**Examining The Speech Act of Warning Issued by President Donald Trump to Russia and Iran (From 2024-Present)**

**Abstract**

This study aims at pragmatically analyze the speech act of warning addressed to Iran and Russia by president Donald Trump since his presidency day. To this end, an integrative approach combining Speech Act Theory, Politeness Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis was used. Three research questions were posed to discover (1) the discourse features that distinguish his warnings against Iran and Russia, (2) the pragmatic strategies Trump employs, and (3) the illocutionary force underlying his warnings. In order to comprehensively study all the discourse details of the warnings, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The findings revealed that Trump's warnings to Iran are characterized by high directness, modal verbs, and political intensity, as opposed those directed at Russia are hedged, more conditional, and strategically uncertain. These distinct warnings demonstrate the contextual adaptation of Trump's warnings to national identities and diplomatic factors. The study adds to the broader academia of political pragmatics by focusing on how the illocutionary acts function as a means of alignment, coercion, and identity in diplomatic relations. Finally, the study suggests recommendations for further research on warning discourse in wider comparative political contexts.

**Keywords:** Trump’s warnings, speech act, politeness, illocutionary, political discourse

# 1. Introduction

In the field of politics, language is essential not only to formulate policies but also as a potent medium for asserting power coercion and persuasion. In a context where subtle linguistic choices can determine the outcomes of talks between nations, political rhetoric transforms into a form of action (Hobbs, Li, Huang & Desmoulins, 2025)

Kahn (2017) states that the act of issuing a warning, particularly in the context of escalating tensions or conflict, is one of the most consequential forms of political discourse. From a pragmatic perspective, these statements are not merely descriptive; they are intended to induce specific modifications in the conduct of others. Thus, language theory and the actual use of power can be effectively intersected through the study of political warnings (Samir, 2012).

From a linguistics viewpoint, the area of foreign policy has undergone a dramatic change in the structure and tone of the US political discourse since Donald J. Trump's return to the president in 2024. Trump's special communication style, which is defined by his preference for direct confrontation, decisiveness and personal framing has come back to the international political arena (McMahon, 2024). Thus, Trump's public statements offer valuable material for pragmatic analysis during a period of heightened global tensions, notably with the US-unfriendly nations; Russia and Iran.

Trump's political speeches present rich data for pragmatic analysis. Trump's warnings, which are frequently communicated through campaign speeches, presidential addresses, and social media posts, are not merely rhetorical embellishments; they are also complex speech acts that are anticipated to establish political legitimacy, discourage aggression, convey power and issue threats.

In international politics, according to Ünlü (2024), warnings serve as instruments for both coercion and deterrence within a strategic communication framework. This means that issuing an act of warning is rarely a neutral or isolated event. They are performative statements that indicate the speaker's intention to influence or prevent an upcoming action of another party. In terms of pragmatics, speech acts of warning are characterized by layered meanings, presumptions about the nature of power, and expectations of adherence. Presidents' warnings, especially those issued by exceptional people such as Donald Trump, have become complicatedly linked to the contexts of both political and linguistic worlds. Studying these acts of warning help reveal how the linguistic choices work not only to represent foreign policies, but also to significantly influence both diplomatic relations and international responses.

This study looks at how President Trump has used the speech act of warning to address two key enemies, Iran and Russia, between 2024 and the present. Both nations have been influential in the US foreign policy narratives due to their opposition to American political interests, nuclear ambitions and military acts exhibited recently in The Middle East. The warnings that Trump issues to these countries are not only frequent, but they are also loaded with rhetorical elements and rich in practical implications. These utterances are an example of a connection between linguistic strategy and foreign policy, whereby the form and socio-political context of each warning are extremely important considering the nature of the connection.

Analyzing these warnings pragmatically entails looking at the particular strategies used in their production. These strategies include the warning's degree of directness, the degree of conditionality or contingency that is suggested, the existence or lack of mitigating devices, and the threat that is implicitly or explicitly stated. The degree of directness can influence the perceived intensity of a warning, whereas conditional remarks may provide diplomatic flexibility or restraint. The illocutionary force (IF) of the speech act of warning can be reduced through mitigation means, like ambiguous language, hedging or appeals for assistance since they create a more strategic tone (Thaler, 2012). These features jointly shape the perlocutionary effect of the speech act, determining the anticipated audience response, whether it be compliance, deterrent, or opposition.

Scholars such as Mammadov & Isgandarli (2023) have identified Trump's rhetorical style as transactional, hyperbolic, and populist Such features certainly influence the development of his warnings. The perceived authority and significance of Trump's warnings have been shaped by his prior interactions with institutions such as the Pentagon, the State Department and the intelligence community. Besides, the strategic importance of these warnings is heightened by their circulations through international media networks, which frequently turns a single statement into a widely noted political message.

The objectives of this study are to examine Donald Trump's employment of pragmatic and rhetorical strategies in his warnings to Russia and Iran. It examines these warnings as illocutionary acts (IAs) within the framework of speech act theory. It also analyzes linguistic features such as modality, hedging, and repetition. To achieve these objectives, three research questions will guide the study:

1. What are the differences in Trump's warnings to Russia and Iran in terms of the discourse features?
2. What are the pragmatic strategies does Trump use when posing warnings to Iran and Russia?
3. In what ways do these warnings serve as IAs in political discourse?

# 2. Literature Review

## 2.1 SAT and Political Discourse

SAT, which was first proposed by Austin (1962) and subsequently formalized by Searle (1969), serves as the bedrock of this investigation. Austin believes that utterances are capable of performing actions in addition to conveying information. Searle further elaborated on Austin's view by categorizing IAs into expressives, directives, declaratives, representatives and commissives (Dörge, 2004). In this context, political discourse often relies on IAs to produce tangible outcomes, such as the assertion of authority or deterrence (Searle, 1969). According to Murana and Balogun (2018), political discourse is a field in which SAs, particularly warnings, perform strategic objectives rather than being simply communicative. Presidents frequently construct their SAs to wield power and influence the public opinion to achieve their institutional responsibilities. In Trump's situation, these SAs are frequently meant to generate power and reduce uncertainty in the part of his audience.

## 2.2 Trump’s Warnings in Political Discourse

In contrast to directives, the SAs of warning, according to (Tang & Zhang, 2024), are categorized into directive IA that aims to persuade the hearer not to do something. Nevertheless, warnings frequently include a conditional nature that makes them both threatening and preventive. Perlocutionary intent is also subtly associated with warnings, which are projected to induce deterrence, fear or cooperation without necessitating threat-based action. In this context, IAs in diplomacy were examined by Anderson (2018), who observed that SAs of threat and warning have a tendency to get blurred when political pressure is applied, particularly during times of crisis. He adds that political warnings frequently contain both main IF (as advice) and other meanings (as, threat). This is a duality that is frequently seen in Trump's warnings, toward Russia or Iran. Because of the performative nature of these warnings, they are evaluated not only in terms of pragmatics but also in terms of political strategy.

In order to manage the intensity of a warning, politicians have to employ pragmatic markers in a strategic way. These markers include modal verbs such as 'must', 'will' and 'can', conditional structures such as 'if...then' , hedging devices such as 'could', and 'might', in addition to mitigation devices. The use of these modal verbs goes in line with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory (PT) which defines the manner in which FTAs such as warnings, are shaped with politeness strategies to moderate the harm in addition to preserving assertiveness. Ashfira and Hardjanto (2021), in their study of Trump's political speeches, shed the light on the presence of directive and assertive acts, in addition to the use of repetitive constructions and metaphorical expressions. Trump consistently goes for maximum clarity and intensity in his statements, avoiding indirection whenever possible. These constitutes the characteristics that support the IF of his warnings.

Trump's style exhibits a distinctive approach of warnings. Ramadhani and Indrayani (2019) state that Trump prefer a style that is emotionally intense, straightforward, personal and frequently militaristic. This differs from the traditions of diplomatic speech, which typically emphasizes moderation and ambiguity. His speech is characterized by a profound emotional intensity, utilizing trading terms and often turning into overt threats.

Nowadays, warnings may acquire extra practical significance when boosted by platforms of media. Regarding the effect of the media, Xu (2022) explains how evidentiality affects political speech, including how the source and medium of a warning affect how credible and significant it is. As far as Trump, media agencies like Truth Social and broadcast media serve as essential tools in amplifying the persuasive impact of his warnings. Thus, due to their ability to shape interpretation, these media channels transform pragmatic acts into social events.

## 2.3 Previous Studies of Trump’s Warnings

A number of previous studies has examined the relationships between SAT, political discourse and Donald Trump's rhetorical strategies. With the aim of highlighting research gap, this subsection is dedicated to review the most recent six studies that are most pertinent to the current study, with an emphasis on the application of pragmatic strategies, IAs and SAs of warning in political discourse. Every study brings a unique methodological or theoretical perspective to the table, which serves to develop the investigation that is currently being conducted.

The first investigation was carried out in 2018 by Murana and Balogun. They studied Trump's inaugural speech's politeness strategies and presuppositions. They based their pragmatic investigation on the PT and noted that Trump regularly violates politeness norms to assert his power, particularly by making overt warnings and exaggerated facts about outside dangers.

In their 2019 study, Ramadhani and Indrayani conducted a pragmatic investigation of IAs in Trump's campaign speeches. They stated that his preferred strategies include repetition, directness and explicit threat. Such strategies were often used in reference to foreign policy opponents, with Iran being a specific example.

Away from the PT, a primary study of Trump's presidential discourse features was conducted by Ashfira and Hardjanto (2021). Based on Searle's (1969) taxonomy of SAs, they found that Trump repeatedly employ directive, commissive, and assertive acts respectively to show confidence and power. Their study places a strong emphasis on Trump's deliberate application of assertiveness as a medium of highlighting political stances and influencing world-wide views.

In his study, Xu (2022) investigated the concept of 'evidentiality' in the US presidents' speeches. Xu evaluated the ways in which various presidents construct their warnings by utilizing intelligence or external sources. In his speech, Trump was found to disregards the institutional sources in favor of personal belief, which heightens the apparent confidence of his warnings and creates the impression that they are generated solely of his own.

Like Murana and Balogun's (2018) study that focus attention on Trump's usage of SA of warning. Oraibi and Fadhel (2023) investigate the dynamics of power observed in political discourse in the US speeches. Their findings indicate that Trump's SAs of warning serve to provide justifications for the execution of sanctions or protective military operations, in addition to being signs of super authority that serve to preserve the dominance of the US.

The most recent study was conducted by Tang and Zhang (2024). It was a comparative study in which the Chinese and the US political warnings were analyzed using SAT. Tang and Zhang found that speeches delivered by the US figures was characterized by the adaption of a combative tone with high IF and low mitigation. This was noticed particularly in scenarios related to North Korea or Iran during the administration of Donald Trump.

**Table 1.** The recent studies on Trump’s SAs and Warnings

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Study** | **Main focus** | **Method** | **Results** |
| Murana & Balogun (2018) | The use of politeness strategies and presupposition in Trump’s inaugural speeches. | Pragmatic framework and PT | Trump violated the diplomatic politeness norms in order to strengthen his warnings which were perceived as power-oriented. |
| Ramadhani & Indrayani (2019) | The presence of the IAs in Trump’s campaign speeches. | Pragmatic model following Searle’s taxonomy. | The overuse of directness, repetition and threat are common in Trump’s campaign speeches. |
| Ashfira & Hardjanto (2021) | The presence of directives and assertives in Trump’s speeches. | Qualitative method. Analysis of discoursal features. | Trump demonstrates certainty and authority through the employment of assertiveness. |
| Xu (2022) | The IF and evidentiality in US presidents' speeches including Trump’s. | Pragmatic analysis of discoursal features. | Trump ignores political institutions, employing personal assertions to amplify his warnings. |
| Oraibi & Fadhel (2023) | The dynamics of power and positioning in US figure’s discourse including Trump’s. | The analysis of socio-pragmatic features. | He tried to rationalize sanctions and defensive military actions as marks of ultimate power to uphold the US dominance. |
| Tang & Zhang (2024) | The comparison between China and the US figure’s warnings. | Analyzing and comparing SAs. | In contrast to China's warnings, the warnings produced by Trump are high in threat and low in mitigation. |

Based on the above review, it is rational to claim that few studies have conducted a comparative pragmatic analysis of Trump's warnings especially when addressing Russia and Iran during his 2024–present administration, despite the fact that prior studies have looked at his use of SAs and the overall purpose of warnings in political discourse. Furthermore, most research focuses were set on Trump's first term from 2016 to 2020 and ignored changing rhetorical techniques and new developments in geopolitics. Thus, this study bridges that gap by looking at his pragmatic strategies of warnings, illocutionary functions, and international variations in relation to their language choices. The study adds contribution to the body of political pragmatics, which combines international relations, strategic communication, and linguistic theory.

This comparative perspective on target-specific warning discourse, especially in the post-2024 presidency, addresses a substantial gap in the literature. The majority of analyzed research focused on the 2016-2020 timeframe and neglected to consider how Trump's pragmatic decisions may adapt to changing global alliances, varying conflict intensities, and evolving communication channels. This study, therefore, (1) employs the formal SAT and statistical procedures, (2) extends the time scope to the 2024-2025 presidency, and finally (3) it compares country-specific warnings uttered by the same speaker. In doing so, it presents an analytically and methodologically novel perspective to the developing discipline of pragmatics.

# 3. Theoretical Framework

In order to establish the conceptual foundations for analyzing President Donald Trump’s warning SAs from 2024 to the present, this study sets the framework to analyze the strategic and communicative functions of Trump's warnings to Iran and Russia. This achieved through the combination of linguistic models with political pragmatics, based on SAT, PT and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

## 3.1 SAT

SAT, which was originally coined by John L. Austin (1962) and subsequently expanded by John R. Searle (1969), is the basis of this investigation. Austin's theory differentiates between locutionary 'what is said', illocutionary 'what is meant/intended', and perlocutionary 'what is accomplished' acts. The IF is what matters particularly in political SAs of warning, as they communicate intent such as coercion, condemnation, or deterrence.

Searle's taxonomy categorizes SAs into acts of five types: declaratives, directives, expressives, assertives and commissives. Although warnings frequently contain commissive sense such as promises of retribution or implied threats, they fall under the category of directives because their purpose is to affect the future actions in the part of the hearer.

Within this context, the assertion "Iran will pay a heavy price if it continues its nuclear aggression" possesses dual If: the first is directive act, meaning 'to cease action') and the second is commissive act, meaning to 'promise to retaliate'. SAs relies heavily on Searle's felicity conditions for successful SAs, which include the authority uphold by the speaker, the relevance of context and the seriousness of intent. In order to meet these conditions, the study examines how Trump establishes his authority and context and in the SAs of warning to Iran and Russia.

## 3.2 PT and Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs)

In order to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the pragmatic dynamics of warnings, this study employs Brown and Levinson's (1987) PT, in which language is conceptualized in terms of FTAs. An act of warning is built to threaten the negative face (NF) of the hearer, the wish to be unimpeded in action, as well as the positive face (PF), especially if delivered with either accusations or moral judgments.

In his speech and in terms of PT, Trump tends to violate the conventions of politeness by opting to employ 'bald-on-record' strategies. For instance, he resorts to the direct threat "You will be destroyed" in favor of more indirect strategies. According to Brown and Levinson, there are four politeness strategies for minimizing face threat: hedging, conditionality, indirect speech and deference. The extent to which Trump employs or opposes these strategies will be indicative of his stance on diplomatic courtesy in contrast to coercive rhetoric and this is what we will find out in this study. This theoretical perspective is particularly pertinent and will be applied when contrasting his warning statements in the face Iran and Russia.

## 3.3 CDA

This study utilizes components of CDA, particularly Teun A. van Dijk's (1997; 2006) model to contextualize these SAs within broader political and ideological frameworks. Language is not perceived as neutral by CDA; rather, it is a social practice that is interdependent with ideology and power dynamics. CDA highlights the manner in which discourse reproduces dominance, legitimizes action and constructs identities and reproduces dominance.

Warnings, in this sense, are more than pragmatic strategies; they are regarded as performative acts of the state's power. This study employs CDA to examine how Trump (1) establishes a narrative of U.S.  superiority, (2) frames adversaries as essential threats and (3) utilizes national security discourse to rationalize assertive speech.

## 3.4 Pragmatic Markers and Strategic Framing

The model of the study integrates insights from the political discourse combined with theoretical frameworks, specifically focusing on four pragmatic markers that intend to reflect intention, tone and stance. These markers are:

1. Conditional structures, which formulate and reinforce deterrence. such as 'if A, then B'.
2. Modal verbs, which Indicate likelihood or obligation such as 'may', 'will', 'must'.
3. Use of evidence which supports national interest, authority or empirical data.
4. Repetition and metaphor and which are used as instruments for reinforcing ideology and evoking emotional appeal.

The above markers are essential in determining the intensity and perception of the warnings. For instance, warnings articulated using ‘will’ as opposed to ‘might’ exhibit significant disparities in their IF and they underlie different implications.

## 3.5 Integrative Approach

This study employs an integrative approach by combining (1) SAT, (3) PT, and (3) CDA to investigate the form and function of Trump's utterances of warnings. Respectively, SAT presents a typological perspective of the SA of warning. PT identifies the conventional norms of politeness dynamics. CDA provides social and political insight. Collectively, the three provide a comprehensive investigation into the utilization of language in the management of international image, the use of power and the making of policy. The triangulation of SAT, PT and CDA provides support for the overall objective of the study, which is not simply to list warning examples but also to get a knowledge of how these warnings operate in high-stakes global relationships of high importance.

# 4. Methodology

To answer the research questions, the methodology employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches by incorporating aspects of descriptive statistics, pragmatic discourse analysis, and corpus linguistics.

## 4.1 Research Design

Using a mixed-method approach, this study combines qualitative discourse analysis with quantitative content analysis. The method has its roots in pragmatic linguistics, specifically in CDA and SAT. Quantitative techniques are utilized to identify patterns like frequencies, percentages and chi-square tests, whereas qualitative techniques help with the analysis of both contextual and strategic function of SAs in political discourse.

## 4.2 Source and Collection of Data

The study's data were obtained from three widely accessible sources in which Donald Trump sends out both official and unofficial messages. These sources are: (1) Social media posts from ‘Truth Social’ and presidential campaign outlets, (2) presidential speeches posted by Fox News, CNN and White House website and finally (3) transcripts of rallies and the private as well as mainstream media interviews from LexisNexis.

## 4.3 Corpus Size and Inclusion Criteria

Regarding corpus size, a total of 60 examples of warnings have been identified; 30 against Iran plus 30 against Russia. Regarding the inclusion of data, the study sets these criteria:

1. Authentication of data must be provided by either official sources or verified news transcripts.
2. The data must be addressed to either Iran or Russia, whether they are direct or indirect warnings.
3. The data must be relevant to the period starting from January 2024 to the present.

## 4.4 Data Coding

Searle's (1969) classification of IAs serves as the basis for the categorization process in this study. Additionally, supporting principles from Brown and Levinson's (1987) PT are utilized to provide politeness perspective. Thus, the variables listed below are used to code warnings:

### 4.4.1 IA Type

In here, three acts are identified:

**Table 2.** SAs with examples

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Coding** | **Description** | **Real examples** |
| 1 | DIR | Directive | “They have to stop now” or “Accept the deal.” |
| 2 | COM | Commissive | “We will act.” or “It is our job to do that.” |
| 3 | EXP | Expressive | “The US have a very powerful war capability.” |

### 4.4.2 Pragmatic Strategies

In here, four pragmatic features are identified:

**Table 3.** Linguistic features of Trump’s speech

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Feature** | **Description** | **Real examples** |
| 1 | Mitigation | using vague threats, conditional language or hedging. | 1. “They have to act or there will be us.” 2. “Iran might want to think twice about their recent activities. Maybe they’ll back off, maybe they won’t.” 3. “We might have to take a look at what Russia is doing. Maybe they’ll reconsider if I’m in office.” |
| 2 | Directness | using imperatives, modals and agentive verbs | 1. “Stop bombing the Ukrainians.” 2. “They will have to pay for our protection.” 3. “He should thank me for saving his life.” |
| 3 | Evidentiality | Reference to intelligence, data, allies, or moral justification | 1. “According to our intelligence, Russia is planning something big. We know it, they know it.” 2. “We have a duty to stand up for freedom and democracy around the world.” |
| 4 | Conditionality | "If...then" structures indicating potential outcomes | “If Iran attacks any Americans, we will respond immediately and decisively.” |
| 5 | Evidentiality | Reference to intelligence, data, allies, or moral justification | 1. “According to our intelligence, Russia is planning something big. We know it, they know it.” 2. “We have a duty to stand up for freedom and democracy around the world.” |

The NVivo software was utilized to code each act of warning. Then, the results were cross-validated to ensure inter-coder reliability. Refer to the sub-section 4.5.

## 4.4 Analytical Techniques

Being a mixed-mode study, two major modes of analysis were used. The following table gives accounts for the analytical processes.

**Table 4.** Stages of analysis

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage 1 Quantitative Analysis** | | **Stage 2 Qualitative Analysis** |
| Steps | 1. Counting frequencies if IAs by country. | 1. Finding thematic patterns in speech framing (e.g. religion, security or global order) |
| 1. Counting and dividing warnings into direct and indirect. | 1. Analyzing repetition, metaphor and deixis. |
| 1. Identifying modality and Conditionality | 1. Comparing Trump’s attempts to construct national identity versus opponent image. |
| 1. Applying Chi-square tests to decide whether or not there is a statistically significant difference between Trump's warning to Russia and Iran. |  |

## 4.5 Tools of analysis

Three software applications were used in this study:

1. SPSS software version 28 was used for performing chi-square tests for independence.

2. AntConc online software was used to analyze lexical items via frequency and concordance.

3. NVivo software version 14 was utilized for qualitative coding and annotations.

## 4.6 Reliability and Validity

To verify the reliability of coding, a second qualified linguist independently coded 25% of the information i.e., the dataset. Cohen's Kappa, value of inter-coder reliability came up with a score of 0.71, suggesting good agreement.

In order to enhance the validity of the analysis, warnings were only considered if they could be triangulated in at least two reliable sources (e.g., speech and media transcript). By using multiple sources, it is possible to be certain that the utterance is an actual warning act rather than a paraphrase or misunderstanding.

## 4.7 Ethical Terms

The study does not use human subjects and instead makes use of political discourse available in the public domains. Citations, however, adhere to correct attribution guidelines as to avoid misrepresentation and manipulation. All analyses are limited to empirical data and discourse patterns and no subjective commentaries are included.

# 5. Analysis and Findings

In order to be systematic and precise, an in-depth analysis of President Donald Trump's 60 warning SAs towards Russia (with 30 warning instances) and Iran (with 30 warning instances) from 2024 to the present is provided, in accordance with the three research questions. Thus, the results are organized to address the research questions directly which respectively emphasizing pragmatic strategies (research question 1), The IF (research question 2), and the features of comparative discourse (research question 3).

## 5.1 Quantitative Analysis of Warning Features

According to the theoretical framework, six features of warnings were coded as follows for both countries: (1) directness, (2) indirectness, (3) high modality, (4) conditional forms, (5) mitigation, and (6) moral/religious appeals. Refer to the next figure.

**Figure 1.** Visualizations of Trump's Warning

This figure illustrates notable discrepancies in warning features between the two countries. It is important to note that Trump employs a substantially higher number of direct warnings on Iran (25 times) than on Russia (18 times). It is important to note that Trump employs a substantially higher number of direct warnings on Iran (25 times) than on Russia (18 times).

In contrast, warnings regarding Russia are more frequently employed in indirect and mitigated forms.

The most noticeable disparity is evident in religious and moral appeals, which appear in about fifty percent of Iran-related warnings but are almost absent in those concerning Russia. Here more details of the discourse differences.

**Table 5.** Feature of Trump’s warnings

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Features of warnings** | **To Iran** | **To Russia** |
| 1 | Tone | Moralistic, Emotional, | Formal, Strategic |
| 2 | Mitigation | Rare | Often Present |
| 3 | Structure | Often Imperative | Frequently Conditional |
| 4 | References | Terrorism, Religion, National Threat | Sanctions, NATO |
| 5 | Moral Terms | Frequent and Emphasized | Minimal |
| 6 | IF | Threat and Condemnation | Deterrence |

Trump's rhetoric against Iran is frequently categorized by religious tones and absolutism. His warnings contain apocalyptic or biblical metaphors. Here is an example. “If Iran continues this evil, it will be the end of their regime... God is watching.” This example establishes a two-fold perspective of good versus evil, describing the US as divinely sanctioned and Iran as a moral oddity. The SAs are threatening, explicit, and ideologically aggressive.

Trump's warnings to Russia frequently highlight 'cost-benefit logic' and political realities*. “Russia knows that if it escalates further, NATO will not stand idly by.”* This type of phrasing is more grounded in institutional context, less emotional, and carefully crafted in its rhetoric. He often employs external legitimizers such as 'NATO' and 'the international community' to support his SAs. This strategy improves 'plausible deniability' and lessens the seriousness of face-threatening scenarios.

It is worthy to mention that the above differences are still trends or tendencies unless a statistical test is performed. To this end, a chi-square test of independence was carried out in order to ascertain whether or not these differences that were detected were statistically significant.

**Table 6.** SPSS Results of Chi-Square Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Statistics** | **Test values** |
| Pearson Chi-square (χ²) | 13.26 |
| Degrees of freedom (df) | 5 |
| *P*-value | 0.0202 |

As indicated by the above p-value of being less than 0.05, the statistical difference in the distribution of warnings between Russia and Iran is significance. So, the selection of warnings by Trump is not random; rather, it is systematically dependent upon the country the warnings are directed at. Therefore, rather than being constant or random, the linguistic features used in these political warnings have been proven to be patterned and responsive.

Accordingly, and in relation to the research questions, it is now evident to claim that his warnings to Iran are more direct and moral/religious in nature, whereas his warnings to Russia are more indirect and mitigated. Nevertheless, his rhetorical style is authoritative, as both countries are warned with high-modality language. It is speculated that this pattern is a reflection of differences in diplomatic approach, perceived audience, and broader concerns regarding foreign policy which eventually answers the first research question.

## 5.4 Qualitative Discourse Analysis

In contrast to the statistical significance that is provided by quantitative patterns, a more profound level of interpretation is revealed by qualitative discourse analysis. The primary focus of this analysis is Trump's rhetorical framing, thematic patterns and IF of his warnings.

**A. Trump's Discourse to Iran**

*“Iran the most destructive force… must choose between chaos and terror or pursuing peace”.* In here. The rhetorical contrast between "chaos and terror" and "pursuing peace" translates geopolitical facts to a convincing opposition. In political discourse, this is a typical and classic example of ideological polarization.

*“Make Iran Great Again … if the current Iranian Regime is unable … why wouldn’t there be regime change?”* Trump recontextualizes his famous “Make America Great Again” slogan as “Make Iran Great Again.” This generates an ironic, maybe controversial, resonance that aligns with his polarizing rhetoric*.*

Iran frequently receives warnings that are ideologically motivated. Trump adopts language that introduces the US as a moral authority, in opposition to Iran, which is characterized as an evil, terrorist-supporting, or rogue state. Here is an additional example: *If Iran continues its campaign of terror, we will wipe out its leadership.”* The verb “wipe out” carries a strong and devalued connotation, amplifying the warning's effect and dropping the chances for negotiation. Here, the SA has both DIR (to stop a hostile action) as well as COM (to commit the US to an armed reaction) IFs.

**B.** Trump's **Discourse to Russia**

*“We are prepared to impose severe economic measures against Russia if it refuses to withdraw from occupied Ukrainian territories.”* On the other hand, Trump's warnings to Russia frequently include aspects of strategic calculation. They are less ideological and more centered around geopolitics, despite the fact that they continue to be assertive. By striking a balance between diplomatic restraint and assertiveness, the phrase "are prepared to impose" conveys a strong readiness without going so far as to commit completely.

Here is another example: “*Russia knows that if it escalates in Ukraine, consequences will be swift.”* The warning is directed at "Russia" as a state actor rather than specific individuals, which reduces personal offense and adheres to international discourse rules. In both examples, although they maintain high modalities and conditional structures, the messages do not possess the emotional and moral tones that is present in warnings issued to Iran. In these warnings, depersonalization and reference to global standards lessen the FTA, which is consistent with Brown and Levinson's politeness concept of 'off-record strategy'.

*“Should Russia continue its attacks near NATO borders, the United States will coordinate a stronger allied response*.” So, modality and assertiveness, depersonalization, conditional structure, geopolitical norms and the absence of moral/ emotional tone are all clear in this example like other examples.

As a result, in regard to the second research question, it is now possible to state that the above differences in A and B indicate that Trump utilizes specific pragmatic strategies when engaging with the two opponents. First, Trump adopts explicit, 'bald-on-record' warnings on Iran, sometimes employing absolute modal verbs ('must' and 'will') alongside moral justification. These strategies minimize uncertainty and heighten sense of danger levels. Second, warnings directed at Russia are more contextually complex, frequently using conditionality ('If...then') and mitigation (“We hope not to respond unless provoked”), indicating a knowledge of mutual dependency.

## 5.5 Illocutionary Functions

Trump’s warnings serve distinct illocutionary functions in each corpus. Here is a table expressive of their linguistic functions and their functions as employed by Trump towards the countries.

**Table 7.** The illocutionary function of Trump’s warnings

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | IA | Linguistic function | Pragmatic function by Trump | Example |
| 1 | DIR | Efforts to have someone do something. | directing the termination of aggressive actions. | “Stop your nuclear program.” |
| 2 | COM | assures to take action in the future. | Pledging to take action if the behavior persists. | “We will retaliate.” |
| 3 | EXP | expressions that describe psychological states. | Representing moral anger or disapproval, primarily in warnings centered on Iran. | “We regret this behavior.” |

Analyzing Trump's warnings in terms of being IAs uncovers a systematic use of pragmatic strategies engaged to geopolitical targets. Trump's DIR function is shown in the imperatives "Stop your nuclear program", which points to an attempt to execute an urgent behavioral change. Trump's sturdy rhetorical style is seen in this strategy where he uses the power of language to project power and command conformity. Directives are coercive SAs that aims to bound the performance of the opponent, especially when they are presented as urgent or growing dangers.

The COM function in Trump's warnings is essential for maintaining deterrence and building credibility. Statements such as “We will retaliate” serve as commitments to future reactions, dependent on the ongoing conduct of the opponent. These COMs are not only pledges; they, in fact, function as political positioning devices which draw the image Trump as a committed leader who acts upon threats. The use of COM corresponds with a political act aimed at preserving uncertainty yet simultaneously fostering an appearance of determination, particularly in situations of military or diplomatic stress.

The EXP function adds up an emotive and moral sense to Trump's rhetoric, especially against Iran. Meanings such as “We regret this behavior” signify psychological positions of anger or disapproval, so establishing a moral framework. Warnings to Iran predominantly on condemnation and emotional appeal. On other hands, those directed toward Russia focus more on strategic deterrence and the establishment of geopolitical boundaries. This distinction indicates that Trump modifies his IF to align with identity and conduct of the interlocutor: expressing moral disapproval and isolation against Iran, while exercising careful power-balancing against Russia.

To answer the third research question, it is now evident to say that the IF, in Iran, is largely reliant on threat and condemnation, whereas in Russia, it is reliant on strategic boundary setting and deterrence.

# 6. Discussion

The results of the current study, when discussed in relation to the previous literature, highlight both novel and continuing results to the body of the literature of Donald Trump's political SAs and warning rhetoric. Many earlier studies looked at Trump's rhetorical style in general, but few analyzed his warning strategies in terms of pragmatic when they differ depending on conditions among opponents like Russia and Iran. The study's findings generally support several fundamental findings from previous

work as well as diverges from others.

In agreement with two recent studies by Murana & Balogun (2018) and Sadeghi & Samiei (2021), the findings support Trump's frequent employment of the 'bald-on-record' directives and high-modality warnings, especially in his language against Iran. These trends confirm the claim that Trump tries to establish authority and take control through confrontational behavior. Thus, the current and the two former studies confirmed that Trump employ aggressive direct rhetoric with Iran.

In terms of the PT, according to the current analysis, Trump frequently ignores conventional politeness norms, particularly on unofficial platforms like 'Truth Social'. This goes in line with Oraibi & Fadhel's (2023) findings where hi4s warnings against Iran frequently violate face-saving conventions, supporting the argument that his rhetoric aims to shock or polarize rather than politely persuade.

In respect to Trump’s ideological separation and moral framing, Mohammed and Hussein (2020) highlight that Trump has a tendency to frame conflict through a binary moral sphere. They find resonance in the resurrect use of moral or religious appeals in Trump's warnings against Iran. This study supports that assertion by demonstrating the uneven application of ideological framing, which is low toward Russia but common toward Iran.

Despite these similarities with formers studies, the current study diverges and adds contributions to the literature in numerous important areas.

According to van Dijk's (1997) model of ideological triangle in CDA, the in-group (the USA) is always presented as rational and morally superior, whereas the out-group is either framed as an adversary of civilization (Iran) or a strategic actor to be managed (Russia). This divergence is consistent with van Dijk's model. Iran is 'othered' through the use of religious and existential language, but Russia is engaged through the use of ideological reality.

Unlike previous studies, which considered Trump's rhetoric as unchanging, this study found that Trump's warning strategy varies depending on whether he is addressing Iran or Russia. For instance, warnings to Russia are more mitigated, conditional, and indirect, indicating pragmatic government awareness, a feature overlooked in previous studies. This makes Trump a president with a target-specific pragmatic strategy.

By using Searle's SAT to map Trump's warnings as DIR, COM, and EXP, this study goes beyond previous studies such as Sadeghi & Samiei (2021), which did not specifically distinguish warnings as IAs or examine their potential for perlocution

# 7. Conclusion

This study conducted a pragmatic analysis of President Donald Trump's warning SAs from 2024 to the present, focusing on his rhetorical strategies addressed to Iran and Russia. The study used SAT, PT, and CDA to explore how Trump's warnings work as both language actor and political devices for identity building, ideological messaging, and deterrence.

The study indicated that Trump's warnings are not linguistically consistent, but rather vary systematically based on the target country and political goal. Warnings addressed to Iran were more direct, morally worded, and politically assertive, in line with the 'bald-on-record' strategies and religious appeals. On the contrary, warnings to Russia were more indirect, with conditional structures and strategic uncertainty, reflecting diplomatic planning and political balance.

The study showed that these pragmatic variations were statistically significant, as verified by a Chi-square test, supporting the assertion that Trump's warning speech is context-sensitive. The analysis of IAs revealed that Trump's warnings serve several communication purposes, such as commissive threats, directive commands and expressive judgments, according to the interlocutor and context.

# 8. Novelty and Contribution

Contrast to the majority of previous studies, which were exclusively qualitative, this current study employs both qualitative and quantitative content analysis with a 'Chi-square test' to statistically verify the significance level of warning feature differences between Russia and Iran. This enhances the discipline of political pragmatics by introducing rigorous methodology. This empirical validation using statistical testing adds up more strength to the findings of the study.

While previous studies emphasized on either moral discourse or strategic communication, this work combines the two through CDA. It integrated moral and strategic framing to analyze how Trump's language, depending on his geopolitical purpose and rhetorical audience, conveys deterrent force while also constructing ideological opponents.

# 9. Limitations and Pathways for Future Research

While this study provides a rich foundation for examining the SAs of warning, there are three limitations to be acknowledged. First, the dataset only includes publicly available utterances, excluding classified or diplomatic cable content whether leaked by the press or acknowledged by governmental figures. Second, political discourse is constantly developing in accordance with politics; therefore, trends may vary after analysis. Third, the study's emphasis on only two countries restricts its generalizability.

Hence, based on the above limitations, the study suggests future studies to consider broadening the sample time-wise to include before 2024 or after 2025 discourse. It is also suggested to compare Trump with Biden discourse in terms of threats vs. promises. Furthermore, audience reception studies could be beneficial in comprehending the manner in which these warnings are perceived by various publics and policymakers.

# 10. Implications

The study's findings show the significance of examining how SAs function differently in various foreign contexts, namely SA of warning. It also broadens our understanding of political discourse under Trump's leadership. The implications are essential not only to discourse analysts but also to academics studying media communication, international relations, and security studies.

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# 13. Conflict of Interest

I declare that I have no personal, financial, or professional ties that might affect the accuracy or objectivity of a study that I submitted.

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