



Pragmatic Analysis of the US Ambassadors's Political Discourse to the United Nations General Assembly

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ABSTRACT

The fact cannot be denied that how a single reality that is the supremacy of America, continues its pace over the world. Also, American ideals are vastly universal and vaguely used in the political discourses to legitimize its political mission. Qualitative mode of inquiry has been employed to assess the speech and for this, Speech Act theory of Austin (1962) and Searle and Searle (1969) has been used as a framework. The tabular presentation of the speech analysis has shown the relative percentages and frequencies of the speech acts employed by the U.S Ambassadors. The result is quite interesting to note that only three speech acts namely expressive, assertive and commissive have been employed by the U.S Ambassadors in her political discourse in order to manipulate the audience. Further, this study exhibits that as always American ideals that is American Dream and American Exceptionalism are propagated through the political discourse and implanted covertly in people's mind to win their consensus, so they accept Jerusalem as Israel's capital city.

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1. Introduction

'Language is never innocent'. (Barthes, 1970)

Language as always has a goal. The aim of every political discourse is to propagate ideology. Language is essential to political stability. The notion of language and politics are interrelated with one another. Opeibi (2009), in this regard, has proposed that language and politics are interdependent. Similarly, Beard (2000) has claimed that political languages help individuals to understand the intentions of all those who not only want power, but also want to exercise it.

Equally, Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012) have argued that language is a very strong political weapon and politicians mold the language to gain their purposes. Perpetuating the same stance, Adeyanju (2016) has claimed that without the recognition and support of the people, a political leader cannot succeed. And Halliday (1970) was right when he viewed language as a tool which not only organizes people but also directs their behaviors.

Pragmatics is the study of how contexts affect the meaning of linguistic expressions and context is important to study language. Adegbija (1999) has submitted that in pragmatics the language use is studied in a particular context or situation (Adeyanju, 2016). According to Thomas (2014), pragmatics deals with the speaker's intended meaning keeping in view the context. Similarly, Austin (1962) has suggested that sentences are not always uttered just to say things, but they are used to do things. Crystal (2008) claims that different acts like to make a request, to greet, to advise, to complain and to warn are performed by the speech act uttered by the speakers. Likewise, Ren (2022) is of the view that the purpose of pragmatics is to employ

language appropriately and to comprehend the intended meanings uttered by the speakers in various communicative context.

Ekoro and Gunn (2021) proposed that speech act theory says that the purpose of people's communication is to influence their listeners so that their listener behaves in a certain way.

Sharndama (2015) cites Bach that it is the communicative context of utterance that assists the listener to comprehend the intended meaning of the utterance.

By the same token, (Fairclough, 2001, 2013) has argued that all linguistic usage expresses ideological positions and mediates and represents the world from different points of view. In this context, this study is grounded in Fairclough (2001) claiming that the presence of ideologies is inherent in political communications. He continued to say that such communications may be interpreted diversely, and that ideology and text are interrelated with one another.

The world experienced a shock when on December 6, 2017, American President Donald Trump, a Republican Party representative announced Jerusalem as Israel's capital city and decided to shift American embassy there. This new American policy aroused the wrath and disappointment of the peacekeepers throughout the world. In this regard, Nikki Haley (the U.S Ambassador to the United Nations General Assembly), stepped forward with a speech to the Assembly. Given the global significance of the said speech, this paper addresses pragmatic strategies of Americans and its ideological mechanisms misused as a ground for reasons to legitimate the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital city.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Political speeches have ever been used as a rhetorical and ideological mantra of the U.S.A. These speeches are always used as a political mission to implant American Dream and American Exceptionalism in the mind of the people. This Exceptionalism with American Dream carries the idea of American superiority over the world. It also stands America out amongst the other nations as a unique example of democratic practices and worthy of emulation across the world.

These American ideals are rooted in common sense ideology of the U.S.A and always meant to be preached through political discourses in order to justify its stance and persuade the audience in order to win their consensus. In the light of this context, the researchers have surfaced such ideals through pragmatic moves used by the US ambassadress in her speech to the United Nations General Assembly which has been misused as a ground for reasons to legitimate the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital city.

1.2. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to discover the embodied American ideals in political discourses that are American Dream and American Exceptionalism. Moreover, readers' awareness and critical thinking abilities in comprehension of political language, power and dominance would be enhanced. In addition, this study brings forth the speech acts which have been used as a weapon by the U.S Ambassador to propagate its political mission. Also, it shows that the language of political discourses is always instrumental in pursuit of power, dominance and legitimization.

1.3. Research Questions

- What are the strategies used by the US ambassadress in her political discourse?
- How does the US ambassadress try to justify American political stance and persuade the audience to win their consensus to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital city?

1.4. Research Objectives

- To identify the strategies used by the US ambassadress in her political discourse.
- To find out how the US ambassadress tries to justify American political stance and persuade the audience to win their consensus to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital city?

2. Theoretical Underpinning

Austin (1962) and Searle and Searle (1969) Speech Act theory has been employed to investigate the US Ambassador's speech to the United Nations General Assembly. Austin divides the speech act theory into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts mean to say something meaningful and Dada (2004) argued that illocutionary act is the prime act of any utterances. Similarly, in illocutionary acts the speaker has some purpose in his utterance. Finally, the Perlocutionary acts can be defined as the outcome of the statements on the listeners. Illocutionary act has been divided into five classes by (Searle & Searle, 1969).

- a. Assertive: Such a statement describes a situation (true or false) in the world.
- b. Directives: These statements cause another person to do something. It is usually used to give advice, request, or command.
- c. Commissive: Such a statement obligates a person to certain future action. For example, promising, planning, threatening, and warning.
- d. Expressives: They express psychological states/ feelings of the speaker. For instance, feelings of pleasure and pain, likes and dislikes, joy and sorrow.
- e. Declaratives: Such a statement states something and makes it so by changing the state of the world like declaring someone husband and wife.

3. Research Methodology

Speech Acts theory by Austin (1962) and Searle and Searle (1969) has been employed to analyze the study. The data for this research is the transcript of the US ambassador political discourse to the United Nations General Assembly on December 22, 2017, which has been taken from the internet and analyzed to surface the pragmatic moves employed by the ambassador during the speech. Speech acts center round the intended meaning in communication particularly in political discourses. Employing Austin (1962) and Searle's theory of speech acts, various implied meanings are drawn out. Searle and Searle (1969) proposed five speech act classification for the purpose of analyzing political discourses from the perspective of a speaker. And the speech acts namely (declarative, directive, assertive, expressive and commissive) have been used to investigate the US ambassador speech in order to get the intended meaning. The result is quite interesting to note that only three speech acts namely expressive, assertive and commissive has been employed by the US Ambassador in her political discourse.

This study has been limited to only one speech. Almost, the whole speech was selected for scrutiny. The number of selected sentences is (22) and the frequencies and percentages of the investigated speech acts are presented in the tabulated form. Table (1) illustrates the characteristics of the Speech Act Classification with examples. Table (2) shows the relevant frequencies and percentages of the investigated speech acts.

Table: 1

Speech Acts	Characteristics	Examples
Assertive	Assertives are used to delineate a situation in the world.	Suggest, state, report, claim, boast, conclude, put forward, deny.
Expressive	Expressives are used to express inner state of mind.	Pleasure, pain, likes dislikes, congratulate, wish, joy or sorrow.
Commissive	Commissives are used to commit the speaker to future action.	Promise, command, challenge, vowing, swearing, threat, warning, planning, loyalty or allegiance

Table: 2

Speech Acts	Frequencies	Percentages
Assertive	7	31.8%
Expressive	6	27.2%
Commissive	9	40.9%
Declarative	-	-
Directive	-	-

The table 3 assembles locutionary acts namely Assertive Speech Acts which suggests illocutionary effect on the audience and perlocutionary acts of the speaker.

Table: 3 Assertive

Lines	Locutionary Acts	Illocutionary Acts	Perlocutionary Acts
1	Together ... people.	Described	Informed, inspire
2	We nurture ... the world.	Described	Informed, Inspire
3	We do this ... our American way.	Described	Informed, inspire
4	The arguments...have already been made	Put forward	Informed
5	The decision ... back to 1995	Report	Loyalty, dedication, allegiance
6	The President's decision...choose the location of our embassy.	Put forward	Committed, devotion, dedicated
7	That ... the right thing to do	Put forward	Informed

Table: 4 Expressive

Lines	Locutionary Act	Illocutionary Act	Perlocutionary Effect
1	To its shame... Israel.	Criticism	sympathy, Persuasion
2	I've often wondered ... member of this body	Sympathy	Persuasion
3	The United States ... its agencies	Praising	Pride
4	We do this... our interests	Praising	Pride
5	Our participation ... for the world	Praising	Pride
6	We ... our American way	Praising	Pride

The above table assembles locutionary acts namely Expressive Speech Acts which suggests illocutionary effect on the audience and perlocutionary acts of the speaker.

Table: 5 Commissive

Lines	Locutionary Act	Illocutionary Act	Perlocutionary Effect
1	Israel ... to be about.	support	Sympathy
2	When ... good will is recognized and respected.	Demand	Informed
3	We ... our investment.	Demand	Informed
4	And if our investment fails... more productive ways.	Warn	Frightened
5	We will remember ... to the United Nations.	Threat	Frightened, dependent
6	We will remember ... to use our influence for their benefit.	Threat	Frightened, dependent, inferior
7	America ... Jerusalem.	Warn	Frightened,
8	No vote ... any difference.	Challenge	Warning, frightened
9	And this vote will be remembered.	Warn	Frightened

The above table assembles locutionary acts namely commissive Speech Acts which suggests illocutionary effect on the audience and perlocutionary acts of the speaker.

4. Results and Discussion

This section deals with the surfacing of multiple pragmatic moves utilized in the speech of Haley (the US ambassadress to the United Nations General Assembly) on December 22, 2017. The purpose of exploring these pragmatic strategies is to observe how American supremacy is practiced and implanted in the mind of the audience and how the audience is exploited in the name of so-called ideology. The section identifies only three speech acts (assertive, expressive, commissive) out of five acts proposed by (Searle & Searle, 1969).

The opening lines clearly indicate a shift from the liberal to traditional and conservative American perception when Halley blames United Nation for carrying hostile feelings against Israel. Halley's form of address can be perceived overtly emotional than ever. This alludes to a defamatory and repulsive approach to the United Nations General Assembly. Though, the nations which are referred are not specifically mentioned in this case. The words 'America will put our embassy in Jerusalem' reflect Halley's warning to shift American embassy to Jerusalem and provides an insight in Americans rivalrous nature against the Islamic world and a religious bigotry. Contrary to the convention, the agnostic attitudes of the nations against Americans resolution at the platform of the United Nations enrage America. Taking to the platform, she speaks in favorable terms about Israel and thus recognizing Israel as an innocent country which

has been deprived of its rights and it is clear from her words when she favors Israel to stand up for its own survival as a nation. These words echo US extreme pressure to secure their co-operation with Israel as a strategic ally. Americans' decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem verifies their diplomatic political mission and rivalry against Muslim world. This behavior testifies that like all the rest the United States too chase self-interest to purely idealistic pursuit first and foremost. This can be exemplified as United States role in defending Israel as their greater friend and offending Palestinians by covertly permitting Israel to sustain its brutal occupation over Jerusalem.

In the phrase 'generous contributions to the United Nations and its agencies', American generosity and greater cooperation and understanding between nations are mentioned as a grand narrative with special emphasis on exercising its power only for good and just purposes. In this regard, the words like 'generous contributions' and 'good will' echoes American's endeavor to spread the ideology that America is distinct from others and therefore its burden is also distinguished. The ambassadress words clearly posit American economy as the world's largest economy and the major distributor of national wealth to the countries in crisis. When she proudly mentions Americas' responsibility to feed, clothe, and educate desperate people, she talks a good game in the name of human rights. The words 'nurture' and 'peace in conflict areas' reveal that she entitles Americans with the legacy of humanitarianism and that they are the keepers of this legacy.

Ultimately, she turns out to be more explicit by saying that 'it is our American way' and this decision is in accordance their law. Here she wants to make the rival nations acknowledge American Exceptionalism which rests on the belief that Americans love peace, respect human rights, nurture liberty and embrace the rules of law. These words enwrap Americans' perception as an exceptional global state. Americans tend to owe to the political foresight of their founding fathers, virtue of the US constitution and creativity and the assiduous nature of the Americans. However, reference to the unique responsibilities is Americans' age-old norm not exception. She declares that Americas' participation in the UN is of great benefit to the world. These words also echo America as a highly developed country, the world's foremost military power, world's largest economy and biggest importer and exporter of goods. Moreover, United States are the leading political, cultural and scientific force internationally. Undeniable credit goes to America for its undeniable contribution to peace and harmony in the world and therefore is a tremendously positive force in world affairs.

Persistent talk about American values, integrity and political system gives the impression as if these American mantras are exceptional and worthy of universal applause. Moreover, their loyalty and patriotism are the quiet force of their progress. American values and virtues, sacrifice, selflessness, and liberty are the endless source of inspiration. Pertaining to the implied meaning, the fact cannot be denied that the ambassadress is frequently irritated why others are less convinced of American virtues and less zealous to proclaim them. Therefore, she makes the nations clear that American President has decided to move the American embassy to Jerusalem which cannot be challenged, and they will remain indifferent to the resentment shown by the United Nations.

Smearing the discourse with citizen centered attitude like 'the President's decision reflects the will of the American people' and 'that is what the American people want us to do' it can easily be perceived that citizenry is the cornerstone of the United States and that the whole system is grounded on American law. The reiterated references to the American people not only show gratitude to them but also make them feel valued of their self-worth. Further, to arouse and strengthen the Americans' confidence and willingness towards the president and his political stance and measures are the purpose behind such gestures of appraisal. Moreover, this is the standard procedure of these kinds of discourses and therefore an attempt to legitimize Americans' decision.

America warns stubborn and defiant nations of a possible danger or unpleasant situation that might happen ahead. Halley clearly warns the world by saying that if their investment fails, they have an obligation to spend their resources in more productive ways and they will remember it when they are called upon to once again make the world's largest contribution to the United Nations. America warns by saying that it will be more careful in its expenditure by helping poor nations if these nations disobey her. In turn, these words also reflect Americans'

perception as a blessed and superior nation whose responsibility is to feed the poor. Likewise, the statement, 'America will put our embassy in Jerusalem' and 'this vote will be remembered' also employs this effective American strategy to attract people's attention and scare them about the upcoming unpleasant situation so that they could change their perception. This strategy aids America in molding other's decisions in their favor. Similarly, the words, 'remember', 'influence', 'benefit', 'obligation' and 'investment' are uttered purposely to put restrictions on people's freedom of speech so that they could not raise their voice against the unjust happening with them or around. This strategy helps control people's behavior. By exercising this strategy, America maintains a monopoly over the world. Moreover, authoritative bodies employ this strategy to meet specific requirements related to their benefits, designs, and long-term goals.

Hence, in the light of the above-mentioned analysis of the political discourse it is concluded that the US ambadress has used the political speech as a medium to convey hidden American ideologies to persuade the audience. The techniques used by her are assertive, expressive and commissive acts through which she tries to win the consensus of the audience regarding the acknowledgment of Jerusalem as Israel's capital city by shifting American embassy over there. In addition, according to the measured frequencies, it is observed that she has used assertive acts seven times, expressive acts six times and commissive acts nine times in order to maintain its political hold on the audience and exploit them in the name of so-called democracy. Similarly, the calculated percentages are 31.8%, 27.2% and 40.9% respectively. The widely used strategy by her is commissive acts (40.9%) through which she covertly warns and frightens the audience for the consequences of their defiant gestures.

5. Conclusion

America has always used political speeches as a medium to propagate its political mission and to implant American Dream and American Exceptionalism in the mind of the people. These ideologies have always been misused as a ground for reasons to legitimate its stance and persuade the audience to win their consensus. Also, the overall approach of the ambadress' speech entails American's self-congratulatory portrait where she has strived to convince the world that it is superior and better than anyone else.

Employing only three speech acts namely expressive, assertive and commissive acts, the US Ambadress has tried to implant American ideals that is American Dream and American Exceptionalism in the mind of the audience. Equally, she has attempted to impose America's decision (being a superpower) to acknowledge Jerusalem as Israel's capital city by shifting American embassy over there.

Under the garb of the boasted words used in the political discourse, the United States has indicated that it is both preordained and authorized to play a positive and distinct role by steering a new era of peace in the world. Deeming its supposedly exceptional qualities, the US thinks as if God is on its side. Being a superpower, America tends to believe that God has authorized her to lead the world.

Irrefutably, confidence is the core feature for any nation, but over-confidence tends a nation to ponder that it is blessed with heavenly mandate. Hence, such nations easily get convinced that failure is not destined for them and that they cannot be outdone by the incompetents.

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