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.A Pragmatic Study of the Commissive Speech Act of Promise in Four of Donald Trump's Famous Speeches

A B S T R A C T

Speaking is a way to communicate in order to express thoughts, feelings, and information. It is not only about the sound; it is also about the significance and intent of the sound. Speech acts classified as "commissives" bind the speaker to future action. One of the commissives is the speech act of promising, which binds the speaker to the promise until it is unintentionally triggered. In this study, the speech act of promising is examined in four of Donald Trump's well-known speeches. following Searle (1969), this study is a descriptive qualitative one. The study tries to identify the promising techniques that Donald Trump used in his political speeches. Additionally, it looks for the most common promising technique employed in the chosen talks.

In summary, the study found that the word "promise", whether it is a noun or a verb and the modal verb "will" are both used to make promises in the chosen speeches. Compared to other words Trump employs to make promises, the word "promise" is used less frequently. The modal verb "will" is frequently used to follow through on a promise, and this is the main technique used in all of Trump's chosen speeches. This verb is used more frequently in these speeches than the word "promise." Additionally, Trump uses it as his go-to phrase when making a commitment.

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دراسة براغماتية للوعد في نظرية افعال الكلام في أربعة من خطابات دونالد ترامب الشهيرة

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الخلاصة:

التحدث هو وسيلة للتواصل من أجل التعبير عن الأفكار والمشاعر والمعلومات. لا يتعلق الأمر فقط بالصوت؛ إنما يتعلق أيضًا بأهمية الصوت وغايته. أفعال الكلام المصنفة على أنها "مفوضيات" تربط المتحدث بعمل مستقبلي. أحد هذه الأفعال هو فعل الوعد، الذي يُلزم المتكلم بالوعد حتى يتم إطلاقه عن غير قصد. في هذه الدراسة، يتم فحص فعل الكلام الوعد في أربعة من خطب دونالد ترامب المعروفة. استنادًا إلى Searle (1969)، تعد هذه الدراسة دراسة وصفية كيفية. تحاول الدراسة التعرف على الأساليب اعطاء الوعد التي يستخدمها دونالد ترامب في خطابه السياسية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن الدراسة تبحث عن التقنية الأكثر شيوعًا المستخدمة لإعطاء الوعد في المحادثات المختارة.

باختصار، وجدت الدراسة أن كلمة "وعد" سواء كانت اسما او فعلا والفعل الشرطي "سوف" تم استخدامها لتقديم الوعود في الخطابات المختارة. مقارنة بالكلمات الأخرى التي يستخدمها ترامب لتقديم الوعود، فإن الكلمة "promise" تستخدم بشكل أقل. كثيرا ما يستخدم الفعل الشرطي "will" لتنفيذ الوعد، وهذه هي التقنية الرئيسية المستخدمة في جميع خطابات ترامب المختارة. يستخدم هذا الفعل بشكل متكرر في هذه الخطابات أكثر من الكلمة "promise". بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يستخدمها ترامب كعبارة عند الالتزام.

الكلمات المفتاحية: كلام واعد، الوعد، قانون الكلام المفوض ،خطابات دونالد ترامب، الخطاب السياسي، التحليل البراكمتي.

1. Introduction

Commissives are speech acts in which the speaker makes a future commitment to take action. They convey the speaker's intent to take a specific action. One of the compliant speech acts is a promise. The concept of promise is a central theme in many areas of language philosophy. How people might bind or restrain themselves in the future is one of the questions. Giving a promise binds you up in a very tough way because once you make a promise to someone; you are unable to break your bond without waiting for them to do so (Gilbert, 2011, p. 80; Watson, 2004; Sheinman, 2011). Searle (1969, p. 62-3) claims that promise is a commissive . This speaking act imposes a responsibility on the speaker, unless the speaker triggers the requirement of insincerity (Arnovick, 1994, p. 127).

The speech acts of pledge and encouragement can be combined with the promise speech act. Given that the speaker makes a promise to the audience and the speech act involves the idea of a voluntary promise, George Austin's typology of speech acts classifies this as a commissive speech act. Promises could also be thought of as performative acts in and of themselves because they share many traits with performative verbs. (Arwood, 1983, p. 131).

This study has fixed its scope to exclusively examine the act of promise in four of Trump's speeches from a practical standpoint. In several of Trump's speeches, there is a fascinating implication of a promising speech act. The study wants to figure out how President Trump employs this speech act in his talks for political causes. She also wants to know what Donald Trump's go-to tactic for making a commitment is.

2. Literature Review

The speech act is a linguistic process in which the speaker uses words to really accomplish something in addition to simply saying it. A speech is therefore both a symbol of meaning and a power source.

The foundation of Searle's theory of language is the idea that "speaking a language is performing acts according to rules" (Searle 1969, p. 36-37). The focus of this study is a spoken act of promising to carry out a certain future action. A promise is described as "a sentence stated or written that binds a person to do or not do something" by the World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary (1964, p. 1554). A promise is defined as "a pronouncement that something will or will not be done, furnished, etc., by one" Stein the Random House Dictionary of English (1966:1151). In order to be considered a promise, an action must be expected from the speaker and cannot be a prior or past action. One cannot guarantee that one will do something or that somebody else will do anything. The idea of an act includes resisting from acts, carrying out a series of acts, and might include situations and conditions. For example, one may promise not to do something or do something repeatedly or progressively. (Searle, 1969, p. 57).

According to Austin, making a speech act of promise is an illocutionary act since it only applies to a particular kind of language in certain situations. Additionally, Austin thinks this is the case because he views promise as a conventional act that is formalized by the application of a certain method. According to Austin, many other actions that result in obligations, such as betting, purchasing, and contracting, are comparable to promises in this way (Austin, 1955, p. 19).

The speech act suggests using five components to form a sincere promise. First, the speaker should intend to follow through on his or her promises. Second, the speaker must believe that the action is in the best interests of the audience. Thirdly, the speaker must have confidence in his or her ability to carry out the action. Fourth, the speaker must foresee a future action. Finally, the speaker must predict an act on his or her own. (Searle, 1975 as cited in Nadar, 2009)

In addition, Searle (1969) distinguishes between direct and indirect IFIDs for the speech act of promise. In contrast to evasive, satirical, and conditional promises, which are delivered indirectly, the phrase "I promise that" is a direct delivery of a promise. Indirect strategies can also be distinguished by grammatical moods, such as imperative or conditional. Direct techniques typically outperform indirect ones.

In one of the previous studies Marklund, E (2023) shows that promises fall within the pragmatics discipline and they mean expressions that commit the speaker to future course of actions. The current study focuses on how frequently the four American presidents

inaugurated in the twenty-first century used commissive speech acts in comparison to other speech acts in their inaugural speeches, as well as how these commissive speech acts were realized in terms of various pragmatic features (such as vagueness, deictic use, selfpositive representation, and implicature).

In another study, Barack Obama's promises that are made during the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections were pragmatically analyzed. The qualitative methodology was used, and speeches were used to get the data. To compute and report the frequency of promising utterances and performative verbs as well as their percentages, this study likewise used a quantitative approach. Obama's speeches were examined using Searle's taxonomy by the researcher. The results revealed that during the two election campaigns, the speaker's speeches most frequently had the purposes of reassuring, confirming, and reconfirming. Obama employed the performative verb "promise" in 7 examples. The research also revealed that the speaker employed the modal verb "will" and the phrase "be going to + infinitive" as means of expression (Dorine, R. 2022:908).

Also, there is a study deals with three concerns of promise. The issues are: (1) what linguistic forms do promise utterances take; (2) what do promise utterances intend; and (3) why are promise utterances used in Barack Obama's campaign speeches. The methods used to collect this data are observation and documentation. The statistics are encouraging quotes from Barack Obama's campaign rallies. The data's original source is the text of Barack Obama's campaign speeches, which were posted on the official website of the American government. This study uses the qualitative research methodology to examine those issues and evaluate them using socio-pragmatics analysis, particularly the form of promising utterances by using theory of sentence structure and the speaker's motivation by using the SPEAKING theory. The analysis's findings indicate, in the first place, that Barack Obama's campaign speeches frequently used declarative sentences. Second, the purposes of promising statements include responding, indicating an intent, reassuring, convincing, affirming, characterizing, inviting, and requesting. The third is that using encouraging words is done for the following reasons: to attract attention, to express regret, to cooperate, to express responsibility, to establish relationships, to express pity, to express affection, and to express prestige. (Rahayu, V. N. 2009).

3. Research Questions

This study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the strategies used to make promise by Donald Trump in the selected speeches?
2. What is the most dominant strategy used by Donald Trump to give a promise in the four selected speeches?

4. Methodology

According to Searle (1969), this study is a descriptive qualitative one. In the descriptive qualitative study, there is no calculation or numbering. The writer's aim when using a descriptive technique is to explain the study's purpose, the data's source, and the analysis method. The descriptive qualitative strategy comprises using methods like searching,

gathering, classifying, and evaluating data in order to find, collect, analyze, and eventually provide findings. It is believed that a qualitative approach is best because the data are promising utterances.

5. Data Sources

The data of the study are the statements that are found in Trump's speeches. There are four of Trump's speeches selected from the speeches Trump's famous speeches, they are:

1. *Presidential Announcement Speech. Trump Tower, New York City, New York. June 16, 2015.*
2. *Donald Trump 2016 RNC Draft Speech Transcript. July 12, 2016.*
3. *Donald Trump's full Inauguration Speech Transcript, Annotated. January 20, 2017.*
4. *Donald Trump's State of the Union Speech Transcript. February 4, 2020.*

6. Data Analysis and Discussion

The focus of the study is on analyzing some of Donald Trump's political speeches and their interpretation. It mainly depends on analyzing the speech act of promising in the selected texts. The author intended to begin with Trump's announcement speech to show that Donald Trump occasionally employs the modal verb "will" in the chosen speech to make an indirect promise:

1. *'We have people that aren't working. But they're going to have incentive to work And they'll be proud and they'll love it and they'll make much more than they would ever made and they'll be they'll be done so well, and we are going to be thriving as a country. Thriving. It can happen. I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created. I tell you that. I'll bring back our jobs from China, from Mexico, from Japan, from so many places. I'll bring back our money.'* Presidential Announcement Speech. Trump Tower, New York City, New York. June 16, 2015.

Trump tells Americans that if he will be elected president he will make America a thriving country and will have more chances for work and they will be proud. He confirms his promise when he repeats the clause "they'll be, they'll be" and this is his promise to them, as seen by the data above. However, it is evident from the texts that were chosen that Trump frequently employs the modal verb in contrast to the other ways he expresses a promise.

2. *'Sadly, the American dream is dead. But if I get elected president I will bring it back bigger and better and stronger than ever before, and we will make America great again.'* Presidential Announcement Speech. Trump Tower, New York City, New York. June 16, 2015.

Again, he ends his announcement speech with other indirect promises by using the modal verb "will". He promises his people that he and his government will make

America a great country again and stronger, bigger and better than the presiding era, if they elect him a president.

When making a promise, the modal verb "will" predominates. The researcher found that he tended to utilize the word "will" more frequently in each instance. In the chosen speeches, Trump employs this term to assure his citizens that he or his administration will carry out their requests. His preferred way of making a promise is with this expression:

3. *Together, we will lead our party back to the White House, and we will lead our country back to safety, prosperity, and peace. We will be a country of generosity and warmth. But we will also be a country of law and order. I have a message For all of you: the crime and violence that today afflicts our nation will soon come to an end. Beginning on January 20th 2017, safety will be restored..... I will present the facts plainly and honestly. We cannot afford to be so politically correct anymore..... But here, at our convention, there will be no lies. We will honor the American people with the truth, and nothing else.' Donald Trump 2016 RNC Draft Speech Transcript. July 12, 2016.*

Trump promises Americans by using the verb "will," as the data above demonstrates. Trump claims in the cited passage that he and his government would lead their party to the White House. He further promises his audience a safe, prosperous, and peaceful country, a country of generosity and warmth even though it is a country of law and order. Trump adds that there will be no crime no violence and safety will be restored again. Also, he and his government will be honest throughout his presidency. Trump used his "will" to make all of these promises to Americans.

4. *'We will bring the same economic success to America that Mike brought to Indiana. He is a man of character and accomplishment. He is the right man for the job. The first task for our new Administration will be to liberate our citizens from the crime and terrorism and lawlessness that threatens their communities.... I will work with, and appoint, the best prosecutors and law enforcement officials in the country to get the job done..... When I am President, I will work to ensure that all of our kids are treated equally, and protected equally. As your President, I will do everything in my power to protect our LGBT citizens from the violence and oppression of a hateful foreign ideology..... We will build the roads, highways, bridges, tunnels, airports, and the railways of tomorrow. This, in turn, will create millions more jobs. We will rescue kids from failing schools by helping their parents send them to a safe school of their choice. My opponent would rather protect education bureaucrats than serve American children. We will repeal and replace disastrous Obamacare. You will be able to choose your own doctor again. And we will fix TSA at the airports! We will completely rebuild our depleted military, and the countries that we protect, at a massive loss, will be asked to pay their fair share. We will take care of our great Veterans like they have never been taken care of before. ' Donald Trump 2016 RNC Draft Speech Transcript. July 12, 2016.*

Here, Trump makes an economical promise to his people, as a president, he will make America a successful economic country. Again, he ensures the importance of safety and equality in his country and he will do everything to fulfill his promises. In addition, he promises that the state of his country will be improved in all different fields such as transport, education, health and the military. In the preceding example the priority of “will” is noticeable.

At the end of this selected speech, Trump uses two strategies of promise together. First, he uses the word “will” for his indirect promise. Second, he uses the direct form of promise, utilizing the word “promise” as a noun which is preceded by the verb “make” and then he returns to the model verb “will” four times immediately. As it is clear in the following sentences:

5- *‘So to every parent who dreams for their child, and every child who dreams for their future, I say these words to you tonight: I’m With You, and I will fight for you, and I will win for you.*

To all Americans tonight, in all our cities and towns, I make this promise: We Will Make America Strong Again.

We Will Make America Proud Again.

We Will Make America Safe Again.

And We Will Make America Great Again.’ Donald Trump 2016 RNC Draft Speech Transcript. July 12, 2016.

6. *‘ Together, we will determine the course of America and the world for many, many years to come. We will face challenges, we will confront hardships, but we will get the job done. January 20th, 2017 will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again..... From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this day forward, it's going to be only America first, America first. Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs will be made to benefit American workers and American families..... Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength. I will fight for you with every breath in my body and I will never ever let you down. America will start winning again, winning like never before. We will bring back our jobs. We will bring back our borders. We will bring back our wealth. And we will bring back our dreams. We will build new roads and highways and bridges and airports and tunnels and railways all across our wonderful nation. We will get our people off of welfare and back to work, rebuilding our country with American hands and American labor.We will seek friendship and goodwill with the nations of the world,.... . We will shine for everyone to follow.we will rediscover our loyalty to each other. Together, we will make America strong again. We will make America wealthy again. We will make America proud again. We will make*

America safe again. And yes, together we will make America great again.’ Donald Trump’s full Inauguration Speech Transcript, Annotated .January 20, 2017.

In the third selected speech, the researcher highlights Trump’s frequent use of “will” for making his promises concerning making America win again on all sides of life and how it will be great, safe, strong and proud. This speech is full of promises and Trump achieves this commessive speech act by the modal verb “will”. Furthermore, the researcher finds that his promises in the second and third selected speeches are nearly similar in meaning and in strategy.

7. *One of the biggest promises I made to the American people was to replace the disastrous NAFTA trade deal. In fact, unfair trade is perhaps the single biggest reason that I decided to run for President. Following NAFTA as adoption, our nation lost one in four manufacturing jobs. Many politicians came and went, pledging to change or replace NAFTA, only to do so and then absolutely nothing happened. But unlike so many who came before me, I keep my promises. We did our job. Six days ago, I replaced NAFTA and signed the brand new United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement into law. The USMCA will create nearly 100,000 new high paying American auto jobs and massively boost exports for our farmers, ranchers, and factory workers..... It will also bring trade with Mexico and Canada to a much higher level. But also to be a much greater degree of fairness and reciprocity, we will have that fairness and reciprocity. And I say that finally, because it’s been many, many years that we were treated fairly on trade. This is the first major trade deal in many years to earn the strong backing of America’s labor unions. I also promised our citizens that I would impose tariffs to confront China’s massive theft of America’s jobs. Donald Trump’s State of the Union Speech Transcript:. February 4, 2020.*

Trump continues his promises concerning America’s affairs, so in this speech, he makes other promises. Some of them are direct and others are indirect. In the preceding lines, he utilizes the word ‘promise’ three times. One in the form of the verb and twice in the form of nouns. The first noun is followed by the verb “made” and in the second, it is preceded by the verb “keep”. This means Trump has made promises and he keeps his promise and achieves it. Here, he declares that he was looking for a presidential job in order to replace the disastrous NAFTA trade deal. He insists that he fulfills this promise and changes the system of trade for the benefit of his country. At the same time, these sentences involve the modal verb “will” to ensure that the new trade will bring a much higher level.

It is obvious from the four chosen speeches that Trump frequently makes promises to Americans using the modal verb "will":

8. ' We will always protect patients with preexisting conditions. And we will always protect your Medicare and we will always protect _____ your Social Security, always..... I want you to know we will never let socialism destroy American healthcare.So long as I am president, I will always protect your second amendment right to keep and bear arms. Our message to the terrorists is clear. You will never escape American justice..... '

9. ' I will build a great, great wall on our southern border..... and I will have Mexico pay for that wall. '

10. ' We will save countless more families from suffering the same awful fate. '

11. ' We will shine for everyone to follow. '

In practically all of Donald Trump's chosen speeches, the verb "will" was frequently used to make a commitment. This demonstrates that using the verb "will" while making a promise is Trump's preferred technique. When this technique is contrasted with the word "promise," it is evident that promises made using this word are less frequent than those made by Trump using other expressions "will".

7. Concluding Remarks

1- The promises in the selected speeches were performed by the use of the word 'promise to give a promise as well as by the modal verb "will".

2- The use of the word 'promise' is less than the other expressions used by Trump to express a promise.

3- Trump sometimes combines the two strategies of making promise.

4- Some of Trump's promises are repeated in the four selected speeches and he uses the same strategy in these repeated promises.

5- The dominant strategy in delivering a promise is the modal verb 'will'. This verb is often used more frequently than the word 'promise'. It is the most common expression used to express 'promising' in all the selected speeches. It is used very repeatedly in most of Trump's speeches.

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