

PRAGMATICS AND MULTIMODALITY IN INTERPRETING POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN JOE BIDEN'S VICTORY SPEECH

Ayu Mayang Sari¹, Ati Sumiati²

^{1,2} English Literature, Universitas Negeri Jakarta

e-mail: ayumayang90201@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aimed to interpret political discourse using a pragmatic multimodality approach to the text and video of the victory speech of the 46th President of the United States, Joe Biden, using linguistic and gestural analysis using Searle's speech act theory, Perrine's speech act theory, and gesture interpretation. After that, the combined analysis of the three were classified into the function of political discourse which includes communicative, emotive, incentive, motivational, phatic, metalanguage, and aesthetic functions. The method used in this research was descriptive qualitative method. The findings on speech acts show that assertive speech acts dominate speech with 61%, followed by expressive (14%), directive (11%), commissive (9%), and declarative (5%) speech acts. Meanwhile, findings on figurative language show that there are 7 figurative languages found in speech, namely synecdoche (24%), symbol (21%), personification (21%), hyperbole (11%), metaphor (11%), simile (9%), and apostrophe (3%). The combination of speech acts, gestures, and figurative language with the function of political discourse mostly refers to emotive function and motivational function, which shows Joe Biden's political discourse leads to the act of evoking the audience's emotion and motivating the audiences related to the United States national movement under the leadership of Joe Biden in terms of maintaining his power as the president of the United States of America.

Keywords: Multimodality, Pragmatics, Speech Acts, Figurative Language, Political Discourse

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INTRODUCTION

Communication has a number of purposes, one of them is to influence people, and that is often found in public speaking (Anggraini, 2016) such as speeches. When a speaker has a goal to persuade an audience, the speaker desires to adopt a new position or belief, to change the audience's minds, or to be moved to action (pp. 6). Multimodality, an interdisciplinary concept, believes representation and communication are about more than just language. It has been developed during the past ten years to methodically handle

hotly contested issues regarding societal changes, such as those related to new media and technologies. Anstey and Bull (2010) argue that a text can be classified as multimodal when two or more semiotic systems are combined.

With its strict relation with language, multimodality can be analysed through the perspective of linguistic, including pragmatics. Speech acts is one of the pragmatic branches that can be used. According to J. L. Austin, speech acts are a pragmatic study that studies various things that can be done with words. Austin (1962, Gasparatou, 2017) begins the

concept of various things that people can do with words by trying to distinguish between two kinds of utterance; constatives and performatives, which he soon breaks and considers that “whenever we say something about the world, we also do something in the world.” This consideration led to the form of three different acts, which are a locutionary act, an illocutionary act, and a perlocutionary act.

Other than speech acts, another language feature that can enhance persuasion, which often found in speeches is figurative languages. Figurative languages are meaningful utterances that is not literally true. As stated by Horton (2013), “Speakers appear to use metaphor and other types of figurative language as a means to create and reinforce social intimacy between themselves and their addressees.” This has a strictly relation with mental imagery, that mental imagery is often experienced by the audience to enact the audience to explore more to what the speaker is intended and the speaker probably wants them to do or to act, thus it can be impactful (Cartson, 2018). As an instance, Sopory and Dillard (2002) states that “Metaphors lead to enhanced persuasion by including a greater amount of appropriately valence (agreement with message) thinking than literal-only messages”. Figurative language or figure of speech is usually used by the speaker to bond with the audience and to reach the audience or the hearer’s attention which can establish the proximity with the hearer

As this study will analyse a multimodal text, the writer also analysed the gestures of the speaker in the video of Joe Biden’s victory speech delivered in victory against Donal Trump on the USA presidential election in 2020. Sometimes, actions do not always occur with a mere utterance or verbal. Girsang, et. al (2021) defines non-verbal communication, or Paralinguistic or paralanguage, is a nonverbal communication, in which people communicate their emotion, sincerity, and honesty in their gestures. Paralinguistic features conceive pitch, tempo, loudness, resonance, timbre, intonation range, syllabic duration, and rhythm. In addition, Muhammed (2022) argues that certain gestures such facial expression, clearing throats, and physical contacts can convey a lot of information

to the audience of a speaker. The text and the video that are analysed is a victory speech delivered by Joe Biden, the 46th president of the United States of America, which was delivered at Seranton, Delaware, USA, on November 7th 2020. The consideration of selecting Joe Biden’s victory speech among other speeches from other country leaders was which the USA presidential election has become the world’s focus and one of the most awaited events, as the USA is undeniably one of the most influential countries in terms of economy, technology, industry, etc. Unlike his rival, Donald Trump, Biden’s political background is more reputable as well-known, one of which was an attemption of running for president in 1987 and eventually became the Vice President of the USA to Barack Obama.

The difference between this study with the previous studies are the combination of theory of speech acts, gesture cues, and figurative languages with the function of political discourse or political communication are not frequently occurred in other studies. Most of the previous studies either utilize speech acts or figurative languages as persuasive strategies and analysis of the theme and visual grammar to identify the goal of the speaker to influence the audience. In addition, there are no previous as mentioned which used the victory speech of Joe Biden as the source of data. The paralinguistic feature of gesture cues and the function of political communication features and the source of the data will be a novelty of this study since there are not much from the previous studies that use this theory and source of the data yet.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speech Acts by Seale

Speech Acts is the branch theory of the pragmatics field that is introduced by a British philosopher, John L. Austin comprised in his book “How to Do Things with Words” which was published in 1962. J. L. Austin’s theory was later developed by John R. Searle (1979), particularly illocutionary. He classifies his taxonomy of speech acts to be five types of illocutionary acts; assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration.

- **Assertive:** Also known as representative. It fits the direction of words-to-worlds or related to sincerity condition (Searle, 1979, Cooren, 2015). Additionally, this illocutionary express the speaker's state of believe. Examples of this acts is reporting, stating, claiming, and complaining.
- **Directives:** The speaker's attempt to get the hearer to do something, a worlds-to-words direction of fit and the sincerity condition where the speaker desires the interlocutor to do something. By that, the examples of this acts are commanding, ordering, and requesting.
- **Commissive:** Used to express what the speaker intends such as promising, vowing, and committing. Despite having the same direction of fit as directives, commissive are more of the speaker's promise to themselves in terms of sincerity condition. The future action of this acts is the ability of the speaker to fulfil their promises or their commit.
- **Expressive:** Used to express the psychological state or the emotion of the speaker, such as anger, joy, sadness and other expressions such as apologizing, thanking, congratulating, etc. In terms of direction of fit, expressive are words-to-worlds.
- **Declaration:** The direction of fit is both worlds-to-words and words-to-worlds and there is no sincerity condition. In other words, a speaker is able to perform something if they are rightfully doing so. The examples for this illocutionary point are dismissing, condemning, postponing, ordaining, declaring, etc.
- **Simile:** Simile and metaphor are used to compare two things that are not essentially the same, they are only distinguished by the use of a number of words or phrase such as like, resembles, seems, similar to, as if for simile, in which it compares two things that are essentially alike.
- **Metaphor:** Perrine described that simile and metaphor are similar. However, metaphor is more of comparing two different things by characterizing or replacing one with another.
- **Personification:** Personification focuses on giving attributes of human traits and characters to a non-human object such as an animal, an object, or a concept.
- **Apostrophe:** Perrine (1977, 32) states that apostrophe is "addressing someone absent or dead or something nonhuman as if that person or thing were present and alive and could reply to what is being said" and have a close relation to personification.
- **Synecdoche:** Synecdoche and metonymy are alike, but synecdoche uses part of something to represent the whole to represent part of it.
- **Metonymy:** Metonymy uses a word or phrase substituted for the actual meaning of a thing which is closely related.
- **Symbol:** Perrine argues that symbol roughly means something that has a bigger meaning than it actually is (1977: pp. 38). Because of this meaning, it is sometimes difficult to tell the differences between metaphor and symbol.
- **Allegory:** A narrative that has the second meaning beneath the surface of the narrative itself. This figure of speech is used to disguise the meaning of the words rather than revealing it and often used in short poems or other literary works.
- **Hyperbole:** Also known as overstatement, is simply an exaggeration that is used to serves the truth (1977, pp. 47). It is usually used to

Figurative Language by Perrine

Laurence Perrine (1977) states that figurative language is "any way of saying something other than the ordinary way". As it plays a significant role to the emotion and people's imaginary, figurative languages are often used to express one's emotion and to beautify one's words. Perrine narrows and divides figurative languages into 11 types.

emphasize something which happens to be the truth and make the meaning to be more serious.

- **Understatement:** The antonym of overstatement or hyperbole as Perrine says that it is “saying less than one means, may exist in what one says and in how one says it” (1977, pp. 47) in order to make something less emphasized.
- **Irony:** Irony is the opposite between one’s said and what they actually mean (Perrine, 1977: pp. 48).

Paralinguistic Features in Pragmatics

Paralinguistic or paralanguage, according to Girsang et al. (2021) is non-verbal communication in which people communicate their emotions, sincerity, and righteousness through paralinguistic features that conceive pitch, tempo, loudness, resonance, timbre, intonation range, syllabic duration, and rhythm. This is in line with Muhammed (2022) as he states through non-verbal communication, the speaker thoroughly explains all the facts, concepts, and messages without using a single word. Physical cues like tone of voice, smell, touch, and body language are used in non-verbal communication. A lot may be inferred from body language and gestures such as facial expression, throat clearing, physical contact, and clothing. Sign language is an obvious form of non-verbal communication and is available to everybody at any time. The aim of pragmatics is to show the intended meanings, assumptions, purpose, or intention of people in communication as well as their actions that are taken throughout the conversation (Yule 1996, pp. 4). Interpreting this purpose of pragmatics with paralinguistic, which is previously stated that it is utilized to express the speaker’s emotions, sincerity, and righteousness, paralinguistic comprises of the intention of people or speakers to convey their intended meaning or purpose through the non-verbal cues such as vocal cues and gesture cues.

Political Discourse

Rakhmatovna (2022) has included several definitions of political discourse from several experts. Rakhmatovna (pp. 88, 2022) states that

political discourse is the central object of political linguistics research, which most frequently related to the definition by A. N. Baranov (1991) that says that political discourse is “the totality of all speech acts used in political discussions, as well as rules of public policy, sanctified by tradition and proven by experience”. Rakhmatovna adds the definition of political discourse by E. R. Levenkova (2011) that states that political discourse is an expression of linguistics of public practice in the field of culture of politics which is the professional used of language that is due to the nationally and socio-historically conditioned mentality of its speakers. These definitions concentrate on the form of public communication of professional politicians that render the political discourse with the aim to win and to withstand their power (Van Dijk, 2013).

Rakhmatovna (pp. 89-90, 2022) also includes the functions of political discourse by Vinogradov (1978, Rakhmatovna, 2022) which focuses on influencing people. It is then expanded to several communicative functions proposed by R. Jakobson (2006) which can also be said as political communication functions, which are communicative, emotive, incentive, motivational, phatic, metalanguage, and aesthetic functions.

Joe Biden’s Victory Speech

After his victory in the presidential election, or November 7th, 2020, in the place where he grew up, Wilmington, Delaware, USA, Biden presented his victory speech in front of the people of Delaware. In his speech, there are a number of points that he points out. In particular, the three focal points that he proposed for his candidacy, which are: the battle for the soul of the nation, the need to rebuild the nation’s middle class as he considers them as the backbone of the country, and a call for unity, to act as One America. Biden brings the main notions that he pledges to unify the United States of America. It is common knowledge that there are two largest parties, Democratic parties and the Republican Parties. The US 2020 presidential election is held with two candidates, Joe Biden from the Democratic parties and Donald Trump from the Republican parties. With

the triumphs of Biden, Biden acknowledges that the final results will enact a sparring between the two groups. In the notion of that, Biden looks in on Democrats and Republicans to cease demonizing and compromise (Phillips, 2020). He also states that he plans to rebuild the middle class.

Considering the middle class as the backbone of the country. Biden also speaks out for justice and ratio problems in the nation, the US economy, administration, and vitality, and the prosperity of people post COVID-19 pandemic. There is no doubt that the pandemic of COVID-19 has affected the world, without exception, USA, as the superpower and the center of the world's economy. Joe Biden, who won the votes in the period of COVID-19, brings this notion to his victory speech.

METHOD

The research method applied in this study is qualitative research. Qualitative research is emphasized on the process analysis of the information that provides a subjective account of the "who, what, and where of events or experiences" (Kim et al., 2017, pp. 23). From a philosophical standpoint, constructionism and critical theories that employ interpretative and naturalistic methodologies are most compatible with this study methodology (Lincoln et al., 2017). In addition, Lincoln et al. (2017) states that these philosophical stances convey the idea that reality is multiple and subjective since it exists within a variety of settings that are dynamic and experienced differently depending on the person.

The data are displayed in the form of words, utterances, and gestures collected and

selected using transcription document analysis technique and video analysis technique from a victory speech of the 46th president of the USA, Joe Biden, which was declared in Wilmington, Delaware, USA on November 7th 2020. Both of the data are taken from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/11/07/annotated-biden-victory-speech>. The speech was transcribed and annotated by Amber Phillips, a staff writer of The Washington Post. The study is presented by 1) watching the video of Joe Biden's victory speech, 2) reading the transcription of the speech that will be thoroughly analyzed, and 3) Identifying words and utterances from the speech and determine speech acts, gestures as paralinguistic features along with the figurative languages, to interpret the political discourse in the speech. Searle's speech acts were the first linguistic feature to be analysed on the speech along with the speaker's gestures. It was followed by analysis of figurative languages to imply the implicit emotion and intention of Joe Biden in delivering the speech. The three steps were combined and finally classified into the function of political discourse.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Searle's Speech Acts in Joe Biden's Victory Speech

The present study revealed that Joe Biden used speech acts and figurative languages in his victory speech that took place in Wilmington, Delaware, USA, on November 7th 2020. In Table 1, it is showed that Joe Biden dominantly used assertive type of speech acts to motivate, convey his emotion, and maintain his power as the new president-elect of the United States.

Table 1. Speech Acts in Joe Biden's Victory Speech

No.	Speech Acts	Total	Percentage (%)
1.	Assertive	77	61%
2.	Expressive	18	14%
3.	Directive	14	11%
4.	Commissive	12	9%
5.	Declaration	6	5%

TOTAL	127	100%
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Table 1 reveals that Joe Biden used a lot more assertive type of speech acts than other types of speech acts which are directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration.

Discussion on Searle's Speech Acts Applied in Joe Biden's Victory Speech

Joe Biden is the 46th president of the United States of America that was elected in 2020 along with the vice president-elect, Kamala Harris.

Biden delivered his victory speech in front of the people of Delaware, his childhood city, and was broadcasted online not only to the people of the United States of America, but also to the people around the world on November 7th 2020. Table 1 and reveals that the most applied type of speech act used by Biden is assertive, followed by expressive, commissive, directive, and declaration. The table below is the discussions on Searle's speech acts found in Joe Biden's Victory Speech.

A. Assertive

And for that is what America, I believe, is about. It's about people. And that's what our administration will be all about.

This data contains assertive acts of "believing" and "stating". Biden states his state of belief that America and its administration are about people.

B. Expressive

And I would not be here without her love and tireless support of Jill and my son Hunter, and Ashley, my daughter and all our grandchildren and their spouses and all our family. They're my heart.

The expressive act occurred in this data is "praising". Biden expresses his gratitude

Perrine's Figurative Languages in Joe Biden's Victory Speech

The present study revealed that Joe Biden used figurative languages in his victory speech.

towards his family members regarding their supportive demeanors towards him as well as expressing what he perceives about his family members to him to the audience, indicating that the role of his entire family that he mentioned is utterly significant.

C. Directive

I sought this office to restore the soul of America, to rebuild the backbone of this nation: the middle class. And to make America respected around the world again. And to unite us here at home.

In this data, a directive acts of "demanding" is occurred. Biden demands the office —the people who work in the departments with him for these three aspects that he mentioned in his speech.

D. Commissive

I'll work with all my heart, with the confidence of the whole people, to win the confidence of all of you.

This data contains commissive act of "promising". Biden promises to do the job as a president totally.

E. Declaration

Let this grim era of demonization in America begin to end here and now.

This data is closed with Biden saying "Let this grim era of demonization in America begin to end here and now", in which he declares that the period of bleak demonization in America starts to end right now in this place as he gives this speech. The act of declaring in this part is identified as a declaration type of speech act.

There are 34 figurative languages in the victory speech. Biden uses figurative languages in his speech with the aim to create imagery and social

intimacy with the audience which is the people of America.

Table 2. Figurative Language in Joe Biden’s Victory Speech

No.	Figurative Language	Total	Percentage (%)
1.	Synecdoche	8	24%
2.	Personification	7	21%
3.	Symbol	7	21%
4.	Hyperbole	4	11%
5.	Metaphor	4	11%
6.	Simile	3	9%
7.	Apostrophe	1	3%
	TOTAL	34	100%

Discussion on Perrine’s Figurative Languages Applied in Joe Biden’s Victory Speech

Other than speech acts, another language device that Joe Biden used in his victory speech is figurative languages in several parts of his speech. Table 2 shows that the most applied type of speech act used by Biden is synecdoche, followed by personification and symbol that both hold the second position, hyperbole and metaphor are in the third position, followed by simile, and least one, apostrophe. The discussions below are the discussions on Perrine’s figurative languages found in Joe Biden’s Victory Speech.

A. Synecdoche

You’re going to have one of your own in the White House.

What he means by saying “the White House” is that he is referring to the government of the United States of America, including himself as the president. Biden and the official employees will be settled in the presidential palace of United States of America called the White House. Sometimes, people call the officials of America’s government “the White House” to represent the entire office.

B. Personification

Once again, America’s bent the arc of the moral universe more toward justice.

It is mentioned that America’s bent the arc. Meanwhile, America is a country. It is not literally a person and more of a something nonhuman. However, Biden uses bent the arc as if it’s alive and a human as bending the arc is more like something that only humans can do. He uses this to emphasize the meaning that America is turning to a particular direction or America’s moral universe tendency is more toward justice.

C. Symbols

Who doesn’t see red states and blue states, but a United States.

Biden mentions red and blue states. The media often use electoral maps in visualizing the political election’s results, red represents Republican states, meanwhile blue represents Democrat states. Biden’s literal intention of saying the words is that he will serve as a president of the United States of America without any discrimination or focusing on particular states without minding the others, even though he is a Democrat himself, and his opponent, Donald Trump is a

Republican. He will serve as the president of the United States.

D. Hyperbole

*I'm proud of the campaign we built. I'm proud of the coalition we put together, **the broadest and most diverse coalition in history.***

The coalition that he mentions is in fact not the broadest and most diverse coalition in history. Biden uses “the broadest and most diverse coalition in history” to convey his message about how diverse the coalition is, which includes people from different parties, stances, ages, races, ethnicity, and races.

E. Metaphor

*... **America is a beacon for the globe.***

Biden uses the words “America is a beacon for the globe” to associate America directly to a beacon or a light. America is one of the most influential country in the world right now. Attentions of people around the world are fixated in America. Therefore, Biden believes that positive attributes that shape America should make America the inspiration and hope of the world.

F. Simile

*To make progress, we must stop treating **our opponents as our enemy.***

Biden tells the audiences not to treat the opponents as the enemies. Opponent is often used to define opposite team in a game, match, and competition. They can possibly be friends outside of the competition. However, enemies tend to use to define a hateful relationship between or among people to others.

G. Apostrophe

*I began thinking about a hymn that means a lot to me and my family, particularly **my deceased son, Beau.***

Biden mentions his late son that has passed away several years ago. Biden mentions his

deceased son as if he was still alive and attended his winning celebration and mentioned that the hymn gives him and his family, including his late son Beau, a consolation.

Interpreting Political Discourse in Joe Biden's Victory Speech

In interpreting political discourse in the victory speech of the 46th president of the United States of America, Joe Biden, which was delivered at Wilmington, Delaware, USA, on November 7th 2020 following his victory as the new president elect of the country, the writer uses speech acts by Searle, figurative languages by Perrine, and interpretation of paralinguistic features of gesture cues done by Joe Biden as the speaker. The analysis of the three features are combined and then classified into the function of political discourse which includes communicative, emotive, incentive, motivational, metalanguage, and aesthetic functions. The discussions below are the discussions of political discourse in Joe Biden's Victory Speech.

“I'll work with all my heart, with the confidence of the whole people, to win the confidence of all of you. And for that is what America, I believe, is about. It's about people. And that's what our administration will be all about. I sought this office to restore the soul of America, to rebuild the backbone of this nation: the middle class. And to make America respected around the world again. And to unite us here at home.” (01:52—02:31)

This data contains three types of Searle's speech acts, commissive act as he promises in “I'll work with all my heart, with the confidence of the whole people, to win the confidence of all of you”, assertive act as he states his state of belief in “and for that is what America, I believe, is about. It's about people. And that's what our administration will be all about”, and directive act as he demanded an action to do in “I sought this office to restore the soul of America, to rebuild the backbone of this nation: the middle

class. And to make America respected around the world again. And to unite us here at home”.

As he performs the three acts, Biden also performs several gestures. A gesture of touching his chest as he performs commissive act of promising shows in the part “I’ll work with all my heart with the confidence of the whole people” indicates that Biden is sincere in conveying his promise. (01:53 – 01:57)



Figure 1. Gesture in 01:53 – 01:57

A gesture of his index fingers facing downward two times as he performs directive act of demanding in the utterance “And to unite us here at home” (02:28 – 02:31) emphasizes that America is home of him and the people of America, also emphasizes the demand of uniting America in the very moment.



Figure 2. Gesture in 02:28 – 02:31

The gesture of looking around to the left or right side as well as squinting eyes indicate that Biden are talking and communicating to all the audience, whether they are close or far from where he is standing.



Figure 3 (02:07 – 02:09)



Figure 4 (02:10 – 02:14)

A figurative language of symbol as in *backbone of the country* which what he means the middle class is uttered as he performs a commissive act of demanding and as he stares at the audience. This figurative language of symbol certainly contains bigger meaning. The backbone of the country means a community who plays a crucial role in the country and for the country in terms of economy and other aspects. However, Biden turns to explain what he means by saying *the backbone of the country* since the audience may not fully understand the phrase that he uses.

Associating the analysis above with the function of political discourse according to Vinogradov (1978) based on the communicative functions by R. Jakobson (2006, Rakhmatovna pp. 89-90, 2022), this data contains four functions of political discourse. The first function is emotive function, as performed in commissive act of promising along with the gesture of touching chest that convey the speaker’s feeling, in this case, sincerity, as well as evoking the same feeling to the audience.

The second function is communication function. It is performed in assertive act of stating a belief of the speaker, in this case, that America and its administration are about people, along with the gesture of staring at the audience. This shows Biden is discussing important political information to the audience.

The third function is incentive function as performed in directive act of demanding, in this case, demanding the office—part of the White House—to manifest these aspects: office to restore the soul of America, empower the middle class, gain honor for America once again, and unite America. It is done in order to assert and maintain his power as the new president of

the United States of America as well as to motivate the audience to act.

The fourth function is metalanguage function as performed in commissive act of demanding and conveyed in the form of figurative language. Biden says “the backbone of the country” which is a symbol that leads to the larger meaning, which then he mentioned as the middle class. This act shows that Biden is accurately communicating the meaning of a phrase that the audience may not fully understand certain phrases in the sphere of politics.

“I mean it. And especially those moments when this campaign was at its lowest ebb, the African American community stood up again for me. You’ve always had my back, and I’ll have yours.” (05:34 – 05:50)

In this data, it is shown that significant gestures are identified when the speaker is performing the illocutionary acts, in particular, a fist followed by several punches to the table are performed in the same time with expressive act of appreciating the African American community that have always supported Biden. This shows that Biden is actually very serious and sincere at the same time when he expresses his appreciation to the African American community, as well as conveying the message of how African American community have significantly helped him (05:40 – 05:45).



Figure 5. Gesture in 05:40 – 05:45

Biden then emphasizes the message as he asserts “you’ve always had my back” (05:45 – 05:47) as he gestures a fist again.



Figure 6. Gesture in 05:45 – 05:47

He subsequently pointed ahead with his index finger as he committed “and I’ll have yours” (05:48), means that he is really serious and will assure that he will help the community of Africa America in the future.



Figure 7. Gesture in 05:48

Figurative language of synecdoche that he uses in the part of assertive act of believing “you’ve always had my back” indicates that he asserts that African American community have always helped him in many ways with anything and the supports have always been there and never left him.

From this analysis, the writer can interpret the political discourse in this part of the speech using the function of political discourse. In this part of the speech, the function of emotive is found again. Biden expresses his appreciation really well to the audience, specifically for the African American community. The use of speech acts, the gestures, as well as the figurative language are all combined in this part of the speech to convey his emotion to the audience about how helpful the African American community is to the point that he promises himself to support them in the future.

“It’s time to put away the harsh rhetoric, lower the temperature, see each other again. Listen to each other again. And to make progress, we have to stop treating our opponents as our

enemies. They are not our enemies. They are Americans. They're Americans." (06:20 – 06:39)

This data contains directive act of asking with several gestures such as serious look, open hands, and flinch several times that indicate accentuation to make peace. Particularly, Biden asks all the supporters of Trump and Biden to lower the temperature and understand one another again post-presidential election. While he performs directive act of asking these things to the audience, he opens his hands and pointed toward the audience, and then he flinched his hands downward for nine time, particularly at the utterances "lower the temperature" (06:23 – 06:24).



Figure 9. Gesture in 06:23 – 06:24

"see each other again" (06:25 – 06:26).



Figure 10. Gesture in 06:25 – 06:26

"listen to each other again" (06:27 – 06:28).



Figure 11. Gesture in 06:27 – 06:28

These gestures clearly indicate the emphasize in every word he says, urging the people to perform it immediately. The figurative language of simile in "(stop) treating our opponents as our enemies" gives the audience a clear image that between the word "opponents" and "enemies", there is actually a big difference even though both words might mean essentially the same when it is actually not similar. Opponents tend to be used when calling the opposite team of one's team in a competition, meanwhile the rivalry stays in the competition. On the other hand, enemies are more like a serious hatred and hostility between or two sides or more. In conclusion, Biden directed the people not to bring the rivalry on a daily basis.

From the analysis, the writer identifies two functions of political discourse in this part, which are incentive function and motivational function. In incentive function, Biden attempts to use his power to persuade his audience to set aside their negativity, lower the tense, and understand one another like before. In motivational function, Biden serves a purpose first by saying "to make progress" before directing the audience to stop considering the opponents like the enemies. He shows a motivation as to why such thing needs to be performed. It can be concluded that the political discourse of Biden in this part of the speech is to persuade the audience to do an action according to his sincerity or his desire, which is to make peace with one another.

"I've long talked about the battle for the soul of America. We must restore the soul of America. Our nation is shaped by the constant battle between our better angels and our darkest impulses. And what presidents say in this battle matters. It's time for our better angels to prevail. Tonight, the whole world is watching America, and I believe in our best, America is a beacon for the globe." (11:30 – 12:03)

In this data, several hand gestures are performed when Biden performs the acts, which are assertive act of informing, assertive act of believing, and commissive act. Associating the

hand gestures with the utterances, Biden is performing assertive act of informing in “I’ve long talked about the battle ...” (11:30 - 11:32) while gesturing a long range with his hands, indicates that he asserts that he actually has talked about the topic from a long time ago.



Figure 12. Gesture in 11:30 - 11:32

Other hand gestures that he shows to the audience indicate a clear emphasize or accentuation of the utterances he says related to the topic, the soul of America. He urges himself as well as the audience to restore the soul of America by raising his right hand, directed it to the audience, and flinched it downward to add emphasize (11:35 – 11:36).



Figure 13. Gesture in 11:35 – 11:36

He also emphasizes his words using his hand gestures to communicate his purpose and belief to the audience: a purpose for allowing positive attitude to win and a belief that America is a light, a hope for the world.

In conveying assertive act of believe, Biden uses figurative language of symbol like “better angels” and “darkest impulses”. Both have deeper meaning. This helps to create an imagery to the audience as Biden refers to positive attitudes for better angels and negative attitudes for darkest impulses as the two things symbolizes opposite things. Biden also asserts his belief that America is the center of the world’s attention at the moment. He uses hyperbole in order to emphasize how immense the attention they obtain at the moment, not

necessarily means that the entire world is literally watching America. This may create an imagery in the audience’s mind that this moment is a very crucial and historical and thus, it will make the audience agrees on what he believes. Moreover, Biden adds a metaphor in “America is a beacon for the globe” when he asserts his belief, which literally means America is the inspiration of the world. This may also shape the audience’s mind to believe what he says and eventually create a certain desire and confidence for the people of America to change and allow the positive attitudes to take over the negative attitudes in order to make America a great country.

Associating this analysis with political discourse function, what Biden does is to influence the audience or the people who is watching to do a certain action, particularly restoring the soul of America with his state of belief, certain gestures that can enact assurance and confidence, and a unique analogy of better angels. With that being said, the political discourse functions found in this part of the speech are motivational function and aesthetic function.

“And it goes like this: And he will raise you up on eagle’s wings, bear you on the breath of dawn, and make you shine just like the sun and hold you in the palm of his hand. And now together, on eagles’ wings, we embark on the work that God and history have called upon us to do, with full hearts and steady hands, with faith in America and each other, with love of country, a thirst for justice.” (13:56 – 14:25)

Biden’s assertive act of reciting and stating here once again are emphasized by the hand gestures in certain utterances, as in “and make you shine just like the sun” (14:03 – 14:05) to gesture the word *shine*, sturdier gesture as in “and hold you in the palm of his hand” (14:06 – 14:08) to indicate the words itself. He flinched his open hands in “and now together” (14:09 – 14:10) to add a force into it.



Figure 14. Gesture in 14:03 – 14:05



Figure 15. Gesture in 14:06 – 14:10

Biden did the same gesture with only his right hands as he said “on eagles’ wings, we embark on the work that God and history have called upon us to do” (14:11 – 14:16).



Figure 16. Gesture in 14:11 – 14:16



Figure 17. Gesture in 14:11 – 14:16

All of these combined and concluded that Biden has asserted that he and the people of America has begun to undertake the tasks that God and the history have mandated. He opened his both arms and says “with full hearts” (14:17 – 14:18).



Figure 18. Gesture in 14:17 – 14:18

By this means he announces to the audience that the tasks need to be done with sincerity and totality. A gesture of fists as he slightly furrowed as well as his lower jaw seemed to be slightly moving forward in “and steady hands” (14:18 – 14:19) signs that they also need to always be prepared to do the tasks.



Figure 19. Gesture in 14:18 – 14:19

Finally, at the end, he opens his arms one more time as he mentions “a thirst for justice” (14:24 – 14:25) as he looked to the left, asserting that justice is still the name purpose of the task.



Figure 20. Gesture in 14:24 – 14:25

Once again, he adds the hymn containing figurative languages of symbol and metaphor to convey a comfort to the audience. In other words, the figurative language embedded in the hymn combines with him performing assertive act of reciting resulted in delivering a consolation to the targeted audience.

Associating this analysis with the function of political discourse, it is inferred that in this part of the speech, there are three functions of

political discourse: emotive, motivational, and phatic function. The emotive function can be identified by the use of hymn which contains not only figurative language, but also Biden's purpose of conveying the hymn to his audience to give them solace, especially for the families who have lost their members of family because of the pandemic of COVID-19. According to The Church of Jesus Christ.org, the eagle's wings is used to represent God's strength, compassion, and kindness in delivering His covenant people. The second function is motivational function. At the end of the hymn, Biden turns to make the hymn not only as a consolation for people, but also a motivation to perform the vision and mission. The third function is phatic function as both Biden and the audience have agreed to start to perform the tasks together.

CONCLUSION

Assertive act that is performed by Joe Biden includes the act of stating, reciting, and believing. Joe Biden often performs assertive act of believing in delivering his speech to his audience in order to tell the audience about motivational information and also emotional messages. It is followed by commissive act of promising and planning certain acts for future necessities that mostly implies a purpose to obtain and maintain the power of Joe Biden. In addition, he often shows hand gestures that indicates accentuation and emphasize of the words that he utters, showing reassurance and confidence to the audience. Even though the dominant figurative languages in the speech is synecdoche, but symbol actually plays a significant role to help interpreting the political discourse of Joe Biden through the political discourse function. It mostly aims to add and create imagery to the audience's mind in order to persuade them to do the task with Biden.

From the analysis, it is concluded that Joe Biden's political discourse that is interpreted by combining speech acts, gesture cues, and figurative languages and classified the findings to the function of political discourse is to persuade the audience, whom are the people of America, to do certain things for the movement of America as well as to obtain and to maintain his power. However, as this study merely

interpreted political discourse from certain parts of the speech conceiving speech acts, gestures, and figurative languages, other parts of the speech has not yet analysed as they do not contain the combination of speech acts, gestures, and figurative languages. Thus, the speech did not analysed thoroughly. It is crucial for future researchers to interpret political discourse by paying attention to the entirety of the speech, especially from political leaders and figures.

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