

Speech Act Analysis of the Joseph R. Biden, Jr.’s Inaugural Address on 20th of January 2021 as the 46th President of the USA

by

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Abstract:

President Biden took the oath of office on 20 January 2021 at a time when the US faces both public health and an economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of this paper is to highlight the speech acts used by President Biden in his inaugural speech. This paper analyzed the direct and indirect speech acts. To analyze the speech acts from all these aspects, both qualitative and quantitative analysis was carried out. The framework employed for this analysis was the Speech Act theory which was introduced by Austin and Searle. The findings revealed that his speech includes maximum directive and representative acts while the use of direct speech was also evident. The paper concludes that the speech act analysis highlights the demanding yet informative, and supportive nature of the President of the US.

Keywords: Jo Biden, inaugural speech, Speech acts of Jo Biden, Illocutionary Acts, Speech Act Analysis, Direct Speech Acts, Indirect Speech Acts, January 20, 2021, 46th President of the USA, etc.

Introduction:

Humans produce utterances in the forms of words and grammatical structures to express themselves. These utterances, called speech acts, perform certain actions and express “the speaker’s intention and the particular effects ... on the listener” (Ahmed et al., 2020) Speech acts are in different forms such as “requests, warnings, promises, apologies, greetings, or any number of declarations” (Nordquist, 2019). In linguistics, speech acts are studied under the “The Speech-Act Theory” introduced by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969). The speech act theory considers utterances at three levels:

- i. Locutionary acts
- ii. Illocutionary acts
- iii. Perlocutionary acts

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A locutionary act is making a statement which the listener understands while the illocutionary act is regarded as the “real action.” “This act is performed via utterances and its effect on the listeners is called the perlocutionary effect” (Ahmed et al., 2020). The center of Austin’s theory (1962) is an illocutionary act.

Non-linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge is essential for clear understanding and production of certain utterances and the theory of speech act cannot be understood without pragmatics because an utterance cannot be understood without a suitable context. Speaker and listener relationship, choice of linguistic form and communicative competence define and cover the scope of pragmatics (Nordquist, 2019).

There are five types of illocutionary acts that are studied in Speech Act Theory or five classes of illocutionary acts as described by Searle (1969) and classified according to the functions performed. Furthermore, speech acts may be direct and indirect. When there is a direct relationship between the function and structure of speech acts, they are called direct speech acts. On the other hand, when there is an indirect relation between the structure and function of speech acts, these are called indirect speech acts (Nordquist, 2019). According to Searle (1969), there are the following five classes of illocutionary acts:

- i. **Representatives:** These are the kinds of speech acts, that commit the speaker to state what he/she believes to be the case or not. It uses verbs such as “report, concludes, denies, believes, and affirms.”
- ii. **Expressive:** These are those kinds of speech acts that tell us about the speaker’s attitude, psychological state by using verbs such as “regret, welcome, thank, congratulate, detest, appreciate, deplore.”
- iii. **Directive:** When speakers want someone else to do something, they perform a directive speech act by using words such as “invite, request, command, beg, challenge, ask, dare, and insist.”
- iv. **Commissive:** When speakers want to commit themselves to some future actions, they perform Commissive speech acts, with verbs such as “pledge, swear, warrant, vow, promise, guarantee, undertake.”
- v. **Declarations:** These speech acts can change the world via utterances; the speaker can alter the condition of a situation by making the utterance. For example, “I pronounce you husband and wife.”

Literature Review:

Joseph R. Biden Jr., in his first address as president, made a sweeping call for unity, truth, and racial justice. He explained how the US nation “faces one of its darkest hours in the midst of a raging pandemic and bitter political division” (ABC News). He delivered his inaugural address after few days of the deadly siege of the Capitol. During this siege, the supporters of Donald Trump, the former president of the US, broke through police barriers and ransacked the building as Congress gathered to ratify Biden’s election.

Biden, 78, also addressed the supporters of his predecessor. Biden was officially sworn in as the 46th president of the U.S. The address was well-written with powerful rhetorical flourishes and inspiring themes. The speech explains that Biden knows the importance, impressions, and powers of the words. “He knows that words matter” (ABC News). The speech was written in collaboration with his speechwriters and historian Jon Meacham and Biden delivered it in a way that will inspire people who read or watch it.

While delivering his speech, Jo Biden “wasted no time in getting to the point” (Gallo, 2021). He explained that the “American story” depends on all of the Americans and to achieve goals Americans require actions. According to Biden, democracy requires unity the most. Unity was one of the main themes of the address so Biden used the word “unity” eight times during his address. Biden cited historical figures like St. Augustine and President Abraham Lincoln to reinforce the theme of unity. He quoted Lincoln who while signing Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, said, “If my name ever goes down in history, it’ll be for this act, and my whole soul is in it.” Biden stressed that his prime aim would be to bring America together, uniting his people and nation.

Biden used a great deal of rhetorical tool alliteration in his address i.e. the repeating letters or sounds in close succession, to bring a strong impact to convey his ideas. It worked bringing power to the address. Biden, therefore, said, “This is a *time of testing*. We face an attack *on* our democracy and *on* truth. A raging virus, growing inequities, the sting of systemic racism, a *climate in crisis*...we will be judged, you and I, by how we resolve these *cascading crises* of our era.”

Juxtaposition, i.e. the fact of two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect and highlighting the differences between two ideas was also prominent in the inaugural address. Biden said, “We have much to do in this winter of *peril* and significant *possibilities*.” “Together we will write an American story of *hope*, not *fear*, of *unity* not *division*, of *light*, not *darkness*.” In this way, Biden highlighted the contrast between hope and fear, unity and division, and light and darkness, etching out each of them in detail, and creating suspense, and lending a rhetorical effect.

Biden also used anaphora, i.e. repetition to add weight to his ideas. The same words started a series of sentences in his address. He said,

“Here we stand in the shadow of the Capitol dome, completed amid the Civil War when the union itself was literally hanging in the balance. Yet we endured. We prevailed.

Here we stand...

Here we stand...

Here we stand...

And here we stand, just days after a riotous mob thought they could use violence to silence the will of the people, to stop the work of this democracy, to drive us from this sacred ground. It did not happen. It will never happen. Not today. Not tomorrow, not ever. Not ever.” This series of repeated sentences garnered a loud and sustained applause.”

Knowing the fact that the people like to be reminded of who they are, Biden did so in several sections of his address. He reminded Americans that they are “restless, bold, and optimistic.” They are a great nation and “good people” and over the centuries, “through storm and strife, in peace and in war,” they have come so far, through “civil war, the Great Depression, world war, 9/11, through struggle, sacrifice, and setbacks,” their “better angels have always prevailed.”

Biden believes that America faces a “historic moment of crisis and challenge” and unity among them is the only “path forward.” As a matter of fact, Biden made it clear that “he hopes unity is the headline” (Gallo, 2021).

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this paper is “to explore the categories of speech acts, and direct and indirect speech acts that are working behind President Jo Biden’s inaugural speech.” Speech by a dignitary like the president of the USA mainly aims to make the audience believe in what is being said

therefore the speech acts play the most significant role to achieve this purpose. By conducting the speech act analysis of this political discourse, the researchers has tried to explore the implied meanings working behind the utterances of President Jo Biden in his inaugural speech.

Research Questions:

This research paper aims at finding out the following research questions;

- i. What types of speech acts were used by the US President in his inaugural speech?
- ii. How many direct and indirect speech acts have been used by the US President in his inaugural speech?

Methodology:

The type of this study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature therefore a mixed methodology has been used in this research paper. The researchers have analyzed the data that have been selected from the US President Jo Biden's inaugural speech. 143 utterances from the speech have been selected for the speech act analysis in order to explore the President's hidden intentions and state of mind. The researchers have used a simple percentage method in order to present the data quantitatively in the form of tables.

Qualitative Data Analysis:

This section consists of the analysis of the data selected from this particular speech. The speech was divided by the researchers into 156 speech acts out of which 13 were found to be locutionary acts and 143 were illocutionary acts. The researchers, after their analysis, has given an explanation of those 143 utterances in data analysis according to the 5 classes of speech acts. Therefore, in this section, the qualitative representation of locutionary and direct and indirect illocutionary speech acts has been given as explained below:

1. "Chief Justice Roberts, Vice President Harris, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Vice President Pence, my distinguished guests, my fellow Americans." (**Locutionary**)
2. "This is America's day. This is democracy's day. A day of history and hope, of renewal and resolve." (**Direct, Representative**)
3. "Through a crucible for the ages America has been tested anew and America has risen to the challenge." (**Direct, Representative**)
4. "Today, we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy." (**Direct, Representative**)
5. "The people... the will of the people has been heard and the will of the people has been heeded." (**Direct, Representative**)
6. "We have learned again that democracy is precious. Democracy is fragile." (**Direct, Representative**)
7. "And at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed." (**Direct, Representative**)
8. "So now, on this hallowed ground where just days ago violence sought to shake this Capitol's very foundation." (**Locutionary**)
9. "We have come together as one nation, under God, indivisible, to carry out the peaceful transfer of power as we have for more than two centuries." (**Direct, Representative**)

10. “As we look ahead in our uniquely American way - restless, bold, and optimistic - and set our sights on the nation we know we can be and we must be.” **(Indirect, Expressive)**
11. “I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here today.” **(Direct, Expressive)**
12. “I thank them from the bottom of my heart.” **(Direct, Expressive)**
13. “And I know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength of our nation.” **(Direct, Representative)**
14. “As does President Carter, who I spoke to last night but who cannot be with us today, but whom we salute for his lifetime of service.” **(Direct, Expressive)**
15. “I have just taken the sacred oath, each of those patriots took - an oath first sworn by George Washington.” **(Direct, Representative)**
16. “But the American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us.” **(Direct, Representative)**
17. “On “We the People” who seek a more perfect Union.” **(Direct, Representative)**
18. “This is a great nation and we are a good people.” **(Direct, Representative)**
19. “Over the centuries through storm and strife, in peace and in war, we have come so far.” **(Direct, Representative)**
20. “But we still have far to go.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
21. “We will press forward with speed and urgency, for we have much to do in this winter of peril and possibility.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
22. “Much to repair. Much to restore. Much to heal. Much to build. And much to gain.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
23. “Few periods in our nation’s history have been more challenging or difficult than the one we’re in now.” **(Direct, Representative)**
24. “A once-in-a-century virus silently stalks the country.” **(Locutionary)**
25. “It’s taken as many lives in one year as America lost in all of World War II. Millions of jobs have been lost. Hundreds of thousands of businesses closed.” **(Locutionary)**
26. “A cry for racial justice some 400 years in the making moves us. The dream of justice for all will be deferred no longer.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
27. “A cry for survival comes from the planet itself. A cry that can’t be any more desperate or any more clear.” **(Indirect, Commissive)**
28. “And now, a rise in political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront and we will defeat.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
29. “To overcome these challenges - to restore the soul and to secure the future of America - requires more than words.” **(Indirect, Commissive)**
30. “It requires that most elusive of things in a democracy: Unity. Unity.” **(Indirect, Commissive)**
31. “In another January in Washington, on New Year’s Day 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.” **(Locutionary)**
32. “When he put pen to paper, the President said, “If my name ever goes down into history it will be for this act and my whole soul is in it.” **(Locutionary)**
33. “My whole soul is in it. Today, on this January day, my whole soul is in this:” **(Direct, Expressive)**
34. “Bringing America together. Uniting our people. And uniting our nation.” **(Direct, Expressive)**
35. “I ask every American to join me in this cause.” **(Direct, Directive)**

36. “Uniting to fight the common foes we face: Anger, resentment, hatred. Extremism, lawlessness, violence. Disease, joblessness, hopelessness.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
37. “With unity we can do great things. Important things. We can right wrongs. We can put people to work in good jobs. We can teach our children in safe schools. We can overcome this deadly virus. We can reward work, rebuild the middle class, and make health care secure for all. We can deliver racial justice. We can make America, once again, the leading force for good in the world.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
38. “I know speaking of unity can sound to some like a foolish fantasy.” **(Direct, Representative)**
39. “I know the forces that divide us are deep and they are real. But I also know they are not new.” **(Direct, Representative)**
40. “Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal that we are all created equal and the harsh, ugly reality that racism, nativism, fear, and demonization have long torn us apart.” **(Direct, Representative)**
41. “The battle is perennial. Victory is never assured.” **(Direct, Representative)**
42. “Through the Civil War, the Great Depression, World War, 9/11, through struggle, sacrifice, and setbacks, our “better angels” have always prevailed.” **(Direct, Representative)**
43. “In each of these moments, enough of us came together to carry all of us forward. And, we can do so now.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
44. “History, faith, and reason show the way, the way of unity.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
45. “We can see each other not as adversaries but as neighbors.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
46. “We can treat each other with dignity and respect.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
47. “We can join forces, stop the shouting, and lower the temperature.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
48. “For without unity, there is no peace, only bitterness and fury. No progress, only exhausting outrage. No nation, only a state of chaos.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
49. “This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge, and unity is the path forward.” **(Direct, Representative)**
50. “And, we must meet this moment as the United States of America.” **(Direct, Directive)**
51. “If we do that, I guarantee you, we will not fail.” **(Indirect, Declarative)**
52. “We have never, ever, ever failed in America when we have acted together.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
53. “And so today, at this time and in this place, let us start afresh. All of us.” **(Direct, Directive)**
54. “Let us listen to one another. See one another. Show respect to one another.” **(Direct, Directive)**
55. “Politics need not be a raging fire destroying everything in its path.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
56. “Every disagreement doesn’t have to be a cause for total war.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
57. “And, we must reject a culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured.” **(Direct, Directive)**
58. “My fellow Americans, we have to be different than this.” **(Direct, Directive)**
59. “America has to be better than this.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
60. “And, I believe America is better than this.” **(Direct, Representative)**
61. “Just look around.” **(Direct, Directive)**
62. “Here we stand, in the shadow of a Capitol dome that was completed amid the Civil War, when the Union itself hung in the balance.” **(Locutionary)**

63. “Yet we endured and we prevailed.” **(Direct, Representative)**
64. “Here we stand looking out to the great Mall where Dr. King spoke of his dream.” **(Locutionary)**
65. “Here we stand, where 108 years ago at other inaugural, thousands of protestors tried to block brave women from marching for the right to vote.” **(Locutionary)**
66. “Today, we mark the swearing-in of the first woman in American history elected to national office - Vice President Kamala Harris.” **(Direct, Declarative)**
67. “Don’t tell me things can’t change.” **(Direct, Directive)**
68. “Here we stand across the Potomac from Arlington National Cemetery, where heroes who gave the last full measure of devotion rest in eternal peace.” **(Locutionary)**
69. “And here we stand, just days after a riotous mob thought they could use violence to silence the will of the people, to stop the work of our democracy, and to drive us from this sacred ground.” **(Indirect, Representative)**
70. “That did not happen.” **(Direct, Representative)**
71. “It will never happen. Not today. Not tomorrow. Not ever.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
72. “To all those who supported our campaign I am humbled by the faith you have placed in us.” **(Direct, Expressive)**
73. “To all those who did not support us, let me say this: Hear me out as we move forward. Take a measure of me and my heart.” **(Direct, Directive)**
74. “And if you still disagree, so be it.” **(Direct, Directive)**
75. “That’s democracy. That’s America. The right to dissent peaceably, within the guardrails of our Republic, is perhaps our nation’s greatest strength.” **(Direct, Representative)**
76. “Yet hear me clearly: Disagreement must not lead to disunion.” **(Direct, Directive)**
77. “And I pledge this to you: I will be a President for all Americans.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
78. “I will fight as hard for those who did not support me as for those who did.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
79. “Many centuries ago, Saint Augustine, a saint of my church, wrote that a people were a multitude defined by the common objects of their love.” **(Locutionary)**
80. “What are the common objects we love that define us as Americans?” **(Locutionary)**
81. “I think I know. Opportunity. Security. Liberty. Dignity. Respect. Honor. And, yes, the truth.” **(Direct, Representative)**
82. “Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson.” **(Direct, Representative)**
83. “There is truth and there are lies.” **(Direct, Representative)**
84. “Lies told for power and for profit.” **(Direct, Representative)**
85. “And each of us has a duty and responsibility, as citizens, as Americans, and especially as leaders - leaders who have pledged to honor our Constitution and protect our nation - to defend the truth and to defeat the lies.” **(Direct, Representative)**
86. “I understand that many Americans view the future with some fear and trepidation.” **(Direct, Expressive)**
87. “I understand they worry about their jobs, about taking care of their families, about what comes next.” **(Direct, Expressive)**
88. “I get it.” **(Direct, Expressive)**
89. “But the answer is not to turn inward, to retreat into competing factions, distrusting those who don’t look like you do, or worship the way you do, or don’t get their news from the same sources you do.” **(Indirect, Directive)**

90. “We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal.” **(Direct, Directive)**
91. “We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
92. “If we show a little tolerance and humility.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
93. “If we’re willing to stand in the other person’s shoes just for a moment. Because here is the thing about life: There is no accounting for what fate will deal you.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
94. “There are some days when we need a hand.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
95. “There are other days when we’re called on to lend one.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
96. “That is how we must be with one another.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
97. “And, if we are this way, our country will be stronger, more prosperous, and more ready for the future.” **(Direct, Representative)**
98. “My fellow Americans, in the work ahead of us, we will need each other.” **(Direct, Directive)**
99. “We will need all our strength to persevere through this dark winter.” **(Direct, Directive)**
100. “We are entering what may well be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus.” **(Direct, Representative)**
101. “We must set aside the politics and finally face this pandemic as one nation.” **(Direct, Directive)**
102. “I promise you this: as the Bible says weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
103. “We will get through this, together.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
104. “The world is watching today.” **(Locutionary)**
105. “So here is my message to those beyond our borders: America has been tested and we have come out stronger for it.” **(Direct, Representative)**
106. “We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
107. “Not to meet yesterday’s challenges, but today’s and tomorrow’s.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
108. “We will lead not merely by the example of our power but by the power of our example.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
109. “We will be a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress, and security.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
110. “We have been through so much in this nation.” **(Direct, Representative)**
111. “And, in my first act as President, I would like to ask you to join me in a moment of silent prayer to remember all those we lost this past year to the pandemic.” **(Direct, Directive)**
112. “To those 400,000 fellow Americans - mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, friends, neighbors, and co-workers.” **(Direct, Directive)**
113. “We will honor them by becoming the people and nation we know we can and should be.” **(Direct, Directive)**
114. “Let us say a silent prayer for those who lost their lives, for those they left behind, and for our country. Amen.” **(Direct, Directive)**
115. “This is a time of testing.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
116. “We face an attack on democracy and on truth. A raging virus. Growing inequity. The sting of systemic racism. A climate in crisis. America’s role in the world.” **(Direct, Representative)**

117. “Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways.” **(Direct, Representative)**
118. “But the fact is we face them all at once, presenting this nation with the gravest of responsibilities.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
119. “Now we must step up. All of us.” **(Direct, Directive)**
120. “It is a time for boldness, for there is so much to do.” **(Direct, Directive)**
121. “And, this is certain.” **(Direct, Representative)**
122. “We will be judged, you and I, for how we resolve the cascading crises of our era.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
123. “Will we rise to the occasion?” **(Indirect, Directive)**
124. “Will we master this rare and difficult hour?” **(Indirect, Directive)**
125. “Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world for our children?” **(Indirect, Directive)**
126. “I believe we must and I believe we will.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
127. “And when we do, we will write the next chapter in the American story.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
128. “It’s a story that might sound something like a song that means a lot to me.” **(Direct, Representative)**
129. “It’s called “American Anthem” and there is one verse stands out for me:” **(Direct, Representative)**
130. “The work and prayers/ Of centuries have brought us to this day/ What shall be our legacy?/ What will our children say?/ Let me know in my heart/ When my days are through/ America/America/ I gave my best to you.” **(Direct, Representative)**
131. “Let us add our own work and prayers to the unfolding story of our nation.” **(Direct, Directive)**
132. “If we do this then when our days are through our children and our children’s children will say of us they gave their best.” **(Direct, Representative)**
133. “They did their duty.” **(Direct, Representative)**
134. “They healed a broken land. My fellow Americans, I close today where I began, with a sacred oath.” **(Direct, Declarative)**
135. “Before God and all of you I give you my word.” **(Direct, Declarative)**
136. “I will always level with you.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
137. “I will defend the Constitution.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
138. “I will defend our democracy.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
139. “I will defend America.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
140. “I will give my all in your service thinking not of power, but of possibilities.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
141. “Not of personal interest, but of the public good.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
142. “And together, we shall write an American story of hope, not fear.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
143. “Of unity, not division. Of light, not darkness.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
144. “An American story of decency and dignity.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
145. “Of love and of healing. Of greatness and of goodness.” **(Direct, Commissive)**
146. “May this be the story that guides us?” **(Indirect, Expressive)**
147. “The story that inspires us.” **(Indirect, Expressive)**
148. “The story that tells ages yet to come that we answered the call of history. “We met the moment.” **(Indirect, Expressive)**

- 149. “That democracy and hope, truth and justice, did not die on our watch but thrived.” **(Indirect, Expressive)**
- 150. “That our America secured liberty at home and stood once again as a beacon to the world.” **(Indirect, Expressive)**
- 151. “That is what we owe our forbearers, one another, and generations to follow **(Direct, Representative)**
- 152. “So, with purpose and resolve we turn to the tasks of our time.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
- 153. “Sustained by faith. Driven by conviction.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
- 154. “And, devoted to one another and to this country we love with all our hearts.” **(Indirect, Directive)**
- 155. “May God bless America and may God protect our troops.” **(Direct, Expressive)**
- 156. “Thank you, America.” **(Direct, Expressive)**

Quantitative Analysis of Data:

The speech of President Jo contains 13 locutionary acts while the 143 illocutionary acts. This part of the paper contains the quantitative interpretation of data and data results have shown in the form of tables and graphs as given below:

Table 1: Speech Acts’ Classes in Illocutionary Acts²

Speech Acts	Frequency	Percentage
Representative	43	30.070
Expressive	17	11.888
Directive	50	34.965
Commissive	29	20.280
Declarative	04	02.797
Total	143	100.00

Table 2. Direct and Indirect Speech Acts’ Classes³

Acts	Frequency		Total	Percentage		% Total
	Direct	Indirect		Direct	Indirect	
Representative	42	01	43	97.67	2.33	100
Expressive	11	06	17	64.71	35.29	100
Directive	22	28	50	44.00	56.00	100
Commissive	26	03	29	89.66	10.34	100
Declarative	03	01	04	75.00	25.00	100
Total	104	39	143	72.73	27.27	100

Table 1 shows that out of a total of 143 illocutionary speech acts, 43 (30.070) are representative, 17 (11.888) are expressive, 50 (34.965) are directive, 29 (20.280) are commissive and 4 (2.797) are declarative speech acts used by the President his speech. Figure 1 below explains further the division of the speech acts in the pie diagram.

Table 2 indicates the interpretation of direct and indirect use of speech act. It shows that out of a total of 104 direct speech acts 42 are representatives, 11 are expressive, 22 are directive

² Source: Data analysis by the author

³ Source: Data analysis by the author

26 are commissive and three are declarative speech acts. Out of 39 indirect speech acts, only one is representative, six are expressive, 28 are directive, two are commissive and one is declarative. Therefore, out of a total of 100% speech acts are 72.73% are direct while 27.27 % are indirect.

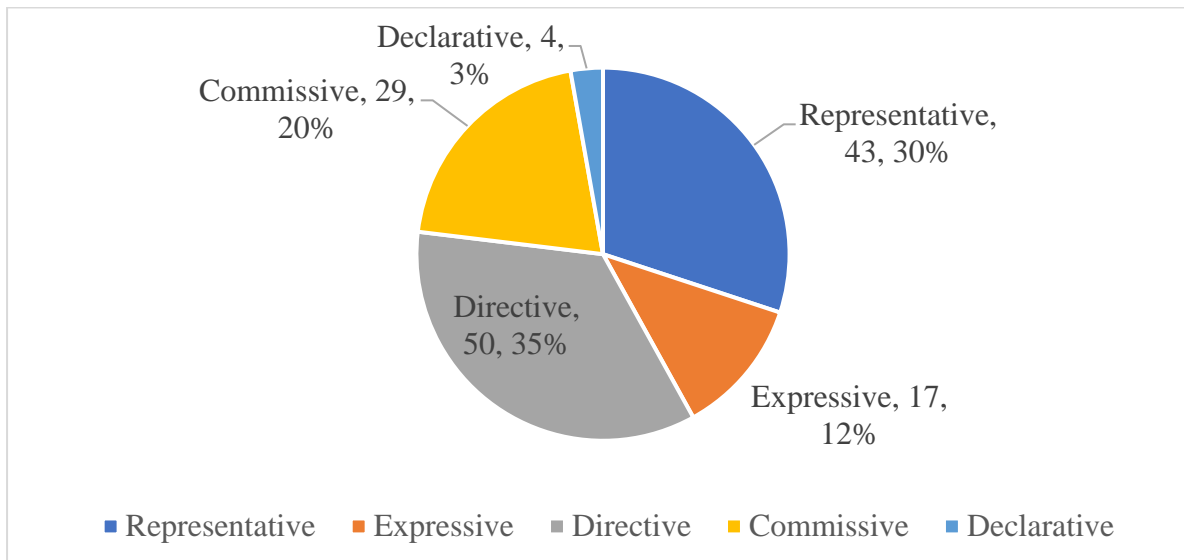


Figure 1: Speech Acts used by President Jo Biden in his inaugural speech⁴

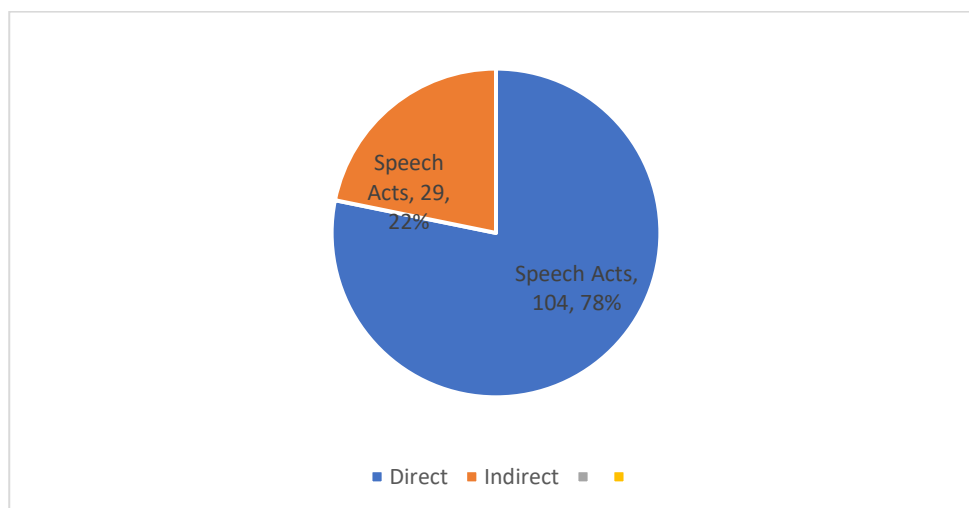


Figure 2: Direct and Indirect Speech Acts⁵

Discussion and Conclusion:

The identification of speech act types in a political address helps to understand the meanings of its contents and bring the meanings in an address to the fore. The analysis of the speech act also helps to portray the personality of the speaker. That is why the analysis of the

⁴ Source: Data analysis by the author

⁵ Source: Data analysis by the author

victorious Jo Biden speech reveals that his speech is mostly characterized by the use of directive, representative and commissive speech acts the most, especially after a long political campaign. The address fills the hearts and minds of the people with great expectations and hopes about the President and promises for a brighter future of the USA. President Jo Biden, after such a meaningful speech, is left with no choice but to practically show enthusiasm, to be thankful, and support Americans to work even harder to completely fulfill his electorate perspectives and aims, because the biggest percentage of illocutionary acts performed in his address are directives, then representatives and then commissive speech acts.

The analyzed data show that as the directive speech acts were used more than any other class of speech acts in the speech, President Jo wants the people of the USA to perform certain acts and behave in a certain way for the betterment of the country. For this purpose he has used both indirect and direct speech acts to invite, request, command, challenge, ask, dare, and urge his people. He has made a call for unity, truth, and racial justice. The maximum use of directives also shows that the president remained very powerful and extremely dominant during the speech to convince the audience to do whatever he wanted. It seems that while uttering these words Biden's focus remained on collecting the broken pieces of the country and reuniting them just opposite the ex-president's views. This uniting would prove the greatest challenge for Biden that is why he needed the directive speech acts the most.

The representative speech acts which are used the most after directives, explain that a unifying theme that is clear from the words plainly and smoothly spoken. The representatives explained that Biden believes in the concept of "all of the Americans" and to "restore the soul of America," to face and overcome the challenges. Biden believes America is a great country and Americans are good people but to meet challenges unity amongst them is what is required the most. The representative use of speech acts justifies the use of directives also in this context.

The third most dominant act was commissive (17 out of 143) in this speech which represents the Biden also commits himself to future actions. He, therefore, used the verbs give, defend, level, guarantee, fight, etc. while committing his promises to his people.

The study has also explored the direct and indirect classes of speech acts. As directive and representative acts were frequently used, where directive use explains the demanding nature of the president, using representatives potentially represents the factual, informative, and supportive aspects of President Jo Biden's personality. It is evident through the use of mostly direct speech that the President was quite clear in his intentions and concepts while explaining the demands, beliefs, and facts with his audience. From this result, it finally can be concluded that the President's address mostly comprised of demands and expectations and then describing the facts and information meant to express his feelings and psychological state as a representative of his people.

Future Recommendations:

For future research the researchers recommend the following:

- i. Future researchers can also conduct the critical discourse analysis (CDA) of this speech.
- ii. The researchers have selected one political discourse, but other researchers can conduct comparative analysis by selecting two political discourses for their study.

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