Illocutionary Acts Analysis in Donald Trump's 2024 Victory Speech

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Abstract:

This study examined the speech acts of Donald Trump's 2024 victory speech. The focus of speech acts studied by the researcher is illocutionary acts. The data was gathered by transcribing President-elect Donald Trump's illocutionary acts from his victory speech into textual form. The data was analyzed qualitatively using John Rogers Searle's theory of illocutionary acts, including declarations, directives, expressives, assertives, and commissives. The result of this study revealed that there were thirty-three utterances of illocutionary acts in Donald Trump's 2024 victory speech. The most common acts were commissive, namely seventeen utterances, while directive acts were four of all illocutionary acts. Conversely, assertive acts were three utterances, and expressive acts were nine.

Keywords: speech acts; victory speech; illocutionary acts

INTRODUCTION

Humans are inherently social entities who consistently interact with one another. They will engage in communication as they endeavor to connect with people. Communication is transmitting ideas, information, messages, and dialogues among individuals. Consequently, transmitting the information is consistently aware of the communication's purpose. The fundamental function of language is to convey information. It indicates that the speaker intended for the listener to understand the context of their communication. In linguistics, the pragmatic and utterance contexts represent the categories of spoken activities. Therefore, speech acts establish a subject of inquiry within the field of pragmatics (Yusanti et al., 2022).

Pragmatics is an area of linguistics interconnected with other domains of language study. The domain of politics necessitates communication, as shown by the president-elect's victory speech (Megasari et al., 2024). The president-elect's victory speech is crucial for conveying policies, vision, and governmental objectives to the public and functionaries. The president-elect employs several illocutionary speech acts to achieve specific communication goals in his victory address. The phrase "illocutionary speech acts" refers

to the aims or objectives achieved, both directly and indirectly, using linguistic expressions. The president of a nation must employ clear and persuasive language in a speech to inspire the public and make judicious decisions in certain situations. It is crucial to analyze illocutionary speech actions in victory speech to understand the formation of political communication and its impact on governmental policies and decisions (Erisen & Villalobos, 2014). President-elect Donald Trump expressed gratitude to his campaigners in his victory speech. He elucidated the significance of their support in guaranteeing that America's future is more prosperous, courageous, superfluous, secure, and resilient than ever before (FOX 9 Minneapolis-St. Paul, 2024).

The theory of speech acts addresses the idea that words have meanings. It identifies both utterances and actions. In other words, speaking acts involve uttering expressions. Producing an utterance involves three acts: locution, illocution, and perlocution. Illocutionary speech acts as utterances that convey supplementary meaning (Searle, 1979). Additionally, he offered five classifications of illocutionary speaking acts. Assertive acts relate to the truthfulness and falsity of a thought articulated within a specific context or phenomenon. Therefore, the terms 'belief' and 'commitment' are common in assertive acts (Ramanathan et al., 2020). When the speaker wants someone else to do something, directive speech acts are used, which mostly employ phrases like "invite," "request," "command," "beg," "challenge," "ask," "dare," and "insist" (Ahmed et al., 2021). The illocutionary acts that bind the speaker to a future action are commissive (AlAfnan & Oshchepkova, 2022). Expressions that reflect the speaker's inner state are called expressive acts. Verbs like "thank you," "compliment," "apologize," and "complain" are so frequently used in expressive acts (Rizki & Golubović, 2020). Declaration speech acts indicate that the success of its implementation will result in a match between the contents of the idea and reality. In other words, it is an utterance of how a situation has changed. People who offer remarks are typically professional experts, such as priests, academics, clerics, doctors, pastors, judges, and others (Yusanti et al., 2022).

The researcher has selected this issue for the study for several reasons. The understanding of speech acts is essential. Most EFL students and educators feel that understanding grammatical principles and fundamental vocabulary is essential for social engagement. When communicating in a language, speakers must consider more than merely its grammatical structures and meanings. EFL students who lack pragmatic

knowledge of a language will struggle to communicate successfully. The capacity to perform speech acts is essential in language understanding, facilitating more effective communication. A firm comprehension of pragmatics facilitates effective communication for EFL students (Kentmen et al., 2023); despite numerous studies on speech acts across several problems, there has been little focus on the analysis of illocutionary speech acts in presidential victory speeches. This research searches for the knowledge gap on the application of speech acts within the framework of United States politics. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the communication style utilized by Donald Trump in his victory speech. The researcher selected Donald Trump's speech due to his status as the most influential individual in the United States. As the president-elect, his speech is intriguing to many individuals.

Third, YouTube.com is the social medium most favorably valued by EFL students for language learning. With adequate internet access, EFL students can use YouTube videos to enhance several foreign language skills (Toleuzhan et al., 2023). Fourth, prior research indicates that the relevant study concentrates on illocutionary acts within Yoon Suk Yeol's victory speech (Megasari et al., 2024). The researcher analyzes the illocutionary acts in Donald Trump's victory speech, applying Searle's (1979) theory.

METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research does not use statistical processes or quantification to discover data (Megasari et al., 2024). This study used data from President Donald Trump's victory speech. The data was gathered from the YouTube FOX 9 Minneapolis-St. Paul channel and then transcribed into sentences indicating the presence of illocutionary acts.

The procedures for data analysis in this study were: a) identifying utterances as sentences, including illocutionary acts, b) categorizing the findings according to Searle (1979), c) interpreting the results, and d) concluding.

RESULT

Table 1. Assertive Acts

Data	Time	Utterances
1	0.38-0.39	And frankly this was I believe the greatest political movement of all time.
2	4.23-4.28	America has given us an unprecedented and powerful mandate.

3	1.16-1.21	It is now clear that we've **achieved the most incredible political thing.**

Table 2. Directive Acts

Data	Time	Utterances
1	20.12-20.15	Bobby, leave the oil to me!
2	20.25- 20.29	Bobby, stay away from the liquid gold.
3	24.16-24.22	I'm asking every citizen all across our land to join in this noble and righteous endeavor.
4	24.55-24.58	We have to put our country first for at least a period of time we have to fix it.

Table 3. Commissive Acts

Data	Time	Utterances
1	0.46-0.53	It's going to reach a new level of importance because we're going to help our country heal.
2	1.50-1.56	Every citizen I will fight for you, for your family, and your future.
3	1.57-2.02	Every single day, I will be fighting for you with every breath in my body.
4	2.04-2.11	I will not rest until we have delivered the strong safe and prosperous America that our children deserve and that you deserve.
5	2.22-2.30	This is a magnificent victory for the American people that will allow us to make America great again.
6	4.03-4.04	We're going to make you very happy.
7	4.05-4.06	We're going to make you very proud of your vote.
8	5.35-5.37	We'll be keeping control of the House of Representative.
9	19.06-19.07	We're gonna pay you back.
10	19.08-19.09	We're gonna do the best job.
11	20.32-20.33	We're going to be paying down debt.
12	20.34-20.35	We're going to be reducing taxes.
13	22.08-22.12	They said he will start a war. I'm not going to start a war. I'm going to stop wars.
14	23.33-23.46	The task before us will not be easy but I will bring every ounce of energy spirit and fight that I have in my soul to the job that you've entrusted to me.
15	24.00-24.05	I will govern by a simple motto *"promises made promises kept"*. We're going to keep our promises.
16	24.07-24.16	Nothing will stop me from keeping my word to you the people. We will make America safe, strong, prosperous, powerful, and free again.
17	25.10-25.18	I will not let you down. America's future will be bigger, better, bolder, richer, safer, and stronger than it has ever been before

Table 4. Expressive Acts

Data	Time	Utterances
1	1.37-1.46	I want to thank the American people for the extraordinary honor of being elected your 47th president and your 45th president.
2	5.46-5.50	I want to thank Mike Johnson. I think he's doing a terrific job.
3	5.53-6.10	I want to also thank my beautiful wife, Melania, first lady who was the number one best-selling book in the country.
4	6.23-6.35	She has done a great job, works very hard, works very hard to help people so I just want to thank her but I want to thank my whole family, my amazing children.

5	18.44-18.53	I want to thank the millions of hardworking Americans across the nation who have always been the heart and soul of this really great movement.
6	6.59-7.01	My father-in-law, Victor, is tremendous.
7	7.04-7.18	We miss very much Melanie's mother, Amalia. We miss Amalia, don't we? She would be very happy right now, standing on this stage she'd be so proud. She was a great woman that one beautiful inside and out.
8	11.49-11.51	Everybody up here is great.
9	11.51-11.53	Everybody up here is very special.

DISCUSSION

In Data 1, presented in Table 1, the term "frankly" emphasizes his statement and spotlights his conviction. The utterances made by President-elect Donald Trump represent assertive acts, implying his expression of a belief regarding the political movement in America. This parallels the findings of (Megasari et al., 2024), wherein president-elect Yoon Suk Yeol employed assertive acts in his victory speech to acknowledge the significant experiences he encountered during his campaign before the Korean public.

In Data 2, presented in Table 1, the phrase "unprecedented and powerful" shows truthfulness in the utterance. This indicates assertive acts because Donald Trump was sure that America would give him the most significant mandate for the first time in American presidential history. Meanwhile, (Hamza & Nordin, 2024) studied the pragmatic deviation of Searle's felicity. Conditions of illocutionary speech acts in Trump's political speeches. Their study found falsity in Donald Trump's utterances, as he used the phrase "rigid and stolen."

In Data 3, presented in Table 1, Donald Trump emphasizes his belief since he uses the word "clear" to clarify his remark. Therefore, the utterances can be classified as assertive, suggesting that he is expressing a belief regarding the American political movement. This finding is consistent with that of (Oder, 2023), who found that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey's former president, employed assertive acts in his speech to guarantee the future prosperity of the Turkish people.

In Data 1, presented in Table 2, the word "leave" emphasizes his utterance, indicating his command. Thus, the utterance made by President-elect Donald Trump falls into the category of directive acts, indicating that he delivers his command. He insists that Bobby stop being involved in US oil policies. It is similar to the findings of (Raza et al., 2021)

when the former prime minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, used directive acts in his speech through utterances in front of the Pakistani public.

In Data 2, presented in Table 2, the term "stay away" emphasizes his utterance, showing his wish. For this reason, President-elect Donald Trump's utterances are classified as directive acts. He reaffirms his earlier command, namely Bobby, to stay away from the US liquid gold regulations. Using directive acts in front of the Pakistani audience during the speech of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif is related to what was found (Raza et al., 2021).

In Data 3, presented in Table 2, the statement "I am asking" emphasizes his utterance, expressing his request. Thus, President-elect Donald Trump's speech fits within the category of directive acts, suggesting that he expressed his urge. Donald Trump wanted the American people to help him construct a righteous society, similar to (Mezhov et al., 2022) findings of current Ukrainian speech.

In Data 1,6,7,9,10,11,12,13 presented in Table 3, Donald Trump used the phrase "going to" to inform the American public about his previous ambitions. Therefore, the statement made by Donald Trump, who has been elected as the US president, is classified as a commissive act. It is comparable to the findings of (Rakaj, 2022) when Barack Obama ran for president in 2008 and 2012.

In Data 2,3,4,5,8,14,15,16, the president-elect, Donald Trump, uses the word "will" to guarantee America's future. Therefore, the utterances made by Donald Trump, the president-elect, belong to the category of commissive acts since they indicate that he presents his future agenda. He is convinced he will deliver a better future for America. It is comparable to what (Yin & Chen, 2020) discovered when Chinese foreign ministry spokespersons made diplomatic promises during regular news conferences in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the Data presented in Table 4, the president-elect Donald Trump used the words "thank you," "great," and "very special" to express his gratitude to the American, his family, his father and mother and in law, and Mike Johnson as the speaker of the United States House of Representatives that had elected him as the 45th and 47th president. Thus, the utterance made by President-elect Donald Trump falls into the category of expressive acts, indicating his gratefulness. However, (MYO, 2023) finding about the speech act in

Martin Luther King Jr.'s '*I Have a Dream*' shows a different result. Expressive acts used by Martin Luther King Jr were to express enthusiasm and dissatisfaction. He used words like "joyous" and "languished."

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that President-elect Donald Trump used several illocutionary speech acts to engage with the American public and functionaries in his victory address. The recognized categories of illocutionary speech acts are expressive, commissive, assertive, and declaration. However, no declaration speech acts were used in the victory speech. This indicated that Donald Trump did not convey factual statements but expressed thanks, excitement, confidence, and dedication to all the participants involved in his campaign. This research offered an advanced comprehension of language and political communication in President-elect Donald Trump's victory speech.

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