Speech Acts and Hegemony in Discourse: Donald Trump's Tweets on the US-Iranian Nuclear Crisis

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Abstract
Language users may use the standardized forms of speech acts as a strategy to achieve their own purposes, like political agendas. This is the objective of the present study, which focuses on the manipulation of speech acts in Donald Trump's tweets on the US-Iranian crisis. More specifically, the current research paper sheds light on hegemony in political discourse and how it is embedded in assertive, commissive, directive, declarative and expressive speech acts. The tweets of Donald Trump, delivered between January 2017 and December 2019 and related to the US-Iranian crisis, will be analyzed within the framework of Speech Act Theory. The results of the current research show that Trump's use of speech acts demystifies his hegemonic tone towards Iranian leaders. His power is mediated explicitly via directives and commissives, while it is exerted implicitly via expressives and assertives. His use of direct and indirect speech acts reveals Trump's ambivalence and willingness to solve the US-Iranian nuclear crisis via both hegemony and diplomacy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The present research examines speech acts within the framework of Speech Act Theory (SAT), which is a theoretical construct based on a fundamental concept of language as action. In other words, the study examines many speech act categories in a specific genre, namely political discourse. SAT, or the study of language as action, is a fundamental theory that aims at providing an alternative approach to the study of the meaning of sentences (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 167). It is the association of language with acts performed in using it. Consequently, a theory of language is a theory of action (Grundy, 1995, p. 87). SAT aims to identify and interpret speech acts in their relation to context (Schiffrin, 1994). It also provides a systematic categorization of illocutionary forces (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1979, Vanderveken, 1990). The purpose behind the use of this analytical tool is unmasking the practices and mechanisms employed by language users to produce and reproduce power abuse, dominance and hegemony in political context. In this context, it investigates hegemony in the American President's tweets on the Iranian issue, more specifically Iran's nuclear proliferation.

The present study seeks to answer the following questions:

a- What are the main categories of speech acts in Donald Trump's tweets?

b- How do speech acts reveal hegemony in discourse and unveil the speaker's agenda?

c- Does discourse sustain or alter existing socio-political structures?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Speech Acts

A speech act is to do things with language. To achieve this performative function, such utterances need to meet certain contextual conditions, called felicity conditions, or appropriateness conditions (Austin, 1962). Both circumstances and participants must be felicitous or appropriate for a successful performance of the speech event (Austin, 1962; Devitt & Hanley, 2003; Searle, 1969, 1979; Vanderveken, 1990). For Charnock (2009, p. 419), "given the appropriate felicity conditions, to say that you promise, order, or apologize is to promise, order, or apologize". Austin (1962) further notices that any utterance performs at least two types of acts, which occur simultaneously, namely locutionary and illocutionary. A 'locutionary act' is what is said, whereas an 'illocutionary act' is what the speaker does while uttering a linguistic expression.

2.2 Categorization of Illocutionary Forces

Speech acts are conventionally classified by Searle (1969) on the basis of their illocutionary force. The five major categories are assertives, commissives, declarations, directives and expressives. These different categories may be distinguished by the type of attitude, or the 'psychological state' that the speaker expresses (Searle, 1969, p. 65).

2.2.1 Assertives

An assertive is an utterance that describes some states of affairs by asserting, concluding, hypothesizing, claiming etc. (Searle, 1979). Assertives commit the speaker to the truth of the proposition expressed since the speaker uses language to tell people how things are (Marmaridou, 2000). The study of assertives in political discourse is useful for two reasons. First, assertive speech acts are not objective because the speakers may express their personal attitudes and beliefs, and present them as self-evident truths (Chilton, 2004, p. 49). Indeed, speakers may mislead the audience by reflecting the ideological assumptions and biased evaluations of people under the cover of facts and valid assertions (Van Dijk, 2004). This practice is considered misguiding since discourse producers may give faulty representations of a group of people. Cap (2008, p. 23) enhances this idea by stressing that assertions encode the ideological background of the speaker and enact credibility by "referring to actions, which are undeniably logical, legitimate and expected by the addressee, yet difficult to verify at the moment of speaking". As a result, the hearers cannot check the credibility of these assertions.

Second, the speakers express such beliefs, intentions and desires with varying degrees of certainty, as well as intensity, according to their commitment to and perception of facts (Abid, 2004, p. 12). In fact, these assertions may encode different levels of strength depending on the hidden agendas or motives of the speakers. As such, politicians make use of stronger assertive speech acts to serve self-interests, maintain superiority, stress the opponents' misconduct, or enhance the positive evaluation of the 'in-groups' and the negative evaluation of the 'out-groups' (Van Dijk, 2004, p.10). From a purely pragmatic perspective, assertions encompass various degrees of strength "from low strength guesses to high strength denials" or assertions (Holtgraves, 2005, p. 2034).

2.2.2 Commissives

Commissives are utterances that commit the speaker to doing something by acts, like promising, pledging, undertaking, threatening etc. (Marmaridou, 2000). In addition, they are attempts by the speaker to convince the addressee to believe the speaker is committed to a particular course of action (Holtgraves, 2005, p. 2030). Commissive speech acts are concerned

with changing the world to match the speaker's words. In Searle's terms, the illocutionary point of commissives involves the speaker's commitment to a future course of events; this signals the propositional content of the commissive utterance. The sincerity condition is that the speaker intends to carry out this future action (Searle, 1969). In case of promises, the obligation to accomplish the action emanates from the "pre-existing social duty to speak sincerely and to keep [one's] word" (Charnock, 2009, p. 421). Any undertaking of this obligation by the speaker increases the strength of both the sincerity condition and the illocutionary force (Abid, 2004). For example, "*I **solemnly** promise I won't be late home today*" and "*I guess I'll **probably** ring you later*" (Holmes, 1984, p. 374) share the same commissive illocutionary force, but are presented with varying degrees of strength. The preparatory condition is, however, the speaker's capability of achieving this action (Vanderveken, 1990).

2.2.3 Declarations

Declarations are utterances that change the world of the hearer by altering some states of affairs, such as declaring war or peace, nominating a president etc. (Blum-Kulka, 1997). Unlike assertives and commissives, declarations need authorized people playing an institutional role in a particular institutional context, like a house of parliament, a court, a church, or a committee. The primitive declarative verb is 'to declare'. The preparatory condition is that the speaker has to be in a position of authority and power to achieve such declarations; otherwise the speaker's utterance will not bring about any real change to the world (Vanderveken, 1990). Declarative speech acts are frequently used in political discourse, since political actions are carried out through linguistic tools. As such, declarations are opted for to declare war, appoint a chairman, deny the truth of a statement, ratify a treaty etc. (Vanderveken, 1990). These declarations are more successful if the intended audiences comply with them.

2.2.4 Directives

Directive speech acts are attempts made by the speaker to get the hearer to do something, such as requesting, advising, ordering, commanding, asking etc. (Georgalidou, 2008; Searle, 1979). Directive illocutionary forces can be syntactically realized by the use of the imperative form (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979; Vanderveken, 1990). They can also be conventionally realized by means of performative directive verbs, such as order, request, advise etc. As a preparatory condition, directives should be uttered by a speaker, who is in a position of authority over the hearer. The hearer should also be able to carry out the ordered action (Vanderveken, 1990). The propositional content condition suggests a future act on the part of the recipient. The sincerity condition is that the speaker wants the hearer to do that action. The essential condition includes the speaker's intention to try to get the hearer to do or not to do the act through his/her utterance (Searle, 1969). In order to guarantee the successful performance of the act, the performative intention must be communicated (Charnock, 2009).

Directives, like commissives, involve the speaker's intention and willingness to make the world fit his/her words (Coulthard, 1977, p. 24). Commissives commit the speaker him/herself to doing the action, whereas directives aim at getting the hearer to commit him/herself to achieving this action. Both commissives and directives are classified by Austin (1962, p. 32) as 'explicit performatives', as opposed to 'constatives'. Like assertive and commissive speech acts, directives can be performed both directly and indirectly. First, direct directives are performed using the imperative form, like in "***Close** the door' please!*" (Blum-Kulka, 1997, p.

43). Second, indirect directives are not achieved by explicit illocutionary forces, but are suggested by the propositional content. They can be mediated by modals or hints to "allow the addressee to remain free of imposition" (Georgalidou, 2008, p. 75). The choice of directness or indirectness depends on the speaker's intentions or goals. It also varies according to the addressees' status or socio-political situations, such as politeness. Politeness strategies, for instance, include the issuing of weaker obligations and softened commands by employing deontic expressions, like 'may vs. must', 'possible vs. necessary' and 'allowed vs. obliged' (Verstraete, 2005, p. 1401).

2.2.5 Expressives

Expressive speech acts include acts used to express or describe the psychological state of the speaker, such as apologizing, thanking, welcoming, condoling, congratulating, regretting etc. (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; 1979). These verbs make the psychological state of the speaker apparent and known to the hearer, and then establish a socio-psychological relationship between them. There is no dynamic relationship between words and the world. Instead, "the illocutionary point of this class is to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content" (Coulthard, 1977, p. 24). As such, expressives are statements that express the sincerity condition of the speech act (Searle, 1969, 1979). Expressive illocutionary forces are syntactically realized by the performative formula 'I congratulate', 'I apologize', 'I thank', 'I welcome' etc. They can also be realized by exclamatory sentences through which the speakers express their psychological states, such as happiness, sadness, satisfaction, anger etc. (Vanderveken, 1990, p. 127). These feelings can be 'boosted' or 'mitigated' according to the situation and the addressees (Holmes, 1984, p. 350).

Expressive speech acts are crucial to the present study because politicians express not only their thoughts and beliefs, but also their feelings and emotions. For Holtgraves (2005), they encode attempts to reveal "a particular attitude represented by the propositional content of the utterance" (p. 2032). Therefore, by analyzing politicians' discourse, one can uncover their intentions, attitudes and political orientations. This can be achieved by studying the conventional performative formulae of speech acts. This can also be realized by inferring the implied meaning of these illocutionary acts because they may deviate from the standard forms and categories to reveal other meanings and achieve other purposes (Searle, 1975).

In sum, illocutionary forces differ in whether the speaker makes words fit the world (assertives), or the world fit words (directives and commissives); in whether the speaker expresses a psychological state (expressives), or brings about changes in the world (declarations) (Marmaridou, 2000; Searle, 1969, 1979; Vanderveken, 1990). Similarly, illocutionary forces differ in purpose. For instance, the purpose of a commissive is to commit the speaker to carrying out a future action, whereas the purpose of an assertive is to commit the speaker to the truth value of the proposition s/he makes (Blum-Kulka, 1997, p. 43). These illocutionary forces can be direct or indirect.

2.3 Indirect speech acts

Speech acts embed the intention of the speaker (Grundy, 1995). The utterance may express the meaning explicitly and may include implicit meanings. Certain meanings are conveyed in 'non- natural' and implicit ways (Austin, 1962). Speech acts can, then, perform direct and indirect actions. In fact, Austin's (1962) felicity conditions and SAT explain how the speaker uses direct speech acts to convey the literal meaning of the utterance, and therefore the form and the function match. Likewise, they show how the speaker uses indirect speech acts to

deform the truth, and therefore the form and function do not match (Grundy, 1995). Indeed, "there is no one-to-one mapping between illocutionary force and a specific utterance" (Holtgraves, 2005, p. 2025). An explicit speech act is expressed clearly and directly through the use of an appropriate performative verb. An implicit speech act, on the contrary, is performed without the relevant performative verb and serves to produce the same illocutionary force (See Zheni (2010) for more details).

2.4 Hegemony

The word hegemony stems from the Greek term 'hegemonia' or the 'dominance over' to describe relations between city-states. In the 20th century, the term was used by the Italian politician and Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci. It refers to 'the cultural, moral and ideological' leadership of a group over subaltern groups. The bourgeoisie protected the interests of subaltern classes to gain their support and protect their hegemony over other classes, like the proletariat (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci's aim was helping the proletariat, or the working class, overcome the leadership of the bourgeoisie, hence become hegemonic itself (Bouthman, 2008). The Gramscian concept of hegemony or moral and intellectual leadership through consent and persuasion involves three processes, mainly (1) leadership without force, (2) leadership through legitimation and (3) leadership through consensual rule (Ramos, 1982).

Nowadays, the term hegemony refers to the dominance of one group or idea by legitimating norms and rules. The word 'hegemon' identifies the 'actor, group, class, or state that exercises hegemonic ideas' (Rosamond, 2020). In International relations, the hegemon's self-interest resides in preserving the system. The hegemon formulates the rules that govern the international system or arena, made of a dominant state or a group of states. For instance, one can mention the examples of Britain in the 19th century and the United States of America after WWII (Rosamond, 2020). In discourse, people who want to exert social power have to do that via discourse (Foucault, 2000). Discourse and hegemony are intertwined with each other (Stoddart, 2007). Hegemony in discourse manifests as the common sense that guides one's everyday understanding of the world. Hegemonic power is the prevalent form of social power (Gramsci, 1996). As such, hegemony, like ideology, is exercised via discourse (Stoddart, 2007; Zheni, 2018).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Corpus

The corpus of the present study is a collection of tweets shared by President Donald Trump on Twitter. The corpus consists of 116 tweets that are downloaded from http://www.trumptwitterarchive.com/archive/Iran. Only the tweets related to the Iranian issue are selected for analysis. They are organized according to the posting date on Twitter during a period of time that stretches from January 2017, when the US. President started his presidential mandate, to December 2019, the time by which the quantitative analysis was launched. The selection of these tweets is based on the topic they discuss, mainly the US-Iranian nuclear crisis.

3.2 Research instrument

The concordance software WordSmith 8.0 is designed to help the user identify the occurrence of keywords, the context in which these words are used and the frequency of such

words in computer text files. It also enables the user to find references, such as the date of the tweet where a given word occurs. WordSmith 8.0 is a helpful and practical instrument because it can handle texts of considerable length in different languages.

3.3 Data Collection

The data collected for analysis include speech act verbs and other features, like nouns, adjectives, adverbs and modals. Speech act verbs are illustrated in table 1:

Table 1. *List of Speech Act Verbs to be Analyzed in the Corpus*

Linguistic Devices		Types of Linguistic Devices	Examples
Syntactic Devices	- Speech acts	- Assertives - Commissives - Declarations - Directives - Expressives	- agree, assert, assure, confirm … - accept, commit, engage … - announce, declare, sign … - allow, demand , permit … - like, hate, want, thank, love …

To analyze the above features, the text file has to be processed and word frequency lists have to be provided by WordSmith 8.0 software. These word lists give the analyst a clear idea about the frequency of occurrence of speech act verbs or features in Trump's tweets.

4. FINDINGS

While analyzing the corpus, one has to focus on speech act verbs and other features that trigger off illocutionary forces. These features are classified according to Vanderveken's speech acts' subcategories. Many problems may be encountered while analyzing the tweets. First, there are speech acts that are not performed via the conventional speech act verbs but are related to expressions, like 'sure', 'should', 'not good', 'the fact that, 'sadly' etc. These expressions are also subject to computational analysis because by uttering them the speaker performs a speech act. Word frequency lists of these items are obtained after the use of WordSmith software to analyze the tweets. These lists and the original tweets are checked manually to keep only the speech acts performed by Donald Trump and related to the Iranian nuclear crisis.

Second, these speech acts may be performed via nouns, like 'hope', 'request' 'support', 'wish', via adjectives, like 'sure' and 'obvious' and via adverbs, like 'certainly' or 'sadly'. So, one has to manually eliminate the words that do not perform speech acts. Third, some speech act verbs belong to more than one speech act category or do not exert an illocutionary force. To solve this problem, the analyst has to go back to the corpus and has to understand the context to find out the appropriate meaning of these speech acts and classify them accordingly. Table 2 illustrates the data collected after the computational and manual analyses of Trump's tweets.

Table 2 *Frequency Distribution of Vanderveken's (1990) Subcategories of Speech Acts in the Corpus*

Assertives = 30	Commissives = 21	Directives = 29	Declarations = 3	Expressives = 63
N of Speech Act Verbs=4	**N of Speech Act Verbs=0**	**N of Speech Act Verbs=4**	**N of Speech Act Verbs=3**	**N of Speech Act Verbs=9**

|				
1 accused 1 ensure 1 know **1 emphatic form** "they do understand"		1 asking 1 instructed 2 vote	1 announcing 1 announced 1 voted	1 appreciate 1 supports 1 thank 1 thanks 2 want 1 wanting 1 wish / 1 wishes
Other Features =26	**Other Features=21**	**Other Features=25**	**Other Features**	**Other Features=54**
2 sure 1 obvious 1 of course 3 fact 7 never 12 will	2 decision 1 support 8 responsible for 1 must 9 will	1 request 2 Can 2 Cannot 2 No 2 Never 2 Should **Imperatives:** 2 stop, 1 investigate 7 remember 2 Never threaten Be careful Be cautious	0	1 support 1 strongly 7 terrible (deal) **Superlative form** 6 the most 1 biggest 1 worst 2 best 5 will 10 bad 8 good 6 great 1 sad / 2 sadly 1 happy 2 horrible
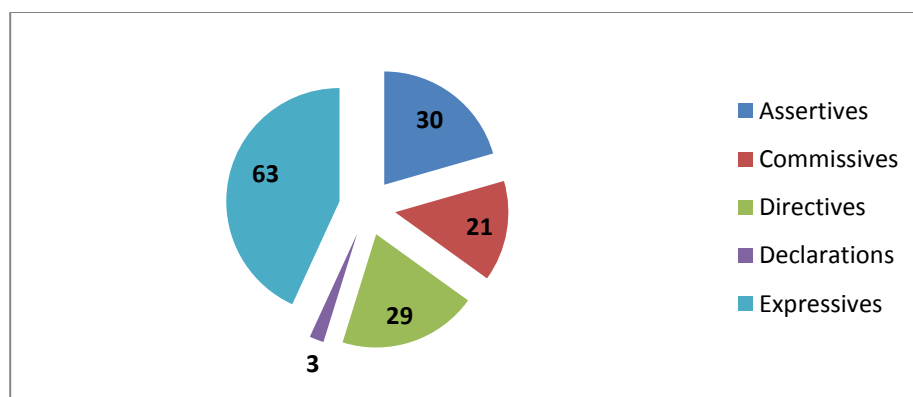
Figure 1 Diagrammatic Representations of Speech Acts in the Corpus

What table 2 and figure 1 show is that speech acts are unevenly distributed in Trump's tweets. Expressive speech acts are the most dominant features (63). Assertives come second with 30 speech acts before directives (29) and commissives (21). As for declarations, this subcategory comes last with only 3 declarative speech act verbs. One can note the absence of primitive commissive speech act verbs in Trump's tweets.

After completing the quantitative analysis of speech acts in D. Trump's tweets on the US-Iranian nuclear crisis, one can focus on the qualitative analysis by selecting some instances of these tweets to examine each type of speech act subcategories. The most dominant speech act category is 'expressives'.

4.1 Expressives
1)
• *Locutionary act:*

*'While I **very much appreciate** P.M. Abe going to Iran to meet with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, I **personally feel** that it is too soon to even think about making a deal. They are not ready, and neither are we!'* (13 Jun 2019).

• *Illocutionary act:*

Trump performs an expressive speech act by showing appreciation of P.M Abe's efforts to negotiate with Iran's Prime Minister Khamenei. The primitive expressive speech act verb 'appreciate' reveals the speaker's contentment and satisfaction. The verb 'feel' is used with the adverb 'personally' to reflect Trump's willingness to delay the deal with Iran. He expresses both an opinion and a feeling. The expressive speech act demystifies the psychological state of the speaker. In this tweet, the propositional content requires participants to understand language, not to act like actors. In other words, they have to understand the speaker's willingness to express feelings, but they do not have to perform any act as a consequence. The preparatory condition necessitates that the circumstances of the speech act should be appropriate to be performed successfully. The sincerity condition concerns the speaker's state of mind and whether he expresses a true feeling or not. The essential condition is that the speaker intends that an utterance be acted upon or grasped by the addressees.

2)

• *Locutionary act:*

*'Saudi Arabia and others in OPEC will more than make up the Oil Flow difference in our now Full Sanctions on Iranian Oil. Iran is being given **VERY BAD** advice by **@JohnKerry** and people who helped him lead the U.S. into the **very bad** Iran Nuclear Deal. **Big** violation of Logan Act?'* (22 Apr 2019).

• *Illocutionary act:*

The expressive speech act is performed by the adjective 'bad' that is boosted by the intensifier 'very'. The repetition of this expression enhances the speaker's strong emotional involvement and his biased evaluation of both John Kerry's advice to the Iranian government and Iran's nuclear deal with Obama's administration. Adjectives and adverbs are modifiers that embed subjectivity and bias since the speaker evaluates entities in the world from his perspective and based on his emotional state. The propositional content condition is clear and comprehensible. The preparatory condition is that the speaker is serious about what he says. The sincerity condition is sincerity in what the speaker says; that is he means what he says. The essential condition is that the receiver believes what the speaker is saying.

These expressive speech acts reveal Trump's psychological states and feelings towards issues with Iran and, more importantly, towards Rouhani, Khamenei, the innocent Iranian people and nuclear proliferators. Consequently, this may divert the international opinion and allow Trump to gain the help and support of the international community. Such a goal can be achieved by stimulating the feelings of hatred and enmity towards Rouhani and Khamenei and by creating emotions of solidarity to stop Iran's nuclear proliferation. Expressives may establish a close relationship between the speaker and the hearers because the speaker appeals to their emotions to guarantee compliance and support. Expressives may also set a distal relationship when the speaker expresses negative feelings towards a group of people.

4.2 Assertives

3)

• *Locutionary act:*

*'The Iran Deal is defective at its core. If we do nothing, we **know** what will happen. In just a short time, the world's leading state sponsor of terror **will** be on the cusp of acquiring the world's most dangerous weapons....' (8 May 2018).*

- *Illocutionary act:*

Trump uses the speech act verb 'know' to assert his knowledge about a state of affairs in the future. The assertive modal 'will' is used to enhance the idea that Iran will do its best to obtain nuclear weapons in spite of the deal with the former president Barack Obama. 'Will' is an epistemic modal that asserts what will happen in the future. Trump tries to convince the audience on twitter that Obama's plan was defective. He persuades the addressees that Iran will not respect the rules and will complete its nuclear plan. President Trump tries to enact credibility when he stresses the truth conditionality of his expectations. Certainty about what will happen after the Iran Deal emanates from the speaker's knowledge about the world.

4)

- *Locutionary act:*

*'Despite requests, I have no plans to meet Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. Maybe someday in the future. I **am sure** he is an **absolutely** lovely man!' (25 Sep 2018).*

- *Illocutionary act:*

The assertive speech act is performed through the adjective 'sure'. It asserts the propositional content 'he is an absolutely lovely man!' The propositional content involves another assertive expression, mainly the adverb 'absolutely'. Trump gives the hearer the impression that he is sure and certain of the truthfulness of the proposition. However, the sincerity condition in this utterance is flouted because Trump opts for irony to say the opposite of the literal meaning. One of irony strategies is saying the opposite of what we 'de facto' mean. It is the role of the hearer to understand what is indirectly stated by the speaker.

(3) and *(4)* assert the propositional content of the utterance in which they occur. This implies that President Trump tries to convince the audience of the truthfulness of the propositional content of his statements. This also suggests that Trump wants the hearers to see things, events and the world as they are depicted by him. The aim of the speaker is to make the hearers look at the Iranian leaders and the US-Iranian nuclear crisis from his perspective. Assertions are manifested through different linguistic features. These textual items show the president's perceptual world and his degree of conviction and commitment to the truthfulness of his utterances.

4.3 Directives

5)

- *Locutionary act:*

*'To Iranian President Rouhani: **NEVER, EVER THREATEN** THE UNITED STATES AGAIN OR YOU **WILL SUFFER** CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE. WE ARE NO LONGER A COUNTRY THAT WILL STAND FOR YOUR DEMENTED WORDS OF VIOLENCE & DEATH. **BE CAUTIOUS!'** (22 Jul 2018).*

- *Illocutionary act:*

The use of the adverbs 'never' and 'ever' before the imperative verb 'threaten', along with the use of capital letters in Trump's tweet, show the firm tone of the speaker. President Trump, on behalf of the USA, explicitly threatens Iranian Prime Minister Rouhani through the use of the assertive 'will' and the base form of the verb 'suffer'. Hegemony in Trump's tweets seems to be more explicit in this example as he opts for capitalization to enhance and highlight the

idea that the USA cannot be threatened by Iran. The president's hegemonic tone is clear when he ended his tweet by the expression 'BE CAUTIOUS!' The imperative form encodes a directive speech act performed by the speaker based on his position as the Commander-in-Chief of the US military forces and the President of the USA. As such, the illocutionary forces embedded in the present tweet are threatening and warning. The propositional content condition of '*you will suffer*' is that it is a future event. The preparatory condition is that the speaker believes the event will occur and be detrimental to the hearer. It also encodes that the speaker believes that it is not obvious to the hearer that the event will occur. The sincerity condition is that the speaker genuinely believes that the event will be detrimental to the hearer. The essential condition is that the utterance counts as an attempt by the speaker to make the hearer recognize that a future event will be detrimental.

6)

• *Locutionary act:*

'*....a dangerous journey. We don't even need to be there in that the U.S. has just become (by far) the largest producer of Energy anywhere in the world! The U.S. **request** for Iran is very simple - **No Nuclear Weapons and No Further Sponsoring of Terror!**' (24 Jun 2019).*

• *Illocutionary act:*

The directive speech act is performed via the negative form. The directive illocutionary force or the order, disguised as a 'request', gives Iran no other option but to comply with the American President's commands. The exclamation mark functions as a warning sign that signals Trump's determination to impede Iran's nuclear process. Hegemony in Trump's tweet is mitigated via a kind of request. However, the repetition of 'No + noun phrase' offers the addressee no option other than stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The propositional content condition is that the requested act is a future act of the hearer. The preparatory precondition is that, first, the speaker believes the hearer can perform the requested act and second, that it is not obvious that the hearer would perform the requested act without being asked. The sincerity condition is that the speaker genuinely wants the hearer to perform the requested act. The essential condition is that the utterance is an attempt by the speaker to have the hearer do an act.

7)

• *Locutionary act:*

'*The Iran sanctions have officially been cast. These are the most biting sanctions ever imposed, and in November they ratchet up to yet another level. Anyone doing business with Iran **will NOT be doing** business with the United States. **I am asking for WORLD PEACE, nothing less!**' (7 Aug 2018).*

• *Illocutionary act:*

Whenever Trump wants to highlight an idea, he opts for capitalization. The assertive modal 'will' is used in the negative form to reject any possibility of non-compliance on the part of the addressee. Trump stresses the idea that his aim is maintaining 'WORLD PEACE'. The primitive directive speech act verb 'ask' sets an obligation on Iran to comply with the speaker's international agenda. The propositional condition is that the act the speaker is asking for is a future act of the addressees or referents in his tweet. The preparatory precondition is that, first, the speaker believes the hearer or referent can perform the required act and second, that it is not obvious that the addressee\referent would perform the act without being asked. The sincerity condition is that the speaker really wants the addressee\referent to perform the mentioned act. The essential condition is that the tweet is considered as an attempt by Trump to have the addressee\referent do an act.

Directive speech acts *(5)*, *(6)* and *(7)* highlight the speaker's authority and power. These directives, especially imperative verbs, enhance the idea that Donald Trump is in a higher position than the addressees or the Iranian leaders who are addressed in his tweets. Given Trump's important institutional and political role, he gives orders, enforces or refuses previous deals and laws, proposes new resolutions or sanctions to Congress etc. The American President may take advantage of such power to reach strategic purposes. One can note that the distribution of directives in Trump's tweets shows that the speaker exerts both direct and indirect power on the recipients. This, sometimes, unveils the unequal power relations between the president and the referents related to these directive speech acts. These textual features encode necessities set by the performer of the speech act on the receiver of the message. Directives are power-laden, in that they typically designate the speaker's hegemony in discourse. They establish an unbalanced relational system that favours the dominant speaker, or the source of the directive illocutionary force.

4.4 Commissives
8)
•   *Locutionary act:*
'Such respect for the people of Iran as they try to take back their corrupt government. ___You will see great support___ from the United States at the appropriate time!' *(3 Jan 2018).*
•   *Illocutionary act:*
Trump performs a commissive speech act by promising Iranian people to support them achieve their will. As they protest against Rouhani's government, Trump shows sympathy and solidarity with them. The speaker commits himself to perform a future action. The utterance 'you will see a great support' encodes a commitment on the part of the speaker to do an action in favor of the addressee or the referent, in this case Iranian civilians. The propositional content of the commissive is based on the context because the future circumstances will determine whether the speaker will be able to keep or not to keep his word. Since the speaker is healthy and able to fulfill his promise, this commissive speech act fits the propositional content of a promise. The sincerity condition depends on the intention of the speaker to perform the act. The speaker is sincere when he is capable of doing the act stated in his tweet. The essential condition is that it is an attempt to undertake an obligation to do the action as it is stated in the tweet by the speaker. By uttering *(8)*, the speaker sets an obligation on himself to support Iranian people. *(8)* will be felicitous if the speaker does support and help Iranians get rid of their corrupt government. If the speaker does not achieve what he promised the addressees to do, *(8)* will be infelicitous.
9)
•   *Locutionary act:*
'Iran has long been secretly "enriching," in total violation of the terrible 150 Billion Dollar deal made by John Kerry and the Obama Administration. Remember, that deal was to expire in a short number of years. Sanctions ___will soon be increased___, substantially!' *(10 Jul 2019).*
•   *Illocutionary act:*
In *(9)*, Trump commits himself and the USA to increasing sanctions on Iran after Obama's Deal expires. Whenever he mentions the Iran Deal, Trump expresses dissatisfaction and rejection of such an agreement with Iran. According to him, to correct Obama's mistake, he commits himself to set more sanctions on this country in the near future. The modal 'will' is both commissive and assertive since the speaker asserts that such a commitment will be fulfilled after a few years. Commissives reveal Trump's personal involvement in the speech

events. The U.S. President is not only engaging himself, but also committing the American administration and Congress in some tweets. He promises, pledges and expresses his own and his country's intention to ban Iran's nuclear project and help Iranian people who want to overthrow the totalitarian regime in their country. For Trump, these efforts are for both national – emancipating Iranian citizens - and international reasons - world peace. In addition, commissive speech acts reflect the speaker's proximity to or distance from future actions. Trump expresses more closeness to the actions to be performed and more or less proximity to events in Iran and the Middle East. It is important to note that modals are frequently used to perform commissive speech acts. Indeed, the deontic modal 'will' is repeated 9 times to designate a strong commitment to accomplishing the propositional content of the utterance. This modal is used deontically, with varying degrees of strength, to engage the addresser to perform future actions, such as keeping one's word, supporting a political view, or impeding nuclear proliferation. Commissive speech acts demystify the performer's relationship with the issues, entities and people involved in the speech event.

4.5 Declarations
10)
• *Locutionary act:*
'Today, I __announced__ our strategy to confront the Iranian regime's hostile actions and to ensure that they never acquire a nuclear weapon' (13 Oct 2017).
• *Illocutionary act:*
The verb 'announce' is used by President Trump to inform the addressees of the US strategy to deal with Iran. The preparatory condition is that the speaker has to be in a position of power to perform a declarative speech act. In *(10)*, Trump plays his institutional role as President of the USA. The sincerity condition is that Trump opts for first-person pronoun 'I' to show personal involvement and strong commitment on his part. If the speaker does not really want to change the knowledge state or condition, the production of *(10)* will be infelicitous. By stating *(10)*, the speaker does not only want to inform but also to create a new status/condition. If the speaker wants to inform without changing or creating a new status, *(10)* cannot be considered as a declaration; it is an assertion. If the speaker creates a new status, *(10)* may then be a felicitous declaration.
11)
• *Locutionary act:*
'I __have just instructed__ the Secretary of the Treasury to substantially increase Sanctions on the country of Iran!' (18 Sep 2019).
• *Illocutionary act:*
The verb 'instruct' is a declarative speech act verb. The propositional content of *(11)* is that the speaker knows that the hearer does not know the news. The speaker knows that by announcing *(11)*, he will change the knowledge state of the addressees. Knowing the context of the tweet helps to figure out that the declaration supports the propositional content. The sincerity condition of *(11)* is that the speaker sincerely wants to change the condition, in this case inform the Secretary of the Treasury. If the speaker is not sincere, *(11)* will, therefore, be infelicitous. However, since the speaker sincerely wants to change the knowledge state of the addressee, *(11)* is felicitous. The essential condition is that his declaration is meant to change or create a new condition, in this case increasing sanctions on Iran.

What is important to note is that declarative speech acts are not frequently used by the American President, when compared to other types of speech acts. Such unexpected use of

declaratives reveals that the speaker's main concern is with asserting 'truths', committing himself and hearers to reaching some personal objectives and directing Iran's leaders to urge compliance rather than declaring or announcing decisions or events. It is also pertinent to state that the performer of the illocutionary force should play an institutional role so as to legitimize and validate the performed declarative speech acts. The speaker should hold power to enact laws, declare war or nominate people. Though declarations indicate the important role of the American President and the main executive functions he may perform, the frequency of occurrence of declarative speech acts in the present corpus do not reflect the president's position and do not reveal the significant role he plays as the US President. This may be explained by the informal context or setting, in this case tweets on social networks.

4.6 Constatives vs. performatives

Austin (1962, p. 10) distinguishes between performatives and constatives. He argues that constatives are propositions which can be stated positively or negatively, i.e. they are statements of facts which could be right or wrong. Unlike constatives, performatives are formulated, under appropriate conditions, not to describe something but to achieve something. The speaker is not stating a fact about the world, but rather he is performing an act. Constatives express the speaker's beliefs and his intentions or desires. As such, constatives include assertives, declarations and expressives. In this study, one can note the dominance of expressives (63) and assertives (30), compared to performatives, mainly commissives (21) and directives (29), hence the prevalence of constatives (96), including 3 declarations, over performatives (50).

As for modality, the analyst has to distinguish between epistemic and deontic modality. Epistemic modals are used by the president to express certainty. Therefore, they can be classified as assertive modals, since they express and mediate the speaker's opinion. Commissive modals, like 'will', are categorized as deontic because they engage the speaker to perform future actions. Directive modality, like 'can' and 'cannot', highlights the authority of the source of the directive force and establishes unbalanced power relations between the addresser and the addressee. Consequently, one can identify them as deontic modals. Figure (2) is an illustration of the distribution of constatives and performatives in the corpus:
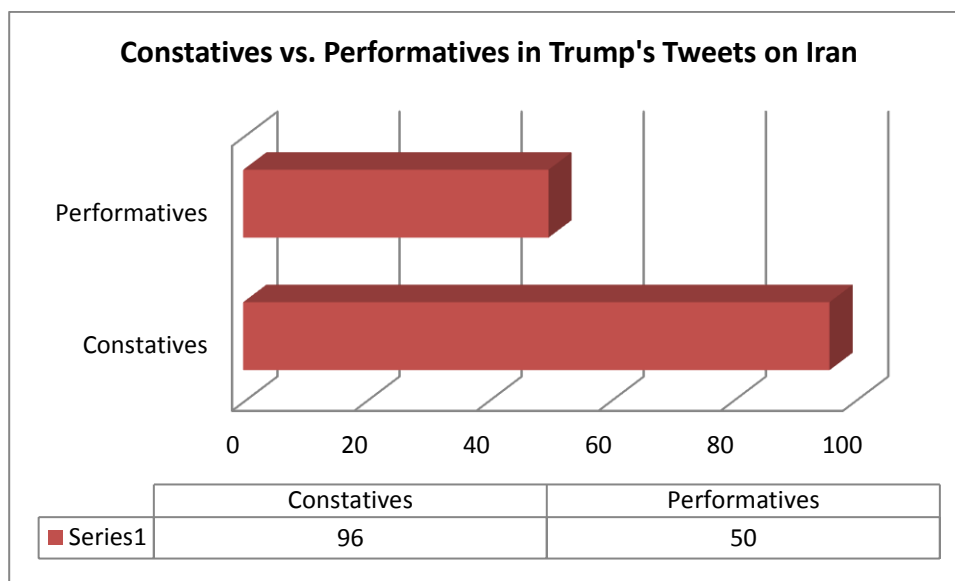
Constatives vs. Performatives in Trump's Tweets on Iran

	Constatives	Performatives
■ Series1	96	50

Figure 2 Diagrammatic Representations of Constative vs. Performative Speech Acts in the Corpus

The use of performatives and constatives stresses both Trump's clear involvement in the Iranian issue and his hegemony in discourse. On several occasions, the president threatens and orders Iran's leaders to change their policy. He, sometimes, attempts to enact credibility and plays on the psychological side of the enemy and the international community as well.

4.6.1 Examples of constatives
a) Expressive speech acts

12)
*"The Iran deal was one of **the worst & most** one sided transactions the United States has EVER entered into"* (19 Sep 2017).

Constatives are descriptions of feelings and emotions. They are also descriptions of opinions and attitudes. In *(12)*, Trump performs an expressive speech act via the superlatives 'the worst' and 'the most one sided'. The description of the Iran deal is based on the speaker's perspective and perception of events and entities in the world. The speaker's use of superlatives gives the addressees the impression that the speaker reports the truth and that his words fit the world. However, expressives can be biased descriptions of the world, hence words fit Trump's world. Constatives are, therefore, assumptions presented by the speaker as truths.

b) Assertive speech acts

13)
*"The Intelligence people seem to be extremely passive and naive when it comes to the dangers of Iran. They **are** wrong! When I became President Iran **was making** trouble all over the Middle East, and beyond. Since ending the terrible Iran Nuclear Deal, they **are** MUCH different, but........a source of potential danger and conflict. They **are testing** Rockets (last week) and more, and **are coming** very close to the edge. Their economy **is** now crashing, which is the only thing holding them back. Be careful of Iran. Perhaps Intelligence should go back to school!"* (30 Jan 2019).

Constatives are utterances that do not perform an action. In *(13)*, the speaker uses the indicative form of the present simple and the present and past progressive as assertions or taken for granted truths. Indeed, Trump asserts Iran's attempts to make trouble, its testing of ballistic rockets and its efforts to possess nuclear weapons. The use of the indicative mode enhances the truth conditionality of the propositions. Such propositions are descriptions of the speaker's 'real world', hence manifestations of reality based on his perspective. The speaker's hegemony resides in asserting his own truths, leaving no option to the addressees but to accept his opinion as indisputable and irrefutable facts.

c) Declarative speech acts

14)
*"Iran **has been formally PUT ON NOTICE** for firing a ballistic missile. Should have been thankful for the terrible deal the U.S. made with them!"* (2 Feb 2017).

In the case of declarations, the speaker does not perform an action but reports or announces a real action or event in a real world. He describes a measure taken by the government, a decision made by the speaker or referents etc. The addresser just changes the knowledge state of the addressees by informing them of a new decision, event, action, etc. In this context, the use of

the adverb 'formally' and the expression 'put on notice' encode a declaration on the part of the speaker. However, Trump also performs an expressive speech act by notifying, blaming and warning Iran about the ballistic missile issue.

4.6.2 Examples of performatives

a) Explicit performatives: Commissive speech acts

15)

*".... Iran's very ignorant and insulting statement, put out today, only shows that they do not understand reality. Any attack by Iran on anything American **will be met** with great and overwhelming force. In some areas, overwhelming will mean obliteration. No more John Kerry & Obama!" (25 Jun 2019).*

Performatives can be categorized as explicit and implicit. Explicit performatives usually contain a performative verb which is apparent to the receiver. The meaning is clear to the audience and needs no reading between the lines to understand it. In the utterance; "I promise to study," there is a clear performative verb which is "promise". The utterance in that case should be commissive. Its subject should be in the first person pronoun with an active, present simple verb. Yet, this rule has some exceptions, as in *(15)* which is in the passive voice. Here the subject of the utterance is the object, and the verb is in the passive mode, in spite of the fact that this is a performative utterance. Trump commits himself and the USA to meet any attack from Iran on American assets. Such a commitment on the part of the speaker and his country is explicitly stated via the speech act 'will be met'. The commissive modal 'will' explicitly engages the agents to perform a future action, hence explicit commissive, or explicit performative.

b) Implicit performatives: Directive speech acts

16)

*"Many reports of peaceful protests by Iranian citizens fed up with regime's corruption & its squandering of the nation's wealth to fund terrorism abroad. Iranian govt **should respect** their people's rights, including right to express themselves. The world is watching! #IranProtests" (29 Dec 2017).*

Unlike explicit performatives, implicit performatives do not include a performative verb. The only way to understand that this is a performative utterance is by realizing the real intention behind that utterance. In *(16)*, the context plays an important role in determining the intention of the speaker because the utterance does not bear a clear meaning as in the explicit performatives. Disguised as advice, Trump performs a directive speech act that is addressing Iran's government. He asks Iranian leaders to give Iranian people their basic rights, like the right to express themselves. The speaker implicitly orders Rouhani and Khamenei to respect their people's rights.

As the goal of the present study is uncovering power relations that govern the speaker and addressees or referents (people collocated with speech acts), unveiling hegemony or the speaker's political power over recipients in discourse will be further elaborated in the following sub-section.

4.7 Socio-political implications: social and political hegemony

The study of speech acts in his tweets on the US-Iranian nuclear crisis shows that Donald Trump, as President of the USA and the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. military forces,

exerts power over the referents and both directly and indirectly manipulates such authority to achieve strategic purposes. At the situational level, he exercises power over the referents and addressees in his tweets. Trump's power, at the situational level, reflects his power at the institutional level. Indeed, Trump is in a position that allows him to play a very important role at the societal level. As President of the United States of America, Trump is the most famous figure in America and one of the most important public figures worldwide. This, also, entails that power relations surpass the conventional situational, institutional and societal levels and are manifested at the international and political levels. For Trump, the USA, as a superpower, has the right to settle order and peace overseas with the help of the NATO's partner states and can attack other nations worldwide to deter terrorists and hamper the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

After briefly dealing with the social structure of discourse and the power relations that govern it at the micro and macro levels, more focus should be on the degree of the speaker's hegemony in his discourse. This has been shown by President Trump in his tweets, like in *(17)*, though he, sometimes, tries to delineate the audience and violates the sincerity conditions of speech acts, like in *(18)*.

(17)

"Iran is failing at every level despite the terrible deal made with them by the Obama Administration. The great Iranian people have been repressed for many years. They are hungry for food & for freedom. Along with human rights, the wealth of Iran is being looted. **TIME FOR CHANGE!"** *(01 Jan 2018).*

(18)

"If Iran wants to fight, that **will be the official end** *of Iran.* **Never threaten the United States again!***" (19 May 2019).*

In *(17)*, the hegemonic tone of the speaker is mediated via the capitalization of the expression "TIME FOR CHANGE!" In *(18)*, a strong commitment to the truthfulness of the speaker's proposition is made clear through the use of the assertive 'will'. Hegemony is embedded in the imperative form "Never threaten". In *(17)* and *(18)*, however, the absence of 'I' slightly decreases the speaker's involvement and commits other participants to perform a future action. Instead, he directly orders Iranian leaders to perform future actions, and this strengthens his hegemonic tone. In this respect, one can infer that the American President uses his tweets as a tool to legitimize the actions he takes, not only at the discourse level, but also at the political and international levels to sustain socio-political structures and existing power relations in the world.

By decreasing the distance between them and the audience, politicians indirectly sustain their power over the audience members. This can implicitly influence the receivers, in this case the readers of his tweets, and ensure the allegiance and support of these receivers. Indeed, by sharing tweets on political issues, President Trump attempts to create an atmosphere of solidarity and empathy. Trump tries to control and maintain his power over other participants, since he is the person who decides on the choice of topics, when to use a purely decisive or hegemonic tone and when to shift to a less decisive tone, or informal discourse.

5. DISCUSSION

At this level, one has to discuss the main questions raised in the current research paper. The first question relates to the main categories of speech acts found in Trump's tweets. One can note that the use of assertive speech acts stresses the president's point of view and his own evaluations of the world and events. The use of commissive speech acts reveals a strong

commitment and involvement on the part of the speaker. Moreover, the use of directives is similarly noticeable and highlights Trump's control of power because at the experiential level he is the President of the USA. Disguised as expressives, many tweets embed mitigated directive illocutionary forces. As for modals, one can state that epistemic modals serve as assertive speech acts, while deontic modals encode commissive and directive speech acts. Adverbs play the role of intensifiers or modifiers and either strengthen, or weaken these illocutionary forces.

The second question investigates how speech acts unveil hegemony in discourse. Starting with assertions, one can note that the excessive use of assertive expressions, whether they are illocutionary verbs, modals, nouns, adjectives or adverbs, shows the speaker's certainty and, therefore, gives no choice to the hearers but to trust the speaker and believe in the truthfulness of his proposition. As for commissive and directive speech acts, they reveal unequal power relations between the speaker and the referents, like Rouhani, Khamenei and Iranian citizens, in general. President Trump is in a position that allows him to commit himself, his country and other nations to future actions. He also exerts power via directives either explicitly or implicitly. Expressives, however, convey a mood of solidarity and sympathy with innocent Iranians and aim to soften the degree of formality of the president's tone. What attracts the attention is the limited use of declarations, and this may be explained by the absence of the institutional environment, in this case tweets on Twitter. Trump is not playing his institutional role in a formal context or environment. As for modality, it encodes both assertions that position the speaker as a truth provider and commissives or directives that do not serve an epistemic meaning, but produce a deontic force. Deontic modals set obligations on referents to comply with the propositional content of the utterances so as to emphasize the sincerity condition of the speech act. Performatives further uncover this hegemonic relationship between the speaker and addressees or referents, more specifically between Trump and Iranian leaders, or the USA and Iran.

The American President assures the evil nature of the enemy through the use of assertive speech act verbs and epistemic modals. He makes use of commissive illocutionary verbs and deontic modals to gain support and guarantee the allegiance and solidarity of both the American public and the international communities. Directives are, however, used to intensify Trump's tone, especially when he deals with nuclear weapons' proliferators or directly addresses Iranian leaders. As stated before, the limited use of declarations conveys the speaker's willingness to avoid formality in an informal context, mainly Twitter and social media. Indeed, he avoids official declarations and formal announcements in his tweets on Iran. However, he reveals his emotions via expressive speech acts, which are most of the time warnings and threats to Iranian leaders. They are also feelings of sympathy and compassion towards innocent Iranian civilians who want to change their country for the better.

At this level, one cannot neglect indirect speech acts and how they are used by the president to flout the sincerity conditions of some illocutionary forces. Consider, for instance, the following examples quoted from Trump's tweets:

19) Expressive as indirect command

"__I look forward to the day that__ ..... Sanctions come off Iran, and they become a productive and prosperous nation again - The sooner the better!" (22 Jun 2019).

Expressed as a wish, the expression 'I look forward to the day that' encodes a hidden and implicit directive illocutionary force. The felicity condition of the expressive speech act is flouted to encompass a performative directive. In other words, Trump's order, disguised as a wish, embeds the speaker's exertion of power over the referent to perform a future act. In *(19)*, it is an implicit request to stop nuclear tests so that the US sanctions will be lifted on Iran. The proposition that 'sanctions come off Iran' depends on Iran's cooperation to stop nuclear proliferation.

20) Assertive as expressive

*".... Iran **will be held** fully **responsible** for lives lost, or damage incurred, at any of our facilities. They **will pay** a very BIG PRICE! This is not a Warning, it is a **Threat**. Happy New Year!"* *(31 Dec 2019).*

The explicit assertion on the part of Trump is an implicit or indirect expressive that encodes a warning to Iran. The assertive and epistemic modal 'will' assures the truthfulness of proposition p in *(20)*; that is, Iran will assume the responsibility for any damage that may happen to American facilities in the Middle East. The apparent assertion hides a threat to Iranian leaders. Even indirect speech acts reveal the speaker's hegemony in his discourse since Trump manipulates the recipients and directs them directly and indirectly, explicitly and implicitly, overtly and covertly to achieve his agendas.

As for the third question, it can be stated that unequal power relations exist at the situational, societal and political levels. This hierarchy exceeds the discourse level - that is the relationship between the speaker and the other participants in discourse - to reach the relations between the American President and the individuals, groups or entities mentioned in his tweets. This can be understood through the use of directive speech acts and the modals 'must' and 'will', as well as the frequent capitalization of some expressions to highlight some ideas and attract the receivers' attention to them.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, after analysing the speech acts used by the American President, one can, first, note that Donald Trump shows hegemony and authority over the addressees or referents, in this case Iranian leaders. This is demystified via Trump's use of a large number of directives in his tweets, sometimes disguised as expressives, as well as the use of assertives to enhance his own views and his personal perception of entities and events in the world. In his tweets, Trump's hegemony has been manifested both physically, via directives, epistemically, via assertives and emotionally, via expressives. Second, the study of speech acts has revealed the prevalence of constatives (96) that encode assertions, expressives and declarations, hence what is perceived by the speaker, over performatives (50) that embed commissive and directive illocutionary forces, hence what should be performed by the speaker or the addressees. The sincerity conditions of many constatives are, however, flouted and indirectly employed to express performative speech acts in discourse. One can also conclude that even the innovative use of discourse, like tweets, helps to further sustain the existing power relations and social structures rather than changing them. Although the speaker seems to delineate the boundaries with the addressees or referents, he indirectly enhances the existing social and political structures between the USA and Iran.

While conducting the current research, some problems have been encountered. First, past and present aspects were not dealt with so as to narrow the scope of analysis – though they are analysed in one of the examples. Second, some illocutionary verbs, modals and expressions perform more than one illocutionary force. The analyst has to cope with the overlap caused by these multifaceted speech acts by using context to decide on the dominant illocutionary forces and categorize them accordingly. This urges us to dig deep in this area and conduct more research on indirect speech acts, the strategies of indirectness, as well as the reasons why politicians opt for them in political discourse.

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