



## **SPEECH ACTS OF THREATENING AND WARNING IN SOME SELECTED POLITICAL TRUMP'S SPEECHES**

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### **Abstract:**

This work looks into how warnings and threatening were utilized by the American President Donald Trump during his political public speeches. It focuses on the language structures as well as pragmatic skills employed to achieve these two acts. It shows that these speeches direct to use particular tactics over others. This paper is divided into three sections. The first section gives a wide view on the two concepts of warning and threatening which are so closely related to speech acts, and how it is hard for readers to differentiate between them. The second section focuses on the aims of this study by listing them successively. The third section treats the pragmatic ideologies of warning and threatening to shed light on the data analysis of some Trump's selected speeches in light of the two acts of warning and threatening. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the findings of this study.

**Key Words:** Speech Act Theory, Illocutionary Acts, Pragmatics, Political Discourse, President Donald Trump.

### **1. Introduction:**

Language is employed as an essential device for human communication, playing an important role to allow individuals to share messages, or information, almost throughout dialogue. In the domain of linguistics, Speech Acts theory includes an essential position, to be recognized as a significant aspect of what is called pragmatic analysis, as much of the studies in pragmatics depending on theory. This study employs a comprehensive analysis of speech acts as employed in addresses delivered by the President Donald Trump. A public speech is a decisive component of political discourse, affording as formal addresses to convey their intentions as a leader delivers them to the public. This research purposes details containing examination of the five aspects of speech acts that proposed by Searle (1979): assertive, directive, evissimmoc, expressive, and declarative.

Also, this study seeks to evaluate the domination of different types of speech acts within some selected political speeches by Trump and to investigate the results in which these acts are detailed, thereby shedding light on any possible effect of these sequences on the types of speech acts employed here. It is expected that the assertive and commissive speech acts will be prominently features in political speeches, with assertions anticipated to be particularly prevalent, as they almost show justifications for the other act types, like commissives and directives.

The first section shows a concise summary of pragmatics, speech act theory, and the context of Trump's speeches. The second section elaborates on the methodology, which includes the research design, data collection processes, a comprehensive data analysis and discussion regarding the frequency and distribution of speech act categories as utilized by the American President Donald Trump in his speeches. And the analytical framework employed in the study. Finally, the third section presents the conclusion of what said in this study.

### **2. This Study Questions:**

- What types of speech acts were employed in Donald Trump's speech?
- How many types of speech acts are most frequently employed in President Trump's speeches?
- What are the frequencies and percentages of the speech acts that employed by trump in his speeches that are related to his threatening to North Korea, Venezuela and Greenland and how they are calculated?

### **3. Literature Review:**

Pragmatics is a vital area of study in linguistics, focusing on the part of context in the understanding of meaning in communication. Wales (1989: 368) noticed that the term "Pragmatics" is attributed to the Greek word "pragma," which refers to concepts such as activity, react, and situation. This concept leads to connect linguistic structures with real-world interactions by finding how speakers and listeners interact with each other and understand language in an easy manner". Taking in consideration the intentions behind communication, the context, and social norms, pragmatics shows an obvious understanding of language use in daily scenarios. It sheds lights on the idea that effective communication way mere surpasses words, emphasizing the complicated relationship among language, context, and human communication. Thus, the study of pragmatics considers language use and its implications for communication have vital roles.

Its roots can be traced back to the philosophy of language that is attributed to American linguist Charles W. Morris founding main concepts in the early 19th century, thus, it is contributing significantly to the domain of semiotics (Morris, 1938). Due to Bussmann (1998:19) defines " Pragmatics as the scientific study of the relationship between natural language expressions and their context-specific usage". Crystal (1991:17) refers to ' Pragmatics has experienced significant advancements, encompassing the various factors that influence a speaker's selection of language during social interactions ".

Additionally, it examines the implications of this linguistic choice on the responses of others. While Mey (2001:6) argues that pragmatic meaning is assessed based on how individuals utilize language to convey messages. He defines pragmatics as "The study of the use of language in human communication as influenced by societal conditions" (Yule (1996:6), offers a

comprehensive view of pragmatics, suggesting it consists of two distinct dimensions. On one side, pragmatics is acknowledged as a vital field that enables individuals to articulate their thoughts effectively through language.

Conversely, it poses challenges, as it necessitates an understanding of the emotions and intentions of others. Further supporting this notion, Leech (1983:5) provides a definition of pragmatics that is in alignment with that of Crystal (2003:33), emphasizing the examination of how meaning is derived from utterances within specific contexts. This approach highlights the significance of situational factors in the interpretation of communicative meaning. In 2026, linguistic and political analysis of Donald Trump's speeches focuses on a refined employing the threatening and warning speech acts, based on strategic ambiguity, high directness, as well as a "victim-perpetrator reversal" strategy.

#### **4. Methodology:**

This study attempts to identify and analyze generally the speech acts that employed by Donald Trump in his speeches. A qualitative and quantitative methodology has been utilized to examine the data. The data source was gotten by downloading the video of Trump's speech from YouTube, after seeing the recording. In the data collection process, the spoken content converted into written form. Following this, the written speeches was typed, printed, and then subsequently edited. The final data were analyzed based on different types of illocutionary speech acts that are attributed to Searle (1979).

#### **Pragmatic Classification:**

This study asserts Trump's use of these acts during (2025- 2026) mainly within Searle's taxonomy:

- Commissive Acts (Threatening): Trump frequently employs Commissive to commit himself to future punitive activities, like "removing" military aids or "imposing sanctions like they've never seen".
- Directive Acts (Warning): Warnings often refer to directives, obligating an audience to change behavior to be away from negative results (e.g., "avoid excessive salt" as instructions for avoiding political "harm"). key strategies in recent examples (2025-2026):
- Implicit vs. Explicit Threats: Trump frequently shows a change from implicit warnings to explicit threats of "powerful outcomes"
- Victim-Perpetrator Reversal: it obvious that Trump's tendency goes to reshape his own aggression as "righteous self-defense," to legitimize more legal actions
- Strategic Ambiguity: Almost Trump employed "off-record" strategies hints to make the others know his intention easily.
- High Threat, Low Mitigation: in opposite of standard diplomatic discourse, Trump's warnings are "high in threat and low in mitigation," as they violating politeness norms to reframe absolute power.

#### **Examples of Threatening Tactics:**

##### **Donald Trump threatens to 'totally destroy' North Korea in UN speech:**

- If it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea". This article is more than 8 years old
- Julian Borger in New York Tue 19 Sep 2017 19.56 BST First published on Tue 19 Sep 2017 17.20 BST
- Donald Trump has threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea, in a bellicose first address to the United Nations general assembly in which he lashed out at a litany of US adversaries and called on "righteous" countries to confront them.
- The speech was greeted in the UN chamber mostly with silence and occasional outbreaks of disapproving murmurs, as Trump castigated a succession of hostile regimes.
- In an address heavy with echoes of address more than 15 years earlier, Trump said: "The scourge of our planet today are a small group of rogue regimes. "If the righteous many do not confront the wicked few, then evil will triumph," the president said.
- He first singled out North Korea, recounting its history of kidnapping, oppression, and missile and nuclear tests.

##### **Venezuela:**

4 January 2026

Ana Faguy

Watch: How the US attack on Venezuela unfolded

On January 6, 2026, Trump delivered a speech framing military intervention in Venezuela as an "attack for justice," using Commissive acts to promise continued action.

The US will "run" Venezuela until a "safe, proper and judicious transition" can be ensured, Donald Trump has said, after US strikes led to the capture of country's President Nicolas Maduro.

US oil companies would also fix Venezuela's "broken infrastructure" and "start making money for the country", the US president said.

The US launched strikes on Venezuela on Saturday morning in which Maduro and his wife, First Lady Cilia Flores, were captured by US forces and removed from the country.

Venezuela announced a state of national emergency and denounced the "military aggression", with the country's vice president saying Maduro is its only leader.

##### **Greenland:**

Euro news

By Aleksandar Brezar

Published on 09/01/2026 - 10:56 GMT+1 •Updated 16:28

In early 2026, Trump's rhetoric regarding the acquisition of Greenland escalated, with White House officials stating that "utilizing the U.S. military is always an option," a move analysts describe as a direct threat to international treaties.

In an interview published on Thursday, Trump also suggested that NATO is toothless without the US, claiming his own morality guided his decisions on US military actions.

US President Donald Trump said on Thursday that "it may be a choice" for Washington if it were to pick between controlling Greenland and maintaining the NATO alliance, amid a renewed push to acquire the island in the Arctic Circle. Trump also hinted that the alliance would be toothless without the US.

"I think we'll always get along with Europe, but I want them to shape up," he said. "If you look at NATO, Russia I can tell you is not at all concerned with any other country but us."

Speaking days after ordering the operation that removed Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro, Trump said in an interview with the New York Times that his personal sense of right and wrong provides the sole limitation on his authority to deploy US military force globally.

Presidential speeches afford a crucial element of political discourse, including significant importance for the leaders. These speeches mark a pivotal moment when the president addresses the nation by extension, the global society, articulating significant political policies and principles that will direct the country throughout their term. Presidential speeches are traditionally delivered by heads of state or government during their official ceremonies. These addresses not only establish the tone for the leader's tenure but also outline their vision and priorities for the public. The primary aims of these addresses are to inspire confidence among citizens, uplift their morale, and collective widespread support.

The threatening is considered as an important event in the United States, as it reflects the nation's historical legacy and attracts considerable attention from global media. During this occasion, the American president delivers a prepared speech designed to engage the audience and effectively communicate key messages and intentions. The inaugural speeches delivered by American presidents are distinct forms of discourse that serve primarily to persuade and convey ideological positions. These elements significantly influence the political landscape of the nation. verbal expression; they also perform actions through their utterances. Austin (1962: 108) classified speech acts into three distinct categories. Furthermore, Grundy (2008) noted that when individuals communicate, they may engage in three dimensions: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Language serves not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a powerful instrument for influencing the listener. These actions, executed through speech, are recognized as speech acts. As noted by Yule (1996: 47) speech act theory offers a profound framework that significantly enhances our understanding of human communication. Yule (1996) emphasizes that when individuals perform speech acts, they do not simply articulate statements in isolation; rather, they possess intentions and motivations that inform their utterances, which can subsequently influence the behavior of the listener.

#### **4.1 Locutionary Act:**

A locutionary act refers to the fundamental utterances produced by individuals, which are crafted with appropriate grammar and comprehensible vocabulary. As noted by (Yule), 1996:25 an essential condition for executing locutionary acts is that both the speaker and the listener share a common language; otherwise, there is a risk of misunderstanding, and the intended meaning may not be conveyed accurately. Austin (1962: 108) further elaborates that a locutionary act signifies the specific sense and reference established by the speaker about the intended meaning. Additionally, this type of act comprises the explicit or precise meanings that are articulated whether spoken or written, by the communicator.

#### **4.2 Illocutionary Act:**

An illocutionary act refers to an utterance that conveys a specific communicative force, such as informing, ordering, warning, or committing (Austin, 1962: 109). This concept is further supported by Yule (1996: 48), who defines illocutionary acts as being executed through the communicative force of an utterance. In essence, an illocutionary act can be understood as the underlying meaning of a word or statement.

As previously mentioned, the utterance may reflect a literal meaning, yet it may also possess a concealed significance relying on the context. For example, a statement may mean an invitation to share a meal. Illocutionary acts can be classified into five main types: assertive, directives, commissive, expressive, and declaratives (Searle, 1979)

Assertive acts are related to the speaker's belief in the statements being articulated. Directive acts reflect the speaker's intention regarding the listener's actions. Commissive acts denote the speaker's commitment to undertaking a specific action. Expressive acts convey the psychological state of the speaker in relation to the situation at hand.

Finally, declarative acts refer to speech utterances that create a correspondence between the propositions expressed and the reality they depict.

#### **4.4 Perlocutionary Act:**

According to Yule (1996: 49), a perlocutionary effect refers to the assumptions made by the listener regarding the speaker's intended meaning, which prompts the listener to take action. This concept concerned with the impact of the speaker's utterances on the listener and the following reactions that emerge. For example, when a listener hears that the speaker expresses a desire to eat, the listener may respond by preparing money for food on behalf of the speaker. In employing perlocutionary acts, speakers aim to influence the behavior of their audience. This influence extends beyond simply prompting physical actions; it can also involve altering the listener's established habits.

#### **4.5 Speech Acts Classification:**

In his 1979 work, Searle distinguished five distinctive categories of what are known illocutionary acts: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Complementing Searle's theoretical framework, Yule (1996) founded a detailed table that arranges these five classifications of speech acts. This table affords a valuable reference for understanding the nuances of each category within the context of speech act theory.

##### **4.5.1 Assertive Force in Speech Acts:**

Assertive force indicates speech acts by which the speaker conveys a belief or idea taking in consideration the situation. According to Yule (1996:25), assertive force is employed to represent the speaker's perception of reality. Below are examples of speech acts that exemplify assertive force:

"The snow is white".

"Nile is the longest river".

These statements refer to the function of assertive speech in showing beliefs about the world.

**4.5.2 Directive Force:**

Directive Force when a speaker tries to make, persuade or enforce a listener perform an act.

"Leave me alone."

**4.5.3 Expressive Force:**

Expressive force indicates the ability to convey psychological states, such as feelings, emotions, and different sentiments like joy, sorrow, happiness and pain. For example:

"I am sorry "

" -Congratulations on your success".

**c. Directive Force in Speech Acts**

Speech acts with directive force are those in which the speaker wants to convince or persuade the listener to do specific action. Examples of such speech acts contain commands or orders, where obvious guidance is provided regarding the desired behavior.

Leave away!

**4.5.4 Commissive Force:**

Commissive force in speech acts pertains to the speaker's intentions. According to Yule (1996:32): speakers employ commissive illocutionary speech acts to convey promises, refusals or threats, pledges. This type is close to the intention of the speaker to execute future actions. For example, one might say, "I promise to help you".

**4.5.5 Declarative Force:**

The notion of declarative force proves the principle that language has its own power to effect change in our world. Specifically, it shows how speech acts can change the speaker's circumstances or environment. For instance, when a police officer declares, "You are under arrest!" this utterance has effective implications for the individual involved.

**5. Findings and Discussion:**

The Analysis of Donald Trump's Speech: Table (1)

<b>Utterance Analysis</b>	
Donald Trump has threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea, in a bellicose first address to the United Nations general assembly in which he lashed out at a litany of US adversaries and called on "righteous" countries to confront them". The speech was greeted in the UN chamber mostly with silence and occasional outbreaks of disapproving murmurs, as Trump castigated a succession of hostile regimes.	This speech is classified due to the speaker as declarative indicating to war and destroy and it is directives as the speaker called on righteous" countries to confront hostile regimes.
The US will "run" Venezuela until a "safe, proper and judicious transition" can be ensured, Donald Trump has said, after US strikes led to the capture of country's President Nicolas Maduro. US oil companies would also fix Venezuela's "broken infrastructure" and "start making money for the country", the US president said.	This speech is categorized an assertive as the speaker effectively commits to run Venezuela until assigned time, the speech can be categorized as commissive as the speaker commits himself to perform fixing Venezuela's "broken infrastructure" and "start making money for the country",
US President Donald Trump said on Thursday that "it may be a choice" for Washington if it were to pick between controlling Greenland and maintaining the NATO alliance, amid a renewed push to acquire the island in the Arctic Circle. Trump also hinted that the alliance would be toothless without the US. "I think we'll always get along with Europe, but I want them to shape up," he said. "If you look at NATO, Russia I can tell you is not at all concerned with any other country but us." Speaking days after ordering the operation that removed Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro, Trump said in an interview with the New York Times that his personal sense of right and wrong provides the sole limitation on his authority to deploy US military force globally.	The speaker articulates declaration for his wishes to control Greenland, emphasizing his desire to highlighting the significance of Greenland .This speech is expressive as .in the speaker saying "If you look at NATO, Russia I can tell you is not at all concerned with any other country but us." and in his saying in an interview with the New York Times that his personal sense of right and wrong provides the sole limitation on his authority to deploy US military force globally. The speech is directives as the speaker attempts to make someone to be ready for controlling Greenland as in his saying "I think we'll always get along with Europe, but I want them to shape up.

In the Trump's speech delivered by him, declarative statements constituted approximately (29%) of his remarks. Within this framework, he looks for legitimizing different policies while obviously articulating his point of view for addressing a range of critical issues. In saying the expressive utterances utilized by Donald Trump, it is clearly that he employs a variety of such statements to express his emotions, feelings, and values. The examples mentioned explain his expressions of gratitude, happiness, solidarity, acknowledgement, , disappointment and criticism, among others. As noticed by Yule (1996:12), expressive speech acts are those that communicate the speaker's feelings.

In Trump's speech, nearly (14%) of the total speech acts are grouped as expressive, demonstrating his thanks to supporters, critiques of the policies for previous presidents, and expressions of disappointment with the political state .Directive utterances show 29% of the overall speech. President Trump makes use of this form of speech acts to extend invitations, make direct requests, for his policies aimed at revitalizing the nation and advancing what is called "Make America Great Again" agenda.

Table (2)

<b>Speech acts</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Assertive	1	14%
Expressives	1	14%
Commissive	1	14%

Declarative	2	29%
Directives	2	29%
Total	7	100%

**Conclusion:**

Depending on the research results and discussions that presented in the previous sections, it can be said that five types from Searle’s classification of speech acts are identified in the speech: Assertive, Commissive, Declarative, Expressive, and Directive. Among these, Assertive and Commissive speech acts rank highest in frequency, with Assertive being the most dominant in Donald Trump's selected speeches of the total utterances that were said in this study, were categorized as Assertive, accounting for approximately (14%) of the overall distribution of speech acts. This analysis shed light on the vital role of Assertive speech acts in conveying the intended messages to the audience within the speech.

**Recommendations:**

Depending on the conclusions aforementioned, it is recommended that:

- As racism phenomenon is widely used in the everyday life we need to study it and to understand its negative results in the society as
- Racism may cause wars, conflicts, immigration or human disasters.
- It is hopefully that the U.N put suitable suggestions and ideas to educate and help the world people to get rid of racism to live with each other peacefully.
- It is advisable for people in some situations not to resort to the racist discourses in their daily activities like talking, or interviewing.

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**Appendix:**

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Occurrence of each speech acts} \times 100}{\text{The total number of employed the speech acts}}$$