



A Pragma-Stylistic Analysis of Flaming Language in Selected Political Speeches

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The pragma-stylistic approach offers a robust framework for examining the intricate dynamics of language use in political texts. Flaming is a term for verbal abuse that is intended to hurt someone, a group, or an organization. In other words, it constitutes profanity or personal insults that is used by politicians. The present study aims at investigating meanings of flaming as a pragma-stylistic phenomenon and identifying which meaning is mostly used by Donald Trump's Rallies against Harris. It also aims at identifying which impoliteness strategies and stylistics devices are used by Donald Trump and their contribute of flamed speeches. The study hypothesis that directs flaming is commonly used in Trump's speech and bald on record and hyperbole are mostly used in his rallies. The study uses eclectic model: Bansal et.al (2012) Meanings of Flaming, Culpeper (1996) Impoliteness Strategies

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1 Introduction

Pragma-stylistics is specifically employed to investigate how pragmatic principles (e.g., Gricean maxims) shape stylistic choices in literary works. In other words, researchers interested in pragma stylistics are more concerned with exploring how authors create meaning through dialogue, subtext, and implied intentions (Mey ,2009). Pragmatics focuses on how language users interact, communicate, and interpret linguistic behavior in context as it deals with meaning beyond literal definitions, considering social context and intentions. On the other hand, stylistics examines language use in texts, emphasizing features like word choice, sentence structure, and rhetorical devices. Viewed differently, pragma-stylistics relies on pragmatic theory, which considers how speakers use language to achieve their communicative goals. It examines felicity impoliteness strategies and their contribute conditions for successful speech acts and implicatures. Stylistics operates within the broader framework of the cognitive humanities. This interdisciplinary approach draws from linguistics, cognitive science, and literary studies. In particular, literary stylistics analyzes language use in literary texts, considering semantic, grammatical, phonological, and lexical properties. It applies linguistic tools to explore how texts are produced, understood, and evaluated (Mey ,2009).

2 Literature Review

2.1 Pragma-stylistics

Pragma-stylistics is an interdisciplinary area which incorporates pragmatics, which investigates “language use in context”, and stylistics, which examines “linguistic elements in texts”. It combines “theories from both pragmatics and

stylistics” to discover how language has purposes in various texts. In particular, it is dedicated to the real fundamentals of language use in different types of texts. It stresses how pragmatic issues (e.g. presupposition, speech acts, inference and implicatures) influence the total stylistic consequence of a certain text. In other words, pragma-stylistics is an area which intends to relate the consequences and procedure of pragmatics to the notion of language style, or “the differences in usage between spoken and written language, such as by looking at the language of literary writings from various authors, genres, and historical periods” (Allan, 2016, p. 217).

2.1.1 Pragmatics

Crystal (1997) defines pragmatics as “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication”. Therefore, pragmatics can be described as the study of communicative acts within their social contexts (Rose & Kasper, 2001). In this respect, pragmatics is the branch of linguistics concerned with language in use and the contexts in which it is used, focusing on the interpretation of language to understand the intended meaning in a given situation. It examines how speakers organize their language based on who they are talking to, the timing, location, and circumstances (Yule, 1996).

2.1.1.1 (Im)politeness Theory

According to Bousfield (2008), to fully understand the concept of (im)politeness, it is almost compulsory to talk about the notion of face, which—among others—belongs to the work of Brown and Levinson (1987). Face may be

defined as ‘an individual’s feeling of self-worth or -self-image’ (Bousfield, 2008, p. 40). Simultaneously, the notion of face is divided into negative and positive face (Brown and Levinson, 1987). The former is understood as an individual’s wish to be free of performing his actions without being unimpeded by others. The latter is defined as the want of an individual of being accepted and desirable to others. Following Brown and Levinson (1987) approach, Bousfield (2008) explains that they defend that face is not something that belongs to society but to ‘the basic wants which every member of a society [...] knows every other member desire’s (p. 34). If this was the case, the perception of face should be universal. However, it is evident that depending on the culture and society we are talking about, the notion of negative and positive face will differ. Thus, the notion of face by Goffman (1967) must be mentioned. Bousfield (2008) transcribed Goffman’s approach of face as not built by an individual but only realized in social interaction, ‘face is public property’. That is, a loan from society. Hence, face is not biological or natural; it is indeed social. As a result, ‘the constitution of face of one member of a group can have an impact on the face constitution and face expectation of other members of a group’ (Bousfield, 2008, p. 42).

In brief, considering this new turning point of face and where it comes from, if the concept of face is rooted in the social practices imposed by a sexist society, this will mean that the social practices will be based on a sexist procedure. Therefore, it may happen that what is not regarded by a sexist society as polite will be considered a face threatening act (FTA). That is, an act that threatens the positive or negative face of an individual. Brown and Levinson (1987) also brought to light the super strategies that may be used for politeness work, which are:

I. Bald on record politeness: This strategy occurs when ‘the FTA is performed in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible’ (Brown and Levinson, 1987 cited in Bousfield, 2008, p. 57).

II. Positive (im)politeness: In this case, the FTA is performed to redress the threat against the hearer’s positive face.

III. Negative (im)politeness: As it can be guessed, this strategy consists of redressing the threat against the hearer’s negative face.

IV. Off-record: The FTA is performed by deploying an indirect illocutionary act open to different interpretations. This permit denying the offence in case the hearer interprets the act as a face threatening act.

V. Do not perform the FTA: The FTA is not performed ‘in the interests of social harmony’ (Bousfield, 2008, p. 59), because it is considered too threatening to the hearer.

Having seen the super strategies brought by Brown and Levinson (1987), it is compulsory to enlighten the definition of impoliteness. In Bousfield’s (2008) words, impoliteness is ‘the broad opposite of politeness, in that, rather than seeking to mitigate FTAs, impoliteness constitutes the communication of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive verbal FTAs which are purposefully delivered’ (p. 72). Then, Bousfield (2008) also clarifies that for impoliteness to be considered ‘successful impoliteness’, it must be interpreted by the hearer as such. The purest act of impoliteness is aggression and it can be performed in three different but not necessarily separate ways: physical, direct and indirect verbal.

2.1.2 Stylistics

The word “Stylistics” is a contested term, as different groups of scholars, including linguists and literary critics, debate its scope and definition. Stylistics can simply be defined as “the study of styles”. This means that “style” is a central issue in the study of stylistics. Many scholars in their definitions have tried to emphasize that stylistics is a subfield of linguistics since it is the linguistic concepts and features that are employed in analyzing literary texts. Arthur (1996, p.914) defines stylistics as “the branch of linguistics that studies style, especially in works of literature”. Likewise, Chapman (1973, p. 11) says that stylistics is “the linguistic study of different styles”. In the same vein, Turner (1975, p. 7) provides a definition in which he states that, “stylistics is that part of linguistics which concentrates on variation in the use of language, often, but not exclusively, with special attention to the most conscious and complex use of language in literature”.

Crystal and Davy (1969, p. 9) argue that “linguistics is the academic discipline which studies language scientifically”. Stylistics, with its focus on certain aspects of language variation, is therefore essentially a part of linguistics. Along the same line, Ullmann (1973, p. 41) claims that “stylistics is not a mere branch of linguistics but a parallel discipline which investigates the same phenomena from its own point of view”. This accords with Turner’s (1975, p. 30) view which affirms that “stylistics has the same divisions as linguistics and that there are phonological, lexical and syntactic levels in the study of style”.

2.2 Flaming

Flaming is a term for verbal abuse that is intended to hurt someone, a group, or an organization. In other words, it constitutes profanity or personal insults. A group of different scholars agree that "flaming" is a person's deliberate intention

to ignite a feudal reaction or "flame" by using disdainful language or attacking someone's beliefs without respect or care for his/her response (Aiken & Waller, 2000). Recently and as a result of being popular in digital language, some scholars organize flaming as one of the phenomena related to online communication. For instance, (ibid:96) define flaming as "comments intended to offend others. While somewhat subjective, at the extreme flaming includes obscenities and other inappropriate comments". Concept of flaming Various headwords used by dictionaries for defining the concept of flaming, for example: flame, flame of war, flame war and flaming, cover actually similar or even identical word fields of cyber lexicon. Initially, the concept of flaming encompassed exclusively a private channel of communication between two users: the email. Since 2006, the flaming has been studied as category of cyberbullying outside the private space, being directed toward the so called 'semi-public' virtual space – social media.

Flame

An angry or abusive email message from one user to another. A flood or e-mail messages from a large group of users to one specific user, who is judged to have offended against some standard of decent behavior. The individual messages may each be angry or abusive, but in some cases the actual messages may have no real purpose other than to overload the recipient's system, typically by sending as a mail message the entire contents of some very large data set such as the text of all the help files on a system.' Chandler Daniel, in A dictionary of social media, published in 2016, mentioned the compound word 'flame war' with the same meaning as flaming: 'an exchange of aggressive messages in an online environment such as a chatroom or forum. A flame war is a prolonged exchange of such messages.'

2.2.1 Meanings of Flaming

Bansal et.al (2012) mentioned another four subcategories of flaming which are:

A. Direct and Intentional Flaming

Flaming tendencies are noted to be highest when users intentionally use abusive, incendiary and hostile message against another user or faction. This is pre-dominant on different forms of computer mediated communication such. Yet, there are small groups of people who take such steps and use venues like status messages and comments on Social Networking Sites, e-mail message boards, forums, blogs, UseNet, IRC chat etc. for flaming. If the mode of communication provides relative anonymity, users tend to flame at higher degrees or are unrestrictive. Direct flames are characterized as "incendiary messages" and "inflammatory remarks". Previous research descriptions of flames that can be used to represent direct flaming as "rude or insulting" messages, "vicious attacks", "nasty and often profane diatribe", "derisive commentary", "vitriolic online exchanges and poison pen letters".

Direct flaming can also be described as messages, which constitute vicious attacks such as name calling, swearing, insulting on another communicating faction. It is also characterized by the use of rude behavior (may be sexually oriented), offensive, aggressive or hostile language.

B. Indirect Flaming

This is generally seen on all forms of computer mediated communication but not as often as direct flaming. Indirect flaming is generally opted for publicizing disagreement or hostility but posted in a language, which can only be understood by the factions involved. Readers of the conversation generally can only note the state of disagreement or recognize the comments as flames but would seldom be able to track references or to whom the flame is intended towards. The users also tend to use sophisticated language in a polite way but can definitely be called as flames when the true meanings of such messages are analyzed for. This characterization can also be used for any hostility intended to third parties in a bilateral conversation, with the intention of initiating aggression against the third party. Another point that can be considered, when people talk about a topic which is specific to their domain for discussion, users without using hostile words, they send flames at each other and it is very difficult to identify whether they are flaming or not. In such cases, only some factions take it as flaming, while others consider it acceptable norms of conversation. “Use of hostile, unfriendly and aggressive literature towards users or situations not clearly mentioned, to show disagreement, but with a subtlety that only the factions involved is capable of deriving the true intention of the statement.”

C. Straightforward Flames

When a user uses straightforward references to people, places or situations without the use of any figure of speech in their messages and with a clear intention of flaming on the topic, it can be termed as straightforward flames or straight flames. This style of flaming is used in tandem with direct or indirect flaming. Since straight flames are more lucid in meaning and the intentions are clear, such messages have higher probability of drawing counter flames by users. Such a style is adopted in

CMC where the identity of the flamer is discreet. The users make use of the anonymity of the mode of communication and express more openly, which is a behavior seen frequently on the internet.

D. Satirical Flames

When a user uses figures of speech or statement to possess alternate derivations aimed at certain factions, places or situations, it can be termed as Satirical Flames. This includes usage of witty language, irony and poetic freedom to convey insults, scorns or even malice. These flames are predominant with users who intended to post incendiary messages but still seem posting normal statement is used along with Direct or Indirect flaming. Since satirical flames are more complicated with references and intentions being vague and enigmatic, responses to such flames are normally enquiring of the details. Generally, the faction about whom the flame was intended chose not respond to such messages when they perceive the true meaning of it. If they do, more often than not, choose to be as enigmatic as the message with their comments. Let us consider a hypothetical scenario where an employee flames his supervisor of the company in which he is working for, on a public asynchronous micro blogging site.

2.2.2 Stylistic devices for flaming analysis

A. Metaphor

Metaphors are used by poets to characterize and identify the subject being discussed. A metaphor also gives readers a visual picture that can be used to support the definition of the topic and the subject of the poem. (Romala, 2015).

B. Simile

Saleem (2012, p.372) states that a simile is “an explicit figurative comparison of similar things in a statement that one thing is like another, unlike a metaphor”. In this trope, the terms like, as, comparable, or same, are used.

C. Hyperbole

It is a way of saying something is much bigger, smaller, worse, etc. than it truly is. Examples include "to wait an eternity" and "rivers of blood."

D. Litotes

Along with Leech (1969, p.168), litotes is a figure of understatement, meaning that it lacks the potential ridiculousness of other tropes. The impact of litotes is determined by the person's knowledge of the circumstance. Litotes is concerned with a particular type of understatement in which the speaker might employ a negative term when a positive one is stronger, such as ‘The meal is not awful at all’ (when one means 'good').

E. Irony

In keeping with Leech and Short (2007, p.222), irony “as a twofold significance arising from the disparity in values connected with two different points

of view.” Shakespeare's line "Brutus is an honorable man" (Julius Caesar) is an example of sarcasm.

3. Methodology

The current study adopts a mixed method in a form of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. This collection causes both methods to complete, support each other, and resulting in “richer and more comprehensive” research (Neuman, 2014, p.167). The qualitative part is descriptive more than predictive; the aim is to have a deep understanding and interpretation with a precise analysis of the phenomenon. Meanwhile, the quantitative part aims to confirm the results in the form of numbers that uses to support the interpretation (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009, pp.7-167).

The collected data consists of ten rallies of Donald Trump in his last election against Harris. The selected texts were extracted from a Rev online platforms to encapsulate a broad spectrum of political ideologies and rhetorical strategies. Each text was subjected to a preliminary review to ascertain its relevance to the research questions and objectives. Texts that demonstrated a clear use of language to influence, persuade, or mobilize were given precedence, as these are prime examples of the pragmatic force of political language. Regarding the analysis model, the researcher of the current study adopts Bansal et.al’s model (2012) Meanings of Flaming which consists of four components.

Regarding the model of analysis the researcher of the current study adopts an eclectic model: Bansal et.al (2012) Meanings of Flaming, Culpeper (1996) Impoliteness Strategies, as well as, Stylistics Devices.

4 Data Analysis

It reveals important insights into the rhetorical strategies employed in Donald Trump’s speeches. By analyzing the various linguistic elements, including flaming language, speech acts, face-threatening acts (FTAs), and figurative language, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how Trump’s language shapes his political persona and influences his audience. The findings highlight the ways in which language is used to convey power, assertiveness, and emotional appeal, while also navigating the complexities of political communication. Overall, the analysis sheds light on the broader impact of Trump’s discourse, offering a deeper understanding of the role language plays in modern political rhetoric.

Table 1: The specific categories of flaming language

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	fre	per
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Direct and Flaming	5	5	1	1	1	3	2	3	1	1	23	56.10%
Indirect Flaming	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	13	31.71%
Straightforward Flames	3	4	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	18	43.90%
Satirical Flames	4	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	17	41.46%
											41	100%

In addition to analyzing the specific categories of flaming language, another layer of analysis was conducted based on the nature of the flaming language used in Donald Trump's speeches. The data collected from S1 to S10 were categorized into four broad types of flaming language: **Direct and Flaming**, **Indirect Flaming**, **Straightforward Flames**, and **Satirical Flames**. The results provide valuable insights into the style and impact of the flaming language, revealing patterns in Trump's rhetorical strategies.

Results Overview

From the data, the frequency and percentage of each flaming language type are as follows:

1. **Direct and Flaming (23 occurrences, 56.10%):** This category represents the most frequent type of flaming language. Direct and Flaming remarks are aggressive, blunt, and often confrontational. They are typically aimed at political opponents, their policies, or their personal characteristics.

2. **Indirect Flaming (13 occurrences, 31.71%):** Indirect Flaming is a subtler form of flaming, where language is used to attack without directly naming or confronting the target. This type of flaming language can be more insidious, leaving room for ambiguity and interpretation.

3. **Straightforward Flames (18 occurrences, 43.90%):** Straightforward Flames refer to language that is direct but not necessarily overly aggressive or incendiary. This type of language tends to make clear statements or criticisms without the added layers of sarcasm or indirectness.

4. **Satirical Flames (17 occurrences, 41.46%):** Satirical Flames involve humor, irony, and exaggerated statements to ridicule or criticize opponents. These remarks are typically more playful in tone but still serve the purpose of undermining an adversary.

Discussion

The findings indicate that Donald Trump employs a variety of flaming language strategies, with a heavy emphasis on **direct and flaming** remarks. This reflects the combative and often provocative style that characterizes much of his political rhetoric. The **direct and flaming** category, accounting for 56.10% of occurrences, shows that Trump often engages in explicit, unapologetic attacks, targeting individuals or groups directly. This approach is commonly used to rally supporters and establish a clear distinction between "us" (his supporters) and "them"

(his adversaries). The use of direct aggression is likely intended to solidify in-group identity and position Trump as a strong, uncompromising leader.

However, the presence of **indirect flaming** (31.71%) suggests that Trump also engages in more subtle forms of attack. These remarks may not be as explicitly confrontational, but they still carry negative implications. Indirect flaming allows Trump to distance himself from direct attacks while still undermining his targets, offering more room for plausible deniability and ambiguity. This type of language is useful when seeking to imply negative traits or behaviors without risking direct backlash.

The **straightforward flames** (43.90%) category represents a more moderate form of flaming language, where the criticisms or attacks are clear but not as harsh as those found in direct and flaming remarks. Straightforward language tends to focus on specific actions or policies, offering criticism without excessive vitriol. This style strikes a balance between aggressiveness and clarity, providing an opportunity to address issues while maintaining some semblance of decorum.

Finally, **satirical flames** (41.46%) demonstrate Trump's use of humor and irony as a means of attacking opponents. By using satire, Trump can engage in ridicule while simultaneously creating a sense of lightness or playfulness. This form of flaming language often appeals to audiences who enjoy humor and irony, but it still carries a biting edge that serves to undermine the opponent's credibility or position. Satirical flames can be particularly effective at drawing attention and generating viral moments that contribute to the political discourse.

In sum, the analysis of the types of flaming language in Donald Trump's speeches reveals a clear preference for **direct and flaming** rhetoric, as evidenced by its high frequency. This suggests that Trump prefers a confrontational, no-holds-barred style that focuses on asserting dominance and rallying his base. However, the inclusion of **indirect flaming**, **straightforward flames**, and **satirical flames** highlights the versatility of Trump's rhetorical strategies, demonstrating his ability to tailor his language to suit different contexts and purposes. The combination of these various types of flaming language serves to reinforce Trump's political message while appealing to different emotional triggers within his audience, ultimately contributing to the polarization and divisiveness that define much of his public discourse.

Table 2: The analysis of flaming language

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	fre	per
Bald on Record	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	6	5	4	38	33.04%
Positive	2	2	3	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	29	25.22%
Negative	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	5	22	19.13%
Off-record	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	9	7.83%

Do Not Perform the FTA	1	3	0	3	3	3	3	0	0	1	17	14.78%
											115	100%

As the result in Table 2 , In addition to the analysis of flaming language, the use of **Face Threatening Acts (FTAs)** was also examined in Donald Trump's speeches. This analysis categorizes the various strategies Trump uses in relation to politeness theory, focusing on **Bald on Record, Positive, Negative, Off-record,** and **Do Not Perform the FTA**. These categories reflect how Trump's speeches navigate the delicate balance between asserting authority and maintaining relationships with the audience or individuals addressed in his discourse.

Results Overview

The data reveals the following frequencies and percentages for each FTA strategy:

1. **Bald on Record (38 occurrences, 33.04%):** This is the most frequently used strategy. Bald on Record refers to direct, unambiguous language where the speaker's intentions are clear, with little or no attempt to mitigate the impact on the listener. This often involves straightforward, unfiltered statements.

2. **Positive (29 occurrences, 25.22%)**: Positive FTAs involve actions that enhance or promote the positive image or face of the listener. These acts serve to show solidarity, appreciation, or affirmation, typically aimed at strengthening rapport with the audience or those addressed.

3. **Negative (22 occurrences, 19.13%)**: Negative FTAs focus on actions that preserve the listener's autonomy or face by avoiding impositions. These may involve refusals or criticisms that minimize impact on the other's personal autonomy but still threaten face in a more indirect manner.

4. **Off-record (9 occurrences, 7.83%)**: Off-record strategies involve indirect communication, where the speaker implies rather than directly states an intention. This strategy relies on the audience interpreting the message, thus leaving room for ambiguity and possible misinterpretation.

5. **Do Not Perform the FTA (17 occurrences, 14.78%)**: This category refers to situations where the speaker deliberately avoids performing a face-threatening act, indicating a reluctance to challenge or impose on the listener's face. This strategy was less common in the dataset.

Discussion

The frequency of the **Bald on Record** strategy (33.04%) reveals Trump's tendency to use direct and straightforward language that minimizes ambiguity and clearly communicates his position. This style aligns with his rhetorical persona, which often emphasizes decisiveness and assertiveness. By opting for **Bald on Record** statements, Trump positions himself as a forthright, no-nonsense figure who does not shy away from confrontation or from expressing his views without excessive politeness or mitigation.

The significant use of **Positive FTAs** (25.22%) suggests that, despite his combative style, Trump also engages in strategies that aim to build rapport and connect with his audience. Positive politeness is often used to promote a sense of camaraderie or unity, especially in addressing his supporters. This can be seen in his use of inclusive language, praise for his base, and statements that enhance the shared identity between himself and his followers. Positive FTAs serve to foster loyalty and reinforce in-group solidarity, which is crucial for maintaining a dedicated supporter base.

Negative FTAs (19.13%) indicate that Trump occasionally takes steps to respect the autonomy or face of others, though this is often in the context of distancing himself from opposition or disagreeing with policies. These instances may be less frequent than positive strategies but reflect a careful attention to balancing his rhetoric without entirely alienating opponents or non-supporters. By using **Negative FTAs**, Trump may be attempting to avoid overt impositions on the audience, ensuring that his statements do not completely alienate those who may not fully align with his views.

The use of **Off-record** strategies (7.83%) was relatively minimal in comparison, suggesting that Trump's rhetorical style leans more towards directness rather than subtlety or ambiguity. This lower frequency of off-record strategies may reflect his preference for clear, hard-hitting messages. However, when employed, off-record strategies allow Trump to convey criticisms or controversial statements with a degree of indirectness, giving room for interpretation and reducing the direct confrontational impact.

Finally, **Do Not Perform the FTA** (14.78%) suggest that, at times, Trump avoids engaging in face-threatening acts altogether, perhaps in order to maintain a more diplomatic or neutral stance in certain situations. This strategy may occur in speeches or moments when Trump wishes to avoid escalating tensions, especially with influential or neutral parties, such as when addressing international leaders or attempting to appeal to a broader electorate.

The analysis of **Face Threatening Acts** in Donald Trump's speeches highlights a strategic balance between direct confrontation and politeness, with a dominant use of **Bald on Record** statements reflecting his characteristic assertiveness and willingness to engage in unfiltered discourse. However, the notable frequency of **Positive FTAs** also reveals that Trump strategically works to build connections with his audience, fostering a sense of solidarity and loyalty. **Negative FTAs** and **Off-record** strategies are used to a lesser extent, indicating that while Trump is not averse to acknowledging the autonomy of others, he generally favors a direct, aggressive rhetorical style. Overall, these findings underscore the calculated nature of Trump's communication style, where face-threatening acts are employed in ways that serve his broader political goals, reinforcing his image as a decisive and bold leader.

Table 3: **The Categories of Speech Acts Theory**

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	fre	per
Representatives	5	4	4	3	3	2	2	5	5	5	38	30.89%
Directives	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	20	16.26%

Expressives	4	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	3	21	17.07%
Commissives	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	21	17.07%
Declaratives	2	4	2	1	1	1	1	5	3	3	23	18.70%
											123	100%

Further analysis was conducted on the **speech acts** in Donald Trump's political speeches, categorizing the utterances based on the speech act theory. The categories include **Representatives**, **Directives**, **Expressives**, **Commissives**, and **Declaratives**. Each category represents a different communicative function, and this analysis reveals the variety of ways in which Trump engages with his audience and conveys his messages.

Results Overview

The frequency and percentage of each speech act category are as follows:

1. **Representatives (38 occurrences, 30.89%)**: This category was the most frequent in the data. Representatives are speech acts where the speaker asserts or claims something, typically stating facts, beliefs, or opinions.

2. **Directives (20 occurrences, 16.26%)**: Directives involve the speaker attempting to get the listener to do something. These can include commands, requests, suggestions, or advice, and are central to persuasive communication.

3. **Expressives (21 occurrences, 17.07%)**: Expressives refer to speech acts that convey the speaker's emotions, feelings, or attitudes toward a particular

situation or event. These are used to express how the speaker feels about something.

4. **Commissives (21 occurrences, 17.07%)**: Commissives are speech acts where the speaker commits to a certain course of action or promises to do something. These acts involve future-oriented intentions or obligations.

5. **Declaratives (23 occurrences, 18.70%)**: Declaratives involve the speaker making statements that bring about a change in the world by the very act of uttering them, such as announcing, declaring, or appointing something.

Discussion

The frequent use of **Representative** (30.89%) highlights Trump's tendency to make assertions or claims, particularly regarding his beliefs, actions, or policies. This is a key feature of his rhetoric, where he frequently asserts his stance on various political matters or issues of national importance. By focusing on **Representative**, Trump positions himself as someone who is in control of the narrative, laying out what he believes to be true without hedging his statements. These acts are often persuasive in nature, as they attempt to establish his authority and credibility on the issues he addresses.

Directive (16.26%) reflect Trump's effort to guide, direct, or persuade his audience to take action. Directives often come in the form of calls to action, whether aimed at his supporters, political opponents, or even members of his administration. The use of directives is common in political discourse, especially when leaders seek to mobilize action or encourage certain behaviors among their constituents. In Trump's case, these can be seen in the frequent calls to support his policies, vote in elections, or rally behind his agenda.

The category of **Expressive** (17.07%) reveals Trump's use of emotional language to convey his attitudes and feelings. These speech acts help establish a personal connection with his audience by showing how he feels about specific events or issues. For example, expressing anger, frustration, or enthusiasm can help generate emotional resonance with supporters, reinforcing their loyalty and fostering a sense of solidarity. By invoking emotional responses, Trump also humanizes his public persona and creates a platform for empathy with his base.

Commissive (17.07%) illustrate Trump's frequent promises or commitments to a course of action. Whether pledging to deliver on campaign promises, address specific issues, or take strong action on particular matters, Trump uses **Commissive** to demonstrate his future intentions and assure his audience of his dedication to fulfilling his stated objectives. This reinforces his image as a decisive leader who is determined to follow through on his word, making these speech acts crucial in maintaining trust and support among his followers.

Finally, **Declarative** (18.70%) reflect Trump's use of statements that have the power to change the situation simply by being made. For example, declaring policies, initiatives, or appointments may serve not only to inform the audience but also to instigate real-world effects. The **Declarative** category is essential in his speeches, as it reflects moments where Trump establishes new directives, sets policies into motion, or frames issues in ways that impact political or social realities.

The distribution of **speech acts** in Trump's political speeches underscores his dominant approach to communication, which is primarily characterized by the use of **Representatives** to assert positions and beliefs. However, the notable frequencies of **Directives**, **Expressives**, **Commissives**, and **Declaratives** highlight the strategic

nature of his language, balancing assertiveness with emotional appeal and future commitments.

By utilizing these various speech acts, Trump engages with his audience on multiple levels—asserting facts and positions, encouraging action, expressing personal feelings, committing to promises, and making declarations that reshape the political discourse. These speech acts serve to strengthen his political persona, mobilize his supporters, and assert his authority, all of which are critical to his overall communicative strategy. The use of **Representatives** in particular reflects Trump’s self-assurance and confidence in presenting himself as a truth-teller and authoritative figure in the political arena.

Table 4: **The Figurative Language**

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	fre	per
Metaphor	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	2	8	16.67%
Simile	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	6.25%
Hyperbole	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	23	47.92%
Litotes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Irony	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	14	29.17%

											48	100%
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In addition to the analysis of the types of flaming language and speech acts, a further examination was conducted on the **figurative language** used in Donald Trump's speeches. This analysis focused on the frequency and use of five key types of figurative language: **Metaphor**, **Simile**, **Hyperbole**, **Litotes**, and **Irony**. These figurative devices are critical for conveying meaning in a creative, persuasive, and often exaggerated manner.

Results Overview

The frequency and percentage of each figurative language type are as follows:

1. **Metaphor (8 occurrences, 16.67%)**: Metaphors involve describing one thing in terms of another, offering a way of understanding a concept or object by comparing it to something different yet relatable.
2. **Simile (3 occurrences, 6.25%)**: Similes are similar to metaphors but involve using "like" or "as" to directly compare one thing to another. They are more explicit in their comparison.
3. **Hyperbole (23 occurrences, 47.92%)**: Hyperbole refers to exaggerated statements or claims that are not meant to be taken literally but are used to emphasize a point dramatically.
4. **Litotes (0 occurrences, 0.00%)**: Litotes involves making an understatement by using double negatives, such as "not bad" to mean "good." There were no instances of litotes in the dataset.

5. **Irony (14 occurrences, 29.17%)**: Irony involves expressing an idea by stating the opposite of what is meant, often to convey sarcasm or critique. It is used to highlight contradictions or absurdities in a situation.

Discussion

The analysis of **figurative language** reveals that Trump frequently relies on **Hyperbole** (47.92%), using exaggerated statements to capture attention and emphasize his points. Hyperbole is a key element in political rhetoric, as it helps create a memorable, impactful message. In Trump's case, his use of hyperbole serves to magnify the significance of issues, often portraying situations as being more extreme or urgent than they may be. This rhetorical strategy is especially effective in galvanizing his supporters and drawing attention to issues he wants to emphasize, whether they are political opponents, policies, or national concerns.

The second most frequent type of figurative language is **Irony** (29.17%). Irony is often employed by Trump to underscore contradictions or absurdities, particularly when criticizing opponents, the media, or the political establishment. Irony allows Trump to mock or challenge others in a way that can be humorous while still making a serious point. The use of irony can also soften the tone of criticism, making it more palatable to his audience, while still serving to undermine his targets. Irony's effectiveness lies in its ability to engage the audience's understanding of the situation and highlight the contradictions inherent in political discourse.

Metaphors (16.67%) are used less frequently but still serve an important function in Trump's speeches. Metaphors allow Trump to frame complex issues in relatable terms, making them easier for his audience to understand. For example, by

comparing political issues to familiar situations or objects, Trump simplifies complex topics and makes his points more accessible. While metaphors are not as prevalent as hyperbole or irony, they still play a significant role in creating vivid and evocative images that resonate with his listeners.

Similes (6.25%) are used sparingly, serving as a tool for making direct comparisons that emphasize a point or idea. The use of similes allows for a more explicit connection between two ideas or concepts, offering clarity or humor. Like metaphors, similes contribute to the creative and figurative nature of Trump's rhetoric, though they are less central to his rhetorical style than hyperbole or irony.

Interestingly, **Litotes** (0.00%) were completely absent from the speeches analyzed. Litotes often involves minimizing a point to make it sound less significant, but in Trump's case, this rhetorical strategy does not appear to be a part of his discourse. Trump's style tends to favor directness, exaggeration, and irony, rather than understated or modest expressions.

The use of **figurative language** in Donald Trump's speeches demonstrates his reliance on exaggerated and creative rhetoric to engage his audience. **Hyperbole** is the dominant figurative device, used extensively to amplify points and create dramatic effects. **Irony** follows closely behind, serving as a powerful tool for mocking opponents, emphasizing contradictions, and generating humor. **Metaphors** and **Similes** add further depth to his rhetoric, helping to illustrate complex ideas in accessible ways, though they are used less frequently.

The absence of **Litotes** indicates that Trump tends to avoid understatement, preferring to communicate with boldness and clarity.

Together, these figurative devices reinforce Trump's rhetorical style, marked by assertiveness, drama, and emotional appeal. The frequent use of hyperbole and irony contributes to his populist, combative persona, while metaphors and similes make his messages more vivid and memorable. This approach to figurative language is integral to the persuasive power of Trump's speeches, allowing him to captivate his audience and effectively convey his political message.

Conclusion

The analysis of Donald Trump's rhetorical style across his speeches reveals a consistent use of figurative language, speech acts, and flaming strategies to engage audiences, assert authority, and provoke reactions. His dominant use of hyperbole and irony, along with metaphors and similes, showcases a communication style grounded in boldness, exaggeration, and relatability. The absence of litotes further illustrates his preference for directness over understatement. Complementing this figurative approach, Trump's speech acts—especially Representatives and Directives—serve to assert his positions while urging action from his audience. Expressives and Commissives reveal his emotional alignment with supporters and reinforce his promises, while Declaratives demonstrate his influence on political and social realities. Together, these linguistic features shape a persona of decisiveness, emotional resonance, and persuasive power.

Moreover, Trump's strategic deployment of Face Threatening Acts and flaming language underscores his confrontational yet calculated rhetoric. His frequent use of Bald on Record statements aligns with a straightforward, assertive style, while Positive FTAs help build rapport with his base. Though used less frequently, Negative and Off-record strategies reveal moments of subtlety and restraint. Flaming language—particularly stereotyping, degrading language, speculation, and sarcasm—serves to polarize audiences and fortify in-group loyalty through emotional provocation and the delegitimization of opponents. Even the limited use of threats and name-calling reinforces an image of dominance and control. Overall, Trump's linguistic and rhetorical strategies reflect a communication approach focused on clarity, confrontation, and audience mobilization, establishing him as a polarizing yet compelling political figure.

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