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Political Discourse Analysis: Analyzing Building Tasks in Trump's Speech in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate how the tasks of significance and identities are built in President Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia to find how President Trump employs language to perform these two building tasks. President Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia was analyzed qualitatively according to Gee's (2011) building tasks model. It has been found that President Trump enacts and builds the significance task by carefully selecting lexical items, cooperative patterns, lexical choice, and compliments. Furthermore, President Trump enacts particular identities and attributes specific identities to others in his speech, such as political, social, and cooperative identities. The analysis shows that President Trump shifts between the identities such as President of the U.S., a representative of the American People, a fighter and defender of American citizens and the world's safety and security, a businessman, a well-educated and knowledgeable person. This study recommends that future research investigate other political speeches delivered by President Trump based on any of the seven-building tasks of language that did not cover in this study.

Keywords: political discourse, building tasks, identities, significance, Trump's speech

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Introduction

Language is used to build things in the world and to participate in world-building. It's like if you could create a building merely by speaking words. While we cannot construct a building with words alone, we may construct things in the world with words that achieve activities and enact identities (Gee, 2011). The relationships between language, politics, and power can be investigated using Critical Discourse Analysis. It introduces a novel approach to analyzing public addresses. As a result, it is worthwhile to pay closer attention to analyzing political speeches (Wang, 2010). Political leaders always aim to attract their audiences and influence their people by employing different linguistic forms, accepting their thoughts more easily. Therefore, they may include their ideologies and reflect what interests their audiences in their speeches which creates trust in the minds of the recipients. Consequently, their ideologies can be accepted as implemented in their discourse (Al-Zawahreh, 2019: 10). Critical discourse analysis focuses on the idea that language is a fundamental part of social life, dialectically intertwined with other aspects of social life, and social analysis and research should always consider language (Fairclough, 2004). According to Van Dijk (2001), critical discourse analysis focuses on the ways discourse structures deal with the interrelationships between language and power, ideology and dominance in society. Thus, addressing such discourse produced by politicians, such as President Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia, occurs within the domain of critical discourse analysis.

The study of the seven-building task is essential because it exposes how language is utilized in the political discourse to build certain functions and influence public opinion. Like any other discourse genre, political discourses have their distinct linguistic structures, and a study of the specific nature of such a structure is a significant academic endeavor. Accordingly, this study extracts some descriptive and interpretive elements of President Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia. Political leaders pay extra attention to their speeches at the national or worldwide levels as they address people from various political, cultural, and social backgrounds. President Trump, like many other political leaders, has given several well-known speeches.

Generally, this study attempts to determine how language is employed in President Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia to know how the significance and identities are built-in President Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia based on Gee's (2011) seven-building tasks model.

More specifically, this research aims to achieve the following aims.

1. To find out how is President Trump can highlight the significance of certain ideas/things in his political speech.
2. To illustrate the identity or identities that President Trump enacts in his speech and identities attributed to others.

Questions of the study

The purpose of this study is to find answers to the following questions.

1. How does the President Trump's language employ to make specific ideas/things sound significant?
2. What identities are enacted in Trump's speech? And what identities are attributed to others?

Literature Review

We create or construct things in the world via language. So when we speak or write, we frequently create or build seven things or seven aspects of "reality." Gee (2011) calls them the "seven building tasks" of language: significance, identities, practices, relationships, politics, connections, sign systems, and knowledge. Hence this study is aimed to examine how language is employed in President Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia in terms of the two-building tasks, namely, significant, identity according to Gee's (2011) model.

Gee (2011:211) defines significance as one of the seven-building tasks as "Using language to make things significant or important in various ways or to lower their significance or importance." Furthermore, Gee (2011:207) defines identity as "how we recognize and act out different social roles or different social positions in society." Finally, discourse analysis is a relatively new area of linguistics that has been broadly characterized as an investigation of language in use and is primarily concerned with extra-sentential levels (Brown & Yule, 1983). Discourse analysis analyzes the patterns that people's utterances follow when they communicate in different domains of social life, such as medical discourse and political discourse (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). According to (Gee 2011, p. 204), Critical Discourse Analysis refers to "any form of discourse analysis that seeks to engage with politics. Critical discourse analysis deals with whose "interests" are represented, helped, or harmed as people speak and write." In addition, Critical discourse analysis is based on a critical theory of language, which views language as a social practice (Janks 1997, p. 329).

Van Dijk (1997, p.12) states that political discourse is identified by "its *actors* or *authors*, viz., *politicians*." He added that the vast majority of political discourse research focuses on the text and speech of professional leaders or political parties. Political discourse is primarily argumentative discourse and primarily involves practical argumentation for or against lines of action in response to political problems (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, p.242).

Building tasks investigated in previous studies in a variety of disciplines as well as political discourse such as presidential speeches. Furthermore, previous studies on discourse analysis have focused on several approaches towards critical political discourse analysis see (Al-Haq & Al-Sleibi, 2015, Al Zawahreh, 2019, Hamood, 2019, Horváth, 2009, Riesner, 2016, Sarfo & Krampa, 2013). Other previous studies investigated Gee's (2011) model (Ruane and Lee 2016) in the discussion board interaction in an online peer-mentoring site. For example, Strunc and King (2017) applied Gee's (2011) seven building tasks to analyze Texas government standards, and Wijayanti (2016) applied Gee's (2011) seven building tasks and Systemic Functional Grammar to the interaction between the King and the Therapist. Horváth (2009) critically analyzed President Obama's public speaking persuasive strategies and the covert ideology that he enshrined in his inauguration speech based on Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach. The results identified Obama's ideological structure as being present in the speech. In addition to placing Obama's speech in the context of President George W. Bush's outgoing administration. Sarfo and Krampa (2013) conducted a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Bush and Obama's speeches on terrorism based on van Dijk's concept of (CDA). The findings show that by carefully choosing emotionally charged words and expressions, both presidents projected terrorism negatively while

projecting anti-terrorism positively. In addition, Bush and Obama's speeches were replete with references to power as control, mind control, and context control.

Al-Haq & Al-Sleibi (2015) conducted a political critical discourse analysis to figure out King Abdullah II's main linguistic strategies in his speeches. The findings indicated that King Abdullah uses four persuasive strategies: creativity, reference, intertextuality, and circumlocution. Furthermore, these strategies are competently employed to deliver his messages.

Riesner (2016) analyzed a 6-million word corpus of speeches that Obama held between January 2009 and January 2016, published by the White House. The researcher embraced the theory that the speaker purposefully formed identity and strategically used it to achieve his communicative objectives. Riesner looks at what kinds of identities Obama creates, as well as tracing the use of two major discursive identities in the ACA debate using a set of seven epistemic verbs. The findings showed that President Obama repeatedly constructs the identities of father and teacher to persuade his audience. Al Zawahreh (2019) applied Gee's (2011) model to analyze the different speeches of Mandela. How the tasks of significance, identities, relationships, and connections are built in some of Nelson Mandela's speeches and how Mandela employs language to perform these four tasks or functions. The findings indicated that Mandela relies heavily on lexical choice, contextualized meanings, comparisons, and compliments, in building the significance task. Furthermore, Mandela enacts political and social identities in his speeches; sometimes, he switches from one identity to another. Moreover, Mandela builds social, global, and political relationships with others.

Additionally, Hamood (2019) analyzes the political discourse of U.S. President Donald Trump concerning the transfer of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and The political discourse is analyzed critically according to van Dijk's thematic theory. The findings indicated that Donald Trump's decision was based on individualism and how president Donald Trump was so contradictory in his speech, especially to the Palestinian side, and how his decision reflected his domestic political considerations on a fair and practical approach to foreign policy.

Ruane and Lee (2016) conducted CDA to investigate Gee's (2011) model, four-building tasks: significance, identities, practices, and relationships in the discussion board interaction in an online peer-mentoring site among preservice teachers in the education program. The findings indicated that the online discussion facilitates valuable communication and professional interactions among the preservice teachers. Strunc and King (2017) conducted CDA, applied Gee's (2011) seven building tasks (significance, identities, practices, relationships, politics, connections, and signs, systems, and knowledge) to analyze Texas government standards. The findings of CDA's indicated a set of learning standards that was heavily biased.

Wijayanti (2016) conducted discourse analysis in Tom Hooper's The King's Speech applied Gee's (2011) seven building tasks and Systemic Functional Grammar on the interaction between the King and the Therapist. The findings reveal the significance of language in overcoming someone's speech disorder. Thus, none of those mentioned above studies analyzed the seven-building tasks in President Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, previous studies on discourse analysis have focused on several approaches towards critical discourse analysis.

Therefore, based on the previous related literature review, the present study analyzes the two types of Gee's (2011) building tasks in President Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia.

Method

This section presents the method of analyzing the political speech of President Trump in Saudi Arabia according to Gee's (2011) model in terms of the two-building tasks, namely, significant, and identity. It includes samples, data collection, and methods of analysis.

Sample and Data collection

The analysis sample consists of all the political speeches of U.S. President Donald Trump, delivered in Saudi Arabia on May 21, 2017. He outlined his vision for U.S. and Muslim relations in front of Muslim leaders. Table 1 shows that Tramp's speech includes 3425 words that constitute 190 sentences and 89 paragraphs.

Table 1. *Statistic of Tramp's speech*

Statistical items	Statistic
	Tramp's speech
Words	3425
Sentences	190
Paragraphs	89

Method of Analysis

Gee's (2011) framework, which he refers to as the "seven building tasks of language," is beneficial for researching how individuals use language (p. 32). The present study adopts the qualitative approach to analyze the political speech of U.S. President Donald Trump in Saudi Arabia. Studies looking at political speeches in general (Al Zawahreh, 2019) and presidential speeches in particular (Al-Haq & Al-Sleibi, 2015, Horváth, 2009, Sarfo & Krampa, 2013) have demonstrated the utility of qualitative approaches. Thus, qualitative analysis is a suitable approach to analyzing the political discourse. Therefore, the present study adopts Gee's (2011) model of building tasks to analyze the political speech of President Trump in Saudi Arabia in terms of the two-building tasks, namely, significance and identity. The way an individual uses language to assign greater or lesser importance to specific ideas or things is called significance (Gee, 2011). The concept of identity is that an individual will use language to enact or ascribe one's identity to someone else (Gee, 2011).

Findings and discussion

This section presents the analysis findings of the building tasks, namely, the significance and identity obtained from President Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia. The findings are presented based on the two research questions.

How is President Trump's language employed to make specific ideas/things sound significant?

The speech of Donald Trump makes certain things significant. In the beginning, Trump highlights the significance of the Summit as shown in "I want to thank King Salman for his extraordinary words, and the magnificent Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting today's summit." Then, Trump uses words to show the significance of the summit "Here at this summit we will discuss many interests we share together.", He highlighted the significance as shown in "With God's help, this

Table 2. *Frequent political keyword clouds in President Trump's speech*

No	Keywords	Frequency
1.	Nations	22
2.	People	19
3.	New, Region	14
4.	Great, world, America, terror	12
5.	Security, Saudi, Muslim,	11
6.	United, Today, future, Middle	10
7.	Peace	9
8.	Saudi Arabia, Leaders, God, East, countries, citizens	8
9.	American, Muslim, terrorism, terrorists, Iran	7
10	Ideology, History, center	6

What identities are enacted in Trump's speech? And what identities are attributed to others?

The speech analysis reveals that Trump enacts particular identities and attributes specific identities to others. The identities that President Trump enacts in his speech were as the following. First, President Trump enacts the role of President of the U.S. Second, President Trump enacts the identity of a stereotype fighter and defender of American citizens and the world's safety and security. Third, President Trump enacts the identity of a businessman who signs many historic agreements with Saudi Arabia, strengthening previous partnerships and building new partnerships with Islamic Worlds. Finally, President Trump enacts the identity of a well-educated and knowledgeable person who knows a lot about Islam and the History and cultures of the Middle East countries.

Firstly, Trump enacts the identity of President of the U.S. in which he wants to form closer bonds of friendship with the Arab countries. As in, "I stand before you as a representative of the American People, to deliver a message of friendship" This identity was supported by various words used by Trump as in, "strengthen America's oldest friendships," "build new partnerships," and "cooperation and trust." Furthermore, he talks about the most profound partnership between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. As shown in "Working alongside another beloved leader American President Franklin Roosevelt, King Abdulaziz began the enduring partnership between our two countries" and "today, we begin a new chapter that will bring lasting benefits to our citizens." Further, President Trump delivers a message to the leaders and citizens of every country who gathered at this Summit since he says, "I want you to know that the United States is eager to form closer bonds of friendship, security, culture, and commerce."

Secondly, Trump enacts the identity of a stereotype fighter and defender of American citizens and the world's safety and security. He commits himself to protect the American people as the defender of the American people as in "our first priority is always the safety and security of our citizens." Furthermore, he pledges to fight against terrorism, extremism and defeat the forces of terrorism as in, "to conquer extremism and vanquish the forces of terrorism." He adds, as in, "Above all, America seeks peace -not war." He named this battle as in, "This is a battle between Good and Evil." He asks Arab countries to join the U.S. in this Battle "I ask you to join me, to join together, to work together, and to FIGHT together— BECAUSE UNITED, WE WILL NOT

FAIL." He was careful in choosing the lexical items such as "join me," "to join together," "to work together," "to FIGHT together," "unified and determined," "to destroy the terror," and "threatens the world" to make his speech more powerful and effective.

Third, President Trump enacts the identity of a businessman who signs many historic agreements with Saudi Arabia, strengthening previous partnerships and building new partnerships with Islamic Worlds. As shown in "we have created almost a million new jobs, added over 3 trillion dollars of new value". Further, Trump states that "yesterday, we signed historic agreements with the Kingdom that will invest almost \$400 billion in our two countries and create many thousands of jobs in America and Saudi Arabia." "This landmark agreement includes the announcement of a \$110 billion Saudi-funded defense purchase," "we are here to offer partnership." Furthermore, he adds, "The Middle East is rich with natural beauty, vibrant cultures, and massive amounts of historic treasures," and "It should increasingly become one of the great global centers of commerce and opportunity."

Finally, President Trump enacts the identity of a well-educated and knowledgeable person who knows a lot about Islam and the History and cultures of the Middle East countries, as shown in the following excerpts. "You also hosted me in the treasured home of King Abdulaziz, the founder of the Kingdom who united your great people." Furthermore, Trump knows that Saudi Arabia is the heart of the Muslim world. He uses a language that gives a valuable perspective of Islam. as shown in "I chose to make my first foreign visit a trip to the heart of the Muslim world, to the nation that serves as custodian of the two holiest sites in the Islamic Faith. " He shows that he a knowledgeable person who knows about Islam as shown in "Saudi Arabia is home to the holiest sites in one of the world's great faiths." He further adds, "Each year, millions of Muslims come from around the world to Saudi Arabia to take part in the Hajj."

Moreover, Trump acknowledges the potential of this region by talking about Egypt, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, and Iraq, as shown in the following excerpts. "Egypt was a thriving center of learning and achievement thousands of years" "The wonders of Giza, Luxor, and Alexandria" "All over the world, people dream of walking through the ruins of Petra in Jordan." "Iraq was the cradle of civilization and is a land of natural beauty." And" the United Arab Emirates has reached incredible heights with glass and steel." "The entire region is at the center of the key shipping lanes of the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, and the Straits of Hormuz."

Identities attributed to others in Trump's speech

Firstly, President Trump attributes a specific identity to others as in "Muslim-majority countries," "the nations of the Middle East," "Religious leaders," "political leaders" explicitly to take their responsibility to counter-terrorism and to be with him in this battle against the terrorism, "combating radicalization," and "combating extremist ideology." President Trump uses expressive words and expressions to make his speech effective, as in "If we do not act against this organized terror, then we know what will happen. Terrorism's devastation of life will continue to spread". Further, he adds, "If we do not stand in uniform condemnation of this killing then not only will we be judged by our people, not only will we be judged by history, but God will judge us." Additionally, President Trump made it clear that the U.S. is not going to defeat terrorism on behalf of Muslim nations as he states "more than 95 percent of the victims of terrorism are themselves

Muslim." He also made an explicit declaration that "Muslim-majority countries must take the lead in combating radicalization." He used the word "must" to show the obligation as in "Religious leaders must make this absolutely clear: Barbarism will deliver you no glory - piety to evil will bring you no dignity. If you choose the path of terror, your life will be empty, your life will be brief, and YOUR SOUL WILL BE CONDEMNED" and in "Political leaders must speak out to affirm the same idea: heroes don't kill innocents; they save them."

Secondly, President Trump attributes a specific identity to Iran as the responsible regime for instability in the region, ISIS, and Hezbollah as a terrorist organization as shown in the following excerpts. "the government that gives terrorists all three—safe harbor, financial backing, and the social standing needed for recruitment." "I am speaking, of course, of Iran." He further adds that Iran funds the terrorists in Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq, as shown in "From Lebanon to Iraq to Yemen, Iran funds, arms, and trains terrorists, militias, and other extremist groups that spread destruction and chaos across the region. For decades, Iran has fueled the fires of sectarian conflict and terror." Additionally, Trump clearly states Iran has stoked sectarian strife and violence in the Middle East. As shown in the following excerpts, "It is a government that speaks openly of mass murder" and "Iran's most tragic and destabilizing interventions have been in Syria."

Further, he made an explicit declaration that Hezbollah and ISIS are terrorist organizations. Therefore, we must take action to combat radicalization. Trump used the word "must" to show the obligation as "We must also strip them of their access to funds," "We must cut off the financial channels that let ISIS sell oil," and "designating Hezbollah as a terrorist organization." Finally, Trump states that responsible nations must work together to end the humanitarian disaster in Syria, defeat ISIS, and restore regional security.

Conclusion

Gee (2011) states that there are tools of inquiry used to analyze the seven "building tasks" that we use language to enact in the world. According to Gee (2011), inquiry tools are employed to analyze the seven "building tasks" that we use language to enact in the world. The tools of inquiry are social languages, discourses, conversations, and intertextuality.

This investigation adequately validated the conceptual framework that language can develop an ideology between the speaker and the audience. This study further supported that political discourses are generally characterized by carefully selected linguistic expressions by speakers especially presidents or government elites to achieve a specific aim or objective and to have a specific kind of impact on listeners. The importance of the study is embedded in its findings, which may give insightful remarks into the nature of the political discourse and Gee's (2011) seven building tasks. Moreover, this study can be a good reference for discourse analysts who use Gee's (2011) model of analyzing the seven-building tasks in various genres of discourses.

The current study shows how to find how Trump employs language to perform these two building tasks. Furthermore, the findings show that Trump enacts the significance of specific themes in his speech by using various functions linguistically, such as careful selecting of sublime words and lexical choice. Trump's speech in Saudi Arabia shows that Trump is found to enact specific identities, and He attributes a specific identity to others, including political, social, and

cooperative identities. However, the present study is limited to use Gee's model of building tasks to analyze the political discourse of President Trump's speech. Therefore, future research is recommended to apply this building task model in other academic discourse and literary genres.

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