

A Realistic Analysis of Conflicts in Political Debates Mustansiriyah University

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The current study aims to explore the conflictive speech acts used in political arguments as a tool of persuasion to undermine Russia's role and attitudes as a prominent participant in foreign policy and a large economic power. **Method:** Using conflictive language, the American president attempts to isolate Russia from the rest of the world, characterising it as a terrorist state intent on attacking not only Ukraine but all of the world's countries. **Results:** This part is not explicitly mentioned in the original text, but you could infer that the results would focus on how the use of conflictive speech acts shapes the perception of Russia in global discourse. **Novelty:** The novelty lies in the examination of how political leaders use conflictive speech acts as a strategic tool in international relations and foreign policy, specifically targeting Russia.

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to shed light on how American President Joe Biden can utilize conflictive speech acts in his arguments about the war between Ukraine and Russia to denounce and undervalue Putin's character and alleged hostile operations against Ukraine. This is a successful technique that employs certain mechanisms with the goal of making the global audience unsatisfied with the latter's wrongdoings, ignorance, offensiveness, and disregard for human rights. Throughout this qualitative investigation, which is realistically supported by illustrative figures as well as a variety of conflictive speech acts, excerpts from Biden's above-mentioned speech are picked at random.

This paper aims at: (1) detecting the pragmatic structure of conflictive speech acts, (2) identifying the most common conflictive speech acts employed in political speeches, exclusively American ones, and how to differentiate between them, (3) demonstrating the frequency of the acts in question that abounds in American political discourses,, and (4) constructing a new eclectic model for the pragmatic structure of a conflict speech act based on recommendations and arguments made by well-known linguists and philosophers involved in prominent theories. After conducting a pragmatic analysis of conflictive speech acts (SAs), the researcher proposes an eclectic model based on a review of pragmatic theories and his own observations to identify the speech acts in question. Following a thorough reading and survey, a list of the most typical conflictive speech acts is provided.

RESEARCH METHOD

Conflicts

Conflictives, which are associated with impositives, are a group of speech actions (SAs, hereinafter) that induce tension between interlocutors because the speaker's display of social interaction is so unpleasant that his utterance would elicit a clash and escalation from the addressee. Practically speaking, the interlocutors' communication objectives would struggle with social requirements and statuses, generating an imbalance in the social equilibrium [1].

Conflictives, which include commissives, expressives, and directions, are intended to undercut the addressee's behaviour and personality, rendering them unappealing to the listener. In practical terms, the felicity criteria of a conflictive speech act might be described as:

1. The speaker should advocate actions that injure the addressee, regardless of the truth value of the statement.
2. The suggested action should be hostile and unwanted to the recipient.
3. The proposed action limits the addressee's possibilities for freedom.
4. The addressee requests that the speaker refrain from uttering the act.
5. Levinson suggests that the speaker holds more power than the addressee [2].

Issuance Stage

This stage is made up of two major components: pragma-rhetorical SAs and impoliteness strategy, which is desperately needed at this level to serve as the foundation for the succeeding phases.

SAS with pragmatic rhetoric

According to Leech, conflictive SAs are those whose issuance results in a conflict between their illocutionary purpose and the social goal [3]. Involving threats and accusations, cursing and reprimanding as the typical acts standing for this group, conflictives are mainly associated with impositive SAs (or impositives) which severely restrict or conceal the addressee's freedom and optionality and, hence, count as impolite. As a case in point, the threat 'I'll kill your child if you do not give me your money, for instance, when issued by an armed bandit to a passer-by, compels the addressee to carry out the former's wish; otherwise, the latter may lose his life if he hesitates [4].

However, the idea that all impoliteness is rude is incorrect because certain impolite utterances are actually polite because they guarantee some form of advantage or benefit to the addressee, such as when someone says, "You must have another sandwich as a generous offer." Nonetheless, the vast majority of impositives make the propositional substance of a speech costly for the hearer. That is, the addressee incurs some type of cost, whether monetary, psychological, or emotional.

2.1.2 Impoliteness

Impoliteness is defined as a speaker's negative attitude toward the addressee's behavior in a certain setting, characterized by aggressive overtones and the absence of mitigation, which is a critical aspect in communication [5]. As a result, impoliteness is associated with face-threatening speaking acts, which ultimately result in an offensive outcome for the addressee. To put it another way, conflictive SAs do not use politeness

techniques that, according to Leech, keep communication channels open, but instead target the hearer's face and social image since the speaker continues to make harsh attacks against the addressee's personality and actions [3]. Simultaneously, the receiver views the attacker's words as a premeditated attempt to denigrate the addressee's actions and character. Impoliteness, often known as rudeness, results in non-cooperative communicative behaviour, which creates an emotional climate of tension between the interlocutors. Brown and Levinson suggest that politeness is a universal quality inherent in face management that helps participants avoid clashes and maintain face (the social image of the people involved in a conversation) [6]. To accomplish this, several politeness tactics can be used to reduce or eliminate friction caused by social interaction. They are listed below.

1. Negative politeness. It is an approach that emphasizes the addressee's freedom to impose or take action. It is distinguished by apologetic language and honorific titles. Conflicts, due to their severe character, compel the addressee to do what the speaker suggests. When Mr. John is assaulted by a conflictive SA, he is, among other things, stripped of his title as a symbol of disrespectful comment [3].
2. Demonstrating positive civility. This technique suggests that individuals choose to mix with the social group with which they feel most comfortable in order to establish their social identity. In contrast, once a conflictive SA is sent, speakers intend to dissociate the addressee from this social membership.

2.1. Practice off-the-record courtesy

This method, which is based on hints and vagueness, uses indirect SAs to ensure that interactants do not engage in face-threatening activities such as requests. On the contrary, conflictive SAs are typically direct, producing interpersonal friction because they stem from communicatively wicked intentions to harm the addressee. As a result, saying "It is hot here" on a scorching day is an indirect appeal to someone sitting near the cooler to turn it on [6].

The first of these three strategies is appropriate for conflictive SAs, in which the speaker actively breaches the strategy's postulates in order to separate the addressee from the social group and isolate him.

2.2. The Inappropriateness and Relevance Stage

The second phase of conflictive SA development is the inappropriateness and relevance stage, which is based on the cooperative principle and relevance theory, both of which will be described in depth here.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Inappropriateness

According to Brown and Levinson, inappropriate communication refers to communicative messages that are unsuitable for the recipient. In this aspect, conflictive communications can be difficult for the receiver to decode [6]. This is due to a violation of either the cooperative principle or the tact maxim, which form the skeleton of

politeness [2]. These two components, when combined, provide the structure of a conflict, which can be completed later by relevance.

Cooperative Principle

The cooperative concept is an essential and indispensable component in communication since it serves to open channels of connection. Grice proposed the cooperative principle, which is based on four maxims that participants in a communicative event should follow, arguing that they are assumptions rather than rules because violating any of them would not result in a breakdown in communication [4]. On the contrary, violating a maxim would result in greater significance. These maxims may be summarised as follows:

1. Quantity maxim. It requires that the speaker convey the appropriate quantity of information, no more or less.
2. The quality maxim. It demands the speaker to state the truth while also providing explanations and evidence.
3. The relevance maxim states that the speaker's arguments should be relevant to the topic at hand.
4. The manner maxim emphasises the organisation and clarity of the speaker's message.

Concerning conflictive SAs, the maxim of quality must be breached merely because the propositional content of any conflictive SA is not established but rather a candidate proposed by the speaker for the audience to be implanted by the latter. This means that the addressee has the option of not taking the advised action [3]. One example is the following threat given by the company's boss to an employee, which states:

I'll fire you if you show up late again.

The speaker is not required to carry out what he has said because the threatened person conforms with the speaker's conditional assertion, and so the quality standard is violated.

Tact Maxim

People, in general, look for membership in the society in which they are raised. As such, they try to maintain a good relationship with others. This occurs when one avoids saying something offensive or disturbing. That is to say, a person should be tactful, and this is the hallmark of politeness [3]. In fact, tact maxim depends on two mechanisms: cost-benefit and indirectness.

Cost-Benefit

Following Hernandez, cost-benefit variable is a part and parcel of tact maxim since it determines the amount of politeness attributed to the speaker and addressee. This factor, in fact, varies inversely relative to the speaker and addressee [7]. That is to say what is costly to the addressee is beneficial to the speaker and vice-versa. Concerning conflictives, a great deal of harm or loss is assigned to the addressee and the speaker, therefore, is discourteous because the latter tries to defame the former's reputation, making him undesirable and hateful. In other words, this fierce attack would be detrimental to the addressee due to the conflictive speech acts used.

Indirectness

Evaluated in terms of degrees of optionality, indirectness is the hallmark of tact and politeness and should be necessarily evaluated in this paradigm in order to judge the value of SAs. Direct SAs, argues Leech, provides no optionality to the addressee and restricts his freedom of response [3]. Accordingly, conflictives count as tactless speech acts as they allow the hearer no opportunity to deny the propositional content of the speaker's messages which are wicked -intentioned ones.

Relevance

According to Mey, a speech act cannot be communicated appropriately unless its form sparks so much relevance that it provokes the addressee's effort to process it with the help of contextual factors [8]. Here, the addressee is entitled to recover the speaker's message via inferences that are stemmed from the social environment in conjunction with the participants' cognitive abilities. Regarding conflictives, the addressee, because of the speaker's utterance, would recognise the coercive message involved in the SAs in question by virtue of the receiver's cognitive forces paired with the social norms and system [9].

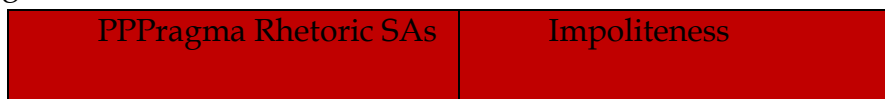
Stated differently, the utterances suggesting the conflictive SAs should be relevant enough to activate the addressee's effort to evaluate detrimental content that the speaker incorporates into his speech act to hurt the addressee and the context, including inferences. The event and accompanying tone will be of help in this concern for the receiver to choose the most suitable interpretation among others that might emerge then.

The Concluding Stage

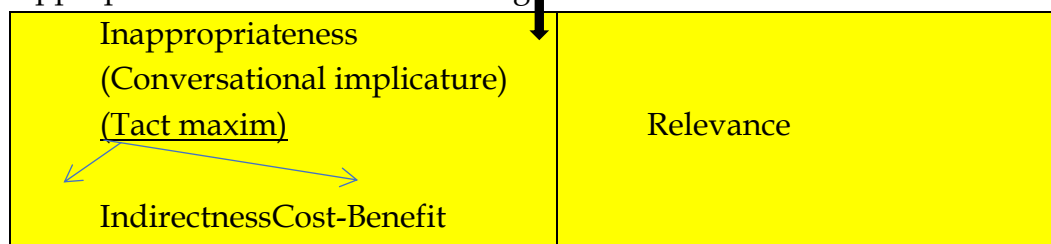
Depending on the persuasive appeals as utilised by the speaker, this stage represents the outcome of a conflictive SA that the producer has been ultimately after by which he can convince the audience of the theses he presents in his argument [10].

The three persuasive devices that are used here are: pathos, ethos and logos. Pathos pursues the audience's emotional predispositions and feelings to provoke an emotional reply in the receiver and makes him adopt an attitude towards an a certain issue which fits in the public opinion [11]. Regarding conflictives, the speaker tries to embody the person under attack as doing something terrible or criminal, which leads to hatred by the audience towards the latter. The second channel of persuasive communication, ethos, inheres in the speaker's or writer's credibility, experience, trustworthiness, worthiness, and conviction. In political speeches, arguments pertaining to conflicts, when made by presidents or prime ministers, are more effective for the audience. The last persuasive channel of logos consists in reasoning, and the speakers, accordingly, has recourse to it because of its effectiveness and consistency in addition to the stamping evidence and logical theses that attract the audience's interest. Here, the speaker's arguments should be upheld by quotations, examples or statistics [12]. As regards conflictives, the speaker refers to size and kind of losses and the number of sacrifices which are allegedly attributed to the person under attack.

Issuance Stage



Inappropriateness and Relevance Stage



The Concluding Stage



Figure 1. The Pragmatic Structure of a conflictive Speech Act [3], [7], [8].

Conflictive SAS

Leech contends that there are four conflictive SA which are commonly used in arguments and conversational interaction, viz. threatening, accusing, cursing and reprimanding [3].

Threatening (Thr.)

Characterized by lack of politeness as a harsh act, threats, maintains Leech (1983:104), are listed lists within conflictive. Following Searle, threatening is a "pledge to do something *to you*, not *for you*" [13]. Strongly upholding this view, Hornby states that a threat is a "statement of an intention to punish or hurt somebody if he doesn't do as one wish" [14]. In threats, the speaker expects that the addressee will exhibit some sort of reaction, which renders the threatener tell the threatened person that the latter will have a cost.

Allan points out that there is a symmetrical relationship between promises and threats in the sense that the proposed action in both will be performed in the future [15]. Nonetheless, threats are different in that the former should be achieved since it is the speaker's commitment, while the latter permits the speaker's withdrawal from what was first proposed. Accordingly, the threat utterance *I am going to punish you*, when issued by the father to one of his sons, is not necessarily amenable to implementation. Put different, the son may get rid of punishment and be set free due to the father's retreatment. In accordance with Hernandez, the advantage of threatening is mainly devoted to the speaker's interest, while the addressee is susceptible to one of two inevitable costs: undesired performance of the speaker's recommended proposition or severe punishment [7].

Cursing (Curs.)

Hornby argues that cursing is a “word, phrase or sentence” calling for punishment, injury or destruction of something or somebody, stressing the rude nature of this SA [14]. In support of this claim, Austin maintains that cursing is accommodated within the framework of behabitives, e.g. in *Damn it* [16]. This is so mainly because this act impels the speaker to react to other individuals’ conduct in a publicly expressed statement. In the same vein, Searle incorporates the act under scrutiny into expressives, an SA group which expresses the speaker’s psychological attitudes towards a state of affairs that the speech act includes [13].

Concerning the pragmatic structure of cursing, Little contends that there are three stages that construct the identity of the act under scrutiny, namely introduction, operative and concluding stages [17]. Introduction stage, which serves as the issuance stage, touches upon the narrative events due to which the speaker voices his objection. The second phase, operative phase, is associated with the pronunciation of the speech act in question against the offender. It is the speaker’s authority that determines the length of this period. The third stage of conclusion alludes to the closing stage where all participants in the setting are expected to say, “so be it”.

Accusing (Acc.)

Viewed as a statement by a person affirming that somebody else or institution has committed something wrong. The person issuing the accusation is an accuser while the person against whom the accusation is directed is referred to as the accused. It should be emphasized that accusation cannot be recognized apart from the context in which it occurs. That is to say, accusing cannot be performed independently of the accuser, the accused and the participants involved in the accusation process. Additionally, the accusation may be true or false (issued with no evidence) due to the speaker’s hatred for the addressee for belittling the latter’s fame [18].

Looking at from another angle, accusation is an SA analogous to warning in that both have a detrimental proposition to be avoided by the addressee to be on the safe and get rid of a disastrous outcome. According to Brown and Levinson, impositive speech acts, including accusations, cause face-threatening to the addressee because they violate his negative politeness that recommends his freedom of imposition and expression should be observed [6]. The accused, it should be noted, may not be aware that an accusation is imputed to him. On the other hand, the audience’s evaluation of the accused is affected by the size of accusation that the speaker directs against the former [17].

Concerning the truth of the accusing act, the accuser may issue an accusation with no proof, as in *US is accused of using nuclear power against Japan*. In this case, novelty is needed since the accusation is not influential if detached from the context where the act is found. In the aforementioned example, the accusation is believable, to a great extent, owing to the disastrous consequences arising from this conflict in conjunction with other contextual factors that uphold this assumption.

Reprimanding (Rep.)

Reprimanding, argues Hornby, is an official rebuke produced by someone in authority to someone else, whose institutional status is lower than that of the former, since the latter has just committed something illegal or wrong [14]. Done in face-to-face interaction, reprimanding is evaluated as a face-threatening SA the purpose of which is to quit the addressee's acting in a particular fashion; that is to say, the speaker offers an adverse evaluation about a certain action.

The felicity conditions of the act under discussion recommend that the speaker should be socially or institutionally more powerful than the addressee. In this paradigm, reference should be made to tone, as a contextual variable with regard to the speaker's attitude as Roach argues, which has bearing on shaping the identity of this act. Besides, the speaker should have the moral ground when making this act and this is demonstrated by the addressee's annoying reaction over the imputation proposed [19]. In the same vein, the speaker is amenable to bitter criticism if his information is faulty or if he mistakenly reprimanded the addressee. Regarding the addressee, he should be satisfied with the speaker as the typical person with strong charisma so as to yield a successful performance of the act at issue. By the same remark, the addressee must make an offence [20].

1. Textual Analysis

For the curtailed space allotted to the current work, the researcher adopts only five texts from Biden's speech in Warsaw concerning the Russian-Ukrainian crisis in which he seizes the opportunity to attack against the Russian President. The SAs involved are enclosed between brackets within the original texts selected (<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/full-transcript-president-bidens-speech-warsaw-russias-invasion/story?id=83690301>)).

Text (1)

Biden says "Ten years later, the Soviet Union collapsed and Poland and Central and Eastern Europe would soon be free. Nothing about that battle for freedom was simple or easy. It was a long, painful slog (Curs.). Fought over not days and months but years and decades. But we emerged anew in the great battle for freedom. A battle between democracy and autocracy. Between liberty and repression. Between a rules-based order and one governed by brute force (Acc.). In this battle, we need to be clear-eyed. This battle will not be won in days or months either (Thr.). We need to steel ourselves of a long fight ahead" (Rep.). (<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/full-transcript-president-bidens-speech-warsaw-russias-invasion/story?id=83690301>).

In accordance with Little, Biden first issues a curse on SA in this extract, condemning the dominance of the former Soviet Union, which stifles the freedom of Polish and European people for ages, an implication that Russians are not a peace-loving people right from the beginning [17]. This act is followed by accusing SA to hold Russia responsible for all battles that took place in Europe, an accusation that precedes Biden's indirect threat by which he undertakes to wage a long-term war that extends for years if Russia does not stop invading Ukraine. In this extract, the president, by using reprimand

SA, suggests a quick and effective response against Russia to avoid a long and bloody struggle. The aforementioned SAs, as illustrated in Figure (2) below, are designed to intensify the audience's dislike and hatred for the current Russian President.



Figure 2. Conflictives Used in Text (1) [3], [7].

Text (2)

In his speech, Biden claims “In my own country, a former president named Abraham Lincoln voiced the opposing spirit to save our union in the midst of the Civil War. He said let us have faith that right makes might (Curs.). Today, let us have that faith again. Let us resolve to put the strength of democracies into action to thwart the designs of autocracy. Let us remember that the test of this moment is the test of all time (Curs.). A criminal wants to portray NATO enlargement as an imperial project aimed at destabilizing Russia (Acc.). Nothing is further from the truth. NATO is a defensive alliance. It has never sought the demise of Russia. In the lead up to the current crisis, the United States and NATO worked for months to engage Russia to avert war. I met with him in person, talked to him many times on the phone” (Acc.) (<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/full-transcript-president-bidens-speech-warsaw-russias-invasion/story?id=83690301>)

Excerpt 2 begins with indirect cursing triggered by means of an imperative when the president asks the public to follow Abraham as their example with the implication that Russian politicians, unlike their American counterparts, are predisposed to hostility and enmity, as Mey remarks [8]. Then, another cursing is formulated pertaining to autocracy that Russia, claims Biden, advocates for an assault on other states. To intensify the plight in the audience's mentality, Biden proceeds with his harsh attack against Russia by performing two SAs of accusing, describing Putin as a criminal who evaluates NATO as occupation forces wanting to get rid of Russia, as Levinson suggests [2]. In

reply, Biden said that NATO is a defensive system attacking no state at all and, hence, should be praised by all states, including Russia. As soon as Biden goes on blasting Putin, dissatisfaction and scorn are accumulated and get fiercer in the audience's mind towards Russia. As shown in figure (3) below, this is the ground that Biden heavily relies on to formulate conflictives, as Leech argues [3].

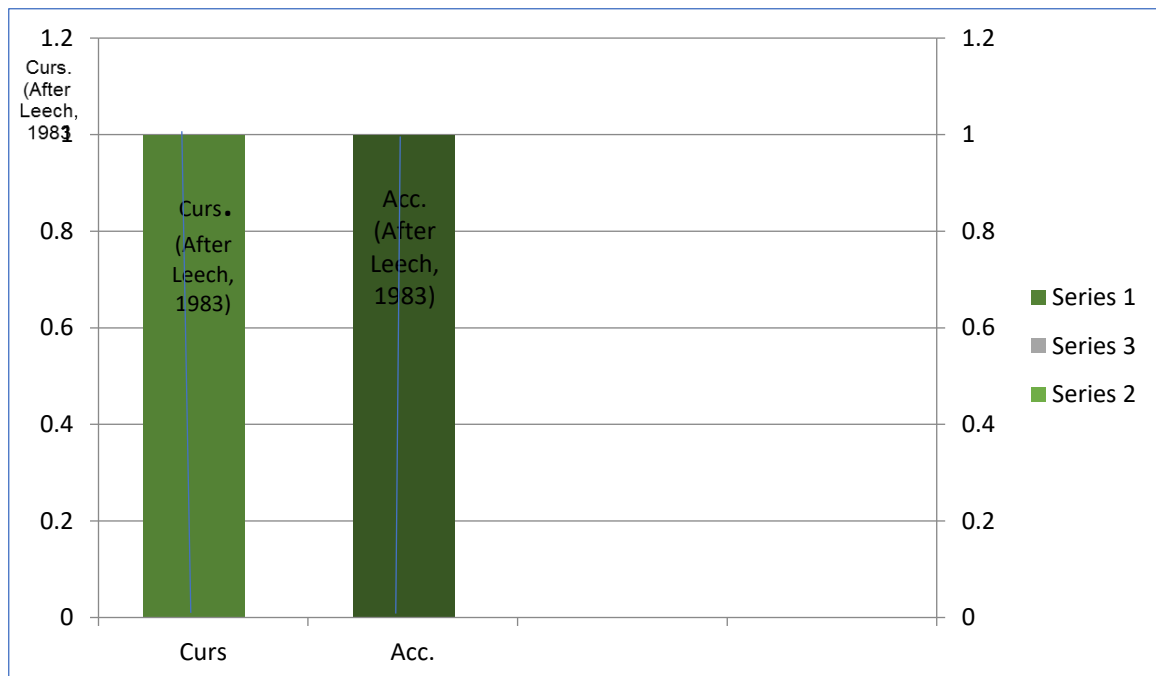


Figure 3. Conflictives Used in Text (2) [3].

Text (3)

Addressing the attendants, Biden declares "To date, the United States has sanctioned 140 Russian oligarchs and their family members, seizing their ill-begotten gains, their yachts, their luxury apartments, their mansions. We've sanctioned more than 400 Russian government officials, including key architects of this war (Thr.). These officials and oligarchs have reaped enormous benefits from the corruption connected to the Kremlin. And now they have to share in the pain (Thr.). The private sector has acted as well (Acc.). Over 400 private multinational companies have pulled out of doing business in Russia. Left Russia completely. From oil companies to McDonald's (Thr.). As a result of these unprecedented sanctions, the ruble is almost immediately reduced to ruble (2). The Russian economy -- that's true, by the way, it takes about 200 rubles to equal \$1" (Thr). (<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/full-transcript-president-bidens-speech-warsaw-russias-invasion/story?id=83690301>).

Extract (3) inaugurates with an indirect threat, concedes Levinson, by the American president when he adverts to huge number of the senior Russian officials, singling out oligarchs [2]. He implies that the future sanctions are much more severe than those nowadays if Russia does not withdraw from Ukraine and show no compliance with NATO's decisions. Embodying the dire consequences that would inflect rich Russian officials, Biden makes another threatening in which he persists in paralyzing their

financial potentials that they in no time have achieved [7]. Then accusing act is indirectly produced concerning the corruption of Kremlin and the Russian oligarchs. At the end of this text, two threatening acts emerge; the first, which is indirect, is couched via Biden's statement that more companies had left Russia to imply that he would withdraw all the giant firms that Russia badly needs; the second, which is expressly made, is in connection with Russian currency which is deteriorated considerably due to the economic sanctions imposed by America on Russia. The intense conflictives, as portrayed by Figure (4) below get the accused psychologically and socially confused due to the burden of charges directed to him from the accuser and audience. The enormous number of conflictives may hinder the accused's ability to make convincing counter-arguments.

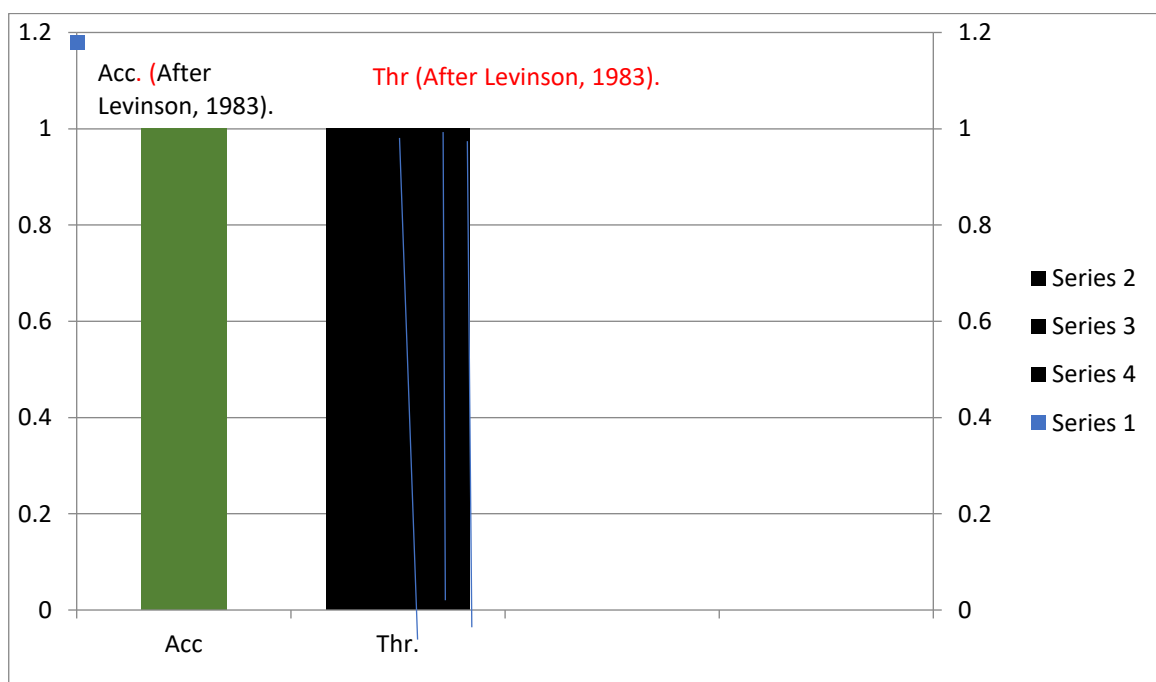


Figure 4. Conflictives Used in Text (3) [2].

Text (4)

"There's simply no justification or provocation for Russia's choice of war" (Curs.), says Biden, adding that "It's an example, one of the oldest human impulses, using brute force and disinformation to satisfy a craving for absolute power and control (Acc.). It's nothing less than a direct challenge to the rule-based international order established since the end of World War II (Curs.). And it threatens to return to decades of war that ravaged Europe before the international rule-based order was put in place (Curs.). We cannot go back to that. We cannot. The gravity of the threat is why the response of the West has been so swift and so powerful and so unified, unprecedented and overwhelming (Thr.). Swift and punishing costs are the only things that are going to get Russia to change its course" (Thr.) (<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/full-transcript-president-bidens-speech-warsaw-russias-invasion/story?id=83690301>).

In this excerpt, cursing SA emerges with regard to Russia's option of fight which, Biden claims, cannot be justified. Next, a direct accusation is conducted, following

Halmari and Tuija, of Russia's starting war against Ukraine, Biden affirms that gone is the time of war and people everywhere are after democracy [10]. This accusation is endorsed by two cursing SAs which zero in on Russian's violation of the international law because Russia, Biden remarks, is reiterating the era of wars that ravaged Europe before. Intending to intimidate Russia's officials and its military leaders, Biden tries to limit Russia's capabilities by issuing two consecutive threats with respect to the West's swift and effective response in conjunction with the necessary forces needed to curb Russia from further aggression and bullying as depicted by Figure (5) below.

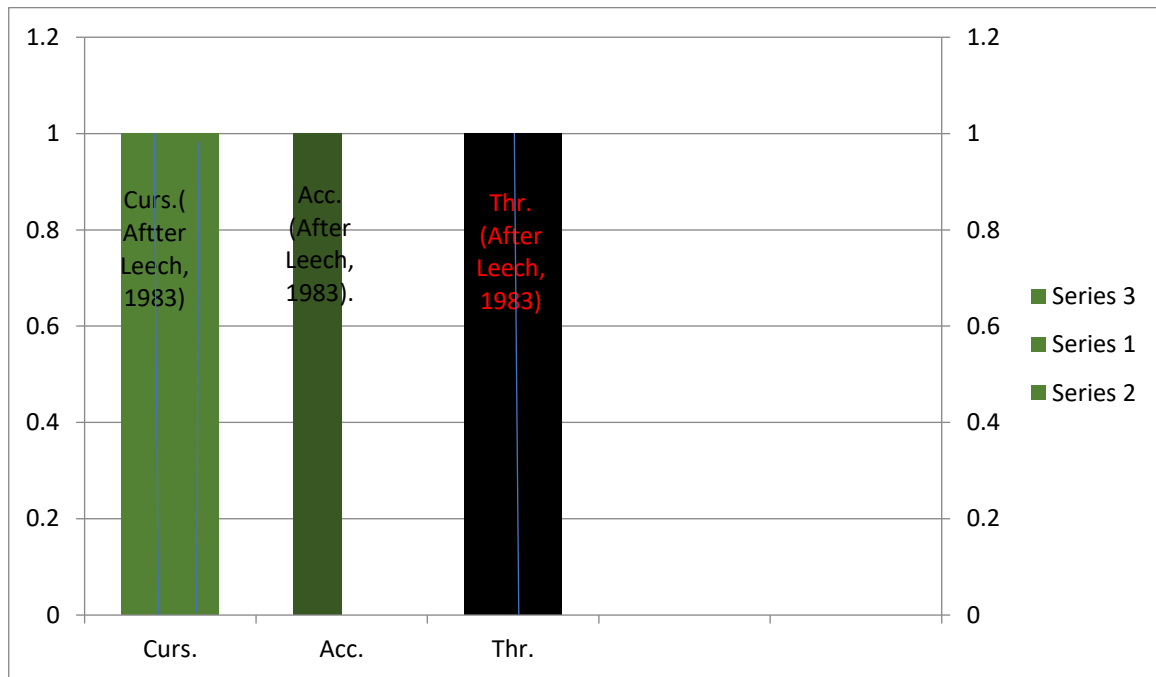


Figure 5. Conflictives Used in Text (4) [3].

Text (5)

Commenting on Russian's alleged hostilities, Biden confirms that "Russia wanted less of a NATO presence on its border but now he has a stronger presence, a larger presence with over 100,000 American troops here along with all the other members of NATO (Thr.). The democracies of the world are revitalized with purpose and unity found in months that we've once taken years to accomplish (Thr.). It's not only Russia's actions in Ukraine that are reminding us of democracy's blessing. It's our own country, his own country, the Kremlin, it's jailing protesters (Curs.). Two hundred thousand people who have allegedly already left. There's a brain drain leaving Russia. (Curs.). Shutting down independent news (Acc.). State media is all propaganda. Blocking the image of civilian targets, mass graves, starvation tactics of the Russian forces in Ukraine" (Acc) (<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/full-transcript-president-bidens-speech-warsaw-russias-invasion/story?id=83690301>).

Talking about NATO presence, this excerpt, Levinson suggests, starts with threatening SA by which the U.S. president expresses his defiance of Russia concerning the huge increase of NATO numbers in Ukraine that Russia first voices objection to [2].

This threat is demonstrated by the American president’s insistence that America is able to place NATO forces near Russian lands. That is to say, the threat is quite clear, though indirect, since the threatened party (Russia), according to Hernandez encounters one of two inevitable losses: immediate withdrawal or huge and destructive war [7].

To further underrate the Russian policy which argues against democracy as Biden has alleged, the American president makes two SAs of cursing by highlighting the significance of democracy in America and its allies, a sign that Russia’s committal of this offence is not rationalized as Leech remarks [3]. This offence, Biden points out, is illustrated by the emigration of brain drains. By the same token, Biden bitterly criticizes the absence of independence of news channels in Russia, arguing against starvation policies and the targeted civilians in Ukraine as embodied by Figure (6) below.

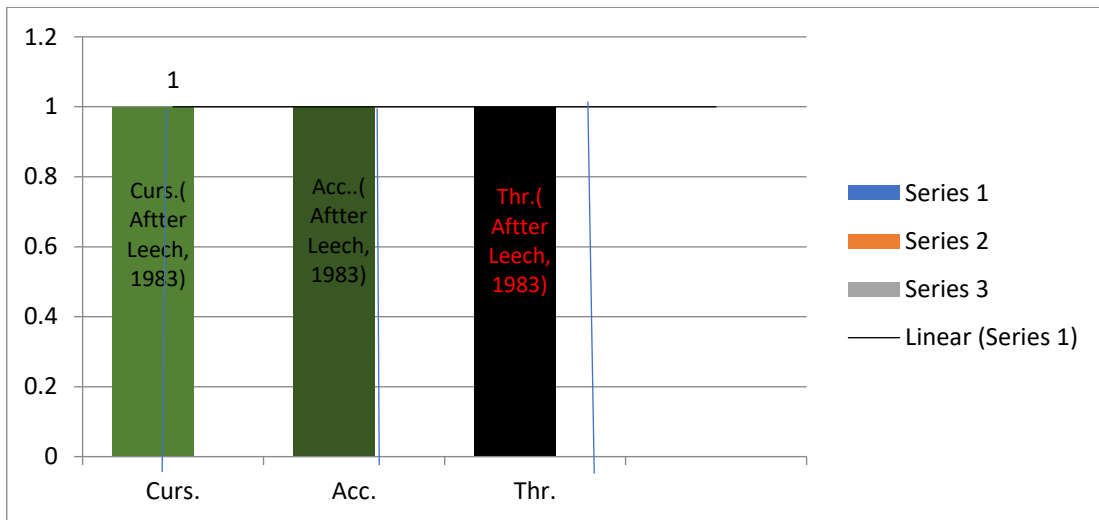


Figure 6. Conflictives Used in Text (5) [3].

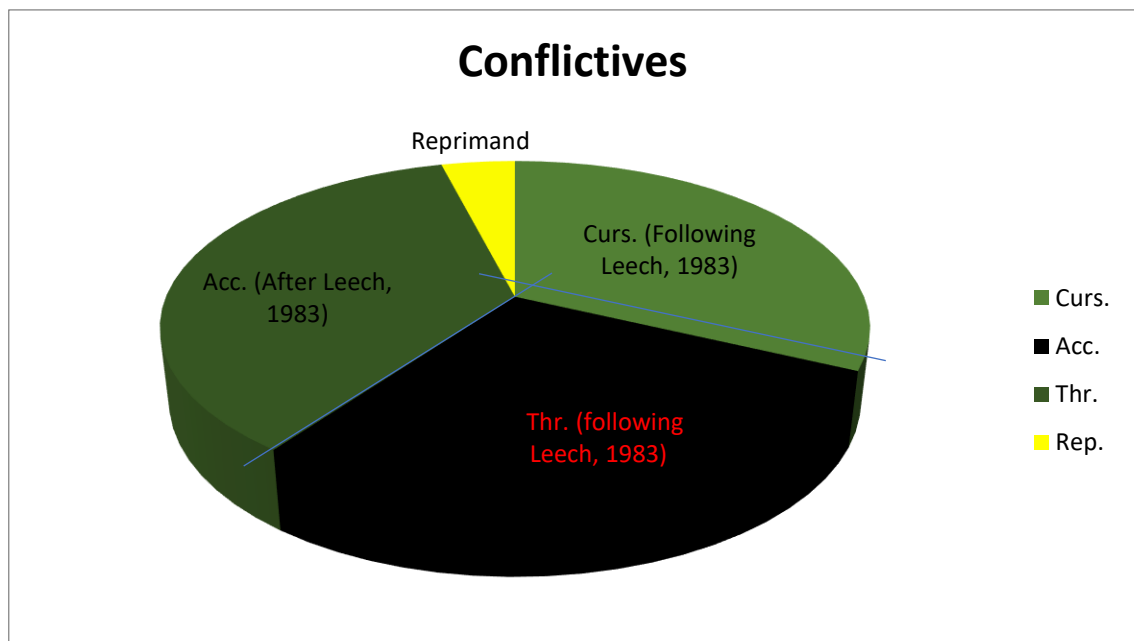


Figure 7. Conflictives Used in the Samples (Adopted from Leech, with the researcher’s observation [3]).

It should be emphasized that the conflictive SAs issued by Biden vary in the number and intensity of offences committed, as Biden claims. Such asymmetry is made evident in Figure (7) above.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The study reveals that conflictive Speech Acts (SAs) are used by speakers to highlight the offenses of the addressee, with Biden preferring threatening and cursing SAs over accusations. Reprimanding SAs are rarely used due to their reformatory nature, and conflictive SAs are often indirect to avoid appearing hostile. These SAs require more justification to challenge and alter the hearer's assumptions. **Implication :** The findings imply that conflictive SAs help speakers influence audience perceptions while maintaining a non-hostile image. The indirect nature and need for justification make these speech acts more persuasive and engaging, subtly altering the audience's beliefs. **Limitation :** The study's focus on Biden limits generalization to other figures or contexts, and it doesn't account for cultural or contextual variations that could affect the use and reception of conflictive SAs. **Future Research :** Future studies could explore conflictive SAs across different political figures and cultures, examining their impact on public opinion and political behavior to provide a broader understanding of their role in political discourse.

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