

2021

Image Polishing in Trump's Digital Campaign: The Case of Speech Act of Persuasion

Bayan Natsheh

Hebron University, r.journal@hebron.edu

Ahmad Atawneh

Hebron University, ahmada@hebron.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/hujr_b

Recommended Citation

Natsheh, Bayan and Atawneh, Ahmad (2021) "Image Polishing in Trump's Digital Campaign: The Case of Speech Act of Persuasion," *Hebron University Research Journal-B (Humanities)* - (مجلة جامعة الخليل) - ب (العلوم الانسانيه): Vol. 16 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.

Available at: https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/hujr_b/vol16/iss1/10

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Arab Journals Platform. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hebron University Research Journal-B (Humanities) - ب (العلوم الانسانيه) - ب (العلوم الانسانيه) by an authorized editor. The journal is hosted on [Digital Commons](#), an Elsevier platform. For more information, please contact rakan@aarj.edu.jo, marah@aarj.edu.jo, u.murad@aarj.edu.jo.



Image Polishing in Trump's Digital Campaign:

The Case of Speech Act of Persuasion

Bayan Natsheh, Prof. Ahmad Atawneh, Hebron University

ahmada@hebron.edu

Received: 7/3/2020 – Accepted: 10/8/2020

Abstract

Trump is an exceptional politician and so was his 2016 campaign. He did not choose traditional methods of campaigning, but rather he has changed the way campaigns are run. The most prominent feature of his campaign was his constant attempts to polish his image. The current paper analyzed the speech act in his tweets as an attempt to reveal what techniques he used to polish his image and how he took advantage of the features of social media to reach this goal. This goal was accomplished by identifying the illocutionary point of 470 tweets that were selected from the verified account of Donald Trump according to their themes. After that, the way that the different illocutionary acts were used in shaping the mode of image polishing to fulfill the perlocutionary object of persuasion was clarified. Two developed taxonomies were used for analyzing the tweets. The first one was an integration between the taxonomies of Searle's classification of illocutionary acts and Bach and Harnish's taxonomy of communicative and non-communicative illocutionary acts. The second one was a development of Aristotle modes, Cialdini's principles, and Shabo's techniques of persuasion. The results showed that Trump concentrated on using the expressive

and representative acts to gain the trust of the majority of the American people by turning their minds to his merits and Hillary's drawbacks. He used the techniques of card stacking, retweeting anti-opponents tweets, and mudslinging to achieve negative-opponents representation. The techniques of retweeting supportive tweets and showing authority were used to achieve positive-self representation. The contrasting technique was used to achieve both negative-opponents and positive-self representation.

Key words: image polishing, persuasion, retweeting, card stacking, mudslinging, speech act theory, representatives, expressives.

أسلوب تحسين الصورة في حملة ترامب الرقمية: حالة أفعال الخطاب الإقناعية

بيان المنتشة، أ.د. أحمد العطاونه، جامعة الخليل

ahmada@hebron.edu

تاريخ الاستلام: 2020/3/7 - تاريخ القبول: 2020/8/10

المخلص:

يعتبر ترامب سياسياً استثنائياً، وكذلك كانت حملته الانتخابية لعام 2016. حيث لم يختر الطرق التقليدية في حملته الانتخابية، بل قام بتغيير كيفية إدارة هذه الحملات. هذا وكانت أبرز سمات حملته الانتخابية محاولاته المستمرة لتلميع وتحسين صورته. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل فعل الخطاب الإقناعي في تغريدات ترامب كمحاولة للكشف عن التقنيات التي استخدمها لتلميع صورته وكيف استفاد من ميزات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي للوصول إلى مراده. تم الوصول إلى هذا الهدف من خلال انتقاء 470 تغريدة كانت قد نُشرت على الحساب الرسمي لدونالد ترامب عبر تويتر والتي تم اختيارها وفقاً لموضوعاتها. وبعد ذلك تم تحديد التباين في تصنيف أنواع الفعل الخطابي وكيفية استغلال هذا التباين في تشكيل التقنيات الهادفة إلى تلميع صورة ترامب. وقد تم استخدام اثنين من التصنيفات المحدثة في تحليل تلك التغريدات؛ الأول كان عبارة عن مزيج بين تصنيف سيرل للأفعال (ذات الدلالة المعنوية) وبين تصنيف باخ وهارنيس (للأفعال التواصلية وغير التواصلية)، أما التصنيف الثاني المستخدم فقد كان عبارة عن تطوير لكل من أنماط أرسطو ومبادئ تشالديني وتقنيات شابوا في الإقناع. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن ترامب ركز على

استخدام الأفعال التعبيرية والتمثيلية لاكتساب ثقة غالبية الشعب الأمريكي من خلال توجيه أفكارهم نحو مزايه وعيوب منافسته هيلاري كلينتون عن طريق استخدام تقنيات عديدة مثل إعادة تغريد التغريدات المعادية لخصومه. كما واستخدم تقنيات أخرى لإظهار قوته وسلطته.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحسين الصورة، الإقناع، إعادة التغريد، رص البطاقات، التشهير، نظرية أفعال الكلام، الأفعال التمثيلية، الأفعال التعبيرية.

Image Polishing in Trump's Digital Campaign:

The Case of Speech Act of Persuasion

In 2000, Simpsons, the popular American animated show, had an episode titled "Bart to the Future" in which it predicted Trump's presidency. When Trump won the 2016 elections, people considered that the Simpsons' prediction was a prophecy. However, that episode certainly was not a prophecy at all! Al Jean, one of the show's original writers, said that this prediction is very logical because Trump was talking about running for president in 2000 but people forgot that. So, as Al Jean says "it wasn't somebody totally out of the blue. It was a guy who was a punch-line name and had presidential aspirations" (as cited in Salam, 2018). Accordingly, Trump's getting into politics did not take place overnight.

Trump, the man who puts his name on everything from ice and meat to airlines and resorts, had been trying to involve himself in politics for several years. He worked very long to spread his name and make the perfect image of himself as a successful businessman who cares a lot about his country. So, since Trump's attempt to build a good image of himself is deep-rooted in his biography, polishing his image during his campaign of 2016 becomes very much expected. He focused on using different persuasive techniques that appeal to convince the American people of his credibility and character to gain their trust.

Because Trump is always unexpected, even when he used expected persuasion techniques, he used them unexpectedly! During his campaign, Trump used all his

social media accounts to persuade people by taking advantage of the features of social media in totally new and modern ways. Since Twitter is considered as Trump's mouthpiece, many studies tried to analyze the style of his tweets. However, they have tended to focus on superficial features, such as misspellings, insults, and non-standard grammar (Clarke & Grieve, 2019). This paper attempted to dive into a deeper issue and analyze the speech act in Trump's tweets to reveal what techniques he used to polish his image and how he took advantage of the features of social media to reach this goal.

Literature Review

1.1 The Speech Act Theory

What Trump intended to tell in his tweets is far richer than what he directly expressed. The speech act theory is the best choice that can be used to reveal the intended and indirect meanings. So, back to the roots of the speech act theory, we will find that Austin seeded the main gist of this theory and become a cornerstone for his followers. In his acclaimed *How to Do Things with Words*, he presented a doctrine of three acts which are assumed to be involved when someone utters sentences: the locutionary, the illocutionary, and the perlocutionary acts. Austin identified five classes of utterances according to their illocutionary force as: Verdictives, Exercitives, Commissive, Behabitives, Expositives (1962, p.150).

Since *How to Do Things with Words* is a series of lectures, we, as readers, can clearly observe the development of Austin's ideas from the first lecture to the last. We can also detect the changes in his outcomes and how he rebelled against his former conclusions. Nonetheless, this doesn't mean that reading Austin's lectures doesn't leave that kind of satisfaction and admiration for Austin and his ideas. However, his lectures have left controversial bearings on a wide variety of philosophical problems.

One of Austin's most known students, John R. Searle, has worked on refining Austin's conceptions in a great number of works. Back to 1976, Searle developed a reasoned classification of illocutionary acts into certain categories. Due to the overlapping and unclarity of Austin's classification of utterances, Searle attempted to improve on his teacher's taxonomy, which-Austin- himself was not satisfied with. He distinguished one kind of illocutionary act from another based on a number of parameters and criteria. In his paper “A classification of illocutionary acts” (1976), he presented a list of what he regarded as the basic categories of illocutionary acts: the representatives, the directives, the commissives, the expressives, and the Declarations (see Figure 1).

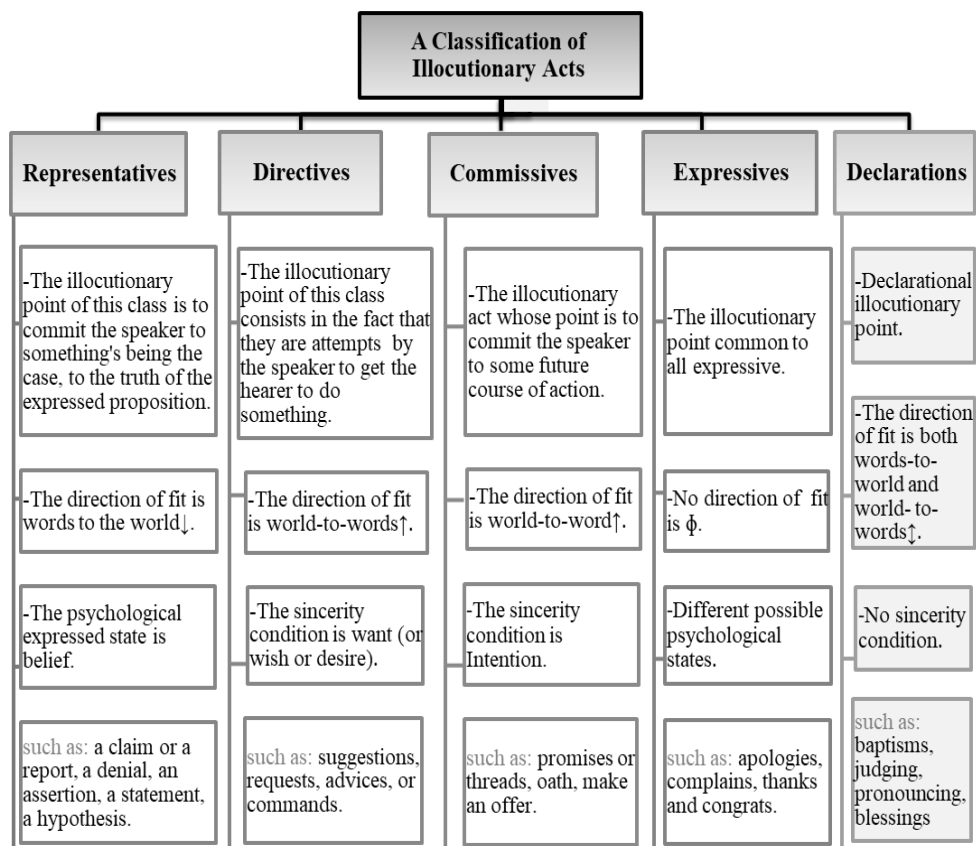


Figure 1: Searle's classification of illocutionary acts

According to Bach and Harnish (1979), after Austin's classification, all the subsequent taxonomies attempted to improve on Austin's; Searle was the only one who tried to reach a general theory of illocutionary acts. In 1979, they published *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts*. In the third chapter of this book, Bach & Harnish presented a taxonomy of the four major categories of the communicative illocutionary acts. The four major categories of Bach and Harnish's taxonomy are in somewhat close to Searle's ones (Acknowledgments= Expressives, Commissives= Commissives, Constatives= Representatives, Directives= Directives). Each one of the categories was subdivided into smaller and very specified classes as shown in Figure 2.

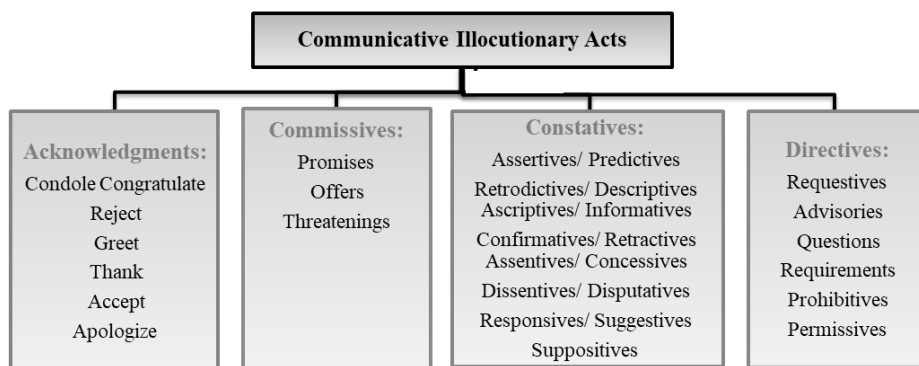


Figure 2: Bach & Harnish's Taxonomy of Communicative Illocutionary Acts

What distinguishes Bach and Harnish's taxonomy is the detailed classification of many types of illocutionary acts. They did not only label the illocutionary acts but specified what distinguishes them. However, their classification has focused only on the sincerity condition. Otherwise, Searle's taxonomy was built around three dimensions: the illocutionary point, the direction of fit, and the sincerity condition. Based on the data of this research, which are closely related to the themes of Trump's campaign promises, the dimension of direction of fit becomes very important. According to Lakoff (2017), persuasion is defined as the nonreciprocal "attempt or intention of one party to change the behavior, feelings,

intentions, or viewpoint of another by communicative means.” In other words, persuasion has the world-to-word direction of fit. Its main goal is to get the world to match the words by doing requests, commands, vows, promises, etc.

After presenting three of the most popular illocutionary act taxonomies, it's important to mention that our utterances have different illocutionary forces that seek to reach specific effects. In other words, when a speaker says something, certain “consequential effects” will often be produced upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the hearers. These effects are called the Perlocutionary Acts. Austin defined the perlocutionary act as the achieving of certain effects by saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, surprising, or misleading. As this paper investigates the speech act in a political discourse that took place in a presidential campaign, conceptually, the perlocutionary object that was intended to be achieved through all this discourse was persuasion.

1.2 Persuasion

Different researchers handled this term from different aspects and views. As this paper deals with persuasion in politics, the definition of persuasion is going to be: a cumulative and planned process in which politicians try to shape, reinforce, or change the autonomous judgments of the public to achieve the desired response from them. However, to come up with this definition, there was a must to dig up the roots of persuasion first.

The Greeks were the first to talk and analyze persuasion in a systematic way (Qutteineh, 2017). Over two millennia ago, the art of rhetoric was popular in Athens. In that period of time, rhetoric and persuasion were two sides of the same coin. Aristotle came out with the result that “rhetoric is not designed to persuade people but to discover scientific principles of persuasion” (Perloff, 2003, p. 22). Besides, he proposed that there are three main modes of artistic means of persuasion (Jamar, 2008). The three modes are: 1) Ethos: it deals with the reliability and credibility of the speaker. 2) Pathos: it deals with the emotional

appeals that evoke the feelings of the public. 3) Logos: it deals with the logical and rational argumentation of a speech.

In order to translate these modes on the ground, we should look for specific and clear principles and techniques. One of the most eminent names who has studied persuasion in this century is Dr. Robert Cialdini. His book, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (2007) discusses six key psychological techniques-or weapons as Cialdini called them- used by salesman, waiters, etc. to influence the hearers to say yes to what they want. The most important three principles for our paper are 1) Social Proof: it's the idea that people will do what other people around them are doing. 2) Liking: the more people like you, the more they likely to agree with you. 3) Authority: people respect authority figures who have an important message, an effective style, a charismatic and powerful character, and tons of money.

Although Cialdini's principles work in with the purpose of the current paper, they are still very general, unlike Shabo's techniques. In 2008, he published a book called *Techniques of Propaganda and Persuasion*. This book explains how political language is utilized to present ideas and manipulate brains. The first chapter of the book features eleven techniques of persuasion. The most important four of them are 1) Card staking: to focus on one aspect of an incident, view, fact, etc. and ignore the others. 2) Glittering generalities: these are colorful, vague, and positive words that are not explained and meant to appeal to the emotions of the audience. 3) Name-calling: the use of negative words, derogatory connotation, and labels in describing a person, group, idea, etc. 4) Testimonials: in politics and advertising, people try to show the written or spoken endorsements about them or about their product that stated by popular people.

After reviewing several political and commercial handouts, articles, and books; modern and old ones, that are related to the persuasion techniques, it turned out that they all of them end up in the sea of Aristotle's modes of persuasion. Since the image polishing is the main theme of this paper, we will find that some of Cialdini's principles are the smaller branches of Aristotle's Ethos modes of persuasion. The authority and liking principles fall under the ethos mode; to gain

the trust of your audience, you should be a powerful, knowledgeable and charismatic person. Also, Cialdini's principles can be reached by using the techniques of persuasion of Shabo's and others. For example, Cialdini's liking principle depends on how to make people like you as a candidate. One way to make them like you is by using Shabo's technique of plain folks.

1.4 Donald Trump's Campaign

To apply the previous techniques and more, Trump used social media platforms as a tool of persuasion. Mainly, he used Twitter which has millions of members who communicate in short messages called tweets (Golbeck, Rogers, & grimes, 2010). Twitter has played an enormous role in the 2016 USA presidential elections. Although all of the numerous election forecasts failed to predict Trump's victory (Stoetzer, Gerlich, & Koesters, 2017), he received 304 electoral votes compared to 227 for Clinton (State Elections Offices, 2017).

Although Trump tweeted against blacks, Muslims, Mexicans, and insulted politicians, he was a newsmaker which gave him more fame and spread. By this, it becomes clear that the media contributed to the buildup of Trump's political persona (Mazzoleni, 2016). Through his tweets, Donald Trump made seventeen promises during his long campaign to become the president of the United States (BBC News, 2018). The following are the main five promises that distinguished his campaign: 1) Prosecuting Hillary Clinton. 2) repealing and replacing Obamacare. 3) Building a wall on the U.S.–Mexico border. 4) Banning all Muslims from entering the US on Muslims and Bombing the Islamic State(IS). 5) Suspending immigration from terror-prone places.

Methodology

This study has utilized the descriptive analysis. The speech act of persuasion is going to be explored to reveal what techniques Trump used to reach the goal of polishing his image during his campaign and how these persuasive techniques were used to reach this goal. The following paragraphs present the methods implemented to collect and analyze the data in detail.

2.1 Data Collection

For the purpose of this paper, Twitter was chosen to be the source of data for the following reasons: 1) based on active users, Twitter ranks as one of the leading social media sites in the world. 2) Twitter is considered as a powerful marketing tool. 3) Twitter is known for its 140-character limit messages. The small size of these tweets has made the process of coding, analyzing, and classifying the tweets a smoother and more precise process. 4) the frequent and unfiltered tweets of Trump has established a reliable, rich, and varied source of information. Based on the previous points, the current paper analyzed 470 tweets that were tweeted during his presidential campaign. These tweets were selected according to their themes from the verified account of President Trump.

2.2 Data Analysis

The current paper has used the mixed-method in data collection and analysis. The collected qualitative data was coded based on thematic categorization. This kind of coding has been chosen due to the clear relationship between Trump's tweets and the themes of his main five campaign promises that aimed at influencing and persuading the audience. The tweets that talked about Hillary Clinton were classified under the promise of persecuting Hillary.

After collecting and coding the data, the following steps were followed: a) tabulating the tweets, b) reading the tweets and some of their comments several times, c) identifying the speech act of persuasion if found, d) classifying the illocutionary points whether they are representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, or declarations, e) deciding what tweets used image polishing as a persuasive mode, f) determining to which techniques these illocutionary acts depend, g) explaining the results.

The classification of the illocutionary acts is an integration between two taxonomies: Searle's (1969) classification of illocutionary acts and Bach and

Harnish's (1982) taxonomy of communicative and non-communicative illocutionary acts (as shown in Appendix A). Bach and Harnish divided the illocutionary acts into two general categories; communicative and non-communicative. They considered effectives and verdictives as non-communicatives. The other four main kinds of communicative illocutionary acts were categorized as constatives, directives, commissives, and acknowledgments. For the analysis of the current study, the researchers suppose that there is no need to separate the six kinds into two general categories. To have a taxonomy that serves the research data, the researchers have integrated Searle's and Bach and Harnish's taxonomies. The expressive acts of challenging, criticizing (it is considered as a representative and expressive), boasting, mocking, and complaining categories were added to the expressive act due to their importance.

However, the former taxonomies are considered as classics and the current study deals with social media discourse, which is a modern type of discourse that has different characteristics than those found in the traditional written or spoken discourse. Based on that, the researchers have developed the integrated taxonomy in a way that fits the characteristics of modern discourse. The following four points have been added: a) capitalizing letters indicates asserting, b) retweeting indicates reporting, c) mentioning indicates recommending, d) hashtagging indicates requesting (see Appendix A).

After classifying the illocutionary acts, defining which of the image polishing techniques were used throughout these illocutionary acts becomes the next and final step. The perlocutionary effect that Trump intended to achieve is to persuade the public by polishing his image. Based on that, the researchers have chosen to define the techniques of persuasion to be the link between the illocutionary acts and their perlocutionary effect. To do so, there was a need to find a clear taxonomy to build on, but, there was no such thing.

Thereby, since Aristotle's modes of persuasion have proven that they can adapt to any context at any time, the new taxonomy of this research was built based on

the Ethos mode. According to Aristotle, a speaker's ethos is a rhetorical strategy employed by the speaker whose purpose is to gain the trust of the audience. Being credible means that you have the ability to inspire trust in your audience and make them listen and believe in your words (Griffin, 2006). This trust is achieved through the speaker's "good sense, good moral character, and goodwill." (as cited Olbricht & Eriksson, 2005). In other words, useful skills, wisdom, virtue, and goodwill towards the audience are basic to convince the people that the speaker is a credible source and is worth listening to.

The original name of this mode (Ethos) has been replaced by a new name with more specific features that fits the purpose of the paper (Image Polishing). As mentioned, Ethos means refining the image of the speaker and make it shine by invoking the superior of his characteristics. However, in this paper, we look for something wider. Sometimes it is very hard to create a shiny image if the speaker has deep-rooted flaws and well-known scandals. Thus, there becomes a need to manipulate the rules by highlighting the drawbacks of the opponents to obscure the speaker's flaws. This kind of manipulation is usually used in situations that offer two bad alternatives and the audience should choose the less bad choice, or what is known as the principle of the lesser of two evils.

In the elections of 2016, voters said this is "the ultimate 'lesser of two evils' election." Some people said that they were forced to vote for the less unpleasant of two choices that neither of which is good (Long, 2016). Thus, the concept of "image polishing" is not limited to the idea of refining the image of the candidates, but rather distorting the image of their opponents. Based on this, as shown in Appendix B, some of Cialdini's, Shabo's, and others' techniques and principles of persuasion were selected to be the subcategories that help the image polishing mode to be achieved.

Results and Discussion

In order to reach the USA presidential chair, the trip is long and tiring. Persuading the people of a multicultural country like the USA is very complex.

The election campaigns need high levels of experience and full-fledged plans. Therefore, Trump exploited a variety of persuasion modes and techniques to get his people from where they were to where he wanted them to be. The mode of image polishing was at the heart of 50.4% of his 470 tweets. Trump used the mode of image polishing considerably in the tweets that talked about Hillary Clinton. 334 tweets talked about Hillary, 63% of them used image polishing as a basic mode to persuade the American people.

Table 1***The illocutionary acts in the tweets that used image polishing mode***

Promise	Illocutionary act	Commissives	Directives	Representatives	Expressives	Sum
Building a wall, and making Mexico pay for it		10.86%	10.86%	%50	%28.26	100%
Ban on Muslims and Isis bombing		21.42%	10.71%	25%	42.857%	100%
Suspending immigration from terror-prone places		8.823%	0.00%	50%	41.176%	100%
Prosecuting Hilary Clinton		6.88%	6.07%	50%	37.044%	100%
Repealing Obamacare		25%	17.85%	32.14%	25%	100%
Average		8.73%	6.825%	48.09%	34.12%	100%

As shown in Table 1, 48% of the tweets that tried to polish Trump's image were representatives, 34% of them were expressives, and the rest 18% were commissives and directives. Although politicians and candidates often like to show lots of promises for change, bringing happiness, pride, and economic and physical security to gain their audience's trust, Trump did not. He used the commissive act of promising significantly to the purpose of polishing his image in the tweets that talked about his intention to protect the American people from ISIS and the Islamic terrorism. He did so to appear as the superhero and protector.

Trump used this mode in a totally new way by using six modern techniques. These techniques are card stacking, retweeting anti-opponents tweets, mudslinging, retweeting supportive tweets, showing authority, and contrasting to achieve two things. On the one hand, he used the first three techniques to achieve **negative-opponents representation**. On the other hand, the techniques of retweeting supportive tweets and showing authority were used to achieve **positive-self representation**. The contrasting technique was used to achieve both negative-opponents and positive-self representation. The distribution of the commissive, directive, representative, and expressive acts will be clarified by illustrating how they were used in shaping the six techniques of the image polishing mode.

3.1 Mudslinging

Although mudslinging has been a part of the American presidential elections for more than 200 years, Allan Lichtman, a political historian who teaches at the American University in Washington, described the American presidential elections of 2016 as “the dirtiest race we've seen in modern American history” (as cited in Schreck, 2016). Mutual insults between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump reached an unprecedented level of political mudslinging. Trump used to blitz Clinton with a nearly daily series of offensive tweets. From her side, Clinton had not hesitated to respond to Trump's attacks. She used to describe him as a person with a long history of racial discrimination and conspiracy theories who absolutely unfit to run presidency. However, how could mudslinging be a technique of persuasion?

Trump used the political mudslinging to spread negative information about the opponents to worsen their image. Spreading such negative information appeared to be a warning to the public against the real dangers of the described, but the fact was to smash the image of Trump's opponents regardless of the credibility of the information. 63% of the image polishing mode appeared in the tweets that talked about Hillary, 37% of them contained mudslinging phrases. Trump pulled

no punches whenever he talked about her. He used the mudslinging technique about 154 times to represent his image nicely by crushing hers.

To apply the political mudslinging technique, Trump used the representative act of describing act to present all his negative observations about Obamacare, Obama, ISIS, Mexican illegal immigrants, the system, and everyone and everything he doesn't like. He used to describe ObamaCare as a "dummy disaster" and the system as "rigged." However, his big focus was on his opponent Hillary. Trump's descriptive mudslinging against the former first lady took two forms:

- 1) **Name-calling:** Trump loved to use negative nicknames and insults to brand and taunt Hillary. These insults and nicknames were not random. They were used to rub salt into the wound and inflate the negative characteristics of his opponent. Throughout the campaign, he referred to Hillary Clinton as "Crooked Hillary" 176 times in reference to her use of the private email server. Sometimes Trump switched the description up and called her "weak", "Liar", "Lyin'", "Not fit!", "unfit to run/to serve/to lead", "incompetent", "dishonest", "dangerous", "Wall Street PUPPET!", and "rattled Hillary." In one of his tweets, he described her as a "PATHOLOGICAL LIAR!" and he added "Watch that nose grow!" Referring to Pinocchio the fictional character who is notably characterized for his frequent tendency to lie, which causes his nose to grow. It does not matter if she was really crooked or liar, what matters is that these nicknames stuck well in the minds of the voters.
- 2) **Negative campaigning:** Trump used the expressive act beside the descriptive one to criticize, mock and describe Hillary's flaws and problems. He did not leave a chance to slap Hillary and express his apprehension of what will happen to the country if she became the president of the USA. He also took every opportunity to present the former first lady in a bad and deceitful image. For example, in Jun 16, 2015, Vocativ, which is an American media and technology company,

published that “Hillary Clinton Dominates the Pack ... In Fake Twitter Followers.” After six days, Trump quoted the same title in one of his tweets with the link of the online article. Trump did not write any comment on that tweet. He just retweeted the title to ensure wider spread of the scandal.

3.2 Card Stacking

Trump used to highlight Hillary’s political and personal problems, rumors, and scandals shrewdly. Moreover, he used her weapons and promises against her by turning the facts upside-down to plant seeds of doubt about her. He used to turn what is in her favor to become against her by focusing on one aspect of the fact and ignoring the other or taking the information out of its context. This clever technique was used in 26% of the tweets which proves that Trump had never tweeted randomly. The card stacking technique is like magic games, it needs smart planning, intensive preparation, and lightness of performance.

To play the game of card stacking well, Trump used the representative act of confirming in particular. He used to manipulate and present the information based on his personal judgment with no clue or clear evidence in a way that serves his purposes. A good example on this is Trump's persistent attempts to ruin the relations between Hillary and the American people by addressing her support for Muslims in a distorted image.

Clinton was a Democratic Party nominee, which means that she represented the ideology of her party. The Democratic Party is the party that embraces labor unions and religious and ethnic minorities. Thus, in The Second Presidential Debate with Trump, Hillary opposed Trump’s “demagogic” accusations against Muslims. She responded that her “vision of America is an America where everyone has a place” (NBC News, 2016). Her response presented the core of the Democratic Party ideology. She supported the minor religious group of Muslims which reflected positively on her. Trump did not like that! He started to play his dirty game of card stacking. He tweeted that “despite the horrible attack in

Brussels”, Hillary wants to open-and let the Muslims flow in America. Thus, Trump brought Hillary's support for Muslims from the context of supporting minorities into the context of supporting terrorism. In doing so, he used her weapon of “Stronger Together” against her depending on his own personal evaluation.

Furthermore, he did get enough from involving Hillary's name in the terrorism context, but he also tried to irritate the women's rights movements against her. In many of his tweets, he accused Hillary with the charge of taking money and doing favors for regimes (referring to Islamic countries) that “enslave women” and “horribly oppresses” them. By doing so, he did not only hurt Hillary's image but also emphasized his “great respect for women.”

At last, as a final example, when Trump saw that only 15 percent of Muslims (In New York, nearly 400,000 Muslims and in Michigan, nearly another 120,000 Muslims (Abdelaziz, 2019)) wanted him to win over Hillary (Green, 2017), he tweeted that Hillary Clinton's Top Hollywood Donor Haim Saban “demands racial profiling of Muslims.” Through this tweet, Trump tried to shake the confidence of Muslims in her by fishing in troubled waters and confirming that Hillary may sell even her own values for money.

3.3 Showing authority

People trust powerful, charismatic, confident, and successful leaders. As humans, we automatically tend to respect and obey people with a successful resume and superior knowledge (Eisenhauer, 2018). Robert Cialdini discusses how human beings have a natural tendency to obey without question when authority factors are presented. He refers to the concept of “blind obedience” and the fact that “we are trained from birth to believe that obedience to proper authority is right and disobedience is wrong” (p. 180). Moreover, we believe what the people whom we believe that they know more than us without question. However, the question is: what authority factors did Trump use in the campaign?

During his campaign, Trump worked to prove that he is a man of authority. He used to deal with people as a president even before he ran for the presidency. Trump worked hard on using the descriptive, expressive, and commisive acts to present himself as:

- 1) A self-funding candidate: in September 2015 Trump tweeted: “By self-funding my campaign, I am not controlled by my donors, special interests or lobbyists. I am only working for the people of the U.S!” Unlike most political candidates, Trump used \$66.1 million of his personal fortune to fuel the 2016 presidential campaign (Levinthal, 2018). Because he is “really rich”, he ensured that he would not use the lobbyists nor the donors’ money. People may think that political candidates are the only ones who benefit from the contributions of donors; however, the donors are the greatest beneficiaries of these contributions. The big contributions lead the politicians to become more worried about the general concerns of their rich donors. In other words, the rich donors, indirectly, control politics and politicians. So, it becomes a corollary that the self-funding candidates are free self-representing who do not face any kind of control or restrictions. Trump wanted to convey this idea to present himself as a free-willed, rich, and powerful person who doesn’t need others’ money.
- 2) A caring leader: Trump always tried to appear as a caring and tough person who keeps his eyes on the needs of the Americans. He immersed them with tweets that used the commisive act of promising, such as: “I am fighting for you!”, “#Imwithyou”, “I will protect America”, “I will never let you down!”, “I will rebuild the military”, “take care of vets and make the world respect the US again!”, “I am going to keep our jobs in the U.S,” Trump promised the voters to feel hopeful that he would restore the American pride and protect them from the evil of the illegal immigrants and the threats of Muslims.

- 3) A man of vision: great leaders have a vision. Trump always considered himself a visionary leader who has a clear idea of where he is going and has the skill of expecting the future by analyzing the incidents logically and wisely. During the campaign, he used the expressive act of boasting every time his expectations got true by saying "I told you so!" to prove that he has a vision and to gain the trust of the people.
- 4) A Confident competitor: "I like thinking big. I always have. To me it's very simple: if you're going to be thinking anyway, you might as well think big. Most people think small, because most people are afraid of success, afraid of making decisions, afraid of winning. And that gives people like me a great advantage." quoted from Trump's book *The Art of Deal* (1987, p. 32). Despite all the negative criticism of Trump's personality, the fact that he is so confident is a reality that we cannot deny. He has always had that kind of unshakeable faith in himself. High self-confidence is one of the characteristics of the charismatic personality and a main factor of authority. Although most predictions confirmed her victory and his loss, Trump had the confidence to challenge Hillary all of the time. In 26 tweets, he used the commissive act of promising in addition to the expressive act of challenging to show his ability to defeat and beat her by saying "I will beat Hillary!"

3.4 Contrasting

In general, when people experience similar things in position, they evaluate the lesser or greater value of the second by comparing it with the first. Thus, the contrast leads to evaluate the second thing depending on how we viewed the first. In presidential campaigns, when the voters make judgments, they evaluate a candidate in comparison with other candidates. When they say this candidate is powerful or smart, they actually mean he/she is more powerful or smarter than the other candidates. Trump used to hand the American voters these contrasts on silver platters so there becomes no need for them to make any evaluations or contrasts (for sure, all the contrasts were in his favor).

As mentioned before, the contrasting technique has a dual-function. By using this technique, Trump killed two birds with one stone, he presented his good qualities and contrasted them with his opponents' to polish his image and deform theirs' at the same time. Trump used this technique about 40 times by using assertive, confirmative, and informative representatives to create attention on the negative sides of Hillary and the positive sides of himself. He selectively amplified those sides that would support his position and downplayed those which would not.

Trump enjoyed making contrasts between the big numbers of his supporters in New Hampshire, West Virginia, and Nebraska and Hillary's small numbers as a kind of showing himself as the populist candidate. He made this kind of contrast to influence the people to do what the others do and belong to the majority who support him (The bandwagon technique). Moreover, in several tweets, Trump attacked Hillary because, as he claimed, she is a person who doesn't want to make any changes unlike him. He built his contrast on one of the most important values that the American people live by. He made use of this point in his favor against Hillary; especially that he knows well that the Americans see that change is strongly linked to development, improvement, progress, and growth. By making such contrasts, he tried to influence the voters' perceptions of Hillary and him and therefore affect their judgment and evaluation.

3.5 Retweeting Supportive and Anti-opponents Tweets

Retweeting supportive and anti-opponents tweets in Trump's campaign has been a revolutionary technique in political marketing and a totally new representation of a representative act. On the one hand, one of Shabo's Techniques of Persuasion is presenting the customers or celebrities' testimonials of a certain product. This technique is also used in politics where the politicians show the written or spoken endorsements about them. To fit with the new ways of political marketing, Trump improved this technique to take the new shape of Retweeting. Trump's retweets were not only endorsements but a mixture of supportive and anti-Hillary's retweets. On the other hand, as mentioned in the answer to the first

question, the retweeting technique has become the modern presentation of the retrodictive and the assentive acts.

Retweeting other's tweets was an essential part of building up Trump's image and destroying Hillary's. Trump retweeted many tweets that endorsed and supported him to build and boost voters' trust by representing the endorsements from a third-party. People feel more comfortable voting for a candidate if they know that other people support him. Online reviews and personal recommendations add authenticity to the candidate and make people more willing to vote for him. Trump retweeted the endorsements of American actors (such as James Woods), political figures (such as Ted Cruz), social bloggers (such as Diamond and Silk), and even ordinary people to make use of Cialdini's Social Proof principle of persuasion (The tendency of people to align their beliefs and behaviors with those of a group).

According to Persily, from August 2015 to the election day, the number of Trump's followers raised to reach thirteen-million followers. Moreover, during that time, more than a billion tweets related to the presidential elections appeared on Twitter. Trump's tweets were retweeted three times more than Hillary Clinton's (2017). Retweeting Trump's tweets gave his words the power of viral widespread, through which he achieved free political marketing. His skill in arousing twitter storms was one of his assets as a candidate and a media darling.

Since Trump is the man of change and development as he claims, he couldn't get enough from the traditional way of presenting the endorsements about him. He retweeted 31 tweets that talked about Hillary in a negative way. The function of these retweets was to shake people's confidence and make them less sure about Hillary. He represented the view of a third party to be a witness on Hillary's slips and flaws. The following table presents some examples of retweeted endorsements and anti-Hillary retweets:

Table

Examples of Trump's retweets

Type of the retweet	Example
Supportive retweets	"@SandraOpines: @realDonaldTrump I LOVE watching Donald Trump in action. Free education. Just watch and learn. LOVE IT. #TrumpTrain" Nice.
	"@BornToBeGOP: @realDonaldTrump you are always many steps ahead of the game!" Thank you.
Anti-Hillary's retweets	"Hillary Clinton Dominates the Pack in Fake Twitter Followers"
	"@jp_sitles: @ RealDonaldTrump HillaryClinton: She Compared To Republicans Terrorist But Not Call is on Terrorists, Terrorists. # OhMe "
Supportive and anti-Hillary's tweets	"@dceaminer: Rasmussen: @realDonaldTrump now beats @HillaryClinton 38%-36% nationally
	"@Tony_Leers: Hillary Clinton is a deceitful career politician, Donald Trump is a no-nonsense billionaire businesses man...pick one.."

Conclusion

After analyzing the tweets, the final results reflect that Trump was smart enough to gain the trust of the majority of the American people by turning their minds to his merits and Hillary's drawbacks. He did so by using different techniques, most importantly: mudslinging, card stacking, retweeting, and using glittering generalities. To apply these techniques, he used a variety of illocutionary acts. Trump used the directive, representative, expressive, and commissive acts. He did

not adopt the traditional method of marketing and focused on the commissives.

However, he focused more on the expressive and representative acts.

Despite that his victory was widely described as a "stunning upset"(Tumulty, Rucker, & Gearan, 2016), the fact that the majority of the American people voted for him is still an undeniable fact. By linking things together, we conclude that the people who voted for Trump can be divided into two groups. The first group represents the Americans who are like Trump and like Trump. The Americans who voted for Trump reflected that they share Trump with the same values and dreams. They hate Muslims, want to build a wall, live the hope of the American dream, and think they are the elite of society. The second group represents the Americans who voted for Trump because he is the lesser of the two evils. Millions of Americans faced a hard choice between Hillary and Trump who were considered as unappealing candidates. Thereby, Americans voted for Trump believing that the alternative was worse (Fiorina, 2017). In either case, Trump is the winner! On the one hand, he persuaded the first group that he is the person who represents the typical values of white Americans. On the other hand, he persuaded the second group that Clinton's resume is full of dirty scandals to avoid choosing her and choosing him instead.

Finally, it's worthy to mention that social media platforms are considered as the main source of knowledge for many people. Therefore, it is recommended to study and analyze the different types of discourse that are presented on social media platforms. Studying the social media discourse can raise awareness among these people, especially with the raised spreading of rumors and false information on these platforms. In addition, it would be recommended to study the characteristics of social media discourse since it has different characteristics than those found in the traditional written or spoken discourse. In other words, social media discourse should be recognized as a new genre with specific features.

References

- Abdelaziz, R. (2019, April 16). Muslim Voters Won't Forget Which Democrats Had Ilhan Omar's Back. Retrieved from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/muslim-voters-wont-forget-which-democrats-had-ilhan-omars-back_n_5cb5fd9ee4b082aab08d21c5
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words: The William James lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Bach, K., & Harnish, R. M. (1979). *Linguistic communication and speech acts*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The MIT Press.
- BBC News. (2018, December24). Trump's campaign promises - has he delivered on them? Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37982000>
- Cialdini, R.B. (2007). *Influence: The psychology of persuasion*. New York: Collins.
- Clarke, I., & Grieve, J. (2019). Stylistic variation on the Donald Trump Twitter account: A linguistic analysis of tweets posted between 2009 and 2018. *Plos One*, 14(9). doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0222062
- Eisenhauer, T. (2018, September 4). How to Use the Persuasion Principle of "Authority" at Work [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://axerosolutions.com/blogs/timeisenhauer/pulse/837/how-to-use-the-persuasion-principle-of-authority-at-work>
- Fiorina, M. P. (2017). *The 2016 Presidential Election—An Abundance of Controversies*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University.
doi:https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/fiorina_webr_eadypdfupdatedpdf.

Golbeck, J., Rogers, A., & Grimes, J. (2010). Twitter use by the U.S. Congress. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 61(8), 1517-1731

Green, E. (2017, March 21). American Muslims Are Young, Politically Liberal, and Scared. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/03/american-muslims-demographics/520239/>

Griffin, C. L. (2006). *Invitation to public speaking* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Lakoff, R. T., & Sutton, L. A. (2017). *Context counts: papers on language, gender, and power*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press

Long, H. (2016, October 13). Voters say this is the ultimate 'lesser of two evils' election. Retrieved July 08, 2020, from <https://money.cnn.com/2016/09/25/news/economy/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-lesser-of-two-evils/index.html>

Mazzoleni, G. (2016). Did the media create Trump?. Lilleker, D. G., Jackson, D., Thorsen, E., & Veneti, A. (2016). *US election analysis 2016: Media, voters and the campaign: Early reflection from leading academics*. Retrieved from [http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/24976/1/US Election Analysis 2016 - Lilleker Thorsen Jackson and Veneti v1.pdf](http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/24976/1/US_Election_Analysis_2016_-_Lilleker_Thorsen_Jackson_and_Veneti_v1.pdf)

NBC News(2016, October 19). "Hillary Clinton: We've Had Muslims in America Since George Washington" online video clip. YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyhQgHkvROE>

Olbricht, T. H., & Eriksson, A. (2005). *Rhetoric, ethic, and moral persuasion in biblical discourse: Essays from the 2002 Heidelberg conference*. New York: T & T Clark International.

Parsons, G. (2015, July 10). Donald Trump's racist comments land him in hot water on Twitter. Retrieved from <https://www.visibrain.com/en/blog/donald-trump-presidential-campaign-twitter-analysis/>

Perloff, R. (2003). *The dynamics of persuasion communication and attitudes in the 21st century (2nd ed.)*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Persily, N. (2017). Can Democracy Survive the Internet? *Journal of Democracy*, 28, 63-76. Retrieved from https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/07_28.2_Persily-web.pdf.

Qutteineh, M. (2017). *The Language of Persuasion and Power in ISIS Political Discourse* (master's thesis). College of Graduate Studies, Hebron University, Palestine.

Salam, M. (2018, February 02). 'The Simpsons' Has Predicted a Lot. Most of It Can Be Explained. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/02/arts/television/simpsons-prediction-future.html>

Schreck, C. (2016, October 29). In U.S. Election, A 'Dirty' Campaign Of Historic Proportions. Retrieved from <https://www.rferl.org/a/us-presidential-election-clinton-trump-dirty-campaign/28082392.html>

Searle, J. R. (1976). A classification of illocutionary acts. *Language in Society*,5(01), 1-23. doi:10.1017/s0047404500006837

State Elections Offices. (2017). *OFFICIAL 2016 PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS* (pp. 1-10) (USA, State Certificates of Vote, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration). Retrieved from <https://transition.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2016/2016presgeresults.pdf>

Stoetzer, M., Gerlich, S., & Koesters, J. (2017, January). Trump's first triumph: The US republican primaries 2016 - An analysis of socio-demographic, time-related and regional influences, by Stoetzer, Matthias-Wolfgang; Gerlich, Steffen; Koesters, Jochen. Retrieved from <https://ideas.repec.org/p/zbw/fhjbwf/20172.html>

Trump, D. (1987). *The Art Of The Deal*. New York: Random House. Retrieved from <http://www.propmgmtforms.com/forms/ebooks/trump-the-art-of-the-deal.pdf>

Tumulty, K., Rucker, P., & Gearan, A. (2016, November 09). Donald Trump wins the presidency in stunning upset over Clinton. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/election-day-an-acrimonious-race-reaches-its-end-point/2016/11/08/32b96c72-a557-11e6-ba59-a7d93165c6d4_story.html

Appendix A

Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts

Illocutionary acts	Description	Specific verbs	
Commissives	statements that commit to a course of action.	Promises	Promise, swear, vow guarantee, contract surrender
		Offers	offer, propose, volunteer, bid
		Threatening	threaten, menace, intimidate, impend,

Directives	Statements that call upon the listener to do something.	Requestives	Insist, ask, urge, hashtag , Invite, tell, Beg, beseech, implore, petition, plead, pray, request, solicit, summon, supplicate
		Advisories	urge, warn caution admonish, Advise, propose recommend suggest, counsel mention
		Questions	ask, inquire, interrogate, query, question
		Requirements	Charge, command, demand, direct, dictate, enjoin, instruct order, prescribe, require
		Prohibitives	enjoin, forbid, prohibit, proscribe, restrict)
		Permissives	agree to, allow, authorize, bless, consent to, dismiss, excuse, exempt, forgive, grant, license, pardon, release, sanction
Representatives	Statements that can be verified as true or false.	Assertives	affirm, allege, assert, aver, avow, deny, claim, capitalization , indicate, maintain, say, state, submit, propound
		Predictives	forecast, predict, prophesy
		Retrodictives	recount, report

		Descriptives	appraise, assess, call, categorize, characterize, classify, date, describe, diagnose, evaluate, grade, identify, portray, rank
		Informatives	advise, apprise, disclose, inform, notify, point out, reveal, tell, testify
		Confirmatives	Assess, bear witness, certify confirm corroborate judge substantiate testify, validate verify
			conclude diagnose, find appraise
Expressives	Statements that express the speaker’s reactions and feelings about themselves or the world.	challenging, bidding ,disapproving, mocking, deploring, boasting, complaining, criticizing: is combination between a representative act an expressive act.and greetings, farewells, Phatic act/expression: polite formulas, Statements that condoles, apologizes. etc. that commit to establish a rapport and a sense of solidarity between the interlocutors.	

Appendix B

Modes and techniques of persuasion

Mode of persuasion	Persuasive Techniques	How Technique Is Used	Intended Effect on voters
Image polishing	Card Stacking	This technique seeks to emphasizing one side of the story and repressing another.	-The technique is commonly used to discredit opponents and to make themselves seem more worthy.
	Retweeting supportive and anti-opponents tweets	Candidates retweet a popular celebrity, politician, writer, magazine...etc., endorsing them or attacking their opponents.	-Audience transfer their respect for the celebrity, politician, writer, magazine...etc. to the candidate.
	Mudslinging	Negative campaigning that directly or indirectly accuses other candidates of bad things.	-Negative messages are able to capture the audience attention.
	Contrasting	This is a comparison of two things.	-By showing the different viewpoints, the candidate is showing that he/she is fair honest and trustworthy.

	Showing Authority	This is the idea that people follow the lead of credible, knowledgeable experts that has confidence and power.	- People in positions of authority are people that others tend to respect and obey.
--	-------------------	--	---