

## **Critical Discourse Analysis of Key Concepts in Obama's Statement: Cuba Policy Changes**

The paper analyzes the key concepts in the US President's speech announcing the reestablishment of relations with Cuba in December 2014 from a critical discourse point of view. His arguments make a clear distinction between what America represents (Us) and what Cuba lacks (Them), glorify the half-a-century-old blockade and acknowledge its failure. Obama's words also reflect the policy change is a one-sided dialogue, a one-lane road, ignoring the needs and hopes in the island when he neglects or only vaguely mentions important areas that are undoubtedly within the Cuban national interests. When read in different geopolitical contexts, the speech, built around the same arguments the US has been using for more than fifty years, envisions a change in Cuba through empowering given population sectors to achieve the same historical objectives.

**Key words:** Obama; Cuba; policy; changes; democracy; human rights; empowerment; color revolution.

### **Introduction**

After two years of secret negotiations on December 17, 2014, the Presidents of Cuba and the United States, Raul Castro and Barak Obama, announced in separate statements the reestablishment of diplomatic relations broken by D. Eisenhower in the early 1960s. That day The BBC reported "US President Barack Obama has hailed a "new chapter" in US relations with Cuba, announcing moves to normalize diplomatic and economic ties ... frozen since the early 1960s, when the US broke off diplomatic relations and imposed a trade embargo after Cuba's revolution led to communism." Gladly received by most in Cuba and the almost two million-Cuban community living in the United States as well as by the American business sector and public in general; the news marked, hopefully, the beginning of the end of the Cuban-United States dispute.

On the other hand, US congressional members of Cuban origin Marcos Rubio, Ileana Ross-Lehtinen and Ted Cruz among others in the Republican Party considered the move counterproductive. The first has on several occasions promised to reverse the steps taken if he is able to get into the White House as republican presidential hopeful for the next elections. Neither Rubio nor Cruz has ever been in Cuba; the former's parents left Cuba long before the revolution; the second's father left Cuba in 1960 and Cruz was born in Canada. Ross-Lehtinen abandoned the island with her parents in early January 1959. Therefore, it is pertinent to wonder what these US legislators know about the reality in the island, apart from what they hear from the US-paid "dissidents".

About the US President and his foreign policy, Mr. Rubio declared, "I don't know what his intentions are. His foreign policy is at a minimum naïve, and perhaps even truly counterproductive to the future of democracy in the region." However, is the United States foreign policy really so obscure and naïve as Senator Rubio believes, or rather, as a senior official in the establishment wants to make us think he believes? Does it really endanger the future of "democracy", as conceived in the US establishment, in Latin America?

The following article will answer the above questions based on the critical discourse analysis of Obama's speech on Cuba policy changes and argue that such policy changes have very clear intentions as their implementation shows; are not naïve at all and, in no way endanger democracy in the region.

To achieve the above, first, I will look into the context the speech is produced; then, the clauses containing some of the most relevant aspects will be analyzed from above; that is, as a message, exchange and representation deriving from distinct functional components or metafunctions in systemic linguistic theory. At this stage, key concepts outlined in each clause will be examined in the light of history and intertextuality. Finally, an outline of a future scenario for Cuba will be described and how subsequent actions by the US government after Dec. 17, 2014 fit nicely in the White House announcement.