

RESEARCH TITLE

A Rhetorical Pragmatic Study of Etiquette in Political Speeches

Lect. Dr. Zina Abdul-Hussein Khudhair¹, Lect. Dr. Hasan Imad Kadhim¹

¹ University of Babylon, College of Education for Human Sciences, Department of English, Iraq.

Email: Hum975.zynh.abdulhussein@uobabylon.edu.iq alkhafajihasan@uobabylon.edu.iq

HNSJ, 2026, 7(5); <https://doi.org/10.53796/hnsj75/44>

Received at 15/04/2026

Accepted at 22/04/2026

Published at 01/05/2026

Abstract

This study investigates the rhetorical-pragmatic use of etiquette in Donald Trump's presidential victory speech, focusing on how linguistic choices contribute to constructing political politeness, solidarity, and persuasion. The study examines etiquette as a communicative practice shaped by social norms, appropriate verbal behaviour, and the strategic management of speaker–audience relations. It adopts an eclectic analytical model combining speech act theory with selected rhetorical devices, particularly metaphor and repetition. The analysis seeks to identify the most frequent speech acts employed in the speech and the dominant rhetorical strategies used to project etiquette and strengthen the persuasive force of the address. The findings show that Trump's speech employs a range of speech acts, including stating, promising, asserting, commanding, thanking, apologizing, threatening, and telling. Among these, stating appears most frequently, while promising is central to shaping the future-oriented and persuasive character of the speech. Rhetorically, repetition is used extensively to emphasize gratitude, unity, urgency, and national renewal, whereas metaphor is employed to personify America and evoke emotional attachment to the nation. The study concludes that Trump's political etiquette is not limited to conventional politeness expressions, but is strategically constructed through pragmatic and rhetorical choices that reinforce unity, patriotism, authority, and audience engagement. The research contributes to studies of political discourse, pragmatics, and rhetoric by showing how etiquette functions as a persuasive tool in presidential speech-making.

Key Words: linguistic etiquette, political discourse, speech acts, rhetorical pragmatics, repetition, metaphor, Trump's victory speech.

دراسة تداولية بلاغية للإتيكيت في الخطابات السياسية

المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة الاستخدام التداولي البلاغي للإتيكيت في خطاب النصر الرئاسي لدونالد ترامب، مع التركيز على الكيفية التي تسهم بها الاختيارات اللغوية في بناء التهذيب السياسي والتضامن والإقناع. وتتنظر الدراسة إلى الإتيكيت بوصفه ممارسة تواصلية تتشكل وفق المعايير الاجتماعية والسلوك اللفظي الملائم والإدارة الاستراتيجية للعلاقة بين المتحدث والجمهور. وتعتمد الدراسة نموذجًا تحليليًا انتقائيًا يجمع بين نظرية أفعال الكلام وبعض الوسائل البلاغية المختارة، ولا سيما الاستعارة والتكرار. وتهدف إلى تحديد أكثر أفعال الكلام تكرارًا في الخطاب، والكشف عن أبرز الاستراتيجيات البلاغية المستخدمة لإظهار الإتيكيت وتعزيز القوة الإقناعية للخطاب. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن خطاب ترامب يوظف مجموعة من أفعال الكلام، منها: التقرير، والوعد، والتأكيد، والأمر، والشكر، والاعتذار، والتهديد، والإخبار. ويُعد فعل التقرير الأكثر تكرارًا، في حين يمثل الوعد عنصرًا محوريًا في تشكيل الطابع المستقبلي والإقناعي للخطاب. أما بلاغيًا، فقد استخدم التكرار على نطاق واسع لتأكيد الامتثال والوحدة والإلحاح والتجديد الوطني، بينما وُظفت الاستعارة لتشخيص أمريكا وإثارة الارتباط العاطفي بالأمة. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الإتيكيت السياسي في خطاب ترامب لا يقتصر على عبارات المجاملة التقليدية، بل يتشكل استراتيجيًا من خلال اختيارات تداولية وبلاغية تعزز الوحدة والوطنية والسلطة والتفاعل مع الجمهور. وتسهم هذه الدراسة في دراسات الخطاب السياسي والتداولية والبلاغة من خلال إبراز كيفية توظيف الإتيكيت أداة إقناعية في صناعة الخطاب الرئاسي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإتيكيت اللغوي، الخطاب السياسي، أفعال الكلام، التداولية البلاغية، التكرار، الاستعارة، خطاب النصر لترامب.

1. Introduction

The term *etiquette* denotes "the formal rules of proper behaviour", i.e., the regulations defining good manners in social, public, or official behaviour (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1978: 373). The label *linguistic etiquette* refers to the practice in any speech community of organizing linguistic action so that it is seen as appropriate to the current communicative event and the context in which it is produced (Kasper, 2007: 257).

Linguistic etiquette means that we have to be able to engage with a variety of audiences who have either the intent of helping us, hurting us, (or at least sacrificing our interests in favour of their own, as is often seen in policy) or monitoring our success (neither harming nor encouraging, merely not wanting us to get ahead). While dealing with these forces, we have to protect ourselves. So, here we are caught in a world and so we have to know how to balance that world (ibid.).

1.2 The Problem

This study attempts to shed light on the linguistic etiquette of Trump's victory speech to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the most common types of speech acts issued in Trump's speech?
2. What are the rhetorical devices employed by Trump to show his etiquette?

1.2 The Aims

This study aims at:

1. Finding out the most common types of speech acts employed by Trump .
2. Identifying the most common rhetorical devices employed by Trump to make up his etiquette.

1.3 The Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

1. The speech acts of stating and promising can be the most common types used in Trump victory speech.
2. Repetition and metaphor are the most common rhetorical devices that form Trump's etiquette.

1.4 The Procedures

In order to achieve the aims of the study and test its hypotheses, the following procedures will be adopted:

1. Reviewing the relevant literature about the term etiquette, its meanings, and functions.
2. Analysing Trump's victory speech using an eclectic model.

1.5 The Limits

This study is limited to the analysis of the American presidential victory speech delivered by Trump.

1.6 The Value

Hopefully, this study will benefit students of pragmatics, rhetoric, and those who are interested in the field of politics.

Etiquette: A Theoretical Background

2.1 Introductory Remarks

Human beings do not live in isolation, but rather they are born for sociability and finding their ties within society. The word society has different meanings. Here, it is used to refer to a group of people living together with different ties. Each person in a society has his own identity. The young man who makes his first entrance to society should know the manners of that society. He should also know how to form his identity, how to choose his friends, how to behave towards them using the different rules of etiquette(Hartley, n.d. 1).

One of the first rules of etiquettes that a man should learn is how to behave in conversations. In their interactions, people should avoid political and religious matters because these will lead to irritating and differences of opinions. Participants should not forget the names of each other. Each participant should know his turn, he should know when to start a conversation and when to end such a conversation. Participants should use what they have learnt from books in order to speak correctly, accurately, and to enrich their conversations(ibid.:2-3).

2.2 What is Etiquette

The Heritage American Dictionary(1978) [cited in Miller(2002:2)] gives two definitions of the term *etiquette*. The first definition, an etiquette is an umbrella term of prescribed social behaviours. The second definition of an etiquette is that it is a particular 'code' of behavior or curtesy.

Miller(2002:2) defines an etiquette as a form of good manners that we encounter in our everyday lives. It is a socially appropriate behaviour. It refers to the involvement of more than one participant in the process of communication. The participants are required to obey a set of rules in the turn taking in order not to break down the process of communication. Saying "thank you", "please", and any form of polite behaviour are the appropriate manners to start a conversation with.

2.3 Etiquette: A Historical Overview

Etymologically, the word etiquette is a French one meaning a bag or a label. In its modern sense, the word etiquette is used in English (1750)(Web Resource, 1).

The first use of the word refers to such terms as truthfulness, self –control, and kindness towards one another. Speakers have learnt to listen to each other, avoiding struggles and conflicts, applying justice and getting rid of greed and any other evil things(ibid.).

In China, Confucius(551BC) who was a teacher, editor, and professor emphasized governmental morality, correctness of social relationships, justice, and sincerity(ibid.).

In Arabic during the eightieth century, the first book that is written about etiquette is entitled "The Instructions of Ptah Hotep". In this book, there are a father and a son. The father teaches his son the proper manners and the rules of behaviour(Al-Rababa'h and Malkawi, n.d. :15).

In the nineteenth century, the aim behind using an etiquette is to protect the upper class from the intrusion of the impairment. At that time, people behave strictly and they live in a spiritual vacuum. Thus, the term etiquette is used to lessen the impact of the rude behaviour of people(ibid.).

Linguistically, Geertz(1960) studies etiquette in Java. He defines an etiquette as " a wall built around one's self in order to protect his inner feeling"(ibid.).

In Arabic, the first linguistic study is made by Al- Hassan. He attempts to study the Jordanian Arabic patterns of linguistic etiquette used at Jordanian shop. The findings of the study show that the customers use certain socio- cultural norms in order to show politeness and curtesy to each other(ibid.).

2.4 Characteristics of Etiquettes

Etiquettes have two characteristics.

2.4.1 Different Etiquette for Different Interactions

This characteristic implies that each situation has its own etiquette. In other words, for each context, there are a set of appropriate rules or manners that should be followed. For example, meeting a friend saying Hello, while meeting a teacher, the way of greetings differs(Miller, 2002:2).

2.4.2 Etiquette is Functional, yet Arbitrary

An etiquette is functional and its functions are homogenous across societies and cultures, but its forms are arbitrary and variable across cultures. For example, most societies have a way of showing deference in making a request, but the way of making such a request varies from one society to another(ibid.).

Etiquette: A Rhetorical Pragmatic Perspective

3.1 Introductory Remarks

This section is intended to shed light on some pragmatic notions such as speech act theory along with some rhetorical devices such as persuasion, metaphor, and repetition. In so doing, an eclectic model will be developed for the analysis of the data under scrutiny.

3.2 Speech Act Theory

The speech act theory reveals that apart from conveying information, language is used to perform an action. In other words, politicians use language to perform such speech acts as making a promise, declaring a war, making an accusation in a court of law, persuading people to vote during elections, and so forth. Because of such considerations, Austin, in his book *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), drew a distinction between *performative* and *constative* utterances : *performatives* create a state of affairs while *constatives* describe them (Chilton and Schaffner, 2002 :10).

Searle(1996), on the other hand, analyses utterances into illocutionary force and a propositional content. All utterances have a proposition; a reference to state of affairs. At the same time, utterances have a potential impact on the social process, i.e. the illocutionary force may issue a command, offer an apology, make an assertion, and so forth. Searle 1969 also introduced the notion of *perlocutionary effect* which refers to the effect of the utterances on the addressee. Such an act is of crucial significance in political propaganda discourse as it points to the potential discrepancy between intended effect(that is, effect that hearers infer to be intended) and the actual effect on the hearers(Chilton and Schaffner, 2002 :10- 11).

3.3 Metaphor in Political Discourse

Being an artistic tool, metaphor refers to something other than what is literally mentioned. It is used in different fields of study. The two most important fields are literature and politics. It is a matter of a style employed by writers of literature and politicians to persuade their audiences. Metaphors are examples of figurative language that involves a special type of comparison or identification between two things. The comparison is implicit(Knowels and Moon,2006: 1-3).

Political metaphor, on the other hand, has a long history. It is regarded as an important tool used by politicians in order to be more persuasive. It is a matter of words rather than thought or action. It plays a vital role in depicting social reality by saying words, but meaning another (Carver and Pikalo, 2008: 41-2).

There are two types of metaphor. The first is the so-called linguistic metaphor in which words are understood figuratively. The second is the so-called conceptual metaphor in which metaphor can be understood as a cognitive device. In both types, metaphor can be associated with the appeal to pathos. It is meant to arouse the audience's emotions and feelings. Metaphors are the fruitful device of politicians. They try to reach the heart of their audiences so as to achieve their purposes (idid.: 272).

According to (Vestemark, 2007: 2), conceptual metaphor can be divided in to:

1. The world as a community.
2. Nation as a person: "It is time to realize that *we are too great a nation to limit ourselves to small dreams*".
(Ronald Reagan)
3. Nation with human attribute: "*America at its best is compassionate*".
(George W. Bush)
4. Nation acting human: "We know we have to face hard truths and take strong steps".
(William Bill Clinton)

3.4 Repetition in Political Discourse

Repetition has been defined differently by different linguists. Cudden (1982:564) defines it as an important element that is used in literature. Gray (1984:172) defines it as "a vital part of the language of literature both in verse and prose". Professor Hawthorn's definition (2000:301) is: "a key means whereby the technical rate of redundancy is increased in a work".

Repetition, according to the way it occurs, is of three main types: semantic, formal, and full.

3.4.1 Semantic Repetition

Repetition is defined as the recurrence of some unit of language. However, it may not be a full repetition: the recurrence may be just in content (i.e. in meaning) and this is particularly what is meant by 'semantic' repetition. Repeating the same – or almost the same – meaning may be attained through more than one way, such as 'paraphrasing', and 'reflexive pronouns'. For example:

-I had never seen a *murderer ...the decent symbol which indemnifies the taker of life.*

(Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981:58)

3.4.1.1 Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a form of semantic repetition which could be defined as "the recurrence of content with a change of expression" (Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981:58), that is, "a restatement of an idea in such a way as to retain the meaning while changing the form" (Thrall and Hibbard, 1960: 340).

3.4.2 Formal Repetition

By 'formal' repetition it is meant the recurrence of form i.e. repeating some unit of language – mostly a word – just in form, that is, with a different meaning or referent. When some word is said to be repeated, it is usually meant that it is a repetition with the same meaning and referent.

Why does this little *boy* have to wriggle all the time? Other *boys* don't wriggle.

(Halliday and Hassan, 1976:282)

3.4.3 Full Repetition

The third type of repetition occurs when words or larger linguistic units are repeated both in form and meaning: this is the commonest type of repetition.

- *I can do it I can do it.*

Data Analysis

4.1 Introductory Remarks

This section is intended to develop a model for the analysis of Trump's victory speech.

4.2 The Model of the Study

The chosen data will be analysed according to an eclectic model. In this model, the chosen data will be analysed pragma- rhetorically in terms of speech act theory, metaphor, and repetition.

4.3 Data Analysis

Trump's victory speech will be analysed according to an eclectic model developed by the study.

"Trump" the thing you should be apologizing for is the 33,000 emails that you deleted. And that you acid-washed. If I win, I'm going to instruct my attorney -general to get a special prosecutor to look into your situation".

Speech act

In this speech, the speaker uses a commissive speech act. Within this macro speech act, threatening is used by Trump to Clinton that if he wins, he will reconsider her situation.

" Muslims have to report the problems when they see them. And, you know, there is always a reason for everything. If they don't do that, it's a very difficult situation for our country."

Speech act

Trump employs a *directive speech act*. He commands Muslims that they should report the problems when they see them.

"Thank you. Thank you very much, everyone. Sorry to keep you waiting; complicated business; complicated. Thank you very much.

Speech act:

Trump uses the speech acts of thanking and apologizing which are a kind of expressive speech acts. Both speech acts reflect Trump's etiquette that is to say to thank or to apologize to someone is to behave more politely.

Repetition:

Trump uses full repetition. He repeats the same expression three times "thank you ". The reason for this repetition is to emphasize his gratitude for his people he give him their voice during the election.

The word "complicated " is also repeated twice to give hints to the audience that he is busy and his job as a president is not that an easy one.

Metaphor:

"complicated business". The word complicated is a human attribute used by Trump to refer to his business.

"Now it's time for America to bind the wounds of division, have to get together. To all Republicans and Democrats and independents across this nation, I say it is time for us to come together as one united people. It's time. I pledge to every citizen of our land that I will be president for all Americans, and this is so important to me. For those who have chosen not to support me in the past, of which there were a few people, I'm reaching out to you for your guidance and your help so that we can work together and unify our great country".

Speech act

Trump mixes between stating and promising speech acts:

Repetition:

Trump uses full repetition. He repeats the phrase "it is time" three times. In the first place, it is time for America to revive again through his regime. In the second place, it is time for him and the Americans to work together in order to revive America. This repetition is important to emphasize the idea that now, neither before nor after this time, to work together for America's benefit.

He also uses formal repetition when he repeats the word "together" twice. The first mention of this word, he refers to those people who support him and give him their voice during election. While the second mention of the word, Trump refers to those who do not support him claiming that he will guide them and give them an equal chance though they do not support him.

Metaphor:

Trump gives America a human attribute (the wounds of America) to reach the heart of his audience, to arouse their patriotism towards their nation.

"Working together, we will begin the urgent task of rebuilding our nation and renewing the American dream. I've spent my entire life and business looking at the untapped potential in projects and in people all over the world. That is now what I want to do for our country. Tremendous potential. I've gotten to know our country so well, tremendous potential. It's going to be a beautiful thing. Every single American will have the opportunity to realise his or her fullest potential. The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. We are going to fix our inner cities and rebuild our highways, bridges, tunnels, airports, schools, hospitals. We're going to rebuild our infrastructure, which will become, by the way, second to none. And we will put millions of our people to work as we rebuild it. We will also finally take care of our great veterans. They've been so loyal, and I've gotten to know so many over this 18-month journey. The time I've spent with them during this campaign has been among my greatest honours. Our veterans are incredible people. We will embark upon a project of national growth and renewal. I will harness the creative talents of our people and we will call upon the best and brightest to leverage their tremendous talent for the benefit of all. It's going to happen".

Speech Act

Trump uses the speech act of telling.

Trump also uses paraphrasing as a kind of semantic repetition. He explains what he is going to do for America. It will be a beautiful thing. Every single American will have the opportunity to realise his or her fullest potential. The forgotten men and women of our

country will be forgotten no longer. We are going to fix our inner cities and rebuild our highways, bridges, tunnels, airports, schools, hospitals.

Metaphor: Nation as Human

Trump uses the word nation to refer to the American people

"We must reclaim our country's destiny and dream big and bold and daring. We have to do that. We're going to dream of things for our country and beautiful things and successful things once again.

"I want to tell the world community that while we will always put America's interests first, we will deal fairly with everyone, with everyone -- all people and all other nations. We will seek common ground".

Speech Act

Trump uses a representative speech act. It is that of asserting. Trump is talking about reclaiming his country's destiny and dreaming of different beautiful things for his country.

Metaphor: Human attribute

Dream big, bold and daring.

Metaphorically, Trump encourages his nation to dream big, bold, and daring in order to rebuild America and revive it again.

"Beautiful America". He treats America as if it were a female that is beautiful.

Repetition Trump mixes between full repetition and paraphrasing. He repeats the word dream fully, then he paraphrases the things that he is going to dream of.

"We're going to get to work immediately for the American people. And we're going to be doing a job that hopefully you will be so proud of your president. You'll be so proud. Again, it's my honour. It was an amazing evening. It's been an amazing two-year period. And I love this country. Thank you. Thank you very much."

Speech Act

Trump uses the speech act of stating with the illocutionary force of promising. He promises that he with the audience will work together for America. He promises that he will make every American proud of having a president like him. He believes that the audience will prefer such a future action. He intends that he is responsible for doing this particular action.

Repetition: Full Repetition

Trump repeats the sentence : "you will be so proud of your president". He wants to tell them that they will never regret having a president like him because his ultimate aim is to work together.

He also repeats the pronoun "we" to emphasize solidarity with the audience. He ends up his speech by thanking the audience twice.

4.4 Discussions of Results

Table(1) The Occurrence of Speech Acts

Speech Acts	Frequency
Stating	2
Threatening	1
Asserting	1
Commanding	1
Telling	1
Apologizing	1
Thanking	1

The above table shows the frequency of occurrences of different speech acts. It is clear that Trump's victory speech is well structured of different speech acts in order to show his etiquette.

Table(2) The Occurrence of Metaphor

Metaphor	Frequency
Human Attribute	3
Nation as Human	1

The above table shows that Trump uses only two types of metaphor: human attribute and nation as a human.

Table(3) The Occurrence of Repetition

Repetition	Frequency
Full Repetition	6
Formal Repetition	1
Semantic Repetition	1
Paraphrasing	1
	1
	1
	1

The above table shows that Trump uses full repetition more frequently than other types of repetition.

5. Conclusions

In light of what has been mentioned in the theoretical section, it is concluded that the term etiquette is a French word which refers to the appropriate use of certain manners by an individual in order to reflect his identity within a given speech community. Linguistically, the first use of the term is traced back to Geertz(1960) who studies etiquette in Java. He defines an etiquette as " a wall built around one's self in order to protect his inner feeling".

In the practical part of the study, it is concluded that Trump employs different speech acts in order to show his etiquettes. He makes use of such speech acts as promising, stating, commanding, threatening, and telling. Furthermore, he makes use of certain rhetorical devices such as repetition and metaphor as a way of convincing his audience that he is the suitable leader for America.

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