Commissive Speech Acts of Persuasion in English Political Discourse

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Abstract: *Politics is a process of making decisions by the distribution of power and resources in order to put certain political, economic, and social ideas into practice. For political messages to be delivered to the target community through political discourse, many strategies have been employed to fulfill the purpose of persuading the audience. The study investigates the Commissive speech acts of persuasion utilized in Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's 2016 presidential election speeches. Adopting the speech act theory by Searle (1980), the study aims to uncover the features of Commissive speech acts used by the two politicians for persuasion. The data was analyzed using descriptive qualitative method basing on quantitative information. The findings showed that the process of manipulation of the two politicians was fostered by Commissive speech acts, highlighting the illocutionary forces of threatening, pledging, offering, and refusing. Through the illocutionary forces, both Trump and Clinton would like to communicate their different political stands and ideologies to persuade the audience to advocate them. Donald Trump spread his persuasion with more dominating frequencies of Commissive speech acts than Hillary Clinton. Besides, they also demonstrated distinctively different illocutionary acts addressing different issues to serve their political purposes.*

Keywords: presidential election speeches, persuasion, ideology, political discourse

1. Introduction

According to Brown and Yule (1983), persuasion is considered a part of discourse analysis, and discourse analysis is concerned with the language used for communication and how to address linguistic messages for interpretation. Accordingly, persuasion is also treated as the speakers' reflection of their rhetorical capacity and a way to induce their interlocutors (Sari, 2012). Effort to reach the negotiation and agreement would be unfortunately in vain unless speakers are able to communicate their messages under the faithful aid of persuasion. In other words, under the pressure of political campaigns, numerous proves and argentations to persuade the society for choosing their selves as well as the use of word choice or supporting dictions are needed to stimulate social and public advocacy. Without these factors, persuasion failures could be anticipated, resulting in the defeat of one side while paving way to the other side's triumph.

All in all, persuasion used by politicians not only reveals potential distinctive language features that need discovering to reach an in-depth insight into language functions and meanings in the field of politics. Seeing the importance and benefits of the study both in terms of language and discourse realizations, the researcher thrives on pursuing the study on *Commissive Speech Acts of Persuasion in English Political Discourse.* In the light of the established theories and methodologies, the study attempts to build up acomprehensive picture of Commissive speech acts of persuasion in Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's 2016 presidential election Political speeches are associated with one party communication, acting out the role of the addressee, descending power and influence (Kenzhekanova, 2015) by using specific strategies which may affect the

audience's ideology autonomy. In the seeking of power predomination in a large population, politicians have to resort to specific language devices and persuasive strategies to add to their utterances. In fact, in order for the aims and intentions to be reached through verbal communication and language, pragmatics needs to be applied. Yule (1996) functioned speech acts as a pragmatic phenomenon in which actions are performed via utterances. Accordingly, political discourse also utilizes language to demonstrate a wide range of activities to ultimately serve the purpose of persuasion. By conveying, requesting, asserting, threatening, pledging …, politicians simultaneously make an attempt to reach an understanding with the audience, gain their advocacy and win their votes. In fact, the ultimate purpose of political speech would be to persuade the audience of the appropriateness of a certain course of action or the truth of a particular viewpoint, shaping the intended illocutionary effect that is intrinsically associated with the speech act of argumentation and persuasiveness, and nurturing the constructed political strategies.

As such, political speeches are expected to contain resources of the speaker's expressions and intentions corresponding roughly to the objectives of this research on persuasion. Interestingly, in this research, the comparison reaching for the similarities and differences in the two politicians' use of Commissive speech acts to highlight persuasion is expected to generate intriguing findings.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous studies

Political discourse has been a prolific topic of many pieces of research aiming at achieving an insightful analysis to

understand more about the power of such discourse. The growing academic interest in political discourse can be regarded as "social request" exposing and discovering not only the peculiarities of political thought and actions but also those linguistic means employed by politicians in their discourse to impinge and control public opinion. Chilton (2004) discussed political actions as verbal action via speech act demonstration. However, he merely considered political discourse as fundamental argumentative and deliberative in nature, focusing only on the ways in which the speakers represent reasons instead of touching on the political view as action. Conversely, an approach was delivered by Fairclough (2012) to particularly consider political discourse as attributive to the development of critical discourse analysis, highlighting political discourse as essentially a form of argumentation fostering more practical argumentation to entail eventual political decisions.

Regarding the area of persuasion in political discourse, Al-Trawneh (2019) conducted research on a critical discourse analysis of persuasion tactics, power distribution, and the ideologies in Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's presidential discourse but focused on debates instead of political speeches in their presidential election campaign. Edward, Hutahaean, Kurniawan, and Hamuddin (2018) provided a study on language and power in presidential speech campaign discourse of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, portraying the relationship between language and power regarding types and functions of speech acts or language use while by no means giving an in-depth insight into the utilization of speech act for persuasion in those speeches.

The study differentiates from other previous studies in the attempt to make a contrastive analysis of the features of persuasive strategies utilized by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's presidential election speeches, taking advantage of Searle's Commissive speech acts featuring persuasion. The study highlighted the way in which Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump utilized speech acts in generating power and ideologies and eventually persuading the audience to vote for them.

2.2 Speech acts

The function of speech acts has illuminated the ability of language to do other things than just describe reality. According to Searle (1980), the theory of speech act starts with the assumption that the minimal unit of human communication is not a sentence or other expression, but rather the performance of certain kinds of acts, such as making statements, asking questions, giving orders, describing explaining, apologizing, thanking, congratulating, etc… Characteristically, a speaker performs one or more of these acts by uttering a sentence or sentences, but the act itself is not confused with a sentence or other expression uttered in its performance. Such types of acts as those exemplified above are called illocutionary acts. In contrast with locutionary acts which are a description of what the speaker says, illocutionary acts focus on what the speaker does in uttering a sentence. Searle attempted to classify illocutionary acts into the following types: *Commissive, Directive, Commissive, Commissive, and Declaration.*

An utterance in context executes an act. In order to explore more about a particular act being performed via an utterance is to assume that underlying every utterance.

(U) there is a clause containing a performative verb (Vp) which makes the illocutionary explicit and accounts for the illocutionary force. This is known as performative hypothesis and the basic format of the underlying clause is shown below:

a) I (hereby) Vp you (that)U;
b) I *confess* that I stole the family jewels;
c) I *warn* you to stop teasing your sister;
d) I *promise* I will come to your birthday party….

In this clause, the subject must be first person singular ("I"), followed by the adverb "hereby", indicating that the utterance "counts as" an action by being uttered. There is also a performative verb (Vp) in present tense and an indirect object in second person singular ("you"). In order for a performative verb to have its performative sense, that means to actually perform the illocutionary act its names, it must (i) be positive, (ii) be present tense, (iii) have a first-person agent (performer of the action of the verb), and (iv) refer to a specific event.

View-points of linguists in terms of speech acts up to now have not reached an absolute agreement. Austin's classification of speech acts is best seen as an attempt to give a general picture of illocutionary acts: what types of illocutionary act that one can generally perform in uttering a sentence. John Searle inherits his ideas from Austin and elaborates on some of them, but develops the theory in his own fashion: the essence of it being that to perform an illocutionary act is to express an illocutionary intention. While each of these speech act theories has some merit, this article follows Searle's as his theory itself as well as its classification of speech acts best serve the aim of the study in revealing the pragmatic features highlighting persuasion in political speeches, particularly, in Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's presidential election speeches. Especially, in this research, Commissive speech act was put at spotlight, uncovering the distinctively different illocutionary forces employed by the two politicians, and how differently these forces function in featuring persuasion in comparison between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's speeches.

2.3 Persuasion as a political concept

Recent research regarding social psychology and public opinion entails a plethora of empirical regularities on how beliefs are formed in the political and social context. First, while beliefs are flexible and can be easily influenced, people are prone to be persuaded particularly in areas where people barely have much personal involvement (Graber, 1984; Zaller, 1992). Second, social interference shapes perception and direct decision, meaning that people are likely to be convinced by their close acquaintances (Grasnovetter, 1973; Cialdini, 1984). Third, in the political sphere, voter awareness of specific issues is supposed to be limited, leading to their high likelihood of persuasion (Zaller, 1992).Persuasion means "urging" and "advising" (Bloom, 2004) the audience, and in politics, the voters,

without violence or coercion. Herbert stated the useful way to construct a definition of persuasion was to look for common characteristics which are referred to as paradigm cases including the following factors.

Human communication: Persuasion relates to acts of human communication and exchanges of messages between human beings.

Attempted Influence: Persuasion can make changes and create influence. Herbert (2001) defines the act of influencing others as making a difference in the way they think, feel, or act and those are attempted influence. However, there are many cases it may be appropriate to refer to persuasion as an effect already produced by messages, whether intend or not. In these contexts, the perception of persuasion remains unchanged.

Modifying judgments: The target audience, receivers, or the persuades are called message recipients. In most cases, they are the ones who are open to the persuading input, process, and generate possible judgments which are the echo of their thinking about the persuader and his persuasion.

By the above explanation, persuasion is defined as human communication designed to influence the autonomous judgments and actions of others (Simon, Joanna,& Bruce, 2001) so that they can alter their way of thinking, feeling, or acting but it differs from other forms of influence. In this research, the paradigm case concerned is the one within political contexts wherein political speeches are put in focus. Particularly, the speeches in the presidential campaign of the two politicians Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are the prolific sources for the research in giving an insightful view of persuasion in politics. In this particular context, persuasion is launched as a human communication coined with political purposes, with an attempt to influence the audience's perception toward particular issues and direct their actions, that is election voting. The findings of the study will help us sharpen our knowledge of how politicians use persuasion as a reliable tool in winning people's support and confidence.

3. Research and Methodologies

The study was designed as descriptive research using qualitative method since the collected data was targeted to yield the pragmatic features, narrowing to the Commissive speech acts of persuasion employed by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's presidential election speeches in general and their illocutionary forces in particular. It was also descriptive in nature in the sense that this study was intended to describe how the language used in the political speeches of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in their presidential campaign manifested with quantitative information, namely, the frequency of the linguistic units that occur in the texts collected.

3.1 Data Collection

Among many political speeches of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, a certain number of speeches were reached. The researcher sourced the data for this research from an

online source: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/2016_election.php which is a repertoire of speeches, statements, and press releases of American public office holders, both past and present. The politicians' speeches were narrowed to 35 thanks to the aid of computer software, the Research Randomizer.
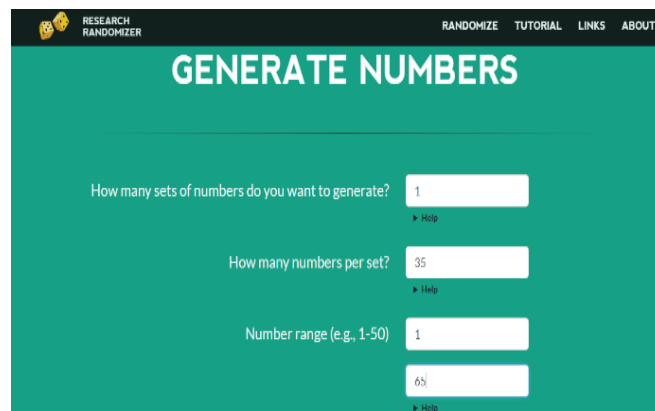

Figure 1: A snapshot of Research Randomizer Software)

All of the speeches chosen for the analysis were coded for the ease of analysis and classification. Speeches belonging to Donald Trump were coded as T, being arranged orderly from *T1* to *T35*. Likewise, *H1* to *H35* were the coded speeches of Hillary Clinton.

3.2 Data analysis

In this section, utterances collected from the speeches are analyzed and classified in accordance with Commissive speech acts by Searle (1980).

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Commissive speech acts in Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's presidential election speeches.

Classifications of commissive speech act can be listed as *threaten, pledge, offer, and refuse illocutionary act.* The priority of illocutionary acts used in Clinton's presidential election speeches was promising (59,8%), followed by refusing (14,6 %), threatening (12,8%) and offering (12,8%), while Trump prioritized promising first, then came threatening (36,4), refusing (7,5%) and offering (4,1%). Different communication goals were targeted by the Democrat and Republican candidates. While Clinton upheld the tendency to employ promise illocutionary act to give solutions and present her proposed plan and convince the audience, Trump resorted to commissive speech act of promising to enforce the audience's belief in him. With 732 instances of commissive speech act of promising which were found in Trump's presidential speeches in comparison with Clinton's counterparts, it can be said that Trump was in favor of making more promises and yielding hopes among the audience. Ranking second in the sub-types of commissive speech acts utilized by Trump was illocutionary acts of threatening with 512 instances, while that of Clinton accounted just one-third compared with her opponent's, making it the lowest figures in Clinton's sub-types of speech acts. Besides, both Trump and Clinton made use of refusing illocutionary acts with similar figures (105 and 101 instances

respectively). Trump's illocutionary acts of offering were used with the least frequency among Trumps' illocutionary acts (58 instances)

Table I: Illocutionary forces of Commissive speech acts used in Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's presidential election speech acts

Commissive speech acts	Instances			
	Hillary Clinton		Donald Trump	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Threatening	89	12,8	512	36,4
Pledging/ promising	414	**59,8**	732	52
Refusing	101	14,6	105	7,5
Offering	88	12,8	58	4,1
Total	692	100	1407	100

4.2. Threatening illocutionary acts in Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's presidential election speeches

Threatening is the opposite of illocutionary act of promising. Threatening means doing something in the future that is harmful or the hearer.

*(T4) So even though you say we want, as an example, General Electric to produce more, if they don't want to or if for some reason one of the donors of crooked Hillary Clinton doesn't want that to happen, even though it's for Erie, even though it's you, even though it's for the state of Pennsylvania, **then it's not going to happen, folks. It's not going to happen.***

Of the two, only Trump outstood himself with the employment of threatening illocutionary act. There were sentences uttered by the Republican candidate to seek mistakes of the past administration and yield a pessimistic picture of a future America. Instead of calling Clinton by name, Trump also added her a nickname "*crooked Hillary Clinton*" as a way to insult her and imply her characteristics (T4). Also, in T4, Trump stated the possible problems being in arrival and no change would be made within Clinton's presidency. The conditional sentence "*if*" was preferred by Trump when he often offered a choice for the audience, stating the failure of a particular option, and certainly highlighted the success of the other option. The worst scenario would be likely to happen unless Trump was in power. The proposition in the "if" clause aimed to threaten the audience not to choose the worst but prefer the better.

4.3 Pledging / Promising illocutionary acts in Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's presidential election speeches

Meanwhile, a pledge is a strong commitment and serious promise to a future course of action, which were employed by both politicians.

*(H11) That's why 'Stronger Together' is more than just a slogan. It's a course of action. So here's what I want to do. I want you to hear me pledge **that this will be a vital aspect of my presidency. And I want you to help me bring our nation together – to solve our problems, strengthen our communities.***

*(H34) The awesome responsibility that is housed in one person is something I want you to think about between now and the time you vote. **Because I will pledge to you that I will exercise the greatest care and responsibility in all of the powers invested in the office of the presidency.***

*(H2) In those first 100 days, I will send a proposal for comprehensive immigration reform to the Congress. **My proposal will keep families together, and it will include a path to citizenship.***

*To all Americans tonight, and all of our cities and all of our towns, **I pledge to you one more time, together, we will make America wealthy again. We will make America strong again. We will make America safe again. And we will make America great again.** Thank you everybody. Thank you.*

*(T5) As president, I will call for **an international conference focused on this goal. We will work side by side with our friends in the Middle East, including our greatest ally, Israel. We will partner with King Abdullah of Jordan and the president of Egypt, President Sisi**, and all others who recognize this ideology of death that must be extinguished. We will also work very closely with NATO on this new mission*

There are many ways for Clinton and Trump to make promises. In some cases, the promises were made direct with the appearance of performative verbs of "*promise*" or "*pledge*" while in some other cases, auxiliary verbs were employed to clearly state the promised plans given by Hillary and Trump. Both of them stressed the vital aspect of their presidency and their future duties.

With the slogan "*stronger together*", Clinton drew attention of listeners to her mission of solving problems and strengthening communities (H11). To emphasize the strong determination and willpower, Clinton said "*I want you to hear me pledge*". The promise was made prominently by the request of careful listening and consideration for her promise and sincerity. With the direct use of the word "*pledge*" the utterance is recognized as commissive speech act of promising. In the disguise of a commissive speech act of promising, Clinton committed to herself to definitely fulfill her proposed plans, and only with the authority given with position, would she be able to accomplish her duties (H34). H2 contains Clinton's commissive speech act with the auxiliary "*will*" indicating an activity in the future. Issues which would be certainly targeted during Clinton's first days at the White House were listed as follows: sending a proposal regarding immigration reform to the Congress, *keeping families together, and including a path to citizenship*. However, in order to convey stronger commitment to her promise, Clinton made a comparison implying the same promise could be made by everyone, but for her, it was her whole-hearted belief hard to leave off.

Examples of pledge used by Trump during the campaign speeches are all about his slogan of "*we will make America wealthy again*" – "*strong again*" – "*safe again*" – "*great again*". The direct commissive speech act of pledge was

uttered with the repetition in structure, in word choice, making the pledge reflect a paramount power and influence, followed by his stating great gratitude towards the listeners and advocators (T5). Particularly, missions to be accomplished as a president were also at focal point in Donald Trump's plans. Trump's utterances highlighted his commissive speech act of promising with the utilization of auxiliary *"will"* expressing inevitable happenings and certainty of coming events. Trump promised to act out specific plans to combat the radical Islam, for example *calling for an international conference on immigration, working with friends in the Middle East, partnering with country leaders, working closely with NATO on this new mission* (T5). His being very specific and detailed in articulating his plans showed his commitments to his presidential missions, easily going to hold people accountable on his words, and persuading them to vote for him.

4.4 Refusing illocutionary acts in Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's presidential election speeches

Some examples of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's refusal in their campaign speeches are under investigation. *(H1)I refuse to believe we can't find common ground here. We have to heal the divides in our country, not just on guns, but on race, immigration and more. And that starts with listening, listening to each other, trying as best we can to walk in each other's shoes.*

(H6) That's the spirit that makes this country great – we might get knocked down, but we get right back up again. And we refuse to quit, no matter what. And that's the spirit we need in this election too.

(T7)I refuse to let another generation of American children be excluded from the American Dream. Our whole country loses when young people of limitless potential are denied the opportunity to contribute their talents because we failed to provide them the opportunities they deserved. Let our children be dreamers too

*(T1) Hillary Clinton is the most **corrupt** person ever to seek the presidency. And if she were to be elected, it would create an unprecedented constitutional crisis.*

Another difference is the use of refuse speech act by politicians. The act of refusing is demonstrated very clearly in direct ways when the performative *"refuse"* was stated by both politicians. Instead of using negative form of the sentence, the word "refuse" makes the sentence much more forceful with direct message. In this campaign speech, utterances in H1 typically exemplify the refuse speech act employed by Hillary Clinton. Specifically, she refused to believe that there was no such thing as national separation; in fact, there were possible methods to foster the unity of the country, particularly by closely listening and understanding each other. Giving the solutions to the problems was the exclusive way in which Clinton showed her refusal for such a dead-end belief. H6 is also an expression of illocutionary act of refusing when Clinton stressed the determination of the country rising back up again regardless of any

disadvantages or failures. By that sense, she refused to give up in any circumstances and by any rate.

Donald Trump, on the other hand, expressed his speech act of refusing in T7, stating his refusal of letting the later generation of America be excluded from American Dream. By giving a proposition describing the pessimistic prospect of a losing country if young people were deprived of opportunities to develop and by asserting the importance of children's nurturing their dreams, Trump enforced his refusal announced in the previous utterance. The act of refusing an action turned out to be an assertion, emphasizing Trump's belief in connecting young people with the American Dreams for a better future of America. In T32, with the absence of performative verb of *"refuse"*, Trump also explicated his illocutionary force of disagreement and refusal towards Hillary being able to demonstrate the role of presidency. Employing negative adjective *"corrupt"* and superlative form of the word *"corrupt"* (T1), Trump wanted to insult Clinton for not being capable enough for the presidential seat and damaged her image in front of many participants. Not stopping there, Trump mounted stating the *"unprecedented constitutional crisis"* being likely to happen within Clinton's presidency, persuading everyone to reconsider and not to vote for Clinton.

4.5 Offering illocutionary acts in Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's presidential election speeches

Illocutionary act of offering also demonstrates the difference between Trump's and Clinton's commissives. The offer means saying that the speakers are willing to do something for somebody or give something to somebody. Offer is the speakers' expression to offer an act for the hearer's or addressee's interest. Offering becomes binding only if it is accepted and has not been withdrawn. In this campaign speech, offering illocutionary acts uttered by Clinton and Trump were used to giving solution on certain problems obsessing the whole America and its people.

(H6) Are we going to pit Americans against each other and deepen the divides in this country, or are we going to be, as I know we can, stronger together? I know what I believe, and I'm going to close my campaign the same way I started my career – fighting for kids and young people and families.

*(T9) To those suffering in crime and poverty, I say: give Donald J. Trump a chance. What do you have to lose by embracing our platform of change? We are going to bring back your jobs, rebuild your cities, and **give parents** and students school choice. I will never, ever, ever take you for granted. We are going to push a new Civil Rights agenda. We believe every American has the right to a safe community, a great education and government that protects their jobs.*

*(T7) She is going to do nothing. And just look at the past. She's done nothing. She's been there for 35 years. She's done nothing. And I say what do you have to lose? Choose me. You watch. Watch how **good** we're going to do **together**. Watch.*

In H2, by giving a rhetorical question, Hillary Clinton offered two likely situations in which lots of people had to suffer when they were sick, whether they should stay in best resting until their full health recovery, meaning their failing in earning money or attempt to dragging themselves to work in unwell health sate. Despite picking particular situations of unfortunately sick people, Clinton implicitly generalized to a larger size of population, aiming at those, maybe in the groups of listeners, and gave them options to choose from. The options turned out to be tough, especially for the Americans who had not been secured with expensive insurance, leaving their well-being at the mercy of glimpse fortune.

In her utterances, Clinton conducted the illocutionary act of offering, asking the listeners to evaluate President Barack Obama while her employment of the superlative adjective *"the best"* seemed already a fulfilled answer. Perhaps, the most convincing way of giving compliments and praising President Barack Obama was to ask a question and intentionally answer it shortly, which highlighted the significant role of Obama in his glorious feat of arms rescuing the country from the second Great Depression, terrorism and so on.

However, sometimes, Clinton posed a question of offering without reaching the answer, leaving it open to the listeners to make a final decision. Clinton offered whether stronger together was considered the main thread weaving in and creating unitary community or separation was being sharpened until the unresolved division. If the option of encompassing unity was reached then joining Clinton would be the way out and help tackle all problems, as her mission was for *"kids and young people and families"*, and that was the *"cause of my life"*, the *"passion of my presidency"* (H6).

Donald Trump, being impressed by his rhetoric way of giving short sentences with little appearance of conjunctions, also shared many similarities with Clinton in giving offer. However, Trump had an inclination of conducting illocutionary act of offering to persuade the listeners to choose and vote for him. Trump targeted the sufferings from crime and poverty, and made an offer of himself being a chance to initiate possible change. Trump asked *"What do you have to lose…"* to hopefully prod the decision to be made on his side, stressing on the just-gaining-choice and the benefits people would get eventually. With all of the proposed actions to be taken, for example *bringing back jobs, rebuilding cities or giving parents and students good school choices…* Trump deliberately added more value and credit to his offer, making his option a lucrative and attractive one, hard to refuse. Similarly, in a different speech, the same question was raised again with the identical arrangement of ideas and reasoning except for the part highlighting Trump's attack on his opponent. By offering people to let the past be the trustful witness, Trump triggered the criticism toward Clinton's poor capacity as she had done *"nothing"* despite being in service for *"35 years"*. Besides, a practice of offering illocutionary act was also seen in the way Trump slipped the argument and asked people to "watch" and see how good the process of accompanying with him would be. With the threefold successive repetition,

the verb *"watch"* was to emphasize Trump's offering and longing for the bright future prospect of being good *"together"*.

5. Conclusion

Classifications of commissive speech act can be listed as *threaten, pledge, offer, and refuse illocutionary act.* Some differences are also recognized in the way the Democrat and Republican candidates made use of commissive speech acts in an attempt to achieve their communication goals. Clinton was inclined to employ promise illocutionary act to give solutions, show her excessive interest, and convince the listeners. Trump, on the other hand, took advantage of it to make criticism on his rival in the election. In addition, Commissive speech act is also used by to strengthen the audience's spirit and give them hope that they would win the election. Further, Trump also utilized commissive speech act to threaten any individuals or organization who would do any harm to the U.S. or cast the pessimistic prospect of future without Trump's presidency. Thanks to the employment of the commissive speech acts, both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump had established social relationship with certain groups of audience, longing for their advocacy and the electing votes. Once the social distance between the politicians and the audience was bridged, the ultimate aim of persuasion was finally reached, fostering the politicians' eventual triumph in their presidential run to the White House.

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