| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

A Pragmatic Study of Topoi in Trump's Tweets

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| **ABSTRACT**

Standard arguments that usually draw on the premises, which are taken for granted and adequate to accept the end, are called topoi. This strategy is closely associated with the process of rejecting immigration by American politicians. American politicians use the strategy of topoi extensively to criticize each other on the one hand and to convince public opinion and the audience of their opinions on the other hand. In particular, former US President Donald Trump employed the strategy of topoi in an unconventional and intense manner, in various ways and methods, in order to disparage, criticize, and attack his political opponents for the purposes of winning the vote in the US presidential elections. He focused his attention on the issue of immigration and the immigrants, and the negatives resulting from the mismanagement of the immigration file by his political opponents, as he made it a pretext to overthrow the opponents. To achieve this, one time, he uses speech acts; another time, he uses the implicature and another time, he uses figures of speech. All these employments are under the general name of pragmatics. In this consideration, the study tries to shed light on this strategy employed by Trump by exploring the implicit motivations behind employing it. For this purpose, the study develops an eclectic model that integrates two approaches. The first one is Searle (1979), on which the study relies on the pragmatic analysis, and the second is Reisigl and Wadak (2001), on which the study relies on the analysis of topoi as a discursive strategy.

| **KEYWORDS**

Pragmatics, topoi, Trump, political speech, immigration

1. Introduction
This section is concerned with presenting some general accounts of the problem, aims, hypotheses, procedures, and limits of this study.

1.1 The Problem of the Study
Language is the main instrument and mediator through which people understand the world (Barker et al., 2001: 1). It is a tool of power and communication (Reyes, 2011: 18). In political communication, leaders use language to influence political understanding, attitudes, and behaviour of individuals, or to influence the general policy of the nation and the state (Perloff, 2014: 30).

Topoi are utilized in reasoning as "ready-mades" because they have been widely disseminated and standardized. Such topoi are frequently abundant in ideological speech in general and racial discourse in particular. Therefore, it is advised that immigrants and refugees stay in their home country to contribute to its development. Alternatively, to put it more cynically, to remain in their own country due to the pervasive prejudice and discrimination in ours (Van Dijk, 2004:53). This study attempts to disclose the pragmatic meaning of Trump's topoi by presenting the following questions:

1. What is the role that topoi play in Trump's tweets?
2. What are the theories of pragmatics employed to achieve the strategy of topoi in Trump's tweets?

3. Which theory of pragmatics is the most employed, and which one is the least employed in Trump's tweets?
4. What is the type of topoi that are most employed in Trump's tweets?

1.2 Aims of the Study
The study aims at the following points:

1. Identifying the role that topoi play in Trump's tweets.
2. Exploring the theories of pragmatics that are employed in achieving topoi.
3. Finding out the most employed theory of pragmatics and the least one of Trump's tweets.
4. Disclosing the most employed type of topoi in Trump's tweets.

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study
The study hypothesizes the following hypotheses:

1. The role of the topoi strategy is undermining the political opponents.
2. Speech act and presupposition theories are all employed in Trump's tweets.
3. Speech act theory is the most employed theory in Trump's tweets.
4. Danger and threat are the most employed type of topoi in Trump's tweets.

1.4 Limits of the Study
The study is limited to analysing five tweets of Trump qualitatively and quantitatively. It is also limited to analysing the tweets that are concerned with the issue of immigration. The study deals with the theory of pragmatics; they are speech acts and presuppositions.

1.5 The Procedure of the Study
The study follows the following procedure in order to achieve the objectives of the study:

1. Presenting the theoretical background of the topic by addressing the strategy of topoi, pragmatics and the topics related to them.
2. Reviewing the model of the study.
3. Analyzing the collected tweets qualitatively and quantitatively.
4. Presenting the results obtained from the descriptive and statistical analysis and discussing them.
5. Showing the conclusions.

2. Theoretical Background
2.1. Pragmatics
Pragmatics as a field of linguistic inquiry was initiated in the 1930s by Morris, Carnap, and Peirce, for whom syntax addressed the formal relations of signs to one another, semantics the relation of signs to what they denote, and pragmatics the relation of signs to their users and interpreters. In this program, pragmatics is the study of those context-dependent aspects of meaning which are systematically abstracted away from in the construction of content or logical form (Horn and Ward, 2006: xi).

Pragmatics is not the same thing for all of its practitioners. Some pragmatic theorists see it as the study of language use in general, some as the study of communication, and others as an approach to the study of language via language's communicative function (Allott, 2010:1).

2.2. Central Theories of Pragmatics
2.2.1. Implicature
Huang (2014: 32) argues what is implied in a conversation is what is meant but not expressed. It goes above and beyond what is spoken and occasionally deviates from it. The addressee infers from what the speaker indicates or implies. The speaker's intended conversational implicature may or may not be successfully recovered by the addressee as an inference.

However, what makes the creation and understanding of conversational implicature a rational, shared goal-oriented action is the speaker's assumption about the inference that the addressee might fairly be anticipated to draw. (Horn 2012 cited in Huang 2014: 33).

The essential issue for pragmatics are cases in which a speaker, in making an utterance, conveys something more than, or different from, the meaning of the words she uses.

The simplest definition of an implicature is an implication that the speaker intends to convey: Not typically a logical implication of the statement made, but rather something that can be inferred from the way the statement was said and the context in which it

was made. Examples start to surface everywhere once the distinction between what a speaker conveys directly through her words and what she implies by speaking them is made (Allott, 2010: 3-4).

2.2.2. Presupposition

A statement or piece of information whose reality is implicitly assumed in the utterance of a sentence is known as a presupposition. Its major purpose is to serve as a kind of prerequisite for the proper application of that sentence. This presumption will still be true even if the statement it is contained in is negated. The presupposition is a part of the context or common ground, and in particular, the speaker's commitment slate, in which the statement is stated. It typically expresses supplied knowledge in some way (Huang, 2014: 85).

This is a technical term in the philosophy of language and pragmatics for an extra level of meaning in addition to the proposition expressed by an utterance and its implicatures. The use of the notion of presupposition is intended to explicate the pre-theoretical intuition that certain sentences or utterances take something for granted. Here is a well-known example:

2.2.2.1 The king of France is bald.

This argument has been described as presuming that there is a king of France and, provided the premise is satisfied, asserting that he is bald. In general, it's believed that specific descriptions, in this case, "The king of France", leads one to assume the presence of the person being described. Presupposition triggers are the now-accepted word for linguistic elements or constructions that cause presuppositions (Allott, 2010:148-149).

2.2.3. Speech Acts

The central tenet of speech act theory is that the uttering of a sentence is, or is part of, an action within the framework of social institutions and conventions. Put in slogan form, saying is (part of) doing, or words are (part of) deeds. There are three facets of a speech act:

(i) Locutionary act: the production of a meaningful linguistic expression.

(ii) Illocutionary act: the action intended to be performed by a speaker in uttering a linguistic expression by virtue of the conventional force associated with it, either explicitly or implicitly.

(iii) Perlocutionary act: the bringing about of consequences or effects on the audience through the uttering of a linguistic expression, such consequences or effects being special to the circumstances of the utterance (Huang, 2014: 127).

There are some further ways in which speakers typically mean more than the linguistic meaning of words they have uttered. For example, an utterance below might be a promise, a threat, a prediction or an order, or, with different intonation, a question.

2.2.3.1 Third battalion will retake the ridge by nightfall.

According to pragmatics, the distinction between, for instance, a statement, an order, and a promise is referred to as a difference in illocutionary power, a phrase J. L. Austin popularized in his study of speech actions. Speech acts can be indirect; for example, not every promise or prediction starts with "I promise to..." or "I predict that..." As a result, the illocutionary force a speaker intends to convey may (and frequently does) transcend the words they have said. The above phrase requires the hearer to infer from context cues what force the speaker intended (Allott, 2010: 5).

2.2.4. Reference

Reference is a relationship between speakers, linguistic expressions, and the item or collection of objects that these expressions stand for or that are chosen by the speaker to be referenced.

The following example, if John said he used the referring expressions Peter, the original manuscript, and the safe to refer to or pick out, or enable his addressee to refer to or pick out, a particular person, a particular manuscript, and a particularly safe in the outside world. What is picked out or referred to is called a referent. The individual named 'Peter', for example, is the referent of the linguistic expression Peter (Huang, 2014: 224).

2.2.4.1 Peter found the original manuscript inside the safe.

In addition to implicatures and figures of speech, there are less formal methods in which a speaker's meaning can be inferred from her words. Indexicals include words like "he," "they," "this," "that," "here," and "there." An indexical's verbal meaning underspecifies (i.e., does not entirely determine) the meaning it conveys when used. We don't know who the speaker met, where they met, or when they met them if we read the following example out of context. To assign a reference to the indexical terms, we must have some understanding of the context in order to determine who, when, and where the speaker was referring.

2.2.4.2 I met her the previous day, just there.

The problem created for a hearer by *ambiguous* linguistic expressions, such as the headline in the following example, is somewhat similar. Here there is a choice between two structures that the speaker may have intended, and the hearer must *disambiguate*: that is, choose the intended sense.

2.2.4.3 Crocodiles Alert as floods hit Australia.

In contrast to what a speaker implicates, reference assignment and disambiguation are typically viewed as essential components in recovering what a speaker says (to use Grice's language) or expresses directly (as some other theories would prefer to say). The similarity between ambiguous instances, examples with indexicals, and cases of implicature is that understanding the grammatical significance of the words stated is insufficient for an audience to understand what the speaker meant (Allott, 2010: 4).

3. Topoi

Topoi are the content-related warrants or 'conclusion rules' which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion or the central claim. As such, they justify the transition from the argument or arguments to the conclusion, like a 'short-cut': *topoi* function as warrants: if p, then q, the argumentation structure in Toulmin's sense is condensed and remains implicit. *Topoi* are central to the analysis of seemingly convincing fallacious arguments, which are widely adopted in prejudiced and discriminatory discourses (Kienpointner 1996: 562 cited in Hyland and Paltridge, 2011: 50).

In the table below, there is a list of the most common *topoi* which are used when writing or talking about 'others', specifically about migrants. These *topoi* have been investigated in a number of studies on election campaigns (Pelinka and Wodak 2002 cited in Hyland and Paltridge, 2011: 50), on parliamentary debates (Wodak and van Dijk 2000), on 'voices of migrants' (Delanty et al. 2008), and on media reporting (Baker et al. 2008). Most of them are used to justify the exclusion of migrants through quasi rational warrants ('they are a burden for the society', 'they are dangerous, a threat', 'they cost too much', 'their culture is too different' and so forth), without giving the necessary evidence – in this sense, they condense a complex argumentative structure by appealing to common sense: Migrants are thus constructed as scapegoats; they are blamed for unemployment or for causing general discontent (with politics, with the European Union, etc.), for abusing social welfare systems, or they are more generally perceived as a threat for 'our' culture.

On the other hand, some *topoi* are used in anti-discriminatory discourses, such as appeals to human rights or to justice. Similarly, there is a more or less fixed set of metaphors employed in exclusionary discourse (Reisigl and Wodak 2001 cited in Hyland and Paltridge, 2011: 50), such as the likening of migration to a natural disaster, of immigration/immigrants as avalanches or floods, and of illegal immigration as 'dragging or hauling masses'

1 – Usefulness, advantage   9 – Economy
2 – Uselessness, disadvantage   10 – Reality
3 – Definition   11 – Numbers
4 – Danger and threat   12 – Law and right
5 – Humanitarianism   13 – History
6 – Justice   14 – Culture
7 – Responsibility   15 – Abuse (Hyland and Paltridge, 2011: 50).
8   – Burdening

4. Methodology

The study seeks to investigate the pragmatic meaning of the topoi strategy employed in Trump's tweets. Therefore, the study draws on pragmatic theories in analyzing tweets. The study analyzes the tweets qualitatively and quantitatively.

4.1 The Model of the Study

The study seeks to investigate the topoi pragmatically, which is an important discursive strategy employed by politicians for political and personal ends. In this consideration, the study develops an eclectic model that integrates two approaches in order to achieve its objectives. The first is Searle (1979), on which the study relies on the pragmatic analysis, and the second is Reisigl and Wadak (2001), on which the study relies on the analysis of topoi as a discursive strategy. From Searle (1979), the study adopts speech act categories; they are assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration. From Reisigl and Wodak (2001), the study adopts the types of topoi.

The form of the model will be as the following:

1. Searle (1979)
a. Speech act theory

1. Assertives:
They commit the speaker to something being the case. The different kinds are: suggesting, putting forward, swearing, boasting, and concluding.

   Example:

   ``*No one makes a better cake than me*''. (Searle, 1979: 12).

2. Directives:
They try to make the addressee perform an action. The different kinds are: asking, ordering, requesting, inviting, advising, and begging.

   Directives: commands, requests, challenges, invitations, orders, summons, entreaties, dares.

   Example:

   ``*Could you close the window?*'' (Searle, 1979: 13).

3. Commisives:
They commit the speaker to do something in the future. The different kinds are: promising, planning, vowing, betting, and opposing.

   Commissives: promises, oaths, pledges, threats, vows.

   Example:

   ``*I'm going to Paris tomorrow*'' (Searle, 1979: 14).

4. Expressives :
They express how the speaker feels about the situation. The different kinds are: thanking, apologising, welcoming, and deploring (Searle, 1979: 15).

Expressives: Speech acts that make assessments of psychological states or attitudes: greetings, apologies, congratulations, condolences, thanksgivings...

   Example:

   ``*I am sorry that I lied to you*''.

5. Declarations:
They change the state of the world in an immediate way.

Declarations: blessings, firings, baptisms, arrests, marrying, juridial speech acts such as sentencings, declaring a mistrial, declaring s.o.out of order, etc.

   Example:

   ``*You are fired, I swear, I beg you*'' (Searle, 1979: 17).

a. Presupposition theory Yule (1996)
Types of presupposition

   1. The existential presupposition
      It is assumed to be either present in constructional possessive.

      For example: "*Her iron*" (Yule, 1996: 27).

   2. The factive presupposition
      It means that some words are used in the sentences to denote facts, such as regret, glad, odd, know, realize and aware.

For example: "Everybody knows that Clara was beautiful" (Yule, 1996: 27).

3.   The non-factive presupposition
It is the contrast of factive presupposition. It is assumed not to be true. Verbs like dream, imagine and pretend are used with the presupposition that what follows is not true.

For example: "Clara dreamed that she was rich" (Yule, 1996: 29).

4.   The lexical presupposition
It is the use of the form with its asserted meaning that is conventionally interpreted with the presupposition that another meaning is understood.

For example: "Someone managed to do something" (Yule, 1996: 28).

5.   The structural presupposition
It is a conceptual assumption. The sentence structures have been examined conventionally and regularly, supposing that part of the structure is presumed to be true. One would suggest that speakers may use these systems to view knowledge as presumed (assumed to be true) and, therefore, to be recognized as valid by the listeners.

For example: "When did Clara go?" (Yule, 1996; 28).

6. The counter-factual presupposition
It is presupposed is not only true but is the opposite of what is true or contrary to facts.

For example: "If you were a friend of his, you should have supported him" (Yule, 1996: 29).

2.   Reisigl and Wodak (2001)
Types of topoi

1 – Usefulness, advantage
2 – Uselessness, disadvantage
3 – Danger and threat
4 – Justice
5– Responsibility
6 – Burdening
7 – Law and right
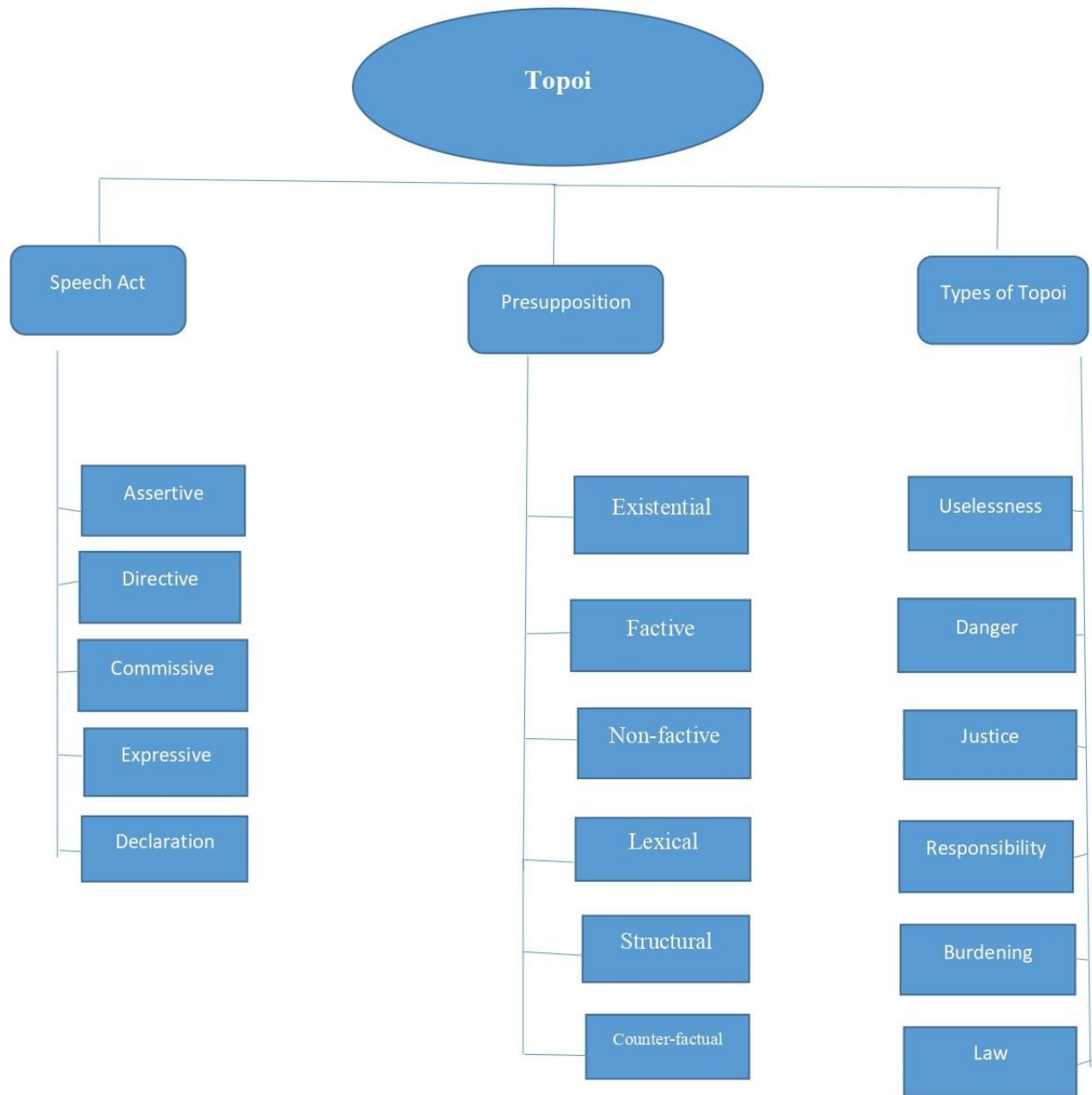
4.2 Data Collection and Description

The data collection process passed through the following stages: searching the websites to get a site that contains Trump's tweets; the "Trump Twitter Archive" website was accessed at the URL https://www.thetrumparchive.com/. It contained 56,571 tweets launched between 2009 and 2021, which means that all the selected tweets are from the same source; reading the tweets in depth to choose the tweets that contain the topoi strategy; choosing ten tweets which are the most representative of the topoi strategy to be the data of analysis.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Tweet One

> *Crooked Hillary Clinton wants to flood our country with Syrian immigrants that we know little or nothing about. The danger is massive. NO!*

Jul 27th 2016

5.1.1 Speech Act/Directive

In the context of the American presidential elections 2016, Trump, in this tweet, shows the disadvantages of Hilary Clinton that may cause danger for the country and finally ends his tweet with the word **no**, implying to request people not to vote for Hilary Clinton. It is a kind of indirect speech act of request.

5.1.2 Presupposition/ existential

Trump here tries to presuppose that there is a danger because of Clinton's wrong immigration policy.

By employing speech act and presupposition, Trump attempts to support his argument of relating the premises **of flooding our country with Syrian immigrants** to the conclusion; **The danger is massive.** This topos is usually called danger and threat.

5.2 Tweet Two

> Corrupt Joe Biden has confirmed that he "would give UNLIMITED Healthcare to Illegal Immigrants". This would break our system and bring millions of people to the USA. @foxandfriends

> Jun 28th 2020

5.2.1 Presupposition/ existential

This tweet was published in the context of the American presidential elections 2020. By the expression **This would break our system** Trump presupposes that America has a strong system, implicating that he is qualified to be elected again.

5.2.2 Speech Act/Factive

The topoi in this tweet are expressed by connecting the premise of **unlimited healthcare to illegal immigrants** to the conclusion of **break our system and bring millions of people to the USA**. This type of topos is called burdening.

5.3 Tweet Three

> The migrant 'caravan' that is openly defying our border shows how weak &amp, ineffective U.S. immigration laws are. Yet Democrats like Jon Tester continue to support the open borders agenda – Tester even voted to protect Sanctuary Cities. We need lawmakers who will put America First.

> Apr 30th 2018

5.3.1 Speech Act/Directive

By the expression **We need lawmakers who will put America First,** Trump implies the indirect speech act of request to vote for lawmakers who will put America first.

5.3.2 Presupposition/ existential, factive, non-factive

This tweet consists of more than one presupposition. By the expression **The migrant 'caravan' that is openly defying our border**, Trump presupposes that there is an open border through which migrant passes to the country. Trump presupposes that Tester supports the open borders as a fact through the expression, **Democrats like Jon Tester continue to support the open borders agenda.** Finally, Trump presupposes that America is not regarded first by using the expression **We need lawmakers who will put America First**.

This tweet is shooted in the context of preparing for the American presidential elections 2020. Trump employs two metaphors, **caravan** and **defying,** as premises that lead to the end, which is **weak, &amp, ineffective U.S. immigration laws.** This topos is called uselessness.

5.4 Tweet Four

> It's the Democrats' fault; they won't give us the votes needed to pass good immigration legislation. They want open borders, which breeds horrible crime. Republicans want security. But I am working on something - it never ends!

> Jun 20th 2018

5.4.1 Speech act/ commissive

Through the expression **But I am working on something**, Trump implies the speech act of commissive, promising to work on something.

5.4.2 Presupposition/ lexical

In this tweet, Trump uses the word **breeds** in the expression, **which breeds horrible crime,** presupposing the meaning of creating horrible crime.

In this tweet, Trump employs the topos that combine three forms of law and right, responsibility, and danger by linking the premise of open borders with horrible crime and, at the same time, abstaining the Democrats from voting to the Republicans to pass good immigration legislation. Through these topos, Trump implies that the Democrats are disloyal to the country and he is the one who works on the country's interests.

5.5 Tweet Five

> *The Democrats in Congress are getting nothing done, not on drug pricing, not on immigration, not on infrastructure, not on nothing! Sooo much opportunity, yet all they want to do is go "fishing." The American people are tired of the never ending Witch Hunt; they want results now!*
>
> Jul 17th 2019

5.5.1 Speech act/ expressive, directive

In this tweet, there are two uses of speech act. The first one is in the expression **The American people are tired of the never ending Witch Hunt,** where Trump expresses his and American's feeling that they are tired of the never ending Witch Hunt**.** The second one is in the expression **they want results now,** where Trump implies indirect order to the Democrats to present results.

5.5.2 Presupposition/ existential

Trump presupposes that there are drugs, illegal immigration and bad infrastructure.

Trump here shows the negativity and uselessness of the Democrats and links them with the people's fatigue. Through these topos, Trump tries to undermine his opponents, preparing for the American presidential elections in 2020. In addition, he uses the word *fishing* metaphorically, mocking the Democrats. This topos is called uselessness or disadvantage.

Statistical Table

Presupposition	Existential 4	Factive 2	Non-factive 1	Lexical 1
Speech Act	Directive 3	Expressive 1	Commisive 1	

6. Results

According to the qualitative analysis, the study finds the following results:

1. The main role of topoi in Trump's tweets is to undermine the opponents and win the votes of the audience.
2. In the five selected tweets, there are four uses of the presupposition of existential, two presuppositions of factive, one of non-factive and one lexical presupposition.
3. Three directives, one for each expressive and commisive speech act, are employed in these tweets.
4. The types of topoi uselessness, danger and threat, and law and right have been repeated three times.

7. Discussions

Due to the results above, the study discusses the following points:

1. It is clear that topoi are influential, effective and persuasive strategies that Trump uses to bring down his political opponents on the one hand and to win the votes of the audience. This is what proves the first hypothesis.
2. Presupposition and speech act theories of pragmatics, which are selected in the analytical model, are employed in Trum'p's tweets but with uneven frequencies. Thus, this is also what asserts the second hypothesis.
3. The presupposition is the most employed in Trump's tweets. Therefore, this is what does not prove the third hypothesis.
4. Uselessness, danger and threat, and law and right are the most employed same frequency. Thus, the fourth hypothesis of the study is proved with the addition of uselessness and law and the right types of topoi.

8. Conclusion

The study concludes that the topoi strategy is one of the most important political strategies that politicians employ in order to achieve their political and personal benefits. Trump employs this strategy to bring down his political opponents, especially his opponent in the 2020 elections, Biden, and thus to gain the confidence of his electorate. The study discovers that in underlying his speech, Trump relies on the use of two theories of pragmatism, namely speech acts and presupposition, with the difference in the

use of their various types. He also focuses on the effective and powerful types of topoi in order to make his argumentation more effective and influential over the audience.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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