
19-20				<b>responds</b> forcefully (to all genocides)	
20			I <b>intend to be</b> (that President)		
20			I <b>look forward</b>		
21			<b>continuing</b> (my active engagement with Armenian-American leaders)		
22-3				we <b>will build</b> , (new and exciting ways)	
23-4				shared values that <b>have bound</b> (together the American and Armenian people)	

Out of the 20 verbs the president has used during his speech, 11 verbs reveal praise for himself, 1 verb reveals his support of genocide recognition, and 4 auxiliary verbs express new ideas about what he will do as president of the US later.

Therefore, analysis of Obama's speech by studying its different emotive verbs and their sub-domains semantically according to Jacobson's communicative function of verbs reveals praise for himself to be considered a suitable presidential candidate and his new ideas concerning his will to work hard towards the negotiations concerning the Armenian Cause.

### ANALYSIS PART 3: SEMANTIC & PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF BOTH US PRESIDENTS' DISCOURSES AFTER GAINING THE PRESIDENCY

Both presidents' discourses after gaining the presidency will be pragmatically analyzed according to Austin's SAT, and semantically studied according to Jacobson's CFT.

The discourses of both presidents during their presidency that will be analyzed pragmatically as well as semantically in this part of the study are:

- 1- A speech by President Bush dated October 10, 2007.
- 2- An interview by *Chicago Tribune* journalist Parsons with President Obama dated April 07, 2009.

**Table 1: Pragmatic analysis of President Bush’s speech on October 10, 2007 according to Austin's SAT**

Line #	Propositional meaning	Illocutionary meaning	Perlocutionary meaning
1	“We all deeply regret the tragic suffering of the Armenian people that began in 1915.”	Can be an indirect way of saying that the USA admits that a genocide happened during World War I	It can result in having the Armenians stop blaming the president since he sympathizes with the community
2	“but this resolution is not the right response to these historic mass killings”	Can be an indirect way of saying although historically mass killings have taken place, yet passing a resolution is wrong	May result in losing hope in the president’s promise
3	“Its passage would do great harm to our relations with a key ally in NATO and in the global war on terror.”	Can indirectly mean that passing the resolution is impossible	May result in thinking of a change during the next presidential elections

**Table 2: Pragmatic analysis of President Obama’s interview with Parsons according to Austin's SAT**

Line #	Propositional meaning	Illocutionary meaning	Perlocutionary meaning
7	“under President Gull’s leadership”	It can indirectly mean that the leader for the negotiations will be President Abdalla Gull and no one else	It can have two opposite results: Turks accepting the negotiations and the Armenians rejecting
10	“I want to be as encouraging as possible”	It can indirectly mean that he will not participate and urge the negotiations; he will just encourage it to a certain limit that is possible	It can result in having negotiations one way or another although the results can be destructive for one of the parties
12	“what I want to do is not focus on my views right now”	It can mean that the president will not focus on his personal views which might be his earlier promise considering this issue	It can result in having the focus contrary to the president’s earlier view, which was accepting the Genocide
13-14	“if they can move forward and deal with a difficult and tragic history”	It can mean that though the president accepts that the history is tragic and difficult, he won’t say more	It can result in an argument from the Armenian side that the president is not keeping his earlier pledge which was to use the word genocide

15-16	“I want to be as constructive as possible in moving these issues forward”	It can mean that the president’s constructiveness is limited to a certain extent	It can have results that do not suit one of the parties
14-15	“I think the entire world should encourage them.”	It can mean that the president is not the only one responsible for the Armenian issue, and is calling the whole world to encourage the two parties	It can result in anger from the Armenian side
18	“I don't want to, as the president of the United States, pre-empt any possible arrangements”	It can mean that the president of the US doesn’t want to take any sides considering the negotiations	It can result in the anger of the Armenian-Americans against their elected president
24-25	“And I'm not interested in the United States in any way tilting these negotiations one way or another”	It can mean that the US President has a neutral role in the negotiations	Again, it can result in the anger of the Armenian-Americans against their elected president

We may deduce from the table above that the president is trying to give credit to the Turkish President to lead the negotiations and is taking a neutral stance towards those negotiations.

Since both presidents’ discourses are full of verbs that have different communicative functions, their discourses during presidency also will be identified and analyzed semantically according to Jacobson’s CFT.<sup>79</sup>

**Table 3:** Different emotive verbs and their sub-domains taken from President Bush’s October 10, 2007 speech during his presidency

Line #	Verbs of praise or recognition to the addressee	Verbs expressing disapproval to the addressee	Verbs expressing self recognition	Verbs expressing something new	Verbs of ‘expressing the attribution of someone’s responsibility about some action
1	Deeply <b>regret</b> (the tragic suffering)				
2	<b>Began</b> in 1915				
3				Its passage <b>would do</b> (great harm)	

Out of 3 verbs mentioned above, 2 verbs reveal that President Bush recognized and regretted the tragic sufferings that happened in 1915. However, there is one other verb in the table that expresses a new opinion of the president different than the earlier one. According to his new opinion, the passage of the resolution would do great harm, although earlier he had a different opinion.

**Table 4:** Different emotive verbs and their sub-domains taken from President Obama’s Ankara interview of April 07, 2009

Line #	Verbs of praise or recognition to the addressee	Verbs expressing disapproval to the addressee	Verbs expressing self recognition	Verbs expressing something new	Verbs of ‘expressing the attribution of someone’s responsibility about some action’
6			<b>I have not changed</b> views		
7				<b>You are seeing</b> (a series of negotiations)	<b>Encouraged</b> (by news, under President Gull’s leadership)
10-11			<b>I want to be</b> (as encouraging as possible)	(negotiations which are) <b>moving forward</b> and <b>could bear</b> fruit	
12			(what) <b>I want to do</b> is (not focus on my views)		
13				<b>focus on</b> (the views of the Turkish and the Armenian people)	
15-16	(the entire) world <b>should encourage</b> (them)				
15			<b>I told</b> the president		
15-16			<b>I want to be</b> (as constructive as possible)		
16			<b>moving</b>		

			(these issues forward quickly)		
17-18		<b>I don't want to</b> , (as the president of the United States,) <b>pre-empt</b> (any possible arrangements)			
20-21			<b>we are going to be a</b> (partner in working through these issues)		
23					<b>What I'd like to do is to encourage</b> (President Gull to move forward)
25				<b>I'm not interested</b> (in the United States in any way) <b>tilting</b> (these negotiations)	

Out of 18 verbs the president used during his interview, 7 verbs reveal praise and recognition for himself, while he uses only 1 verb to support the people he is negotiating about and 1 verb to express disapproval to the addressee saying that he doesn't want to pre-empt the negotiations. Although negotiations must include both parties involved, President Obama mentions only one party, only President Abdulla Gull, as if there is no second party involved in these negotiations.

Along with these verbs, there are 6 other verbs that express something new, that there are negotiations going on. Although he focuses on the views of the Turkish and the Armenian people first, in the same place at the same time he says that he is not interested in tilting these negotiations.

Earlier, during his campaign in California, in lines 10-12 of his speech, Obama had said, "As a senator, I strongly support the passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution (H.Res.106 and S.Res.106), and as President I will recognize the Armenian Genocide." However, during the negotiations between the two parties, the president now has a completely different way of expressing himself; his views now are very different from his earlier position and standpoint.

The tables above show that both presidents concentrated on verbs of praise for

the addressee before becoming presidents; however, after attaining the presidency they started to use verbs of self-recognition and started to express something new. Both presidents' horizons and visions changed during their presidency. At first they wanted to become presidents, so they praised their addressee; however, when they wanted to remain presidents later, they used verbs showing disapproval to the addressee and completely new standards.

Thus, analyzing and comparing the discourses as in the tables above pragmatically, according to Austin's SAT and semantically according to Jacobson's CFT of emotive verbs, is useful. It can be concluded that both presidents pledged support before they became president but could not keep their promises. They both wanted, for political purposes, to hide the negative which was not for the benefit of the Armenian-American community, on which they tried to count during the political elections.

## CONCLUSION

Had it not been for the Armenian Genocide recognition issue, the American presidential candidates would not have pledged support to the Armenian-Americans. Moreover, since the Armenian Genocide is a crucial issue for Armenian-Americans, they cast their votes for both US presidential candidates of the last decades with the expectancy of the recognition of that Genocide. However, in both cases these US citizens found they did not have a deal with the US presidential candidates (Mr. Bush and Mr. Obama) won the race because of the power of their political discourse. It was through the competency of their discourses that both presidents convinced the Armenian-American citizens and were able to gain their votes during the elections.

Throughout this study, analysis shows striking differences between the earlier and later discourses of both presidents. Through their discourses, both presidents pledged that they would recognize the fact that genocide against the Armenian people was committed by the Ottoman Empire; however, after becoming presidents their discourses took a completely different approach.

It is hypothesized that both US presidents, Mr. Bush and Mr. Obama, intentionally used propositional meaning different than the illocutionary meaning to reach their political goals. The analysis used to prove this is linguistic analysis according to different linguists as well as pragmatic and semantic analysis.

In the **linguistic analysis** concentrated on Blommaert's theory of CDA it is obvious that the two presidents have invested in language to attract the Armenian-Americans to vote for them.

The **pragmatic analysis** of Austin's SAT revealed that the propositional meanings both US presidents used throughout their discourses were different than the illocutionary ones as well as the perlocutionary meanings they referred to at different times and in different places.

Through the **semantic analysis** of Jacobson's CMT of emotive verb functions shed light on the fact that both presidents' discourses are full of verbs that have different functions. The verbs analyzed express praise as well as disapproval to the addressee, self recognition, something new, and other verbs expressing the attribution of someone's responsibility about some action. Analysis shows that

verbs used by both presidents throughout their discourses before presidency are full of verbs that reveal praise to the addressee to gain Armenian-American sympathy. The verbs also show praise for the speaker's own person to attract the citizens and show that the speaker is an appropriate candidate. However, the emotive verbs used in the discourses of both presidents during presidency show disapproval to the addressee as well as new ideas and new perspectives that are completely different from their earlier frame of reference.

A detailed analysis using these three methods and theories, presented in three different parts in the analysis section of this study, proves that both presidents used their power in political discourse to take advantage of obtaining the votes of the Armenian-American community during presidential elections.

The discourses by both presidents before presidency show a promise to the Armenian community; however, the discourses after gaining the presidency reveal that for political and economic reasons both presidents' speeches changed, signaling a new phase and a completely different orientation. Both presidents said something and meant another because Turkey is a powerful ally and may cause trouble for the USA if the presidents recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Both presidents during their presidency came to have a new objective which was to remain the US President rather than to become president as was the case before the elections. However, one may wonder whether the power of political discourse can enable candidates to become presidents and presidents to stay presidents or whether this can be changed by a more powerful political discourse by another candidate.

#### ENDNOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> E. Chouldjian, "Barack Obama's Track Record of Armenian Genocide Recognition," *Armenian National Committee of America - National Headquarters* (retrieved June 1, 2011 from <http://www.anca.org>, [anca@anca.org](mailto:anca@anca.org), p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> M. Toti, "The Story of Bush and the Armenian Genocide," (retrieved June 16, 2011 from <http://www.resetdoc.org/stories/index>).

<sup>3</sup> CanWest News Service, October 10, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Chouldjian.

<sup>6</sup> Discourse analysis is the area of linguistics that is concerned with how we build up meaning in the larger communicative rather than grammatical units; meaning in a text, paragraph, conversation, etc., rather than in a single sentence. Political discourse analysis is a field of discourse analysis which focuses on discourse in political forums (such as debates, speeches, and hearings) as the phenomenon of interest ([www.UsingEnglish.com](http://www.UsingEnglish.com)).

<sup>7</sup> Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, London: Taderon Press, 2000 (retrieved on February 28, 2012 from JSTOR database).

<sup>8</sup> *Armenian Genocide Resource Library for Teachers*, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Genocide Education Project, (2004) . *Armenian Genocide Resource Library for Teachers*. Retrieved on February 28, 2012 from [http://www.TeachGenocide.org/Armeanin\\_Genocide\\_Denial](http://www.TeachGenocide.org/Armeanin_Genocide_Denial). (2008). Retrieved, December 20, 2011 from [http://Armeniapedia.org/Armenian\\_Genocide\\_Denial\\_html](http://Armeniapedia.org/Armenian_Genocide_Denial_html). Armeanin Genocide Recognition. (2012). Retrieved,

- March 18, 2012 from [http://Armeniapedia.org/Armenian\\_Genocide\\_Recognition.html](http://Armeniapedia.org/Armenian_Genocide_Recognition.html). Armenians in the Whole of the Americas. (2009). *Armenian Diaspora in the Americas*. Retrieved August 7, 2011 from <<http://www.Armeniapedia.org/Armenia>> Posted by Dimitri Anastasopolous. Retrieved March 6, 2012 from [http://www.Asbarez.com/Asbarez.Armenians\\_Should\\_Confront\\_Obama\\_During\\_his\\_California\\_Visit](http://www.Asbarez.com/Asbarez.Armenians_Should_Confront_Obama_During_his_California_Visit). Tuesday, April 12th, 2011. Posted by Harut Sassounian. Retrieved March 6, 2012 from [http://www.Asbarez.com/Bush\\_Urges\\_Rejection\\_of\\_Armenia\\_Genocide\\_Resolution](http://www.Asbarez.com/Bush_Urges_Rejection_of_Armenia_Genocide_Resolution). (October 10, 2007). [Editorial] *Can West News Service*. Retrieved August 7, 2011. [www.canada.com/topics/news/story.html](http://www.canada.com/topics/news/story.html) Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman. Glossary definition. Retrieved on July 10, 2012. [www.usingEnglish.com/glossary/discourse-analysis.html](http://www.usingEnglish.com/glossary/discourse-analysis.html) Macmillan Reference. (p. 244) Retrieved on November 25, 2011 from JSTOR database. Parson, C. (April 6, 2009). [Interview with Barack Obama] *Chicago Tribune*, p. 11. Turkish Population, (last modified, March, 16, 2012). Retrieved March, 18, 2012 from JSTOR database. Turkey–United States relations, (last modified 16 March 2012). War on Terror. Retrieved March, 28, 2012 from JSTOR database
- <sup>11</sup> Webster's, 1994, p. 486.
- <sup>12</sup> M. Imbleau, *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity*, 2005, p. 244.
- <sup>13</sup> Armenian Genocide Denial, 2008, p. 8.
- <sup>14</sup> Armenian Genocide Recognition, 2012.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> John Kifner, "Armenian Genocide of 1915: An Overview" [www.nytimes.com/ref/timestopics/topics\\_armeniangenocide.htm](http://www.nytimes.com/ref/timestopics/topics_armeniangenocide.htm)
- <sup>18</sup> Armenian Genocide Recognition, 2012.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Armenian Diaspora in the Americas, 2006.
- <sup>22</sup> On April 22, 1981, President Ronald Regan, in his proclamation of the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust had said, "Like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians which followed it -- and like too many other such persecutions of too many other peoples -- the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten" ([www.armenian-genocide.org](http://www.armenian-genocide.org) > ... > US Presidential Statement)
- <sup>23</sup> Armenian Genocide Recognition, 2012.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> D. Johnson and R. Johnson, *Civil Political Discourse in a Democracy: the Contribution of Psychology*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota 60 Peik Hall, 2000 (retrieved on March 3, 2012 from JSTOR database, 2000, p. 3).
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> A. Teun Van Dijk, *What is Political Discourse Analysis? Universiteit van Amsterdam* (retrieved from [www.discourses.org/OldArticles/What\\_is\\_Political\\_Discourse\\_Analysis.pdf](http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/What_is_Political_Discourse_Analysis.pdf) on March, 3, 2012. 1993, p. 12).
- <sup>28</sup> G. Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*, London, 1969, p. 225 (retrieved on November 6, 2011 from JSTOR database).
- <sup>29</sup> Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton, *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, Malden, 2001 (retrieved from JSTOR database on 20 March, 2012).
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 401.
- <sup>31</sup> Orwell, p. 401.

- 
- <sup>32</sup> Chilton, p. 401.
- <sup>33</sup> Montgomery, p. 179.
- <sup>34</sup> Montgomery, p. 402.
- <sup>35</sup> Chifton, p. 402.
- <sup>36</sup> Wilson, 2003
- <sup>37</sup> Wilson, 1996, p. 56.
- <sup>38</sup> Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton, as cited in Wilson, p. 402.
- <sup>39</sup> Goodman, p. 57.
- <sup>40</sup> Goodman, p. 57.
- <sup>41</sup> Wilson, 2003, p.401.
- <sup>42</sup> J. Blommaert, *Discourse: A Critical Introduction*, London: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 14.
- <sup>43</sup> Blommaert, p. 14.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 15.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>48</sup> Pragmatic analysis is the study of the meaning of words, phrases and full sentences, but unlike semantics which deals with the objective meanings of words that can be found in dictionaries, pragmatics is more concerned with the meanings that words in fact convey when they are used, or with intended speaker meaning, as it is sometimes referred to (www.UsingEnglish.com).
- <sup>49</sup> J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962 (retrieved on 11/11/2011 from JSTOR database pp. 1-2). Austin suggests a- Propositional meaning - the literal meaning of what is said; b- Illocutionary meaning - the social function of what is said; c- Perlocutionary meaning - the effect of what is said.
- <sup>50</sup> Semantic analysis is the process of relating syntactic structures, from the level of phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs to the level of the writing as a whole, to their language-independent meanings (www.UsingEnglish.com).
- <sup>51</sup> These verb types are: a- Verbs expressing praise or recognition to the addressee; b- Verbs expressing disapproval to the addressee; c- Verbs expressing self recognition; d- Verbs expressing something new; e- Verbs expressing someone's responsibility about some action (Van Valin, p. 12)
- <sup>52</sup> Orwell, p. 225
- <sup>53</sup> *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, p. 18.
- <sup>54</sup> Medz Yeghern in Kouyumjian's dictionary (Mesrob Kouyoumdjian, *A Comprehensive Dictionary Armenian-English*, Beirut: Atlas Press, 1970) and Chakmakjian's dictionary (Hovhanness Chakmakjian, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Armenian-English*, Beirut: Hamazkayin Press, 1979), is as follows:
- | <b>Armenian</b> | <b>English translation</b> |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Medz Yeghern    | Great calamity             |
| Tseghasbanutyun | Genocide                   |
- <sup>55</sup> Montgomery, 1992, p. 400.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 402.
- <sup>57</sup> Goodman, 1996, p. 56.
- <sup>58</sup> Weems, 2003.
- <sup>59</sup> See Appendix E3.
- <sup>60</sup> Richard Nordquist, "The Glossary of Grammatical and Rhetoric Terms," (retrieved July 10, 2012 from grammar.about.com/od/d/g/**discourseterm**.htm www.UsingEnglish.com).
- <sup>61</sup> Artvoice, *Armenian Genocide Denial: An American Problem*. Wednesday 10/31/2007.

- 
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>63</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>64</sup> Artvoice, 2007.  
<sup>65</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>66</sup> *Asbarez*, 2011  
<sup>67</sup> Harout Sassounian, “Armenians Should Confront Obama during his California Visit”, *The California Courier*, April 12, 2011.  
<sup>68</sup> *Asbarez*, 2012  
<sup>69</sup> Austin, 1962, p. 2  
<sup>70</sup> R. Van Valine, *Investigations of the Syntax–Semantics–Pragmatics Interface*, New York: John Benjamin Publishing Company, 2008 (retrieved on November 6, 2011 from JSTOR database, 2008, p. 12).  
<sup>71</sup> Jaworowska, p. 1.  
<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p. 2.  
<sup>73</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>74</sup> Van Valine, p. 13.  
<sup>75</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>76</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>77</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>78</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

#### APPENDIX

A President Bush’s Letter on February 19, 2000 before presidency numbered by lines

Mr. Edgar Hagopian

Mr. Vasken Setrakian

Dear Edgar and Vasken,

**line 1:** Thank you for your inquiry to my campaign regarding issues of concern to **line 2:** Armenian Americans the twentieth century was marred by wars of unimaginable **line 3:** brutality, mass murder and genocide. History records that the Armenians were the **line 4:** first people of the last century to have endured these cruelties. The Armenians **line 5:** were subjected to a genocidal campaign that defies comprehension and commands **line 6:** all decent people to remember and acknowledge the facts and lessons of an awful **line 7:** crime in a century of bloody crimes against humanity. If elected President, I **line 8:** would ensure that our nation properly recognizes the tragic suffering of the **line 9:** Armenian people. The Armenian Diaspora and the emergence of an independent. **line 10:** Republic of Armenia stand as a testament to the resiliency of the Armenian **line 11:** people. In this new century, the United States must actively support the **line 12:** independence of all the nations of the Caucasus by promising the peaceful **line 13:** settlement of regional disputes and the economic development of the region. **line 14:** American assistance to Armenia to encourage the development of democracy, **line 15:** the rule of law and a tolerant open society is vital. It has my full support. I am **line 16:** encouraged by recent discussions between the governments of Armenia and **line 17:** Azerbaijan. The United States should work actively to promote peace in the **line 18:** region and should be willing to serve as a mediator. But ultimately peace must be **line 19:** negotiated and sustained by the parties involved. Lasting peace can come only. **line 20:** from agreements they judge to be in their best interests I appreciate the **line 21:** tremendous contribution of the Armenian community to the United States. The **line 22:** Armenian community has been and will continue to be a model of dedication to **line 23:** values of faith and family. Sincerely, George W. Bush

---

**B** President Bush's Speech after presidency October 10, 2007

**line 1:** "We all deeply regret the tragic suffering of the Armenian people that began in **line 2:** 1915. but this resolution is not the right response to these historic mass killings," **line 3:** "Its passage would do great harm to our relations with a key ally in NATO and in **line 4:** the global war on terror."

**C** President Obama in the California Primary, before the elections on January 19, 2008

**line 1:** As a U.S. Senator, I have stood with the Armenian American community in calling **line 2:** for Turkey's acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide. Two years ago, I **line 3:** criticized the Secretary of State for the firing of U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, **line 4:** John Evans, after he properly used the term "genocide" to describe Turkey's **line 5:** slaughter of thousands of Armenians starting in 1915. I shared with Secretary Rice **line 6:** my firmly held conviction that the Armenian Genocide is not an allegation, a **line 7:** personal opinion, or a point of view, but rather a widely documented fact **line 8:** supported by an overwhelming body of historical evidence. The facts are **line 9:** undeniable. An official policy that calls on diplomats to distort the historical facts **line 10:** is an untenable policy. As a senator, I strongly support passage of the Armenian **line 11:** Genocide Resolution (H.Res.106 and S.Res.106), and as President I will **line 12:** recognize the Armenian Genocide. Genocide, sadly, persists to this day, and **line 13:** threatens our common security and common humanity. Tragically, we are **line 14:** witnessing in Sudan many of the same brutal tactics - displacement, starvation, **line 15:** and mass slaughter - that were used by the Ottoman authorities against **line 16:** defenseless Armenians back in 1915. I have visited Darfurian refugee camps, **line 17:** pushed for the deployment of a robust multinational force for Darfur, and urged **line 18:** divestment from companies doing business in Sudan. America deserves a leader **line 19:** who speaks truthfully about the Armenian Genocide and responds forcefully to **line 20:** all genocides. I intend to be that President. I look forward, as President, to **line 21:** continuing my active engagement with Armenian American leaders on the full **line 22:** range of issues of concern to the Armenian American community. Together, we **line 23:** will build, in new and exciting ways, upon the enduring ties and shared values **line 24:** that have bound together the American and Armenian peoples for more than a **line 25:** century."

**D** Interview with President Obama after presidency on April 07, 2009

**Christie Parsons:**

**line 1:** "As a U.S. senator you stood with the Armenian-American community in calling **line 2:** for Turkey's acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide and you also supported **line 3:** the passage of the Armenian genocide resolution. You said, as president you **line 4:** would recognize the genocide. And my question for you is, have you changed **line 5:** your view, and did you ask President Gull to recognize the genocide by name?"

**Mr. Obama:**

**line 6:** "Well, my views are on the record and I have not changed views. What I have been **line 7:** very encouraged by is news that under President Gull's leadership, you are seeing **line 8:** a series of negotiations, a process, in place between Armenia and Turkey to **line 9:** resolve a whole host of longstanding issues, including this one. **line 10:** "I want to be as encouraging as possible around those negotiations which are **line 11:** moving forward and could bear fruit very quickly very soon. And so as a **line 12:** consequence, what I want to do

---

is not focus on my views right now but focus on **line 13**: the views of the Turkish and the Armenian people. If they can move forward and **line 14**: deal with a difficult and tragic history, then I think the entire world should **line 15**: encourage them. And so what I told the president was I want to be as **line 16**: constructive as possible in moving these issues forward quickly. And my sense **line 17**: is that they are moving quickly. I don't want to, as the president of the United **line 18**: States, pre-empt any possible arrangements or announcements that might be **line 19**: made in the near future. I just want to say that we are going to be a partner in **line 20**: working through these issues in such a way that the most important parties, the **line 21**: Turks and the Armenians, are finally coming to terms in a constructive way."

**Christie Parsons:**

**line 21**: "So if I understand you correctly, your view hasn't changed, but you'll put in **line 22**: abeyance the issue of whether to use that word in the future?"

**Mr. Obama:**

**line 23**: "What I'd like to do is to encourage President Gull to move forward with what **line 24**: have been some very fruitful negotiations. And I'm not interested in the United **line 25**: States in any way tilting these negotiations one way or another while they are **line 26**: having useful discussions."

*Later, in a speech to the Turkish Parliament, Obama brought up the historical events and referred to his previous views, but again he did not declare the events as genocide:*

**line 27**: "Human endeavor is by its nature imperfect. History is often tragic, but **line 27**: unresolved, it can be a heavy weight. Each country must work through its past. **line 28**: And reckoning with the past can help us seize a better future. I know there's **line 29**: strong views in this chamber about the terrible events of 1915. And while there's **line 30**: been a good deal of commentary about my views, it's really about how the **line 31**: Turkish and Armenian people deal with the past. And the best way forward for **line 32**: the Turkish and Armenian people is a process that works through the past in a **line 33**: way that is honest, open and constructive."

#### **E            Speeches of President Obama on the Armenian Memorial Day in three successive years**

**E1** Statement of President Barack Obama on Armenian Remembrance Day, April 24, 2009

Ninety four years ago, one of the great atrocities of the 20th century began. Each year, we pause to remember the 1.5 million Armenians who were subsequently massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. The Meds Yeghern must live on in our memories, just as it lives on in the hearts of the Armenian people. History, unresolved, can be a heavy weight. Just as the terrible events of 1915 remind us of the dark prospect of man's inhumanity to man, reckoning with the past holds out the powerful promise of reconciliation. I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view of that history has not changed. My interest remains the achievement of a full, frank and just acknowledgment of the facts. The best way to advance that goal right now is for the Armenian and Turkish people to address the facts of the past as a part of their efforts to move forward. I strongly support efforts by the Turkish and Armenian people to work through this painful history in a way that is honest, open, and constructive. To that end, there has been courageous and important dialogue among Armenians and Turks, and within Turkey itself. I also strongly support the efforts by Turkey and Armenia to normalize their bilateral relations. Under Swiss auspices, the two governments have agreed on a framework and roadmap for normalization. I commend this progress, and urge them to fulfill its promise. Together, Armenia and Turkey can forge a relationship that is peaceful, productive

---

and prosperous. And together, the Armenian and Turkish people will be stronger as they acknowledge their common history and recognize their common humanity. **Nothing can bring back those who were lost in the Meds Yeghern.** But the contributions that Armenians have made over the last ninety-four years stand as a testament to the talent, dynamism and resilience of the Armenian people, and as the ultimate rebuke to those who tried to destroy them. The United States of America is a far richer country because of the many Americans of Armenian descent who have contributed to our society, many of whom immigrated to this country in the aftermath of 1915. Today, I stand with them and with Armenians everywhere with a sense of friendship, solidarity, and deep respect.

**E2** Statement of President Barack Obama on Armenian Remembrance Day, April 24, 2010

“On this solemn day of remembrance, we pause to recall that ninety-five years ago one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century began. In that dark moment of history, 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. Today is a day to reflect upon and draw lessons from these terrible events. I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view of that history has not changed. It is in all of our interest to see the achievement a full, frank and just acknowledgment of the facts. The Meds Yeghern is a devastating chapter in the history of the Armenian people, and we must keep its memory alive in honor of those who were murdered and so that we do not repeat the grave mistakes of the past. I salute the Turks who saved Armenians in 1915 and am encouraged by the dialogue among Turks and Armenians, and within Turkey itself, regarding this painful history. Together, the Turkish and Armenian people will be stronger as they acknowledge their common history and recognize their common humanity. Even as we confront the inhumanity of 1915, we also are inspired by the remarkable spirit of the Armenian people. While nothing can bring back those who were killed in the **Meds Yeghern**, the contributions that Armenians have made around the world over the last ninety-five years stand as a testament to the strength, tenacity and courage of the Armenian people. The indomitable spirit of the Armenian people is a lasting triumph over those who set out to destroy them. Many Armenians came to the United States as survivors of the horrors of 1915. Over the generations Americans of Armenian descent have enriched our communities, spurred our economy, and strengthened our democracy. The strong traditions and culture of Armenians also became the foundation of a new republic which has become a part of the community of nations, partnering with the world community to build a better future. Today, we pause with them and with Armenians everywhere to remember the awful events of 1915 with deep admiration for their contributions which transcend this dark past and give us hope for the future.”

**E3** Statement by the President on Armenian Remembrance Day, April 23, 2011

“We solemnly remember the horrific events that took place ninety-six years ago, resulting in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. In 1915, 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view of that history has not changed. A full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all our interests. Contested history destabilizes the present and stains the memory of those whose lives were taken, while reckoning with the past lays a sturdy foundation for a peaceful and prosperous shared future. History teaches us that our nations are stronger and our cause is more just when we appropriately recognize painful pasts and work to rebuild bridges of understanding toward a better tomorrow. The United States knows this lesson well from the dark chapters

in our own history. I support the courageous steps taken by individuals in Armenia and Turkey to foster a dialogue that acknowledges their common history. **As we commemorate the Meds Yeghern and pay tribute to the memories of those who perished**, we also recommit ourselves to ensuring that devastating events like these are never repeated. This is a contemporary cause that thousands of Armenian-Americans have made their own. The legacy of the Armenian people is one of resiliency, determination, and triumph over those who sought to destroy them. The United States has deeply benefited from the significant contributions to our **nation by Armenian Americans, many of whom are descended from the survivors of the Meds Yeghern**. Americans of Armenian descent have strengthened our society and our communities with their rich culture and traditions. The spirit of the Armenian people in the face of this tragic history serves as an inspiration for all those who seek a more peaceful and just world. Our hearts and prayers are with Armenians everywhere as we recall the horrors of the Meds Yeghern, honor the memories of those who suffered, and pledge our friendship and deep respect for the people of Armenia.”

ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՑԵՂԱՍՊԱՆՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ՝ Մ. ՆԱՀԱՆԳՆԵՐՈՒ ՆԱԽԱԳԱՀ  
ՃՈՐՃ ՈՒ. ՊՈՒՇԻ ԵՒ ՊԱՐԱՔ ՕՊԱՄԱՅԻ ԵԼՈՅԹՆԵՐՈՒՆ ԸՆԴՄԵՋԷՆ  
(ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ)

ՎԻՔԻ ՉԱՓԱՐԵԱՆ  
vicky.tchaparian@hotmail.com

Վերջին տասնամեակներուն, Ա. Մ. Նահանգներու նախագահութեան թեկնածուները ընդհանրապէս նախագահական ընտրապայքարի ընթացքին խոստումներ կը շռայլեն՝ նաեւ ամերիկահայերուն՝ Ցեղասպանութեան ճանաչման խնդրով, սակայն ընտրուելէ ետք կը դրժեն իրենց խոստումը:

Այս ուսումնասիրութիւնը բնագրային քննավերլուծութեան կ'ենթարկէ Ա. Մ. Նահանգներու վերջին երկու նախագահներու՝ Ճորճ Ու. Պուշի եւ Պարաք Օպամայի նախընտրական խոստումները ամերիկահայութեան: Ապա, ուսումնասիրութիւնը կը վերլուծէ նաեւ Ապրիլ 24ի ամենամեայ յիշատակութեան օրուան առթիւ անոնց արտասանած յետ-ընտրական չքմեղանքի ու խուսափողական ելոյթները:

Այս առումով, ուսումնասիրութեան նիւթ կը դառնան Թեքսասի կառավարիչ Ճորճ Ու. Պուշի 19 Փետրուար 2000ին Բոկար Յակոբեանին ու Վազգէն Մեղրակեանին ուղղած նամակը, 10 Հոկտեմբեր 2007ին նախագահ Ճորճ Ու. Պուշի ելոյթը, ինչպէս նաեւ 19 Յունուար 2008ին Քալիֆորնիոյ նախընտրական արշաւին ընթացքին Իլինոյի ծերակուտական Պարաք Օպամայի, եւ 7 Ապրիլ 2009ին *Շիրակո Թրիպիոնի* թղթակից Քրիսթի Փարսընզին հետ նախագահ Օպամայի ունեցած հարցազրոյցն ու 24 Ապրիլ 2009ին, 24 Ապրիլ 2010ին եւ 23 Ապրիլ 2011ին արտասանած իր ելոյթ-խօսքերը:

Ըստ յօդուածագրին, խոստումի այս դրժումը աւելի հակասական կը հնչէ երբ խորապատկերին վրայ կը պարզուի թէ Ա. Մ. Նահանգներու 43 նահանգներ (բացի Էլլպամա, Միսիսիպի, Ուեսթ Վրժինիա, Բնտիանա, Այօուա, Ուայոմինկ եւ Սաութ Տաքոթա նահանգներէն) ճանչցած են հայոց դէմ գործուած Ցեղասպանութիւնը:

Ուսումնասիրութիւնը քերականական, ձեւաբանական եւ իմաստաբանական վերլուծութեան կ'ենթարկէ վերոյիշեալ ելոյթները, ապացուցելով որ կատարուածը բառախաղի շնորհիւ ամերիկահայութեան քուէները շահելու փորձ մըն է, մատնանշելով նաեւ որ սպասուած «Ցեղասպանութիւն» բառին փոխարէն նախագահ Օպամա կը գործածէ «Մեծ Եղեռն» արտայատութիւնը:

Ուսումնասիրութիւնը կը փորձէ նաեւ լուսարձակի տակ բերել այն իրական ու պարագայական պատճառները որոնք մղած են ամերիկացի այս երկու նախագահները՝ խուսափելու իրենց նախընտրական խոստումները յարգելէ: