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Reiteration Relations in the Courtroom: A Case Study of Schleicher's Closing Statement

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Abstract. This study explores the types and functions of Reiteration Relations in Steve Schleicher's closing argument statement, using Tanskanen's (2006) model of analysis as a foundation. The primary objective is to identify these Reiteration Relations and examine their roles within the argument. This analysis reveals the underlying messages conveyed through the use of Reiteration Relations in court. The study conceptualizes "Reiteration Relations" as encompassing various types, each serving multiple functions. In legal discourse, they are employed as a potent technique to influence and persuade the audience.

1. Introduction

Language permeates every aspect of our lives, serving as a fundamental component of communication. The manner in which individuals employ language varies greatly depending on the message they wish to convey. As a result, a multitude of discourse types exists, including legal, medical, religious, and political discourse, each used to specific situations or purposes. For instance, lawyers employ distinct techniques in their speeches to further their interests, one of which is repetition. Repetition encompasses not only repeated words but also phrases, clauses, and even letters or ideas. It manifests in various forms such as synonyms, antonyms, collocations, and paraphrasing, serving diverse functions like emphasis, emotional expression, and persuasion. Reiteration Relations, a prominent form of repetition and the focus of this study, plays a crucial role in discourse by shaping the structure of text and functioning as a potent technique used by language users to convey their messages effectively.

2. Legal Discourse

Legal discourse is a specific way of talking that happens in courts. It's not like how people talk in everyday conversations. It mostly involves speaking, not writing. In legal discourse, people use speech to argue for or against something in a particular way (Aldosari &Khafaga,2020). Although legal language has long been the subject of interest for legal philosophers and sociologists, its appeal to linguists and discourse analysts is relatively recent. Legal language plays a crucial role in shaping, interpreting, negotiating, and enforcing legal justice. Through a limited set of legal genres, efforts are made to establish and uphold a model world of rights and obligations, permissions and prohibitions. However, this a model world must ideally align with the societal vision held by individual states or nations. (Bhatia, Candlin and Engberg, 2008).

Language is used in different domains, including education, the military, healthcare, religion, and law. Legal discourse encompasses the manner in which individuals communicate orally and in writing within the legal domain, such as when deliberating on laws. Legal language imbues words with

specialized meanings, such as justice and fairness, as the primary function of the law is to regulate human behavior and maintain societal order. Legal discourse also encompasses the principles underlying the law, such as the regulations established by legislators, law enforcement personnel, legal interpreters, and reformers. Since these tasks involve human beings, their manner of speech, knowledge, values, beliefs, and intentions influence legal discussions. These personal elements shape how language operates within the legal world (Zhenhua,2016).

3. Repetition in Legal Discourse:

Repetition is often utilized to emphasize points by reiterating the same words, phrases, sentence structures, or ideas. This technique can be highly effective in persuasion, as it strengthens the conveyed message. In courtroom settings, repetition can significantly influence a jury. A memorable theme, once established, should be reiterated periodically—typically three to five times during a statement—to reinforce its importance and impact (Supardi,2015). In legal discussions, it's noticed that one common way to sway the audience is through repeating words. These repetitions help reinforce the speaker's views and affect how the listener thinks, making statements more powerful. They also help to make opinions, facts, and judgments clearer and stronger, and to add an emotional touch to the conversation. This consistency in reasoning, along with the emotional tone, helps illustrate the speaker's perspective effectively (Budnyaya, et al., 2021).

4. Persuasion in Legal Discourse

In courtroom discussions, convincing someone depends on how to use language and how willing the listeners are to believe what they're listening to. Aldosari & Khafaga (2020) present different definitions for persuasion by many scholars. Persuasion involves conveying specific ideas to various people and convincing them to accept these ideas. According to Lakoff, it is a deliberate effort to change others' behaviors using targeted communication methods. Jowett and O'Donnell describe persuasion as an interactive process where a speaker intentionally influences the beliefs and attitudes of the audience. Pardo sees persuasion as a language-based phenomenon used to convince others. These definitions highlight persuasion as a communicative process where speakers aim to modify and influence others' attitudes to their benefit. Persuasion is closely linked to power and often involves some degree of it. The line between persuasion and manipulation or coercion depends on the extent of power used in communication.

In courtroom settings, persuasion can be used both persuasively and manipulatively to sway the audience's opinion to align with the speaker's viewpoint. Lawyers, for example, use language in their statements to persuade the court to adopt their client's position. In persuasion, language is used to influence people to act or think in a certain way. In legal contexts, lawyers employ language to persuade the jury. By using persuasive language, they can convey to the jury why their clients are justified and should prevail in the case. To be effective, lawyers must strategically use language, incorporating both linguistic and non-linguistic elements that are essential for persuasion. By leveraging these features, lawyers can successfully deliver compelling statements (Supardi,2015). Moreover, Johnstone (1991) suggests a connection between persuasion and repetition, defining persuasion as the result of the sheer number of times an idea is stated and the balanced, elaborate ways in which it is stated. When someone repeats their lexical items while speaking, they aim to convince others of their ideas.

5. Repetition and the Strategies of Emphasis and Emotional Words

It's commonly understood that when someone wants to stress a point, they often repeat themselves. In other words, repetition plays a crucial role in highlighting specific points that a speaker wants to convey to their audience and ultimately influence them. According to Biber et al. (1999, as cited in Forraiová, 2011), deliberate repetitions are employed for emphasis, to maintain attention, or for clarity. Forraiová (2011) further suggests that important features in a speech are underscored by the frequent repetition of sounds, words, and phrases, which captures the speaker's attention.

Furthermore, Jackson (2016) presents various perspectives on repetition and emphasis, noting that repetition conveys emphasis by imparting a certain meaning or effect.

On the other hand, emotion is a potent tool that enhances speeches and makes them more impactful. It is frequently used in political discourse, media discussions, and by everyday individuals to influence opinions, either by changing existing ones or creating new ones. Emotion can be described as a means of influencing the listener to adopt a certain viewpoint and take action, possessing a performative potential (Cislaru, 2012). Language is rich with words and phrases that can be strategically used to manipulate people. For example, Politicians often utilize emotional language deliberately to evoke strong feelings in their audience and thereby manipulate their decisions (Woods, 2006). Raheem (2017) examines the use of emotional language in poetry, noting that deep emotional language is employed to resonate with readers' emotions and persuade them with what they read. To enhance the effectiveness of emotive language in persuading the audience to align with the speaker's ideologies, it is observed that speakers prefer to repeat these emotive words. They choose words that resonate with the listeners' emotions and emotionally influence them.

6. Tanskanen's (2006) Model

Tanskanen introduced her model, drawing from previous frameworks, in her 2006 book "Collaborating towards Coherence." This model incorporates two fundamental categories derived from Halliday and Hasan's classification: reiteration and collocation. Within each category, Tanskanen identifies various elements that she believes do not unnecessarily complicate the analysis but instead provide a solid foundation for understanding lexical cohesion in discourse (Tanskanen, 2006: 46-49). According to Tanskanen's model, reiteration relations encompass simple and complex repetitions, substitution, equivalence, generalization, specification, cospecification, and contrast. Meanwhile, collocation relations comprise ordered sets, activity-related collocations, and elaborative collocations.

6.1 Reiteration Relations

The following relations can be subcategorized into the following:

6.1.1 Simple and Complex Repetition

Tanskanen (2006: 49-50) categorizes repetition into simple repetition and complex repetition. Simple repetition occurs when an item is repeated in an identical form or with minimal grammatical changes, such as singular to plural forms or present to past tenses. Complex repetition, on the other hand, involves more significant changes, including different grammatical functions or shared lexical morphemes among repeated items. Tanskanen notes that repeated items do not necessarily have to refer to the same thing.

6.1.2 Substitution

Substitution involves the repetition of pronouns. The most common form of substitution occurs when a pronoun, such as "I," "you," "we," "they," "she," "he," or "it," replaces a noun or noun phrase. Other less common forms of substitution, such as using the words "one," "do," and "so," are rarely employed (Bayu,2019).

6.1.3 Equivalence

Equivalence enhances the relationship between various lexical items viewed from similar perspectives. This concept is borrowed from the idea of synonymy (Bayu,2019).

6.1.4 Generalisation

According to Tanskanen (2006:57), this subcategory involves the relation between a specific item and a more general one. In other models of lexical cohesion, it has been referred to using various terms such as superordinate, hyponymic relation, or inclusion: specific-general.

6.1.5 Specification

Specification, in contrast to generalization, involves the relationship between an item and a more specific one. In other studies, it is also known as meronymy and is termed "inclusion: general-specific" by McCarthy.

6.1.6 Co-specification

Co-specification, another subcategory proposed by Tanskanen (2006:58) in this classification, refers to the relationship between two items that share a common general item. It has been referred to in other studies as co-hyponymy or co-meronymy. It is important to note that the general item does not necessarily need to appear in the text.

6.1.7 Contrast

The final subcategory of reiteration is often termed antonymy or opposition. Essentially, it entails contrasting meanings between different lexical items. Like equivalence, the notion of contrast necessitates a blend of lexical-semantic relations and a discourse-specific approach to ensure the precise correlation of lexical items (Bayu,2019).

7. Data Analysis

closing argument statement in Derek Chauvin's trial will be analyzed using Tanskanen's (2006) model which is discussed previously. The statement delivered by Steve Schleicher is **marked** by the use of repetition to convey certain messages that serve one purpose which is convincing the audience of the defendant's innocence. Repetition is used in its various forms to fulfill this purpose. The analysis shows the speaker's repetition techniques that is used to deliver and convince the listeners with his implied ideologies.

7.1 Steve Schleicher's closing argument statement:

Mr. Schleicher reviewed the prosecution's evidence and attempted to cast doubt on the evidence presented by Mr. Chauvin's attorney. He interspersed his arguments with excerpts from the jury instructions and legal principles. Mr. Schleicher emphasized that it was Mr. Chauvin's knee on Mr. Floyd's neck for over nine minutes that caused his death on May 25, 2020, dismissing any suggestion of a heart condition or drug overdose. He endeavored to strike a delicate balance. He aimed to portray Mr. Chauvin as a law enforcement officer who had failed to adhere to departmental policies, all the while ensuring that his critique was directed specifically at Mr. Chauvin's actions rather than casting aspersions on policing in its entirety.

7.2 Reiteration Relations

The analysis starts with **Reiteration**, the first category of Tanskanen's (2006) model which includes the following:

7.2.1 Simple and Complex Repetitions

Following the Reiteration Relations of Tanskanen's (2006) model, which include the first two subcategories the simple and complex repetitions. As explained before, in these two kinds, the item is reiterated either identically or with slight grammatical changes. Starting with the most frequent words in the text: "George" which is repeated (13) times i.e., (2.5%) and "Floyd" repeated (14) times i.e., (3%). Indeed, George Floyd is the name of the dead man. Schleicher reuses the name frequently in different occasions to show that Floyd is not only a victim, rather human being who has a name and a family that cares about him. Thus, he keeps repeating his name to affect people's emotions. Similarly, the (7) times i.e., (1.5%) repeated word "people" serves the same function which is showing that Floyd was close and loved by so many people.

He was a man that many people care about and he is missed by so many people. He is missed especially by his mother, this point is confirmed by re-mentioning the words "heard" (4) times i.e., (0.7%), "mom" (3) times i.e., (0.5%), "mother", "Sissy", special", "brother", and "childhood"

(2) times i.e., (0.3%). Schleicher was keen on repeating these words to the audience to show that the special bond between the victim and his mother had been assured by many people who were close to him and witness his childhood like his brother. He was very close to his mother (Sissy) and represented a significant part of her life. That part had been torn out, leaving an emptiness in his poor mother's life due to the terrible crime committed by the officers.

After evoking the listeners' emotions by presenting Floyd as a beloved personality, Schleicher proceeds to describe the crime and emphasize the severity of the police officers. "Room", "chest" are repeated (5) times i.e., (1%), "pavement" and "breathe" (7) times i.e., (1.5%), "lungs", "enough", "give", "pushed" (3) times i.e., (0.5%), "lift", "make", "knee", "tearing", "bare", "skin", "trapped", "unyielding", "desperately", "desperate", "knuckles", and "defendant" (2) times i.e., (0.3%) to reveal the cruelty of the officers pushing him a knee to the neck, a knee to the back with his face against the rough pavement which tore into his bare skin. He was unable to breathe because there wasn't enough room in his chest, and none of them cared about his shouts. They were pressing on his body so hard that his lungs couldn't draw in air anymore, leaving him unable to breathe. The immense pressure made it difficult for him to move his chest, hindering his ability to inhale. Shedding light on the same point, Schleicher repeats the words "nine", "minutes", "twenty", "nine" and "seconds" (5) times i.e., (1%) to refer to the time that Floyd spend facing the pavement with the defendant's weight on him.

The words "surrounded" frequent (5) times i.e., (1%), "time" (4) times i.e., (0.7%), "knew" (4) times i.e., (0.7%), "strangers", "life", "house" (3) times i.e., (0.5%), "cared", "familiar", "place", and "pick out" (2) times i.e., (0.3%) are clarifying the contrast in two times in Floyd's life. After being surrounded by the people he knew, loved, and grew up with in the same house, he is now looking at strange faces that he does not know. He can not see any familiar faces and is never given the time to see his family for the last time. To confirm the same point the word "face" is repeated (4) times i.e., (0.7%), as a noun and a verb. in other words, the idea of Floyd being killed facing the pavement alone away from his family is affirmed by the repetition of the same word.

George Floyd is a human being, as any other human being, has a human strength which has limits. It is not a superhuman strength that may last longer, so defiantly he will lose his strength and consequently his life after almost ten minutes of pressure on his chest. He was an ordinary man, emotional man, in that he was crying out for his mother. This point is clarified by repeating the words "strength" (4) times i.e., (0.7%), "superhuman" (4) times i.e., (0.7%), "crying", "human", "humans", and "man" (2) times i.e., (0.3%). Schleicher also believes that repeating the place where Floyed was killed, 38th and Chicago, in Minneapolis, shows how real the situation is and is important to influence the listeners' feelings. For this reason, the two words "38th", "Chicago" are frequent (2) times i.e., (0.3%) in the statement.

7.2.2 Substitution

The second subcategory of reiteration in the classification of Tanskanen's (2006) model is **substitution.** This is represented by many forms; the **pronoun form** is the most noticeable form in this argument. This relation is when a pronoun replaces a lexical form, it does not weaken this relation; it only provides an alternative form. The following examples present the frequent usage of the pronouns "he", "him" and "his" which refer back to the name of the victim "Gorge Floyd". This kind of repetition emphasizes the point that Floyd was a normal human who had a name, emotions, and family whom they cared about and he cared about them too. The pronouns mentioned again and again also to confirm the suffering that the victim went through during that day before he loses his life. Moreover, the pronoun "she" replaces "Sissy Floyd", George Floyd's mom. This replacement is stressing and persuading the listeners of the amount of suffering she is experiencing now after losing her loved one. This kind of repetition underlines the scale of this tragedy.

- (1) "... his name was George Perry Floyd Jr. and he was born on October 14, 1973 in Fayetteville, North Carolina to his parents..."
- (2) "In that time and in that place while he was surrounded in life by people who knew him, faces he could pick out, there was no one there he knew."
- (3) "He was trapped with the unyielding pavement underneath him, as unyielding as the men who held him down, pushing him, a knee to the neck, a knee to the back, twisting his fingers, holding his legs for nine minutes and 29 seconds. The defendant's weight on him."
- (4) "you heard all about Sissy Floyd. She was George Floyd's mom. She was the mom of the house. She was the mom of the neighborhood, and you heard about the special bond that she and George Floyd shared during his life."

7.2.3 Equivalence

The third subcategory in Tanskanen's (2006) model is **Equivalence** which is commonly referred to as **synonymy**. It is important to note that the equivalence relation relies upon the text and context. This implies that one item may be considered equivalent to another in one text or context, while being related to a different item in another text or context. Below are some examples of equivalence from Schleicher's closing argument statement:

The phrases "to open his chest", "to give his lungs room", and "to breathe" are all related by equivalence. They serve to describe actions aimed at facilitating George Floyd's ability to breathe more comfortably. They convey the idea of creating space within his chest area to allow his lungs to expand and function more effectively. These phrases are equivalent in the sense that they emphasize the physical actions George Floyd attempted to ease his breathing difficulties during the incident. "Knew" and "recognized" both have similar meanings, suggesting familiarity or acquaintance with those individuals that Floyd love and care about:

- (1) "He pushed with his face to lift himself, to open his chest, to give his lungs room, to breathe."
- (2) "George Floyd was surrounded by people, by people he knew, people who knew him, people he recognized..."

7.2.4 Generalisation, Specification, and Co-specification

The fourth subcategory in this classification is referred to as **generalization**, focusing on the relationship between an item and a broader, more general category. It can alternatively be termed as a **superordinate** or **hyponymic** relation. Conversely, the fifth subcategory, **specification**, operates in contrast to generalization. It pertains to the relationship between an item in a text and a more specific item, also known as **meronymy**. The sixth subcategory, **co-specification**, involves the relationship between two items that share a common general category. It is also referred to as **co-hyponymy** or **co-meronymy**. Schleicher employs these types of repetition in his closing argument to help accomplish his objectives. He utilizes a select few of these relationships in his text. Therefore, the following analysis will offer examples, each of which contains the three types of relations:

The three types of repetition, i.e. the relations of **generalisation**, **specification**, and **co-specification** are used in this text as example (1) shows. In which "life" generalizes "**childhood**, **adolescence and adulthood**", and "**childhood**, **adolescence and adulthood**" specify "life" and related to each other by Co-specification for the purpose of stressing the role of the people whom he was surrounded with his whole life and how painful it is to lose someone this close. While example (2) sheds lights on the horrible crime and the suffering Floyd had been through before his death. In this example, "**this time**" generalizes "**Nine minutes and 29 seconds**" (recurs 2 times to add emphasis), "**Nine minutes and 29 seconds**" specify "**this time**" and co-specify each other to serve the function of emphasizing and attracting the attentions of the listeners of how long his suffering was:

- (1) "George Floyd was surrounded by people he cared about and who cared about him, throughout his life, throughout his childhood, in that house, through his adolescence, into his adulthood."
- (2) "Nine minutes and 29 seconds, nine minutes and 29 seconds. During this time, George Floyd struggled, desperate to breathe, to make enough room in his chest to breathe."

7.2. 5 Contrast

The final subcategory in the classification of reiteration is **contrast**. This subcategory denotes the relationship between an item and another item that has an opposing meaning. In alternative studies, it is referred to as **antonymy** or **opposition**. It is not necessary for the items related by contrast to be strictly antonymous; they could simply convey opposing meanings within a specific text. Indeed, Schleicher in his closing argument utilizes the contrast relation to fulfill specific purposes. This is evident in the following examples:

The contrast relation that is used in this text is presented in example (1) to serve the two functions of persuasion and confirmation. The items "knew" and "familiar face" are opposite in meaning, in this context, to "strangers" which used more than one time for the purpose of emphasis. That is to say, the utilization of this contrast relation is an attempt to assure and persuade the audience of the painful fact that Floyd who cherishes his family and friends died alone with no familiar face only strangers. Example (2) presents "super humans" which contrasts with "A human being", "a human" and "a man" to stress that Floyd did not resist arrest. He was cooperative and willing to comply with their wishes, all he wanted is to let him breathe because he is a normal human being with no superpowers, and his lungs will not work with all this pressure on his chest:

- (1) "In that time and in that place ... there was no one there he knew. He was surrounded by strangers. Strangers, all of them. Nine minutes and 29 seconds. He's surrounded by strangers, not a familiar face to say his final words".
- (2) "Not super humans, only humans. Just a human, just a man, lying on the pavement being pressed upon, desperately crying out. A grown man, crying out for his mother. A human being."

7.3 Discussion of the Results

Schleicher heavily uses the Reiteration Relations in his argument to speak persuasively to the audience, namely the jury. He seeks to obtain their acceptance and promotion for his endeavors to prove Derek Chauvin's guilt. He frequently employs the reiteration relations to affect the listeners by his recurrent emphasis as well as to persuade them by repeating emotional language to achieve his goals. It is observed that the repetition of words, whether simple or complex, by Schleicher serves to emphasize their importance. This emphasis on certain ideas is crucial for highlighting the significant features of the statement. Whether through immediate or delayed repetition, emphasis ensures that crucial ideas are comprehended and retained by the audience. This technique empowers listeners to easily identify and remember crucial words and phrases, strengthening the message and magnifying its impact. Through skillful imprinting of expressions in the minds of the audience, the speech earns credibility and convinces listeners to support its objectives, ultimately reaching its primary goal.

Tables (1) and (2) illustrate the distribution of persuasion and emphasis functions carried out by reiteration relations. The analysis reveals that simple and complex repetitions account for the majority, constituting over 79% of total persuasion and 78% of emphasis. The two tables also show a clear similarity between the distributions of the two functions expressly; substitution [(6%) persuasion, (7%) emphasis], equivalence [(3%) persuasion and emphasis], generalisation [(3%) persuasion and emphasis], specification [(3%) persuasion and emphasis] and contrast [(3%) persuasion and emphasis]. All reiteration relations in the text play a significant role in building an influential statement. They are all used for the same purposes which are persuading, and obtaining the hearers sympathy and informing them about the magnitude of the crime that are essential for the success of his intentions

Table (1). Persuasion Function of Reiteration Relations in Schleicher's closing statement

Reiteration Relations	Complex + Simple Repetitions		Substitution		Equivalence			Generalisation		Specification		Co- specification		Contrast	Total	
	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.
Persuasion	54	79%	4	6%	2	3%	2	3%	2	3%	2	3%	2	3%	68	100%

Table (2). Emphasis Function of Reiteration Relations in Schleicher's closing statement

Reiteration Relations	Complex + Simple Repetitions		Substitution		Equivalence		Generalisation		Specification		Co- specification			Contrast	Total	
	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.	n.	Per.
emphasis	48	78%	4	7%	2	3%	2	3%	2	3%	2	3%	2	3%	62	100%

7.4 Conclusion

Analyzing the linguistic structure of Schleicher's closing statement sheds light on his linguistic skills. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the presence of "Reiteration Relations" in the argument, aiming to demonstrate that the repeated lexical items in this closing statement serve specific ideological functions. Tanskanen's (2006) model provides a valuable framework for achieving this goal and thereby figuring out the functions each type performs. As a means to strengthen his argument and make it more persuasive, Schleicher used legal strategies namely, emphasis and emotional words. The analysis proved that the text is mainly designed to achieve the function of persuasion It is also important to mention that the text is full of single words, and intuitively, the speaker tends to repeat isolated words more than phrases because they are more effective and memorable. The analysis reveals the significance of linguistic repetitions in court to secure the listeners' engagement and, consequently, win the case.

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