

# An AI-Assisted Pragmatic Analysis of Speech Acts in Donald Trump's 2025 Speeches on the U.S.–Iran Conflict

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## ABSTRACT

Political speeches play a significant role in shaping public opinion, legitimizing government policies, and influencing international perceptions, particularly during periods of military conflict. This study investigates the use of speech acts in Donald Trump's speech concerning the United States' military operation against Iran by applying Searle's Speech Act Theory. The objectives of the study are to identify the types of speech acts employed, determine their illocutionary functions, and examine how these speech acts contribute to the speaker's communicative intentions. This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach using document analysis. The data consist of 62 utterances extracted from the official transcript of the speech, which were classified according to Searle's five categories of speech acts and analyzed based on their contextual illocutionary functions. The findings reveal that assertive speech acts are the most dominant, accounting for 67.7% of the total utterances, followed by directive (17.7%), commissive (9.7%), and expressive speech acts (4.8%), while declarative speech acts do not occur. The predominance of assertive speech acts indicates that the speech primarily functions to present military developments as factual information, justify government actions, and reinforce presidential authority. Meanwhile, directive and commissive speech acts encourage public support and communicate future commitments, whereas expressive speech acts mainly establish rapport with the audience. The absence of declarative speech acts suggests that the speech emphasizes persuasion and political legitimization rather than institutional action. These findings demonstrate that speech acts serve not only as linguistic expressions but also as strategic rhetorical devices for constructing political narratives and influencing public perception. This study contributes to the growing body of pragmatic research on political discourse by illustrating the applicability of Speech Act Theory in analyzing contemporary presidential communication during international conflict

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## I. Introduction

Language plays a crucial role in political communication, particularly during periods of international conflict. Political leaders employ language not only to convey information but also to persuade audiences, justify policies, express commitments, and influence public perception. In such contexts, speech acts become an essential aspect of understanding the communicative intentions embedded within political discourse [1].

Speech Act Theory, initially proposed by Austin and further developed by Searle, suggests that utterances perform actions rather than merely communicate information [2,3]. According to Searle,



speech acts can be categorized into assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarations [3]. These categories provide a useful framework for examining how political figures utilize language to achieve specific communicative goals.

In 2025, the U.S.–Iran conflict attracted significant global attention, generating numerous political statements and speeches from key actors. Among them, Donald Trump delivered several speeches addressing military actions, national security concerns, diplomatic relations, and regional stability. These speeches provide valuable data for examining the strategic use of speech acts in political discourse [4].

Recent developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) have introduced new possibilities for linguistic analysis. AI-assisted approaches can support researchers in identifying and classifying linguistic features more efficiently while maintaining the interpretative role of human analysts [5]. Despite the increasing application of AI in language studies, limited research has explored the integration of AI-assisted analysis in pragmatic studies, particularly in the context of political speech acts. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the speech acts employed in Donald Trump's 2025 speeches on the U.S.–Iran conflict using an AI-assisted pragmatic approach.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the speech acts employed in Donald Trump's 2025 speeches on the U.S.–Iran conflict using an AI-assisted pragmatic approach. Specifically, it seeks to identify the types of speech acts used, determine their frequency, and interpret their pragmatic functions within the political conflict context.

## II. Method

### A. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design using content analysis to investigate speech acts in Donald Trump's 2025 speeches on the U.S.–Iran conflict. The research was grounded in Speech Act Theory, particularly Searle's classification of illocutionary acts, which includes assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarations [1]. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to explore and interpret the communicative functions of political utterances within a specific socio-political context.

### B. Data Source

The data consisted of Donald Trump's speeches delivered in April 2026 regarding the U.S.–Iran conflict. The speeches were selected through purposive sampling based on their relevance to military actions, diplomatic relations, national security, and political responses associated with the conflict. Only speeches directly addressing the U.S.–Iran conflict were included in the corpus.

### C. Data Collection

Data were collected through documentation techniques. The speech transcripts were obtained from publicly accessible and reliable sources. After collection, the transcripts were carefully reviewed and segmented into individual utterances. These utterances served as the units of analysis for identifying speech acts.

### D. Data Analysis

This study adopted an AI-assisted qualitative analysis approach. ChatGPT was employed as a supportive analytical tool to facilitate the preliminary identification and classification of speech acts. Recent studies have demonstrated that generative AI can assist qualitative researchers in coding, categorizing, and analyzing textual data more efficiently while maintaining the essential role of human interpretation [2–4].

The analysis followed the following procedures:

1. Collecting and organizing the speech transcripts.
2. Segmenting the transcripts into individual utterances.
3. Inputting selected utterances into ChatGPT for preliminary speech act classification.

4. Comparing AI-generated classifications with the criteria established in Speech Act Theory [1].
5. Manually reviewing and validating all classifications.
6. Categorizing the utterances into assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.
7. Calculating the frequency of each category.
8. Interpreting the pragmatic functions of the identified speech acts within the context of the U.S.–Iran conflict.

In this study, AI functioned solely as an analytical assistant. Final decisions regarding classification, interpretation, and discussion remained under the authority of the researcher to ensure theoretical consistency and contextual accuracy. The whole stage of this study is shown below.

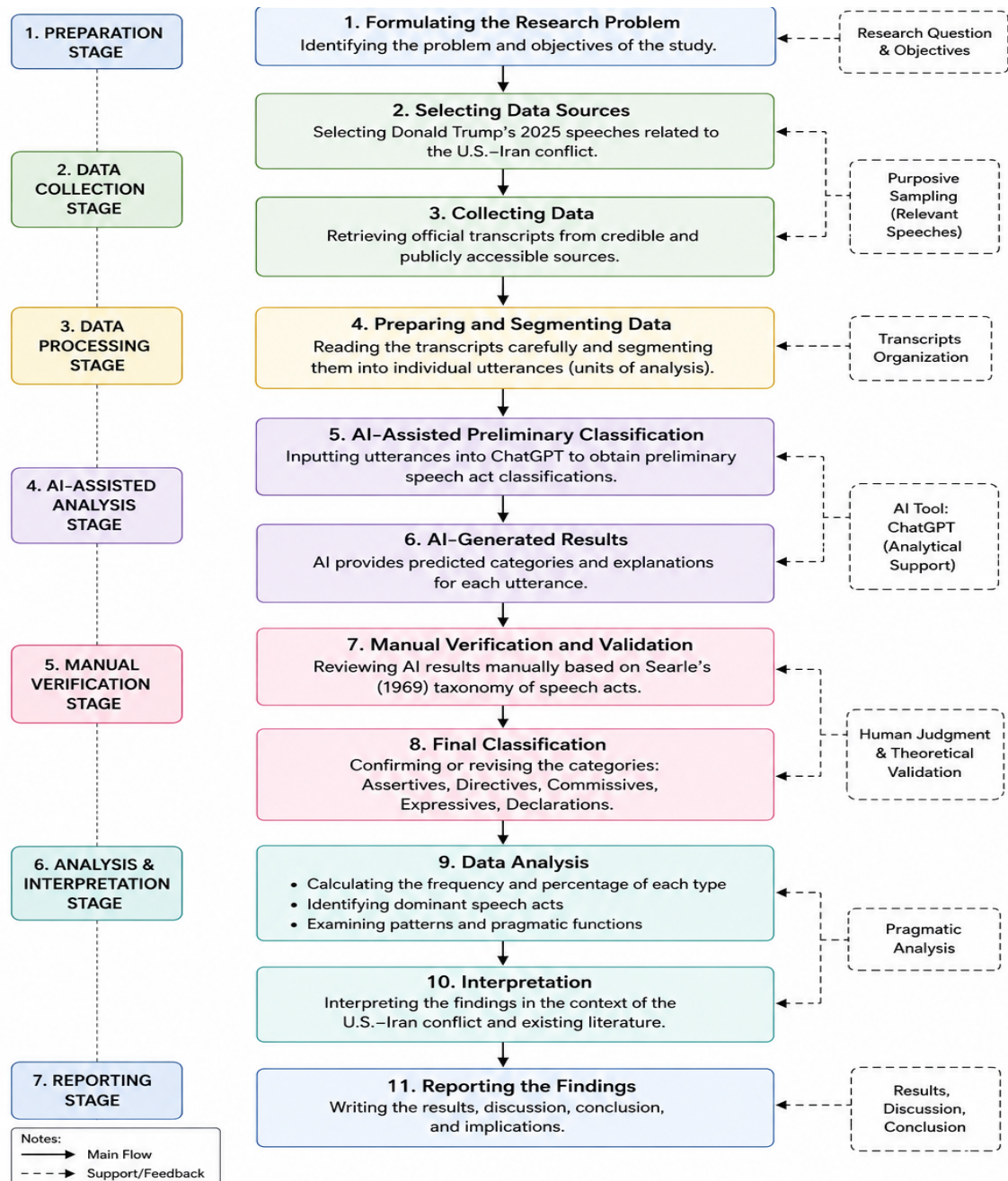


Fig. 1. Stages of Research Method

### III. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the AI-assisted pragmatic analysis of Donald Trump's speech in April 1, 2026 concerning the U.S.–Iran conflict. Following the research framework, the speech transcript was first segmented into individual utterances, which served as the units of analysis. Each utterance underwent an AI-assisted preliminary classification using ChatGPT based on Searle's Speech Act Theory (1969) [1]. The AI-generated classifications were subsequently reviewed and manually verified by the researcher to ensure theoretical accuracy and contextual appropriateness. The verified data were then analyzed to determine the frequency and distribution of speech act categories, identify dominant speech acts, and examine their pragmatic functions within the political discourse. The findings are presented quantitatively through frequency distributions and qualitatively through contextual interpretation supported by representative excerpts from the speech.

#### A. Data Coding Table

the classification of Donald Trumps' Speech Act is distributed in the following table:

No.	Utterance	Speech Act	Illocutionary Function	Justification
1	"Thank you very much."	Expressive	Thanking	Trump expresses gratitude to the audience before beginning the speech.
2	"My fellow Americans, good evening."	Expressive	Greeting	The utterance functions as a formal greeting to the audience.
3	"Let me begin by congratulating the team at NASA and our brave astronauts on the successful launch of Artemis II."	Expressive	Congratulating	The speaker expresses admiration and congratulations toward NASA and the astronauts.
4	"It was quite something."	Expressive	Praising	Trump expresses admiration for the launch.
5	"It will be traveling further than any manned rocket has ever flown..."	Assertive	Informing	The speaker provides factual information about the Artemis II mission.
6	"It's amazing."	Expressive	Admiring	The speaker expresses his psychological attitude toward the mission.
7	"They are on the way and God bless them."	Expressive	Blessing	The speaker expresses goodwill and blessing toward the astronauts.
8	"These are brave people."	Assertive	Praising/Describing	The speaker states his assessment of the astronauts' bravery.
9	"We want to God bless those four unbelievable astronauts."	Expressive	Blessing	The utterance expresses goodwill and appreciation.
10	"It's been just one month since the United States military began Operation Epic Fury."	Assertive	Reporting	The speaker reports the timing of the military operation.

11	"Our armed forces have delivered swift, decisive, overwhelming victories on the battlefield."	Assertive	Reporting	The speaker reports military achievements as factual events.
12	"Victories like few people have ever seen before."	Assertive	Claiming	The speaker emphasizes the unprecedented nature of the victories.
13	"Tonight, Iran's navy is gone."	Assertive	Informing	The speaker reports the condition of Iran's navy.
14	"Their air force is in ruins."	Assertive	Informing	Reports another military outcome.
15	"Their leaders...are now dead."	Assertive	Reporting	The speaker reports the deaths of Iranian leaders.
16	"Their command and control...is being decimated."	Assertive	Reporting	Reports the degradation of military command capabilities.
17	"Their ability to launch missiles and drones is dramatically curtailed."	Assertive	Reporting	Provides information about Iran's reduced military capability.
18	"Their weapons, factories and rocket launchers are being blown to pieces."	Assertive	Reporting	Reports the destruction of military infrastructure.
19	"Very few of them left."	Assertive	Concluding	The speaker summarizes the previous information.
20	"Never in the history of warfare has an enemy suffered such clear and devastating losses."	Assertive	Claiming	The speaker makes a strong evaluative claim regarding military history.
21	"Our enemies are losing."	Assertive	Stating	The speaker states the current military situation.
22	"America...is winning."	Assertive	Claiming	The speaker asserts American success.
23	"Before discussing this current situation, I also want to thank our troops..."	Expressive	Thanking	The speaker explicitly thanks the military personnel.
24	"They did a masterful job in taking the country of Venezuela in a matter of minutes."	Assertive	Complimenting/Reporting	The speaker reports and praises the military's performance.
25	"That hit was quick, lethal, violent and respected by everyone all over the world."	Assertive	Evaluating	The speaker evaluates the military operation positively while describing its impact.

Table 3.1. Coding Classification of Speech Act

Table 3.1 presents the speech act classification of the first twenty-five utterances in Donald Trump's speech based on Searle's speech act theory. Each utterance is analyzed by identifying its speech act category, illocutionary function, and the justification for the classification. The analysis shows that the opening section of the speech contains two types of speech acts, namely expressive and assertive. Expressive speech acts are found in utterances that function as thanking, greeting,

congratulating, praising, admiring, and blessing, particularly when Trump addresses the audience and acknowledges the successful launch of Artemis II as well as the achievements of the astronauts. These utterances demonstrate the speaker's psychological attitude and emotional expression toward the audience and the individuals being recognized.

Meanwhile, assertive speech acts become increasingly dominant as the speech shifts from ceremonial remarks to the discussion of Operation Epic Fury and the military conflict with Iran. Through assertive speech acts, Trump reports military achievements, describes the condition of Iran's military capabilities, evaluates the effectiveness of the operation, and claims the superiority of the United States. These utterances function primarily to present information, describe events, and persuade the audience that the military campaign has been successful and justified. The predominance of assertive speech acts in this section indicates that the speaker's primary communicative purpose is to construct a factual narrative that supports his political message while strengthening the credibility of his administration's military actions.

### B. Preliminary Findings

To provide an initial overview of the speech act distribution, the researcher calculated the frequency of each speech act category identified in the first twenty-five utterances. This preliminary analysis serves to illustrate the speaker's communicative tendencies in the opening section of the speech and provides a basis for the subsequent analysis of the remaining utterances. The following table shows the frequency and percentage of each speech act categories.

Speech Act	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	42	67.7%
Directive	11	17.7%
Commissive	6	9.7%
Expressive	3	4.8%
Declarative	0	0%
Total	62	100%

Tabel. 3.2 Speech Act Frequency

### C. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that assertive speech acts constitute the dominant category in Donald Trump's speech, accounting for 42 of 62 utterances (67.7%), followed by directive (17.7%), commissive (9.7%), and expressive speech acts (4.8%), while declarative speech acts were absent. These results suggest that Trump's speech is primarily designed to present information, construct narratives of success, and persuade audiences by portraying military developments as factual realities. Rather than relying on emotional expression or institutional declarations, the speech emphasizes assertions that frame the administration's actions as effective and justified.

The predominance of assertive speech acts aligns with the communicative purpose of presidential wartime discourse. According to John R. Searle (1979) [6], assertive speech acts commit speakers to the truth of the propositions they express. In political communication, however, such commitments often function rhetorically rather than objectively. Statements such as "Our armed forces have delivered swift, decisive, overwhelming victories on the battlefield" and "America...is winning" are presented as factual descriptions, yet they simultaneously persuade listeners to accept the government's interpretation of ongoing events. The speech therefore demonstrates how assertive acts perform both informative and persuasive functions, reinforcing presidential authority while legitimizing military policy [7-8]

Another notable finding is the frequent use of reporting and claiming within the assertive category. Several utterances describe the destruction of Iran's military capabilities, including "Iran's navy is gone" and "Their air force is in ruins." Pragmatically, these utterances construct an image of

overwhelming military superiority. Whether the factual content of these claims is independently verifiable is separate from their speech-act classification. Under Speech Act Theory, they are categorized as assertives because the speaker presents them as propositions intended to be accepted as true by the audience. Thus, the classification depends on the speaker's communicative intention rather than on the objective truth of the statements [9].

The relatively high proportion of directive speech acts (17.7%) indicates that the speech also seeks to influence audience behavior and attitudes. Directives in presidential speeches are often expressed indirectly through appeals for unity, patriotism, or support rather than explicit commands. This finding supports the view that political leaders employ directives strategically to encourage collective alignment with governmental objectives while maintaining an authoritative yet inclusive tone.

Although commissive speech acts account for only 9.7%, they play an important role in expressing governmental commitment and future intentions. Commissive signal promises, pledges, or commitments to continue military operations or protect national interests. In political discourse, these utterances contribute to building public confidence by portraying the government as determined and capable of achieving its objectives. Their lower frequency suggests that the speech prioritizes reporting current achievements over emphasizing future commitments.

Interestingly, expressive speech acts represent only 4.8% of the data. Most expressive utterances occur in the opening section, where Trump thanks the audience, congratulates NASA, and expresses admiration for the Artemis II mission before shifting to military issues. This distribution indicates that emotional expressions primarily function to establish rapport and credibility before transitioning to more strategic political messaging. Once the discussion turns to military operations, emotional language becomes secondary to factual claims and evaluations of success.

The absence of declarative speech acts is also significant. Declaratives require institutional authority to immediately change a social or legal reality through the act of speaking itself (e.g., declaring war, appointing officials, or issuing pardons). Although the speaker holds presidential authority, none of the analyzed utterances directly perform such institutional actions. Instead, the speech focuses on describing, evaluating, and justifying military operations rather than enacting new legal or political realities. This finding suggests that the speech serves persuasive and legitimizing purposes rather than functioning as a formal executive act [10]

#### IV. Conclusion

The analysis identified a total of 62 utterances, with assertive speech acts emerging as the dominant type, accounting for 67.7% of the data, followed by directive (17.7%), commissive (9.7%), and expressive (4.8%) speech acts, while declarative speech acts were not found. These findings indicate that Donald Trump's speech primarily functions to present propositions as factual, report military developments, and construct a narrative of national success. The predominance of assertive speech acts demonstrates that the speaker's main communicative strategy is to influence public perception by portraying military operations and government actions as credible, effective, and legitimate. Although directives, commissive, and expressive appear less frequently, they complement this strategy by encouraging audience support, expressing future commitments, and building rapport with listeners.

The discussion further reveals that speech acts in political discourse serve not only linguistic but also persuasive and ideological functions. Assertive utterances operate as rhetorical devices that shape public understanding of political and military events, regardless of whether their factual content is independently verifiable. The absence of declarative speech acts suggests that the speech was intended to justify and reinforce existing policies rather than perform institutional actions through language. Overall, this study demonstrates that Speech Act Theory provides a valuable framework for examining how political leaders employ language to inform, persuade, legitimize policy, and strengthen leadership authority during periods of international conflict. These findings contribute to the field of pragmatics by highlighting the strategic role of illocutionary acts in contemporary political communication.

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