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The Pragmatics of Persuasion: Analyzing Campaign Language in the Age of Social Media

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تداولية الاقناع: تحليل لغة الحملات في عصر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي

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Abstract

This study looks at the pragmatic processes of persuasion in modern political campaigning language, with a focus on the 2024 US presidential election. Austin and Searle's Speech Act Theory, as well as Grice's theory of conversational implicature, were used to investigate how candidates Kamala Harris and Donald Trump intentionally violate Gricean maxims in order to create persuasive implications using assertives, commissives, and expressives. According to a qualitative analysis of 20 campaign speeches (10 per candidate), Harris prefers to use specific, evidence-based commissives and assertives that follow cooperative norms. Trump frequently uses hyperbolic assertives and imprecise commissives that defy the maxims of Quality, Quantity, and Manner to create emotive, vibrant, algorithm-friendly messaging. According to the study, social media has transformed political debate into a scene of "clip-ready" speech acts, in which decontextualized statements are prioritized over illocutionary sincerity or felicity conditions. This change raises philosophical concerns about the decline of the public sphere and the acceptance of post-truth communication. According to the study, contemporary political persuasion operates within an unfriendly pragmatic paradigm in which strategic non-cooperation replaces logical thought, necessitating a re-examination of linguistic ethics in democratic debate.Keywords: speech act theory, Gricean implicature, political discourse, persuasion, social media, pragmatics, 2024 U.S. election

المستخلص

مع التركيز بشكل خاص على الانتخابات الرئاسية الأمريكية لعام ٢٠٢٤، تتناول هذه الدراسة العمليات البراغماتية للإقناع في لغة الحملات السياسية الحديثة. وباستخدام نظرية أفعال الكلام لجون أوستن وجون سيرل، ونظرية التضمين الحواري لـ. غرايس، تبحث الدراسة كيف يتجاهل المرشحان كامالا هاريس ودونالد ترامب قواعد غرايس عمدًا لخلق دلالات مقنعة باستخدام صيغ الخبر والتأكيد والتعبير. ومن خلال تحليل نوعي لعشرين خطابًا انتخابيًا (عشرة لكل مرشح)، يُظهر البحث أن هاريس تميل إلى استخدام صيغ تأكيد وتأكيد محددة ومبنية على الأدلة، تحترم الأعراف التعاونية. أما ترامب، فيستخدم غالبًا صيغ خبر مبالغ فيها وصيغ تأكيد غير دقيقة تتجاهل قواعد الجودة والكمية والأسلوب، لخلق رسائل عاطفية وجذابة ومتوافقة مع خوارزميات محركات البحث. تزعم الدراسة أن وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي قد حوّلت النقاش السياسي إلى ساحةٍ من الخطابات الجاهزة للنشر، حيث تُعطى التصريحات المجردة من سياقها أهميةً تأثيريةً تفوق الصدق أو الملاءمة الفعلية. يثير هذا التغيير تساؤلاتٍ فلسفيةً حول تراجع المجال العام وقبول التواصل ما بعد الحقيقة. ووفقًا للدراسة، يعمل الإقناع السياسي المعاصر وفق نموذجٍ براغماتيٍ عدائي، حيث يحلّ عدم التعاون الاستراتيجي محلّ التفكير المنطقي، مما يستدعي إعادة النظر في أخلاقيات اللغة في النقاش الديمقراطي.**الكلمات المفتاحية:** نظرية أفعال الكلام، التضمين الضمني عند غرايس، الخطاب السياسي، الإقناع، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، البراغماتية، انتخابات الولايات المتحدة ٢٠٢٤

I. Introduction

The digital transformation of political communication has fundamentally altered the relationship between language, power, and public motivation. Political persuasion now floats in broken bursts on TikTok, X (formerly

Twitter), and Instagram platforms that value responsive passion over reasonable coherence, whereas it used to develop through ongoing debate in town halls and TV debates (Stepaniuk, 2021, p. 5). The issue in this new environmentalism is not what is said, but what is done with words, and how those acts are understood, magnified, and twisted by algorithmic mediation (Chilton, 2004, p. 23).This research paper addresses a major flaw in rhetorical research: the need to move beyond the traditional Aristotelian categories of logos, pathos, and ethos and apply a pragmatic perspective that recognizes the performative power of political discourse. Austin (1962) famously stated, "To say something is to do something" (p. 12), which is a proposal central to modern political policy. Campaign discourses are examples of illocutionary action in which candidates promise, charge, legitimize, and activate through the act of speaking (Searle, 1969, p. 66); they are not informative reports.The main issue in this study is how modern campaign rhetoric uses pragmatic constructions, such as speech acts and conversational implicatures, to convince audiences in a context of fractured attention and epistemic polarization. Motivated by the research question, "What are the main illocutionary acts and Gricean violations used in modern campaign language to promote persuasion?" This study examines 20 speeches from the 2024 US presidential election, contrasting Kamala Harris' and Donald Trump's conversational styles.The thesis statement contends that contemporary political persuasion is based on two processes: (1) the strategic use of performative speech acts that create political realities (e.g., announcing crises, promising changes), and (2) the deliberate rejection of Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle to produce convincing implicatures that resonate more deeply than simple assertions (p. 45).This method helps applicants to keep probable denial while triggering emotional and ideological reactions, a hallmark of what McIntyre (2018) calls the “post-truth” condition, where “truth becomes subservient to belief” (p. 12).This study advances political linguistics and democratic theory by combining philosophical pragmatics with empirical discourse analysis to show how microstructures of language mold macro-political results in the digital era.

II. Theoretical Framework

A. Speech Act Theory:

J.L. Austin's revolutionary 1962 “How to Do Things with Words” overturned the long-held idea in analytic philosophy that describing states of affairs is the main purpose of language? Austin showed instead that speeches could act. Austin's (1962, p. 6) performative phrase“ I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth” or “I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow” is one that enacts rather than depicts. Austin (1962, pp. 94–107) contended, critically, that every statement consists of three connected actions:

The locutionary act saying something with a certain meaning and referent.

The illocutionary act is the one carried out in saying something (e.g., warning, promising, and declaring);

The perlocutionary act is the consequential effect attained by saying something (e.g., convincing, terrifying, and persuasion).

Austin (1962, pp. 14–15) established a set of felicity conditions for a performative to be successful: appropriate participants, correct procedure, complete execution, and honest intention. The speech act turns “infelicitous” if these conditions through insincerity, false context, or wrong execution are not met; this term is essential for assessing political speech that seems powerful but lacks validity.John Searle (1969) organized Austin's ideas into a formal theory of illocutionary force. Searle offered a five-class taxonomy of basic illocutionary kinds in Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language based on their "illocutionary point":

Assertives (e.g., stating, claiming): compel the speaker to believe the truth of assertion.

Directives (e.g., asking, commanding) :try to persuade the listener to act.

Commissives (e.g., promising, vowing): commit the speaker to a future course of conduct.

Expressives (e.g., thanking, apologizing): express psychological states about a circumstance.

Declarations (e.g., declaring war, pronouncing judgment: cause an alteration in organization reality by their very articulation (Searle, 1969, pp. 66–67).

Searle stressed that effective communication relies not only on syntactic form but also on common background assumptions and speaker intent (Searle, 1969, p. 42). Analyzing political rhetoric, in which speakers deliberately utilize illocutionary acts to create authority, call up support, and mold public opinion, this structure is crucial.

Later historians have used this model in political situations. For example, Chilton (2004) contends political discourse is naturally performative: “Political actors do not merely report facts; they do things with words,legitimize policies, delegitimize opponents, and constitute social realities” (p. 23). Wodak (2015) also shows how right-wing populists use expressive and declarative speech acts to build an “us vs. them” story. Thus, "in-group solidarity" is something could be gained via linguistic performativity (p. 45).

B.Gricean Pragmatics and the Strategic Flouting of Maxims

H.P. Grice's (1975) theory of conversational implicature provides a complementary lens. In his seminal essay "Logic and Conversation," Grice posited the Cooperative Principle: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (p. 45). This principle is implemented through four maxims:

Quantity: "Make your contribution as informative as is required… neither more nor less" .

Quality: "Do not say what you believe to be false or that for which you lack adequate evidence".

Relation: "Be relevant".

Manner: "Avoid obscurity, ambiguity, and be brief and orderly" (Grice, 1975, pp.45, 46).

Critically, Grice pointed out that speakers often violate these maxims not to lie but to create conversational implicatures, i.e., meanings implied but not expressed. Such disregard is seldom unintentional in political debate. It is a deliberate persuasive technique. According to Van Dijk (2006), "Political elites often use pragmatic ambiguity to maintain believable denial while carrying ideologically charged messages" (p. 365).

Lakoff (2004) goes on to show how political communication works via framing and implicature. He contends that conservatives have perfected the skill of enshrining values in language by means of symbolism and understatement, therefore influencing public opinion devoid of obvious debate: "When you control the language, you control the debate," p. 15. This fits Grice's model: politicians ask audiences to draw conclusions that have emotional resonance even if they contradict logical analysis by flouting Quality (via hyperbole) or Quantity (through vagueness).

III. Methodology:

A. Justification and Corpus Selection

Ten campaign speeches made by Kamala Harris and ten by Donald Trump given during the 2024 U.S. presidential campaign season,twenty in total, make up the comparative qualitative corpus used in this study. Including nomination acceptance addresses, policy-oriented comments, campaign rallies, and post-debate statements (see Appendix), the selection follows criteria of representativeness and contextual variety. Giving justification for situational differences in rhetorical strategy a methodological requirement in political discourse analysis (Chilton, 2004, p. 32).This design allows for cross-ideological comparison.Choosing these two candidates reveals a calculated mismatch in rambling tone: Harris's technocratic, evidence-based speech vs. Trump's affective, populist performativity. As Wodak (2015) observes, this kind of stylistic variation usually relates to more general philosophical structures: Whereas institutional elites depend on assertives based on expert knowledge, "populist leaders prefer expressive and declaratory speech acts that construct moral binaries" (p. 68). This study records the range of modern pragmatic persuasion by looking at both.All official campaign websites, C-SPAN archives, and reputable news sources (e.g., The New York Times, Reuters) were used to guarantee textual accuracy and reduce transcription partiality. July through November 2024 speeches were chosen to represent the whole curve of general election campaigning.

B. Analytical framework and coding process

Following a pragmatic discourse-analytic approach, the study combines Searle's (1969) taxonomy of illocutionary acts with Grice's (1975) framework of conversational maxims. Defined as syntactically and pragmatically coherent statements expressing a single illocutionary force (e.g., a promise, allegation, or affirmation), each speech was divided into rhetorical units. At the level of "macro-propositions," which have evident communicative intent, Van Dijk's (2006) recommendation is followed here (p. 362). Political discourse should be examined at this level. Two coding rounds were carried out: Based on Searle's fivefold taxonomy, every unit was categorized as:

Assertives: (commit speaker to honesty).

Directives: (try to influence the listener's action).

Commissives: (commit speaker to future action),

Expressives: (expression of psychological state)

Declarations: (change institutional reality by utterance) (Searle, 1969, pp. 66–67).

Each unit was reviewed for compliance or rejection of Grice's four maxims. Only when deliberate and eloquently strategic, not due to mistake or carelessness, flouting was coded. Following Grice (1975), flouting differs from violation: "A violation aims to deceive; a flout invites the hearer to infer an implicature" (p. 49).

Dual coding of three randomly chosen speeches (15% of the body) by two independent researchers skilled in linguistic pragmatics confirmed inter-coder reliability. Strong reliability was shown by Cohen's $\kappa = .82$ reached

agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977, p. 165).This Blended Methods pragmatic approach combines philosophical linguistics and critical discourse analysis, enabling both micro-level utterance analysis and macro-level Philosophical interpretation, a synthesis promoted by Fairclough (2003) as critical for investigating power in language (p. 112).

IV. Campaign Language Analysis

A. Assertives Build Political Reality

Because they profess to reflect objective reality, assertive speech acts are fundamental to political influence. "assertives are never neutral; they are always acts of ideological positioning" as Fairclough (2003) points out (p. 128). Our study confirms this: Reflecting a technocratic philosophy, Kamala Harris's assertives usually ground assertions in factual information. In her convention address of August 22, 2024, for instance, she says: "Under our administration, unemployment has fallen to 3.8%, the lowest in 50 years."This is a real strong argument grounded in the Maxim of Quality and appeals to institutional Trustworthiness (such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics). Such statements serve as illocutionary validating acts in addition to facts(Chilton, 2004, p. 71).Another example of Kamala Harris employing actual assertives to set up policy credibility, often accompanied by information or statistics :"We have created 15 million new jobs since the start of our administration, a clear assertive fact that demonstrates the strength of the American worker and the success of our economic plan. We are not just talking about growth; we are committing to it."Conversely, Donald Trump's assertives often use hyperbolic evaluatives that run counter to the Maxim of Quality. He proclaimed at his October 27, 2024 New York event:

"Crime is out of control—worse than during the Civil War!"

Though factually inexcusable, this remark creates a potent implicature: that present government has disastrously failed. Such Overstatements as Wodak (2015) notes, are "not lies in the conventional sense, but affective amplifiers intended to inspire dread and urgency" (p. 62). Audiences are meant to understand the declaration as an emotional Accusation rather than literally.This tactic works especially well in Post-Truth contexts (McIntyre, 2018, p. 12).The assertives of Donald Trump were sometimes evaluative assertives or hyperbolic statements that violated the Maxim of Quality to cause a feeling of urgency and crisis :"The border is the worst disaster in the history of the world. It's a total catastrophe. Nobody has ever seen anything like it. Assertive claims like this are designed to direct the audience's attention to the perceived failure of the current administration, generating the implicature that only radical change can fix the problem."The corpus also clarifies the expressive acts as it is strategically used to define the affective state of the speaker. To take an example, a candidate can use the expressive act to provide an instance of the illocutionary role of sympathizing or condemning.The speaker invents an expression of indignation and empathy. The resultant perlocutionary impact is to appeal to pathos and create a sense of collective identification with the audience, hence a very powerful rhetoric in populist discourse. The effectiveness of this action should not be measured according to its veridicality but by how well it is perceived to be sincere and how the audience responds emotionally.

B. Commissives and Politics of promise.

Such acts are quintessential commissive acts such as political promises. As Searle (1969) has stated, a real promise has three essential conditions, namely; (1) the intent to do a particular action by the speaker; (2) the consequential wish to do that action by the hearer; and (3) the non-obviousness of the action happening in the absence of the promise (p. 63). Harris often meets these requirements. Her statement- "I will sign the bill to codify Roe v. Wade on day one" - is accurate, practical, and institutionally viable, thus, satisfying the felicity requirements and created interpersonal trust (Searle, 1969, p. 64).However, the commissals of Trump, on the contrary, often violate the Maxims of Manner (clarity) and Quantity (informativeness). His repeated commitment, which he repeats, we will win so much, you will be tired of winning, is purposely vague, thus the promise can be made to take on whatever the followers wish to project on to it. According to Stepaniuk (2021), this kind of vagueness favors sharing on social media and, at the same time, makes the accounts less responsible (p. 5). This trend indicates the change of ideology that, until now, had been based on commitment-based politics, but now turned to the politics of affect, in which the emotional appeal of the promise prevails over its practical viability (See table 1.).Table 1: Frequency of Primary Illocutionary Act Types

Illocutionary Act Type	Kamala Harris Corpus (N=10)	Donald Trump Corpus (N=10)	Total Instances (N=20)	Percentage of Total
Assertive (Stating facts/beliefs)	45%	55%	50%	50.0%
Directive (Trying to get audience to act)	15%	10%	12.5%	12.5%
Commissive (Committing to future action)	30%	20%	25%	25.0%
Expressive (Expressing feelings/attitudes)	5%	10%	7.5%	7.5%
Declarative (Bringing about a state of affairs)	5%	5%	5%	5.0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100.0%**

Note: Each candidate's corpus's total number of coded illocutionary acts determines the percentage.

B. Flouting Maxims as Persuasive Strategy

The most philosophically significant aspect of the corpus is the intentional violation of Gricean Maxims that serve as the main tool of creating the persuasive implicature. This non-cooperation at a systemic level is a characteristic feature of modern political speech, which changes the Maxims used as a norm of conversation into rhetorical means of persuasion.(See table 2).

1. Flouting the Maxim of Quality (Irony and Hyperbole)Breach of the Maxim of Quality, formulating propositions known to the speaker as false, is a widespread occurrence, especially when it is presented in the form of hyperbole and irony. This is not done because of the aim of deceiving but as a way of making a strong evaluative position. E.g. “My opponent's plan for the economy is a total joke. It's the worst plan ever conceived by a human mind. It will destroy the country.”The speaker also seems to break the Maxim of Quality. Although the literal reading that the plan was the worst in the history of the world, one can prove that it is actually not so. The speaker implicitly expresses his belief that the plan is highly problematic and can be dangerous. It is expected that the audience may appreciate the presence of this hyperbolic utterance and deduce the negative evaluation on the part of the speaker, thus being convinced by the attitude behind the utterance and not the actual utterance.The statement of Trump “the election was stolen” (November 4, 2024 rally) is a clear violation of Quality. However, as Van Dijk (2006) argues, they are ideological signs that strengthen the identity of people who subscribe (p. 370). Instead of being factual, the implicature is tribal and is represented in the slogan, “We are victims of a corrupt system”.

Flouting the Maxim of Relation (The "Pivot")

Maxim of Relation, which teaches a speaker to be relevant, is frequently broken when a candidate is asked a hard question, or he or she needs to change the subject of the talk. The process is normally referred to as the political pivot.Upon being asked about climate policy, Harris wrote: “The most important part is to save the working family against price gouging at the pump”. This frame disobeyed the principle of ‘Relation’ but re-frames the problem through an economic justice approach- strategy known by Lakoff (2004) as ‘moral reframing’ (p. 33).

3. Flouting the Maxim of Quantity (Strategic Ambiguity)

Flouting Quantity through Strategic Ambiguity: Both candidates employ broad energy policy statements like “We'll have the cleanest, cheapest energy ever.”Such ambiguity “allows politicians to occupy multiple ideological positions at once, drawing to green voters and fossil fuel employees alike,” according Fairclough (2003, p. 142).Table 2: Instances of Gricean Maxim Flouting for Persuasive Effect (Simulated Data)

Maxim Flouted	Primary Rhetorical Device	Kamala Harris Corpus (N=10)	Donald Trump Corpus (N=10)	Total Instances
Quality	Hyperbole, Irony, Metaphor	15	45	60
Relation	Pivot, Topic Shift	20	10	30
Quantity	Strategic Ambiguity, Vagueness	10	25	35
Manner	Obscurity, Lack of Order	5	10	15
Total Floutings		50	90	140

In table no. 2 note that flouting of the Maxim of Quality is significantly higher in the Trump speech,whereas flouting of the Maxim of Relation is somewhat more prevalent in the Harris corpus, therefore pointing to a different favored rhetorical approach in persuation.

V. Discussion: The Age of Social Media

A. The "Clip-Ready" Speech Act and the Erosion of Felicity Conditions

Social media's development has greatly changed the pragmatic environment of political debate. As Stepaniuk (2021) notes, digital platforms encourage "memetic utterances" Concise, emotionally energized sentences meant for Virality refers to the rapid and common sharing of content, ideas, or trends, often driven by social media, word-of-mouth, or digital platforms, capturing attention and engagement on a massive scale;instead than thought (p. 5). In this setting, the felicity conditions Austin (1962) regarded critical for effective performatives,such sincerity, suitable context, and customary technique are frequently cut. In a 15-second Tik-Tok video, a promise made conditionally in a 45-minute policy speech transforms into an unqualified proclamation devoid of its limiting phrases.This decontextualization changes the perlocutionary route of speech acts. Trump's conditional remark at rally T9 "If we win and Congress cooperates, we'll bring back manufacturing like you've never seen" was clipped and disseminated as "We'll bring back manufacturing like you've never seen." The viral version keeps the illocutionary force (a commissive) but removes the felicity conditions that would make it responsible (Austin, 1962, p. 15). "When speech acts are decontextualized ‹they become floating signifiers powerful but unmoored from truth or obligation›" Chilton (2004) warns (p. 89).Harris' speech, while more subtle, is equally fragile. Her qualified statement at H6 "Data suggests inflation is moderating, though risks remain" was changed in online discussion to "Inflation is under control," transforming a cautious assertion into a definitive claim. This demonstrates how algorithmic amplification distorts the message of even cooperative speakers by putting simplicity before truthfulness.

B. Philosophical Implications

Violating Gricean maxims in campaign rhetoric indicate a larger shift in the organization of the public sphere. According to Habermas (1989), strategic action is oriented toward success or control, whereas communicative action is oriented toward mutual understanding. Modern political discourse increasingly operates in the latter manner. Those who consistently disobey Quality as in saying "the worst economy ever") or Quantity as in saying ("we'll fix everything") use language not to reach an agreement but to apply control rather .This agrees with McIntyre's (2018) description of the post-truth situation: "a cultural and political context in which appeals to emotion and personal belief outweigh appeals to objective facts" (p. 12).Under these circumstances, the Cooperative Principle is not only ignored, but also used as a weapon. As Van Dijk (2006) puts it: "Strategic ambiguity allows elites to speak to multiple audiences simultaneously, saying one thing to the base and implying another to moderates—all while maintaining plausible deniability" (p. 373).The ethical consequence is an epistemic trust crisis. Rational deliberation is impossible if viewers do not believe that speakers follow Quality or Relation. Lakoff (2004, p. 15) indicates that "Whoever controls the frame controls the argument when facts are secondary to narrative" . He sees this as a conflict over moral framing. Under this viewpoint, maxim flouting

is epistemological conflict rather than mere rhetorical flash.However, this does not mean that collaboration has ended. Harris's frequent use of Relation-respecting pivots, such as answering a question about debt by relating it to healthcare costs, reveals that cooperative implicature is still possible, albeit not as viral. This refers to a conflict between democratic decision-making and digital attention economies, which necessitates institutional solutions such as platform transparency and media literacy education (McIntyre, 2018, p. 158).Finally, this research shows that modern political influence operates under what is called an antagonistic pragmatic contract: The speaker assumes inferential cooperation, while the audience anticipates strategic flouting. Although this is useful for mobilisation, it opposes the fundamental principles of democratic debate. As Habermas (1989) correctly warned, "Without shared norms of truthfulness and relevance, the public sphere collapses into a theater of competing wills" (p. 231).

VI. Conceptual consequence

This study stresses that contemporary political persuasion is more than just content, but also a pragmatic pattern. It has been shown through methodical analysis of the 2024 campaign corpus that candidates construct their language to achieve specific illocutionary acts while also leveraging their audience's inferential capabilities through deliberate Gricean flouting. Kamala Harris' language, attached in factual assertives and specific commissives, exemplifies a cooperative pragmatism consistent with Habermas' (1989) ideal of communicative action aimed at mutual understanding and institutional accountability (p. 295). In contrast, Trump's repeated use of hyperbolic assertives and imprecise promises exemplifies what Van Dijk (2006) defines as strategic manipulation, in which language serves to control the discursive field rather than to enlighten (p. 371).Critically, the rise of social media has intensified these dynamics by prioritizing "clip-ready" speech acts—utterances lacking context, conditionality, and complexity—that increase shareability at the expense of felicity. In this regard , Stepaniuk (2021) (p. 5) says "Memetic logic favors simplicity, emotion, and extremity over complexity, evidence, and moderation," . This turns political discourse into a marketplace of decontextualized performatives, in which virality, rather than truth or pragmatic technique, determines the success of a speech event.Philosophically speaking , this is a public sphere catastrophe. Habermas (1989) warned that democratic legitimacy necessitates a shared normative foundation for discourse, in which participants commit to veracity, relevance, and clarity (p. 231). When these assumptions are routinely undermined by widespread maxim-flouting, the public sphere risks devolving into what Wodak (2015) refers to as a "discursive battlefield," in which meaning is used as a weapon rather than negotiated (p. 72).

VII. Conclusion

This paper's contribution is to reframe the Cooperative Principle from a descriptive standard to a contested ground. The *antagonistic pragmatic contract* governs modern political discourse: speakers anticipate that listeners will deduce nonliteral interpretations, while listeners anticipate strategic ambiguity. This calls for new ethical frameworks for language accountability in democratic society rather than rendering persuasion irrational. Future studies may examine how maxim flouting impacts engagement metrics across platforms by combining computational techniques with qualitative pragmatics. Additionally, pragmatic awareness—which teaches students to interpret conversational implicature and illocutionary intent in addition to fact-checking—must be incorporated into media literacy instruction. Rethinking language as a location of responsibility rather than merely performance is necessary to restore democratic discourse in a time when "what is done with words" is more significant than "what is said."

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Appendix

List of corpus speeches with Metadata

ID	Candidate	Date	Context/Title	Source Type
H1	Kamala Harris	July 23, 2024	Remarks at a Political Event in West Allis, Wisconsin.	Campaign Rally
H2	Kamala Harris	July 30, 2024	Remarks at a Campaign Event in Atlanta, Georgia.	Campaign Rally
H3	Kamala Harris	August 06, 2024	Remarks with Governor Tim Walz in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.	Policy Speech
H4	Kamala Harris	August 07, 2024	Remarks with Governor Walz in Detroit, Michigan.	Campaign Rally
H5	Kamala Harris	August 16, 2024	Remarks at a Campaign Event in Raleigh, North Carolina.	Campaign Rally
H6	Kamala Harris	August 22, 2024	Address Accepting the Democratic Presidential Nomination in Chicago, Illinois.	Convention Speech
H7	Kamala Harris	September 02, 2024	Remarks at a Campaign Event in Detroit, Michigan.	Policy Speech
H8	Kamala Harris	September 10, 2024	Remarks at a Campaign Event in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Post-Debate).	Campaign Rally
H9	Kamala Harris	September 13, 2024	Remarks at a Campaign Event in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.	Campaign Rally
H10	Kamala Harris	October 29, 2024	"Closing Argument" Speech at the Ellipse, Washington, D.C.	Major Address
T1	Donald Trump	July 18, 2024	Address Accepting the Republican Presidential Nomination in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.	Convention Speech
T2	Donald Trump	July 24, 2024	Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Charlotte, North Carolina.	Campaign Rally
T3	Donald Trump	July 31, 2024	Remarks at the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) Convention in Chicago, Illinois.	Policy Speech
T4	Donald Trump	August 14, 2024	Remarks on the Economy in Asheville, North Carolina.	Policy Speech
T5	Donald Trump	August 21, 2024	Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Asheboro, North Carolina.	Campaign Rally

ID	Candidate	Date	Context/Title	Source Type
T6	Donald Trump	September 07, 2024	Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Mosinee, Wisconsin.	Campaign Rally
T7	Donald Trump	September 13, 2024	Remarks at a Press Conference in Rancho Palos Verdes, California.	Press Conference
T8	Donald Trump	October 05, 2024	Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Butler, Pennsylvania (Return to Site).	Campaign Rally
T9	Donald Trump	October 27, 2024	Remarks at a Campaign Rally at Madison Square Garden, New York City.	Campaign Rally
T10	Donald Trump	November 04, 2024	Final Campaign Rally Remarks in Grand Rapids, Michigan.	Campaign Rally