

## A Sociopragmatic Study of Motivational Speech by Steve Harvey

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### دراسة تداولية إجتماعية للخطاب التحفيزي لستيف هارفي

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الملخص

تتناول الدراسة الحالية كيفية استخدام الخطاب التحفيزي بشكل فعال من قبل ستيف هارفي من وجهة نظر لغوية تداولية و إجتماعية و تأثير بعض المتغيرات الإجتماعية على استخدامه لبعض الإستراتيجيات التداولية. تم إختيار الخطاب التحفيزي بشكل أساسي لأنه لم يتم تناوله بشكل دقيق من قبل الباحثين من منظور لغوي تداولي و إجتماعي. لذلك، يجب سد هذه الفجوة المعرفية من خلال الدراسة التداولية الإجتماعية للخطاب التحفيزي كما ألقاه ستيف هارفي. وبالتالي، فإن هذه الدراسة هي محاولة لتحقيق الأهداف التالية: إكتشاف المعايير التي تشير تداولياً بشكل أفضل إلى الخطاب التحفيزي؛ وتحديد الإستراتيجيات التداولية المستخدمة لتعكس الخطاب التحفيزي و وظائفها في الخطاب التحفيزي لهارفي؛ و معرفة تأثير المتغيرات الاجتماعية مثل القوة على المظهر اللغوي للخطاب التحفيزي الذي ألقاه هارفي. تماشياً مع أهدافها، تفترض هذه الدراسة أن: الخطاب التحفيزي يتميز بتوافر معايير محددة منها الغرض المحدد للخطاب، و استخدام القصص الشخصية التحفيزية، والملائمة الجيدة للجمهور، و الملاحظات الختامية القوية؛ يمكن لهارفي استخدام الإستراتيجيات التداولية لأفعال الكلام، والإسناد، واللغة المجازية، والتكرار، والتوكيد، والتباين، وغيرها من الإستراتيجيات لعكس خطابه التحفيزي؛ كما أن للمتغيرات الاجتماعية للسلطة والمكانة تأثيراً كبيراً على تجليات الخطاب التحفيزي، كما يتضح من تفصيل هارفي لاستخدام أنواع معينة من الإستراتيجيات التداولية دون غيرها. ولتحقيق أهدافها، تتبع هذه الدراسة خطوات محددة: فهي تستعرض بإيجاز الأدبيات ذات الصلة بالتداولية الإجتماعية للخطاب التحفيزي؛ وتضع نموذجاً للخطاب التحفيزي لتحليل البيانات؛ وتحلل عشرة مقتطفات كأمثلة تحليلياً نوعياً باستخدام النموذج (المودل) الذي طُوّر في هذه الدراسة لهذا الغرض؛ و تناقش النتائج للوصول إلى بعض الإستنتاجات. وتنتهي هذه الدراسة بمجموعة متنوعة من الإستنتاجات المهمة، أبرزها أن الخطاب التحفيزي يُحدد تداولياً بمعايير معينة، ويتجلى ذلك من خلال الاستخدام المتعدد و المتنوع للإستراتيجيات التداولية، ويتأثر الخطاب التحفيزي إجتماعياً ببعض المتغيرات الاجتماعية، بما في ذلك السلطة و المكانة الاجتماعية للشخص الي يلقي ذلك الخطاب. الكلمات المفتاحية: التداولية الإجتماعية، الخطاب التحفيزي، ستيف هارفي.

#### Abstract

The present study sociopragmatically examines how motivational speech is effectively reflected by Steve Harvey and the effect of some social variables on his use of certain pragmatic strategies. Motivational speech is mainly selected as it has not been given a satisfactory consideration by researchers from a sociopragmatic perspective, as far as the researcher could inspect. Therefore, this knowledge gap should really be bridged by sociopragmatically scrutinizing motivational speech as delivered by Harvey. This study, hence, is an attempt to achieve the following aims: detecting the criteria that pragmatically best indicate motivational speech; identifying the pragmatic strategies used to reflect motivational speech and their functions in Harvey's motivational speech; and finding out the effect of the social variables of power and status on the manifestation of motivational speech delivered by Harvey. In line with its aims, this study hypothesises that: motivational speech is characterized by the availability of the criteria of a well-defined purpose, personal storytelling, a good audience fit, and strong concluding remarks; the pragmatic strategies of speech acts, attribution, metaphorical language, repetition, emphasis, contrast, and other strategies can be used by Harvey to reflect his motivational speech; and the social variables of power and status highly affect the manifestation of motivational speech as reflected in Harvey's preferences for the use of certain types of pragmatic strategies rather than the others. To

accomplish its aims, this study follows certain steps: it briefly reviews the relevant literature about the sociopragmatics of motivational speech; develops a model of motivational speech to analyze the data; analyses ten extracts qualitatively using the model developed in this study for this purpose; and discusses the findings to arrive at some conclusions. The present study ends up with a variety of conclusions, the most dominant of which is that motivational speech is pragmatically identified by certain criteria and manifested by various pragmatic strategies and it is socially affected by means of some social variables including power and status.

**Keywords:** Sociopragmatics, Motivational Speech, Steve Harvey.

## 1. Introduction

Motivational speech has become an omnipresent hallmark of contemporary common culture, with several self-help books, podcasts, and public speakers offering guidance on personal development and success. Among these motivational speakers, Harvey has emerged as a prominent figure, leveraging his charisma and life experiences to inspire and empower audiences worldwide (Jacob, 2022: 144). As a media personality, author, and public speaker, Harvey's motivational speech has resonated with millions, sparking a desire to explore the sociopragmatic dynamics underlying his communication style. This study undertakes a sociopragmatic analysis of Harvey's motivational speech, examining the pragmatic strategies and cultural values that characterize his discourse. By investigating the way in which Harvey uses language to motivate and inspire his audience, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between language, culture, and power dynamics in motivational speech. Despite the widespread popularity and influence of Harvey's motivational speech, there is a scarcity of research examining the sociopragmatic dynamics underlying his communication style. Hence, the present study makes an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the criteria that pragmatically indicate motivational speech?
2. What are the pragmatic strategies employed by Steve Harvey to motivate and inspire his audience?
3. What are the cultural values and norms that are reflected and reinforced in his motivational speech?
4. What are the power dynamics at play in Steve Harvey's discourse, including the way in which he establishes authority and expertise?
5. How do the social variables of power and status affect the manifestation of motivational speech delivered by Steve Harvey?

This study seeks to address these gaps in knowledge by conducting a sociopragmatic analysis of Harvey's motivational speech, with a focus on exploring the complex relationships between language, culture, and power dynamics in his discourse. It is worth noting that this study has two limitations. First, it focuses on a single motivational speaker, Harvey, and may not be generalizable to other speakers or contexts. Second, it relies on a qualitative analysis of Harvey's speech and may not have captured the full range of his communication strategies.

## 2. Sociopragmatically Theorizing Motivational Speech by Steve Harvey

### 2.1 Sociopragmatically Defining Motivational Speech

Generally speaking, communication is the rudiment of human life, and the ability to communicate effectively is a talent which highly affects our personal and professional life. Motivational speech is considered by Bovée (2003: 273) as a speech given in public with the goal of encouraging the audience to alter their life. As its name suggests, motivational speech is a form of communication that aims to motivate, inspire, and uplift the target individuals (Livingston, 2015: 31). It, as (Vasile, 2016: 62) states, encourages the audience to take action, overcome obstacles, achieve goals, and believe in their abilities. Thus, According to Koch and Schmitt (2016: 78), motivational speech often consists of a defined goal, a personal narrative tailored to the audience, and a call to action at the end. In order to be motivational, the speech should be delivered by someone who is really effective in the society and has a social status. Such social status reflects the capacity to influence others through respect and admiration. Specifically, the social status of the speaker who delivered the motivational speech influences the way the audience forms their beliefs about their abilities and achievements. Hence, motivational speech can operationally be defined as a contextually-situated, socially-constructed, and pragmatically-oriented process wherein a speaker, as a social actor, strategically employs certain pragmatic strategies, and cultural resources to create a transformative social reality that enables the audience to reorient their actions towards achieving personal and collective goals.

### 2.2 Defining Criteria of Motivational Speech

In order to breakdown the deep side of motivational speech delivered by Harvey, there must be some criteria that clearly define it. In this case, this study suggests the following clues to identify motivational speech:

### 2.2.1 A Well-defined Purpose

This criterion indicates having a clear goal behind the delivered speech. Hence, the level of clarification required should cope with the topic of the speech. To do so, the speaker, as Mayseless (2016: 223) elaborates, should provide enough information to the audience to ensure a complete understanding of what he likes them to do and how they can get started.

### 2.2.2 Personal Storytelling

This criterion can be indicated by using at least one personal story by the speaker to which the audience can relate. When the audience hears the story of the effective speaker, this will inspire them and allow them to feel empowered to make a change. Also, when the speaker shares his own success story, it adds a personal touch that allows the audience to realize the impact of making a change in their life.

### 2.2.3 A Good Audience Fit

Motivational speech should be tailored to fit the audience. If too much background information is given, listeners who are already familiar with the subject area may get rapidly disinterested, while those who are not will be lost in the material. Moreover, when planning the speech, social aspects like cultural and regional context should also be taken into account to fit the audience's interests (Sonaike, 2011: 96).

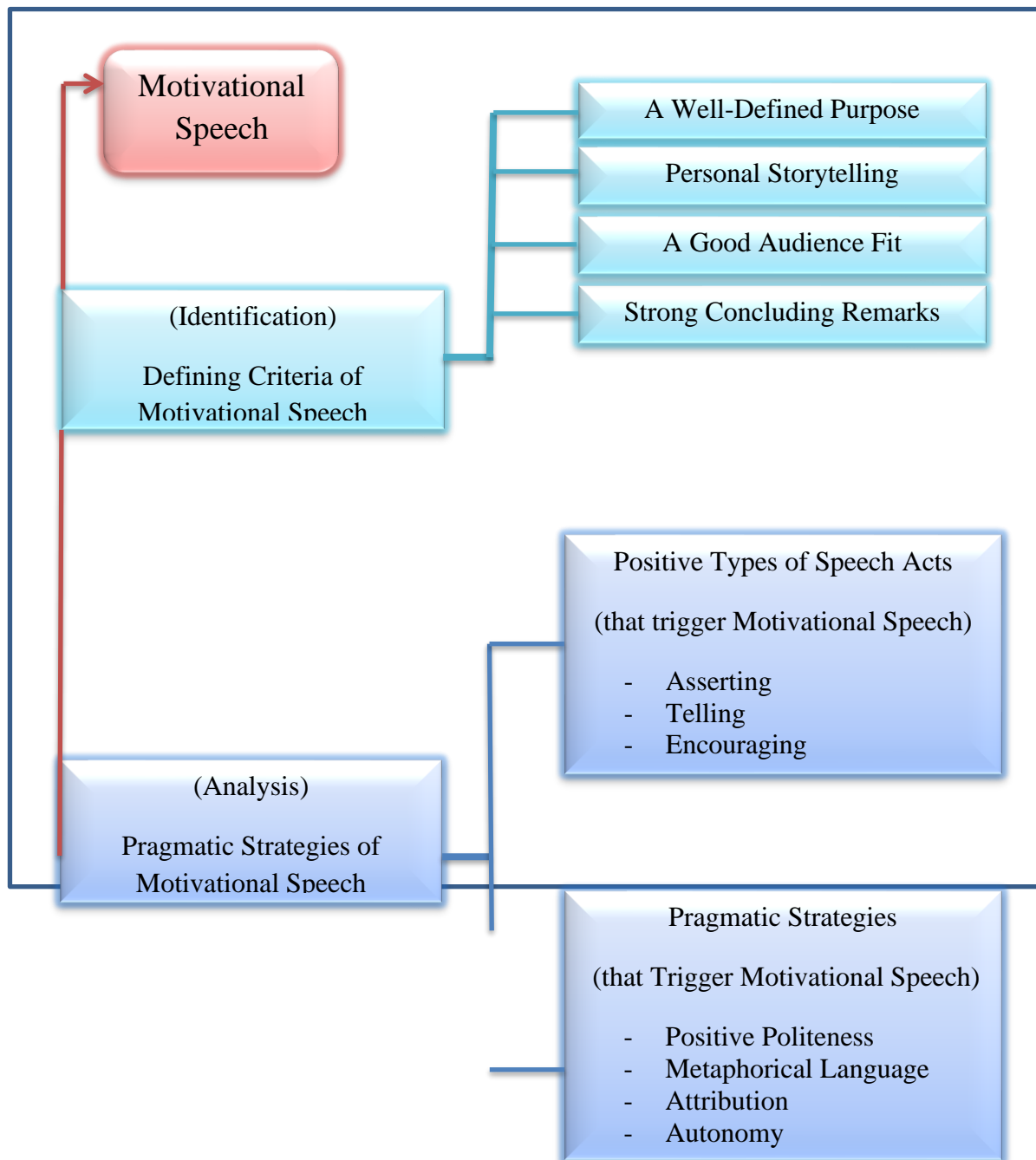
### 2.2.4 Strong Concluding Remarks

It's crucial to make the most of the closing moment of the speaker's speech because it can be the one the audience recalls the most. The speaker should put the major ideas of his speech together while going over the important issues in brief with the intention to inspire the audience with a call to action.

## 3. Methodology

The data of this study is represented by one of the best motivational speeches, namely "You're the Captain" delivered by Harvey who is a popular American television host, actor, writer, producer, and comedian. He is well-known for his daily words of wisdom by providing his audience with spiritual support, comfort, and guidance. This speech is found in form of video and transcribed by the researcher herself. Motivational speech demands the activation of three dimensions; the speaker, the speech, and the audience to whom the speech is delivered. In this study, Searle's (1976) taxonomy of speech acts is adapted to include all the positive speech acts which suit the purpose of motivational speech. Other pragmatic strategies such as attribution, metaphorical designation, metaphorical language, repetition, autonomy, and others are activated in his speech. The model is a top-down model that works from top to bottom where the two phases of this model; namely, identification and analysis, have a vertical sequence. First, it starts with the identification of the criteria of motivational speech.

Second, it moves to the analysis where motivational speech is depicted in terms of some pragmatic strategies. The proposed model is clearly sketched in Figure (1) below:



**Figure (1):** A Pragmatic Model of Motivational Speech

#### 4. Analysis

In this section, ten extracts are analyzed by means of the model developed in this study for this purpose.

**Extract (1)** "You have control of this. This belongs to you. This is yours. You're the captain. You're the master. You're the foreman. You're the general. You're the head. Don't give control of this to nobody". In this extract, motivational speech is triggered when Harvey conveys his powerful message behind this extract which could imply that success and happiness depend on you being the steward of your own thinking. It indicates a mixture of two speech acts which are asserting and advising respectively to motivate the audience to control their mind and prevent negative thoughts from creeping in. As a man of experience, Harvey advises his audience to be the master of their life and to control their behavior without allowing others to control their decision. Harvey emphasises that one must have full authority and responsibility over his life path to steer it in the right direction. This utterance is used to motivate and empower his audience to take ownership of their work, decisions, and actions. It's a reminder that they must have the power to shape the outcome and make choices that align with their goals and values. As the "captain", they must continue to navigate their life with confidence and expertise,

ensuring that they will reach their desired destination. His utterances employ several speech acts. He uses a declarative speech act of declaring and a representative speech act of asserting when he says "You have control of this" which asserts a fact or a state of affairs, declaring his authority. He also uses a representative speech act of asserting as he says "This is yours" which asserts a fact or a claim, emphasizing his possession or control. He also uses the strategy of "attribution" when he says "This belongs to you" which assigns ownership or responsibility to the audience. Directive speech act of advising is used in "Don't give control of this to nobody" which issues a command or instruction as it directs the audience to maintain control and not relinquish it to others. Such utterance indicates prohibition which explicitly prohibits the audience from surrendering control, reinforcing the importance of maintaining authority. Attribution is also used in "You're the master", "You're the foreman", "You're the general", and "You're the head" because these utterances assign a role, position, or title to the audience, emphasizing their authority and control. Additionally, he activates the strategy of metaphorical designation as he says "You're the captain" when he uses a metaphor to designate the listeners' role or position, conveying authority and responsibility. Assertiveness is very obvious since the overall tone of extract is assertive, conveying confidence and authority, and encouraging the audience to adopt a similar mindset. Repetition is used when repeating the phrase "You're the ..." emphasizes the audience's authority and control, driving the point home. He also uses metaphors like "master", "foreman", "general", and "head" to create vivid imagery and convey a sense of power and responsibility. Emphasis is used also when he use strong, assertive language to emphasize the importance of maintaining control and not relinquishing it to others. Thus, the pragmatic effects of this motivational speech collectively aim to empower the audience, establish their authority and control, encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility, motivate them to take charge and make decisions, and prevent them from relinquishing control to others. By using these pragmatic strategies, Harvey aims to influence the audience's perception, attitude, and behavior.

**Extract (2)** "Get off of instagram and snap and get off all these blogs and get into something that can really really move your life forward. Listen, getting successful it's not a magic trick. You can decide to be rich. It's highly doable, but you first have to think it. The difference between successful people and non-successful people is here". In this extract, Harvey employs several speech acts and pragmatic strategies to motivate and guide his audience. He utilizes the directive speech act of commanding in saying "Get off of Instagram and snap and get off all these blogs" to instruct the audience to stop wasting time on social media and focus on more productive activities. Harvey advises his audience to get off of the social media using the directive speech act of advising by saying "get into something that can move your life forward" as this advice encourages the audience to engage in activities that can lead to personal growth and success. He also asserts that getting successful is not a magic trick and the difference between successful people and non-successful people is by their way of thinking. Assertion is activated in "getting successful it's not a magic trick. You can decide to be rich. It's highly doable, but you first have to think it" as this speech act of asserting states that success is achievable through deliberate thought and action. He also uses the declarative speech act of validating by giving endorsements and decisions. Contrast is illuminated by saying "The difference between successful people and non-successful people is here" to highlight the distinction between individuals who achieve success and those who do not. Generally, Harvey's speech, in this extract, aims to motivate his audience to take action and make positive changes in their life. Positive direction is obvious through the use of positive language and directives to encourage the audience to focus on productive activities. Empowerment is activated as the speech emphasizes the audience's ability to make choices and decisions that can lead to success. Contrastive emphasis is obvious by highlighting the contrast between successful and non-successful individuals highlighting the importance of making deliberate choices. The pragmatic effects of this extract are to motivate the audience to take action, encourage positive change and personal growth, emphasize the importance of deliberate thought and action, and highlight the distinction between successful and non-successful individuals.

**Extract (3)** "If you had a place in your life and you ain't happy with it, you have to change some things. But you have to make a conscientious decision that you're going to change, and it's not dependent on anybody else. It don't matter what your mama think. It don't matter what your co-workers think. It don't matter what your siblings think. It don't matter what your children think. It doesn't matter. They have nothing to do with it. This decision is yours and yours alone". In this extract, which is a powerful message to his audience, Harvey uses a series of representative speech act of asserting to encourage his audience for a change of mindset in order to achieve success through the use of the speech acts of asserting and advising. This extract employs several speech acts and pragmatic strategies to convey a message of personal empowerment and decision-making. Harvey resorts

to speech act of advising by saying "If you had a place in your life and you ain't happy with it, you have to change some things". This advice encourages the audience to take action to improve their situation. He also uses the speech act of asserting "But you have to make a conscientious decision that you're going to change, and it's not dependent on anybody else". This assertion emphasizes the importance of making a deliberate decision to change. Rejection is also highlighted by saying "It doesn't matter what your mama think. It doesn't matter what your co-workers think... They have nothing to do with it". This rejection dismisses the opinions of others as irrelevant to the audience's decision. The pragmatic strategy of empowerment is obvious by empowering the audience to take control of their life and make decisions independently. Autonomy is also highlighted to emphasize making a "conscientious decision" and ignoring others' opinions which promotes self-reliance. Repetition is clear by the use of the repeated expression "It doesn't matter" drives home the point that others' opinions are irrelevant. Exclusion is used in the use of the explicit exclusion of others' opinions "They have nothing to do with it" which reinforces the idea that the decision is the audience's alone. The pragmatic effects of this extract is to empower the audience to take control of their life, encourage self-reliance, emphasize the importance of making deliberate decisions, dismiss the influence of others' opinions on the listener's decision-making.

**Extract (4)** "Let me tell you something. You get to decide if i'm gonna be rich, poor, mediocre, plentiful, happy, sad. You you have a decision to make. It's really not important what the majority of people that are blogging are saying. As a matter of fact, bloggers are not relevant people. They're not shakers and movers and they're not decision makers and they're not power brokers. So, when you spend so much time in the blog world, the instagram world, the chat world, all of this, you're wasting valuable time". In this extract, Harvey utilizes the directive speech act telling and through this speech act, he directly motivates his audience to be confident in their abilities by telling them that once they decide to be rich, they will be so. So, they have the decision to be rich, poor, mediocre, plentiful, happy, or sad. In this extract, Harvey employs several speech acts and pragmatic strategies that reveal his stance, power dynamics, and social relationships. He resorts to the directive speech of commanding by saying "Let me tell you something" to establish his authority and expertise. However, he uses assertion in saying "You get to decide if I'm gonna be rich, poor, mediocre, plentiful, happy, sad" which emphasizes the audience's agency and power. Evaluation is also triggered in saying "bloggers are not relevant people" to express his negative opinion of bloggers. Advisory is clear by saying "you're wasting valuable time" as he warns the audience about the consequences of spending time in the blog world. The pragmatic strategy of power dynamics is also triggered by Harvey to establish the audience members as authority figures, emphasizing their agency and power. Social exclusion is also used by Harvey as he excludes bloggers from the category of "relevant people", creating a social hierarchy. Time management is clear when Harvey advises the audience to prioritize their time, implying that the blog world is a waste of time. Anti-conformity is clear when Harvey discourages the audience from following the majority opinion, promoting individuality. In this extract, thus, some sociopragmatic insights are reflected such as social hierarchy, when Harvey creates a social hierarchy, positioning himself as an authority figure and bloggers as irrelevant, power relationships, when Harvey establishes a power dynamic, emphasizing the audience's agency and power, cultural values, when Harvey promotes individuality and self-reliance, discouraging conformity to majority opinions, and technological critique, when Harvey critiques the blog world, Instagram, and chat world, implying that these platforms are a waste of time. More importantly, Harvey's authority is established through his directive and advisory speech acts. However, his exclusionary language towards bloggers may be seen as dismissive and elitist. Simplistic advice is given by Harvey to avoid the blog world and prioritize time may be overly simplistic and not applicable to all situations.

**Extract (5)** "Ain't no elevator to the top. You got to take the stairs. The elevator don't go to the top, man. Not in the world of success. You got to take the stairs. Y'all got to start getting gritty, man". In this extract, Harvey cleverly performs the expressive speech act of mocking by assuring them that there is no elevator to the top in the world of success and they have to take the stairs. In this extract, Harvey employs several speech acts and pragmatic strategies that convey a message of hard work, determination, and resilience. He uses assertion by saying "Ain't no elevator to the top" which states a fact or a reality, emphasizing the absence of shortcuts to success. He also resorts to the directive speech act of commanding by saying "You got to take the stairs" to instruct the audience to take a specific course of action, emphasizing the importance of hard work. Advisory is highlighted in "Y'all got to start getting gritty, man" which warns the audience to adopt a tougher and more resilient mindset. Metaphorical language is pragmatically utilised by using the elevator and stairs metaphor to

create a vivid and memorable image, conveying the idea that success requires hard work and effort. Repetition is clear in repeating "You got to take the stairs" to emphasize the importance of this message and drive it home. Inclusive language is activated in the use of "y'all" which creates a sense of inclusivity and shared experience, emphasizing that the message is relevant to everyone. Moreover, emotional appeal is triggered by the use of "man" and "gitty" which creates an emotional connection with the audience, emphasizing the importance of adopting a resilient mindset. Some sociopragmatic insights are elaborated in this extract such as cultural values because this extract promotes the cultural values of hard work, determination, and resilience, emphasizing the importance of effort in achieving success. Power dynamics is highlighted when Harvey establishes himself as an authority figure, offering advice and guidance to the audience. Additionally, social identity is reflected in the use of "y'all" and "man" which creates a sense of shared identity and community, emphasizing that the message is relevant to everyone. Emotional intelligence is triggered since this extract appeals to the audience's emotions, emphasizing the importance of adopting a resilient mindset and being "gritty". This extract can be described by the criterion of oversimplification as it oversimplifies the path to success, implying that hard work alone is sufficient.

**Extract (6)** "I hate it when i see young people wasting their time, wasting all this technology you got just bullshit, just sitting around in this world that's been created for you, that everything is instant. I was arguing with my son the other day. We're having a debate. I thought, man, I'm finally sitting with one of my sons having a healthy debate. I told him that from Cleveland to Nashville was about 540 miles, something like that. He googles it while we're talking. He said "no dad you're wrong, It's 526 miles". I said 540. It's amazing, man. How you rely on technology and it's a help to you". The extract captures Harvey's, as a father, frustration and, ultimately, begrudging admiration for how readily his son uses technology. It reveals a generational difference in approaching information and problem-solving. Harvey resorts to assertion saying "I told him that from Cleveland to Nashville was about 540 miles, something like that" which is a declarative statement, attempting to convey information. However, his use of "something like that" as hedging reveals his uncertainty and potentially inviting a challenge. Such hedging weakens Harvey's assertion, as a pragmatic strategy, and it used here to mitigate the potential for being wrong, but it also invites correction. This hedging could be interpreted as a sign of Harvey's subconscious awareness that his information might be inaccurate in the age of readily available information. When his son says "No dad you're wrong, it's 526 miles", it serves as a direct, corrective assertion which is delivered with certainty, contrasting with his father's hesitant tone. The act of stating the correct information functions as a challenge to the father's authority on the subject. Hence, directness is obvious in the son's response which is remarkably direct, as he doesn't soften the correction or offer any preamble. This directness reflects a modern approach, prioritizing efficiency and accuracy over potentially face-saving politeness strategies. It could also be interpreted as a lack of deference to the father's experience or knowledge. Then, Harvey uses expressive speech act in saying "It's amazing, man. How you rely on technology and it's a help to you" which expresses his surprise and, despite the initial frustration, a degree of admiration. The utterance "It's amazing, man" suggests a shift in his perspective. While there's still a hint of criticism "how you rely", the "and it's a help to you" acknowledges the practical benefit of technology. There is also a kind of implicit criticism because the father's initial frustration and the phrasing "wasting all this technology" and "just sitting around" implicitly criticize the younger generation's perceived misuse of technology. This is a common generational trope. Also, there is a kind of implicit acknowledgment since despite the initial criticism; Harvey's concluding statement implicitly acknowledges the value of technology. The shift from "rely on" which is potentially negative to "it's a help to you" which is really positive shows a pragmatic adaptation to the reality of readily available information. More importantly, Harvey frames the interaction as a "healthy debate" as an attempt to position his initial incorrect statement not as a mistake but as part of an intellectual exchange. It's a face-saving strategy. Clearly, there is a kind of generational differences in this extract because he exchange clearly highlights the differing ways generations approach information. The father's reliance on memory and approximation contrasts sharply with the son's immediate recourse to technology. Also, the son's easy correction of the father challenges the traditional authority of elders as repositories of knowledge. In the information age, knowledge is democratized and readily accessible, shifting the balance of power in such interactions. Furthermore, the son's approach emphasizes efficiency and accuracy. In a world saturated with information, quick access and verification are highly valued. The interaction demonstrates how technology mediates communication and influences pragmatic choices. The son's directness is facilitated by the ease of accessing information. The extract offers a glimpse into how technology is reshaping social interactions and challenging

traditional notions of knowledge and authority. Harvey's initial frustration and eventual acknowledgment reflect a broader societal adaptation to the information age. The pragmatic strategies employed by both the father and son reveal how language is used to negotiate meaning, maintain face, and navigate generational differences in a technologically mediated world.

**Extract (7)** "You can't google success, man. I got something else for you because I've lived so long and I've been exposed to so many things. I've seen stuff hopefully you'll never see and I've seen some things I hope one day you do see, but go google exposure. It ain't gonna take you nowhere. I've been around the world, man, because I've traveled it, but I traveled it because I made myself uncomfortable. I have a life of convenience now, but in order to get the life of convenience, you got to have a very uncomfortable life. You got to get comfortable being uncomfortable. Stop trying to do everything the short way". This extract highlights one of the most powerful and motivational speech by Harvey which is intended to make his audience realize that success cannot be found through Google or any other search engine. It can only come through hard work, faith, dedication, and determination. He uses the directive speech act of encouraging because he has noticed a valuable thing that he wants his audience to get it, but they might not be aware of that thing. So, he makes the observation that might enable them to gain their confidence by delivering his storytelling to remind them of the qualifications that they have and to urge them to overcome any expected challenges. Harvey continues his discourse, contrasting his views on achieving success through lived experience and discomfort with the perceived ease of modern life and reliance on technology. He emphasizes the importance of "real" experience over readily available information. He uses assertion in saying "You can't google success, man" which is a strong, declarative statement intended to convey a fundamental truth as he sees it. It's not just about searching for a definition; it's about the complex, multifaceted nature of achieving success. He employs directive speech act with an imperative and sarcastic tone when he says "go google exposure" which is a sarcastic command. Harvey isn't genuinely suggesting his son look up "exposure" online. Instead, he's using irony to highlight the limitations of online information when it comes to real-world experience. He also uses assertion in saying "It ain't gonna take you nowhere" which reinforces the futility of relying solely on digital resources for understanding complex concepts like "exposure" or "success". Assertion with narration is used in "I've been around the world, man, because I've traveled it, but I traveled it because I made myself uncomfortable" which is a personal anecdote, a narrative used to illustrate his point. It emphasizes the connection between discomfort and valuable experience. Harvey uses directive with an imperative tone when says "You got to get comfortable being uncomfortable" and this can be a piece of advice framed as a necessary condition for success. It's a key takeaway message he wants to impart. He also says "Stop trying to do everything the short way" which is another direct command, expressing his disapproval of shortcuts and the perceived ease of modern solutions. Harvey also uses the pragmatic strategies of contrast and juxtaposition when he juxtaposes "googling success" with his own lived experiences, highlighting the difference between theoretical knowledge and practical, often challenging, experiences. He also contrasts the "short way" with the path of discomfort and hard work. Harvey's directive utterance "go google exposure" is dripping with sarcasm. It's a pragmatic strategy to express contempt for the idea that such a complex concept can be easily grasped through a quick online search. Moreover, the travel story is a powerful pragmatic tool of personal narrative anecdote which is a personal narrative that lends weight to his argument and makes it more relatable or at least, more personal. It positions him as someone who has "walked the walk" and earned the right to give this advice. The recurring theme of "uncomfortable" is central by emphasis on the disadvantages of discomfort. He emphasizes that growth and success often require stepping outside one's comfort zone, a concept he contrasts with the perceived ease of modern life. Additionally, "Man" is used by Harvey as a discourse marker which contributes to a sense of informal, direct communication and it creates a sense of camaraderie and reinforces him as someone sharing wisdom. Then and again, there is a kind of implicit criticism as the entire extract implicitly criticizes the perceived reliance on technology and shortcuts. Harvey sees these as hindering genuine growth and understanding. The underlying message is that the "easy way" is not the "right way" Moreover, directness and forcefulness are expressed through Harvey's language as he uses imperatives and strong assertions to convey his message, leaving little room for ambiguity and this directness reflects his conviction and his desire to impart this wisdom to his son. Thus, this extract provides a compelling illustration of Harvey's perspective on success, the importance of real-world experience, and the perceived dangers of relying too heavily on technology. The pragmatic strategies he employs including sarcasm, personal anecdotes, and a focus on discomfort, effectively convey his message and highlight the generational



differences in values and approaches to learning. The extract goes beyond simply criticizing technology to offer a broader commentary on the nature of personal growth and the challenges of navigating the information age.

**Extract (8)**"You got to get messed up sometimes, you got to get dirty, you got to get your feelings hurt, you got to get disappointed, you got to get told no, you're going to ask somebody for some money, he going to tell you no. But at least then when I see somebody trying and I tell them no, I try to at least give them something else. See, I'm not going to hand you a fish sandwich, I'll teach you how to fish, but I'm not giving you a fish sandwich". This extract focuses on Harvey's philosophy of resilience and learning through adversity. He emphasizes the importance of experiencing setbacks and challenges as a necessary part of growth. He uses assertion in saying "You got to get messed up sometimes, you got to get dirty, you got to get your feelings hurt, you got to get disappointed, you got to get told no...". This series of statements asserts a fundamental truth about the nature of life and the path to success. It's presented as inevitable and even necessary. He also says "You're going to ask somebody for some money, he going to tell you no" which is a specific example used to illustrate the general principle of facing rejection. In saying "But at least then when I see somebody trying and I tell them no, I try to at least give them something else", Harvey contrasts his approach with others who might simply reject someone without offering support. It highlights his practice of offering alternative guidance. Metaphorically, he employs assertion in saying "See, I'm not going to hand you a fish sandwich, I'll teach you how to fish, but I'm not giving you a fish sandwich" This is a metaphorical statement. The "fish sandwich" represents immediate, short-term solutions, while "teaching how to fish" symbolizes providing the skills and knowledge for long-term success. The repetition of "you got to" emphasizes the inevitability and necessity of these experiences. The parallel structure reinforces the idea that these are all interconnected and essential parts of the learning process. The example of asking for money and being told no makes the abstract concept of rejection more concrete and relatable. Harvey contrasts his own approach of offering alternative support with the implied actions of others who might simply reject someone outright. This highlights his commitment to helping others learn and grow. The "fish sandwich" metaphor is a powerful pragmatic tool. It concisely conveys Harvey's philosophy of empowering others with skills rather than providing temporary solutions. It makes his message memorable and easily understandable. Harvey's language is direct and forceful, reflecting his conviction and the importance of the message he's trying to convey. There's no room for ambiguity. While not explicitly stated, there's an implicit criticism of those who only offer immediate solutions "fish sandwiches" without empowering others to achieve long-term success "teaching how to fish". The entire extract emphasizes the importance of resilience and the ability to bounce back from setbacks. Harvey views these challenges not as failures but as opportunities for learning and growth. This extract provides a powerful illustration of Harvey's philosophy of resilience, learning through adversity, and the importance of empowerment. The pragmatic strategies he employs including repetition, specific examples, contrast, and metaphor, effectively convey his message and highlight his commitment to helping others develop the skills and resilience necessary for long-term success. The extract offers valuable insights into his values and his approach to mentorship and guidance.

**Extract (9)**"Do you understand negativity, you can protect yourself from negativity and that's what stops most people, negative thoughts. You can coat your mind from negativity. It's a real simple exercise to do. I do it every morning before I walk out the door. So, I walk out as a positive person. You know, I get tired sometimes. That's different from being negative because I get mentally drained from my job at times. But to coat your mind from negativity, the way you can put a coating around your mind, is with one simple thing, gratitude. Gratitude erases negativity". In this extract, Harvey motivates his audience to protect themselves from negativity by learning how to block negative thoughts. He uses the speech act of advising to motivate them to start their day with gratitude because gratitude, as he assures, erases negativity. Harvey successfully uses the storytelling technique by sharing how he protects himself from negative thoughts daily and uses gratitude to help him stay positive. This extract focuses on Harvey's approach to maintaining a positive mindset and overcoming negativity. He emphasizes the importance of mental resilience and offers gratitude as a key strategy. In using the rhetorical question "Do you understand negativity?" he is not seeking information but rather engaging the audience and introducing the topic. It assumes the audience has some understanding of negativity but positions Harvey as having deeper insight. Thus, the opening rhetorical question engages the audience and sets the stage for Harvey's message. It creates a sense of shared understanding (or the assumption of it). In saying "you can protect yourself from negativity and that's what stops most people, negative thoughts", he asserts the possibility of shielding oneself from negativity and identifies negative thoughts as a major obstacle to success. Moreover, in saying "You can coat your mind from negativity", while not a direct command, this statement implies a directive to

take action and protect one's mind. Harvey also uses personal anecdote in saying "It's a real simple exercise to do. I do it every morning before I walk out the door. So, I walk out as a positive person" which serves as an example of Harvey's strategy and its effectiveness which adds credibility to his advice. Also in saying "You know, I get tired sometimes. That's different from being negative because I get mentally drained from my job at times", Harvey clarifies the distinction between tiredness and negativity, preempting potential misunderstandings. Saying "But to coat your mind from negativity, the way you can put a coating around your mind, is with one simple thing, gratitude" reveals the core of Harvey's strategy of gratitude as a protective shield against negativity. Harvey also uses a strong, declarative statement emphasizing the power of gratitude to counteract negative thoughts in asserting "Gratitude erases negativity". This extract provides a valuable insight into Harvey's approach to maintaining a positive mindset and overcoming negativity. The pragmatic strategies he employs including personal anecdotes, metaphors, and a focus on practicality, effectively convey his message and offer a concrete strategy for mental resilience. The extract highlights the importance of gratitude as a tool for managing negativity and promotes a proactive approach to mental well-being.

**Extract (10)** "The fact that you can walk, that's a blessing; the fact that you woke up, that's another blessing; the fact that you can see, think, reason, that's another blessing; the fact that you can go somewhere and get yourself something to eat, that's another blessing; the fact that you can go and turn the key and call some place home, that's another blessing; the ability to dream is a blessing; the fact that you have an opportunity to get it right is another blessing. And I'm just talking to you, I don't even know you. I could give you 50 things you ought to be grateful for right now. I don't even know you. Start coating your mind with gratitude. It'll change everything for you". In this extract, Harvey performs a speech act of asserting by presenting a series of statements of blessing by counting a number of blessings like walking, waking up, seeing, thinking, reasoning, etc. in order to motivate the audience to appreciate Allah's grace in their life. Hence, several speech acts and pragmatic strategies that convey a message of gratitude, positivity, and empowerment are employed. Assertion is clear in saying "The fact that you can walk, that's a blessing" which states a fact or reality, emphasizing the importance of appreciating one's abilities. Enumeration is pragmatically activated when Harvey lists multiple blessings, such as waking up, seeing, thinking, and reasoning, to emphasize the abundance of things to be grateful for. Advisory is used by saying "Start coating your mind with gratitude" to recommend a specific course of action, encouraging the audience to cultivate a mindset of gratitude. The commissive speech act of promising is used by saying "It'll change everything for you" to assure the audience of a positive outcome, emphasizing the transformative power of gratitude. The repetition of "that's a blessing" emphasizes the importance of gratitude and creates a sense of rhythm. Enumeration is triggered in the listing of multiple blessings creates a sense of abundance and emphasizes the importance of appreciating one's life. Inclusive language is also highlighted in the use of "you" creates a sense of inclusivity and shared experience, emphasizing that the message is relevant to everyone. Moreover, emotional appeal is clear when Harvey appeals to the audience's emotions, emphasizing the positive feelings associated with gratitude. Furthermore, Harvey presents himself as an authority on gratitude, emphasizing his ability to provide guidance and advice. As for the sociopragmatic insights of this extract, it promotes cultural values of gratitude, positivity, and empowerment, emphasizing the importance of appreciating one's life. Power dynamics is clear when Harvey establishes himself as an authority figure, offering guidance and advice to the audience. As for social identity, the use of "you" creates a sense of shared identity and community, emphasizing that the message is relevant to everyone. Emotional intelligence is triggered as the extract appeals to the audience's emotions, emphasizing the importance of cultivating a positive mindset. It is worth mentioning that overemphasis on individual responsibility is clear as the extract overemphasizes individual responsibility for cultivating gratitude, neglecting the role of systemic and structural factors in shaping one's life.

**5. Results and Discussion** After sociopragmatically analyzing the data of this study, the results demonstrate the effect of the social variables of power and status on the speech delivered by Harvey and this is reflected in the choice of certain pragmatic strategies that indicate his high position in social relations which is socially recognized and regulated in the American society. The results, moreover, indicate the existence of some benchmarks that indicate motivational speech as obtained by a well-defined purpose, personal storytelling, a good audience fit, and strong concluding remarks. The results also reveal that positive speech acts such as asserting, encouraging, and advising, that trigger motivation are mainly used by Harvey to make his speech motivational and to deliver his intended message. Harvey uses many pragmatic strategies in his motivational speech including metaphorical language, metaphorical designation, attribution, inclusive language or exclusive

language, evaluation, power dynamic, emphasis, time management, contrast, anti-conformity, empowerment, autonomy, repetition, implicit criticism, implicit acknowledgment, personal anecdote, and emotional appeal. Furthermore, power and status are the social variables that can highly affect the choice and the use of certain pragmatic strategies that manifest motivational speech. The sociopragmatic effects of Harvey's motivational speech are illuminated through social hierarchy, power relationship, cultural values, technological critique, and social identity.

**6. Conclusions** The present study ends up with several key conclusions as follow:

1. This sociopragmatic study of Steve Harvey's motivational speech has revealed the amalgamation of many factors including the interplay of language, social context, and persuasive intent in his discourse.
2. Harvey's motivational success is not solely attributable to his charisma, but also relies on a sophisticated and strategically deployed use of language within specific social contexts.
3. The study confirms the significance of context in shaping the meaning and impact of Harvey's messages. His ability to adapt his language and rhetorical strategies to the audience, whether defined by demographics, cultural background, or the specific setting of the speech, is crucial to his effectiveness. This highlights the importance of considering the social and cultural milieu in which motivational speech occurs.
4. The study identifies a range of linguistic and rhetorical devices employed by Harvey to construct his motivational messages. These include the skillful use of storytelling, often drawing from personal anecdotes, humor, direct address, appeals to shared values (particularly those related to faith, family, and hard work), and the strategic use of inclusive language like "we" and "us" to foster a sense of connection and shared experience with his audience. These pragmatic techniques contribute to the perceived authenticity of his message.
5. The analysis reveals the pragmatic force of Harvey's language. His use of language goes beyond simply conveying information as it actively seeks to persuade, inspire, and motivate. He employs various pragmatic strategies, including directives, suggestions, and rhetorical questions, to encourage specific actions and beliefs in his audience. His language is designed to not only inform but also to move his audience to change their behaviors.
6. While this study has identified key sociopragmatic features of Harvey's motivational speech, it also points to the need for further research. This study, thus, contributes to a broader understanding of the sociopragmatic dynamics of contemporary motivational speech and its role in shaping individual beliefs and behaviors within specific social and cultural contexts. It underscores the power of language to inspire, persuade, and influence, and highlights the importance of considering the social and cultural contexts in which communication takes place.
7. More specifically, the study shows that Steve Harvey relies on some positive speech acts that suit the goal and the function of his motivational speech. Basically, he heavily uses on two categories of speech acts which are representative speech acts and directive speech acts because these two categories enable him to deliver his speech effectively. More specifically, he uses the representative speech acts of telling, reporting, asserting, and stating to convey to his experiences to the audience and to comment on these experiences. He, also, utilizes the directive speech acts of advising, encouraging, and warning where he can direct the motivation he wants to create towards particular actions and thoughts on the part of his audience.
8. By pragmatically employing such speech acts, Steve Harvey is able to motivate the audience to solve their problems and face their challenges successfully, and such speech acts make this possible. He always refers to his real-life story in his speech in order to state and assert particular facts and values and, then, in the light of his statement and assertions, he advises, warns, or encourages his audience about a particular issue he wants to highlight.

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