

# Negation in American Discourse: A Socio-Cognitive Study

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**Abstract:** The present study cognitive aims to investigate the negation phenomenon in American political discourse under Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) principles. The research sample includes two speeches given by Clinton and Trump in their election campaigns in 2016. Since the nature of the study follows the social-cognitive approach, the researcher adopted two models of analysis to achieve the study's objectives: First, the theoretical framework of MST (developed by Fauconnier (1994), Fauconnier and Sweetser (1996) to examine meaning construction resulting from building different levels of negative mental spaces by two different genders the selected speeches. Second, pragmatic model to examine the role of gender from the functional perspective of negation, five pragmatic strategies here are adopted, namely, Speech Act, off-record, on-record, presupposition (based on the politeness model of Brown and Levinson, 1987), and violation of Grice's maxims (1975). The study follows a qualitative method in the analytical interpretation of data to understand the negative impact of a contextual model and subjective model (personal ideology and knowledge) and quantitative analysis to find out the frequencies and the types of negatives. The findings show that both genders are biased to use negatives in their election campaigns to damage f each other's face, and both similarly succeed in using pragmatic strategies within the scope of negative spaces, with some differences to mention.

**Keywords:** Negatives, Context, Critical analysis, Pragmatic strategies, political role

## 1. Introduction

Negation expresses people's denial or rejection of specific attitudes or issues in everyday communication. Its classification and types have been studied by many scholars such as Jespersen (1917), Zimmer (1964), Horn (1989), and many others. Negatives can produce more rhetorical and meaningful effects than a positive scenario might result in the same circumstances. Thus, cognitive linguists proposed that the lexical and grammatical forms are inadequate to build a full range of meanings far beyond them. Fauconnier (1985, 1997), Fauconnier and Sweetser (1996), and Fauconnier and Turner (2002) have suggested that negatives presuppose a long and effective meaning building. This hypothesis takes great interest by linguists in examining negative levels and their role in building meaning construction in different texts. Sweetser (2006) has examined the levels of negative mental spaces and their impact in some literary texts (novels and dramas). Thus, the study of English negation in texts, such as political discourse, still needs to be examined from other aspects than grammatical levels because there is no political activity without language. Furthermore, there is a need to focus on the practical relationship between language use and social practice. According to linguists such as Fairclough (1989) and van Dijk (1997b), Critical Discourse

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Analysis (henceforth, CDA) is the best way to understand meaning resulting from the exploitation of social power through language use.

Therefore, the present study aims to investigate negation in political discourse from both cognitive and pragmatic perspectives under the principles of CDA in Clinton's (Democratic candidate in the 2016 American election) and Trump's (Republican candidate) speeches to discover the role of gender variable in the meaning building by first employing negation and second studying the impact of the relationship between knowledge and ideology when politicians apply their attitude by testing the five pragmatic strategies.

The present study aims to find answers to the following questions:

1. How can the negatives achieve meaning construction in American political discourse?
2. What is the impact of gender in using different types of negatives in American political speeches?
3. What is the role of pragmatic strategies in achieving text building and understanding within the scope of negation in American political speeches of politicians from different genders?

## **2. Literature Review**

Evans and Green (2006, p. 5) state that through cognitive linguistics, "Language offers a window into a cognitive function, providing insights into the nature, structure, and organization of thoughts and ideas." In other words, it focuses mainly on the relationship between language and humans. It rejects the concept of studying languages in separate disciplines (syntax, semantics, and pragmatics) as generative grammar introduced by Noam Chomsky (1968). Negation is part of this story. All natural languages have their own linguistic devices to show denial or dissatisfaction in specific situations in everyday communication. However, the context of negative utterances can play a vital role in the speaker's choice of the type of negative and interpretation of these utterances in the listener's mind. The situation is not different in politics since any political activity is dependent primarily on language. One feature of political discourse is that it is a communicative activity, for example, an inauguration speech or a debate that depends on the relationship between speaker and listener. However, achieving a political aim beyond any speech is no more primarily dependent on the selection of vocabulary than on its effect on the audience, and this is the function of pragmatics to achieve the intentional message.

Linguists such as Fairclough (1989) and Van (2008) further argued that pragmatic analysis of any discourse would be affected by social and cognitive factors. Since 1980, linguists like Fairclough and Van Dijk have started focusing on the critical analysis of political discourses and founded the critical approach within discourse analysis, called Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Van Dijk (1997b, p. 11) argues, "CDA deals, especially with the reproduction of political power, power abuse, or domination through political discourse, including the various forms of resistance or counter-power against such forms of discursive dominance". It also investigates the ties between language use and the political and social contexts in which it is used and functions as a tool to construct and reflect society (Paltridge, 2012, cited in Akbar, 2019, p.113).

### **2.1. Pragmatic Strategies in Discourse Analysis**

Levinson (1983, p.6, cited in Majeed, 2021, p.19) stated that "pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language". Thus, the pragmatic dimension plays a vital role in doing discourse analysis. The

following pragmatic strategies are selected to examine the role of the pragmatic aspect in achieving meaning construction within the scope of negation in political discourse in the present study.

1. Speech Act was first introduced by Austin (1962), and later his student Searle (1969) developed it into a speech act theory. It is concerned with the function of language. Searle (1976, pp. 10-17) reclassifies Austin's classification of illocutionary acts into five categories: Representatives, Expressives, Commissives, Directives, and Declarative. Representatives commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition. Expressives express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content. Commissives are where the speaker commits himself to do something. Directives include the attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something. Declarative means the successful performance of one of its members brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality. Politicians employ this strategy for many claims in the political process, such as making decisions, showing their actions, attitudes, and ideologies, bringing light to certain information, and deemphasizing others.

2. Presupposition: is “any kind of background assumption against which an action, theory, expression or utterance makes sense or is rational” (Levinson, 1983, p. 168). Presupposition can be of different kinds, such as existential (concluded by nouns and possessive structure), factive (shown by some factive verbs such as know, recognize), non-factive (defined by verbs such as hope, dream, and so on), lexical presupposition (concluded from the word meaning), and structural presuppositions (understood from sentence structure). A negative process of a sentence does not influence the presupposition of the sentence. Furthermore, presupposition has several political functions, such as building hopes, drawing many future challenges, showing dissatisfaction about actions, and so on.

3. Cooperative principle (CP) is a conversational principle that Paul Grice developed in 1975. He proposed that people should be cooperative to achieve successful human communication. Grice (1975) suggested four maxims called ‘Gricean maxims’; (1) Maxim of quality (make your contribution one that is true), Maxim of quantity (Make your contribution as informative as is required and do not make your contribution more informative than is required), Maxim of relevance (Be relevant), and Maxim of Manner (Be brief, orderly avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity). The CP is sometimes deliberately flouted by the speakers, for different purposes such as to be ironic, be opposite or irrelevant, to make the listener understand the intentional meaning. Thus, speakers might be uncooperative at the level of literal meaning, but they are still cooperative at the level of intended meaning, this is pragmatically known as ‘implicature’.

4. On-record :is one of the politeness strategies developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). They (1987, p.74) defined bald on record strategy that “a direct way of saying things, without any minimization to the imposition, in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way”. The use of this strategy (as a negative or positive politeness strategy) is related to social experience. Since the use of on-record strategies in one culture is polite, it might not be so in another. Bousfield (2008, p. 92, cited in Mohammed et al. 2016, p. 78) adds that ‘this strategy is employed when there are many faces at risk and when a speaker intends to damage the hearer’s face and thus the impolite utterance will be performed directly and clearly. Therefore, the face-threatening act here socially depends on the relationship between participants in the conversation.

5. Off-record: the speaker applies off-record to minimize the face-threatening act on the hearer or to spread the feeling of affiliation to the party, family, or group. Politicians usually exploit this strategy in election campaign speeches to show their affiliation to the people to gain their support.

## 2.2. Negation in the English Language

Negation is grammatically used to bring falsity to the truth-value of the statement in natural languages. There are two types of negation in English; explicit such as not, never, no, and but conjunctions, and implicit (for more see Dahl, 1979). Arimitsu (2000, p. 44) observes that, “the concept against positive is not fixed.”

### Explicit Negation

This type of negation can be achieved by some negative words such as not, no, never, none, negative connective 'but' and negative affixes, such as un-, im-, -less... etc. The negative element 'not' usually attracts the verb, for instance, is not, does not...etc., as in the following example:

(1) John is not a good driver.

### Affixal Negation

Zimmer (1964), Funk (1971), and Bybee (1985) stated that there are some English prefixes such as un-, im-, and in- that can reflect contrary and contradictory interpretations as part of words (adjective or verb), as the following example shows:

(2) It is impossible to pass the exam.

### Implicit Negation

Different linguistic strategies can convey the idea or the meaning of negation in the indirect way as in the following example.

(3) She is a spinster

In example (3), Arimitsu (2000, p. 54) argues “spinster is [+female, -married]. There is no explicit negative word here. However, there is negativeness in this word. The negativity in the word ‘spinster’, as it implicitly expresses a feature of negation in its meaning (not married)”

### Adverbs and Quantifiers

Some adverbs and determiners have negation in meaning (e.g., barely, few, little, rarely, scarcely, and seldom). Jespersen (1917, p. 38) calls them, ‘incomplete negatives’ because they could not convey a complete negation as the case with hardly, seldom, and rarely (as adverbs) and little and few (as determiners). The word only, which can be used as an adjective and an adverb, is to some extent capable of negating a sentence implicitly, where a non-assertive item such as any (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 780; also see Dixon, 2005) can follow it.

### Conditional Clause

The conditional clause is another linguistic mark that can easily convey the meaning of implicit negation since the achievement of a condition in a conditional is related to a specific situation. For instance:

(4) If the weather was good, I would certainly travel.

Graver (1986, p. 90) adds that “it is important to note that the probability of the condition being fulfilled often exists in the speaker’s mind”.

**Comparative Context:** Jespersen (1917) and Ota (1980) argue that comparison in English is one of the linguistic strategies that can achieve the meaning of negation by showing some degree of the difference between people or things, as in the following example:

(5) Mary is more beautiful than Sarah.

In the above example, the second part of the comparative context implicitly conveys the meaning of negation by suggesting that ‘Sarah does not have characteristics of beauty as the former ‘Mary’.

### **Question and Indirect Negation**

People normally ask questions when they have no information about something. Jespersen (1917, p. 22) observed that “questions may be used implying a negative statement” because the question has the capacity to reflect the speaker’s unknown about something. In the following example, the speaker implicitly shows that he has no information about the location of the bus station.

(6) Where can I find the bus station?

### **Too with Expressions**

The word 'too' has the meaning of 'more than enough'. Therefore, it can imply the meaning of negation with the expressions that followed. In example (7), the sentence means that ‘she cannot give anything because she is very poor’.

(8) She is too poor to give us anything.

### **2.3. Negation in Pragmatics**

Some utterances can, in particular contexts, convey implicit negation in the deep meaning through irony. In example (8), the coach's judgment (he’s a skilful player) is ironic. The sentence is explicitly positive in structure, but it shows some implicit negation in the deep structure or meaning expressed (he is a stupid player!).

(9) John fails to score a simple goal. The coach says he is a skilful player!

## **3. Methodology**

The present study follows the qualitative because of the data nature; the data analysis thus has two stages:

Description, Explanation, and Interpretation Stage

This stage is concerned with analyzing and interpreting the negatives in the framework of MST, investigating contextual features and the types of the pragmatic strategies that help to build meaning within the scope of negation in political discourse.

The Functions of Pragmatic Strategies stage

The second stage highlights the various functions of the five-selected and pragmatic strategies and their frequencies in the texts under study as well.

### **3.1. Data Collection**

The sample study includes the scripts of two speeches delivered by two American candidates (Trump and Clinton) during their election conferences in 2016. Table 1 shows some information about the research-selected data.

Table 1. Data selected for analysis

Speaker	Topic of speech	Date of delivery	Source
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Clinton	Donald Trump and National Security Republican	2/05/2016	<a href="http://time.com/4355797/hillary-clinton-donald-trump-foreign-policy-speech-transcript/">http://time.com/4355797/hillary-clinton-donald-trump-foreign-policy-speech-transcript/</a>
Trump	National Convention	6/21/2016	<a href="http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=117935">http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=117935</a>

#### 4. Data Analysis

This section focuses on the detailed analysis of the data based first on the qualitative method as the main tool of analysis. Second, the quantitative method is used to find out the types of negatives, and pragmatic strategies within the scope of negation in the selected data.

##### 4.1. Clinton's speech on Donald Trump and national security

Hillary Clinton was the Democratic nominee for the American presidential election in 2016. She gave a long speech about the unfitness of the Republican Party's nominee, Donald Trump, to be a president. We have seen that the direct negatives were most often employed by Clinton than the other negative forms; they appeared 88 times of the total 140 instances.

The direct negative 'not' frequency was 38.54%. The use of 'negative meaning' had the second-highest value, with a total of 17.14% of instances. The frequency of the direct negative 'no' and the 'if-clause' were both at 9.28%. The frequency of both 'negative affixes' and 'comparative contexts' constituted 8.57% and 7.14%, respectively. The lowest frequency value was the use of the 'but-conjunction', with only 2.14%.

Table 1. Types of negatives in Clinton's speech

Type of negation	Negative operator	Frequency	Percentage
Direct negation	1- Not	54	38.54%
	2- No	13	9.28%
	3- Adverb	6	4.28 %
	4- Negative Affixes	12	8.57%
	5- But-Conjunction	3	2.14%
Indirect negation	1- If-Clause	13	9.28%
	2- Too-Expressions	0	0
	3- Negative Meaning	24	17.14%
	4- Comparative Context	10	7.14%
	5- Question	5	3.57%
Total number of negatives		140	% 100

##### Analysis of some Extracts from Clinton's Speech

After reading the script, the researchers identify the following utterances that contain direct and indirect negatives:

(1) Americans aren't just electing a President in November. We're choosing our next commander-in-chief – the person we count on to decide questions of war and peace, life and death.

(2) We cannot put the security of our children and grandchildren in Donald Trump's hands. We cannot let him roll the dice with America. "That's why – even if I weren't in this race – I'd be doing everything I could to make sure Donald Trump never becomes President – because I believe he will take our country down a truly dangerous path".

(3) We need to reduce income inequality because our country can't lead effectively when so many are struggling to provide the basics for their families.

(4) If Donald gets his way, they'll be celebrating in the Kremlin. We cannot let that happen.

(5) What's Trump's? Well, he won't say. He is literally keeping it a secret. The secret, of course, is that he has no idea what he'd do to stop ISIS.

(6) What happens to the moral example we set – for the world and our children – if our President engages in bigotry?

(7) There is no challenge we can't meet, no goal we can't achieve when we each do our part and come together as one nation.

In the application of the 'metalinguistic negative' in utterance, Clinton mainly focuses more on the role of the President than the name of the presidential candidate will be the President in example (1) via describing the important and dangerous role played by the person who will serve as the American President. Clinton has meant that Americans must be careful in choosing the person who will lead this nation in times of both peace and war. She uses these contrastive and crucial pairs of words to discredit the image of her competitor, Donald Trump, for this job in the voters' minds.

While uttering the directive speech act, in example 2, she portrays that Trump is not a good person to be the President of America in alternative space. Clinton usually uses the emotional words such as children and grandchildren to show that she also has a family to worry about their future like other American families. Then, she metaphorically describes Trump's odd strategies about America's future as a person who simply plays a dice; he is reckless as he runs casinos. Trump does not have any political experience before; this helps Clinton apply on-records to damage the image of her competitor. By repeating the same subject and verb 'we cannot' in the two sentences, she emphasizes her disappointment (in the name of the American families) about having Trump as the possible future President of the US. In utterance (3), Clinton draws two meaning constructions. In the first unreal space, she asserts her wish, as an American person, to do anything to stop Trump from being a president. While the second real space expresses her willingness, as the Democratic nominee for the American presidential election to do anything to prevent him from reaching the White House not because he is her competitor in the election, but because he is also an irresponsible man.

In both readings, she states her desire to stop him as a loyal patriot. Hence, she tends to increase the positive value of the self on one hand and claims Americans do not vote for him in the frame of sincerity or loyalty to America on the other hand. Hence, she violates the maxim of quality (Grice, 1975), because only the American people have the right to choose in the election. Then, she turns from an attack stage to a manipulative stage in utterance (4). Clinton exploits this situation to declare that she will support the fundamental needs of the poor and, further, provide family care for the American people. In the frame of income inequality in America, with many poor families still working hard only to get their basic needs met, the ability to lead the country would be difficult. She presupposes she will work hard to solve these problems if she wins the election.

In utterance (5), Clinton portrays that Trump has a relation with the Kremlin in the hypothetical space, so he is not a loyal patriot. Then, in the performance of the negative speech act 'we cannot', she generalizes that she and the American people must work together to stop Trump in his efforts to

attain the White House in the alternative space. Since she does not introduce any evidence about Trump's relationship with Kremlin, she does not follow the maxim of quality (Grice, 1975) since she does not introduce adequate evidence about Trump's relationship with Russia.

The question form has an implicit negative in English. Clinton's question, in utterance 6, implies that Trump does not have well-thought-out strategies when it comes to stopping ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). This negative utterance encourages and motivates the audience to consider the need for Trump, as a presidential candidate, to declare his future policies because keeping them a secret is unacceptable. Clinton employs this foreign policy issue to mock Trump, observing that he is keeping his strategy a secret. Pragmatically (albeit implicitly), she is suggesting that Trump is a liar. In saying so, she is cancelling out any meaning construction in the alternative space regarding Trump's plan for the threat (as might be conveyed by the idea that Trump has a plan for stopping ISIS; he is just keeping it a secret from the public). In utterance (7), the rhetorical question reveals the bad messages that would be sent to the world. In the application of on-record, Clinton socially employs this bad ideology to attack Trump's behaviour as the possible future President of the United States to get the support of people of different races in the country. Thus, the above indirect negative context shows the speaker's disappointment (and possibly, the audience's shock at contemplating this possible scenario in the future). In the final utterance, she shifts to display a good representation of her future democratic government. This motivates to build four spaces; (1) the existence of challenges (2) her ability to meet these challenges (3) having goals, and (4) the ability to achieve goals when teamwork is used (as one group, regardless of the color or religion of the people involved). So, the above negative spaces are actually exploited to persuade the audience to vote for her in the election. The word 'nation' adds some emotional effect here.

#### 4.2. Trump's speech to the Republican National Convention

Donald Trump became a strong Republican candidate against the Democrat candidate Hillary Clinton in the 2016 American presidential race and won it. There are 184 occurrences of direct and indirect negatives in the text under study. The direct negative operator 'not' is the most frequently used (approximately 32.37%). While the direct and indirect negatives of the lowest frequencies are the negative operators 'if-clause and the 'but conjunction' (at 3.59%). This may be reflective of Trump's self-confidence. Other direct strong negative elements, such as 'no', 'never' and 'negative prefixes' have the frequencies 16.54%, 7.19%, and 17.26%, respectively, in the speech.

Table 3. Types of negatives in Trump's speech

Type of negation	Negative operator	Frequency	Percentage
Direct Negation	1 Not	45	32.37%
	2 No	23	16.54%
	3 Never	10	7.19%
	4 Negative Affixes	24	17.26%
	5 But-Conjunction	5	3.59%
Indirect Negation	1 If-Clause	5	3.59%
	2- Too-Expressions	0	0%
	3- Negative Meaning	0	0%
	4- Comparative Context	21	15.10%
	5- Question	6	4.31%
Total number of negatives		139	100%



### Analysis of some Extracts from Trump's speech

- (1) The Republican Party would get 60 per cent more votes than it received eight years ago, who would've believed this, who would've believed this?
- (2) But here, at our convention, there will be no lies. We will honour the American people with the truth and nothing else.
- (3) As long as we are led by politicians who will not put America first, then we can be assured that other nations will not treat America with respect the respect we deserve.
- (4) And when a Secretary of State illegally stores her emails on a private server, deletes 33,000 of them so the authorities can't see her crime, puts our country at risk, lies about it in every different form, and faces no consequence – I know that corruption has reached a level like never ever before in our country.
- (5) Nobody knows the system better than me, which is why I alone can fix it.
- (6) No longer will we enter into these massive transactions with many countries that are thousands of pages long and which no one from our country even reads or understands.
- (7) Remember, all of the people telling you, you can't have the country you want are the same people that wouldn't stand – I mean, they said Trump doesn't have a chance of being here tonight, not a chance”.

In utterance 1, Trump suggests that, with his candidacy, the number of votes for the Republican Party would increase by 60% (over what they had received eight years earlier). He does this comparative context with the time references (past and present) to show the difference between his abilities and those of other former Republican candidates. Here, the self-confidence of Trump and the negative expression of the others in the same party suggest a far degree of social distance or dissociation between him and other colleagues inside the Republican Party.

Similarly, the linguistic device 'rhetorical question' is used to garner and encourage astonishment regarding these anticipated results; Trump emphasizes this unprecedented result by repeating the rhetorical question 'who would've believed this?' twice. In the assertive negative speech act 'will be no lies', in example (2), the speaker tries to confirm what most audience certainly consider in the hypothetical space: 'there will be lies' in his political competitor's conferences. However, the use of spatial deixis 'there' and 'here' draws a far distance of such knowledge in Trump's convention from others' convention. Then, he emphasizes the above utterance by applying the negative word 'nothing else'. Trump here shows some exaggeration. This utterance makes Trump flout the maxim of quantity 'do not say more than required' (Grice, 1975), as he typically overstates in the description of his convention.

In the frame of the American political ideology, American leaders should put America first. In example (3), Trump tends to damage the face of the Democrat party via criticizing the bad strategies of that administration which has become his intentional target. He tries to persuade the audience to vote for him because he loves America and puts America first in his agendas. So, the two negative operators 'not' in the above utterance ensure the perception of unacceptable actions of the former Democrat administration in general and their present candidate; Clinton in particular. Besides, the use of the passive voice twice 'are led' and 'be assured' emphasises the inability of the Obama administration to make America great. Utterance (4) is rich with different types of negatives.

The negative prefix in the adverb 'illegally' achieves negation and leads the audience to think that the Secretary State, Clinton, has broken the law by conducting her official business using a private server. In addition, the direct negative element 'can't' in a possible space applies her thinking that

the emails cannot be certainly a 'big scandal for her and her country'. So, the two negative utterances are employed by Trump mentally to cast doubt on Clinton's loyalty to America. Then, he directly continues to attack the target's character by saying, 'it is too bad that the political character as Clinton would not have been punished for her crime to show the injustice and the bad act of authority in this case. Here, he implies to take serious action against her. Finally, the negative adverb 'never' in 'I know...' pragmatically helps the speaker suggest there was an increase in corruption to the highest level during the last administration.

However, in quote 5, his claim that he knows the political system of the United States better than the others and that he alone can fix it has actually a high degree of overconfidence and unacceptable. As a result, the negative speech act shows the speaker's positive presentation via the negative impoliteness strategy 'on-record. Besides, Trump definitely violates the maxim of quality 'say what you believe to be true' (Grice, 1975) since his biography does not show any evidence that he has political experience, but he still believes in what he says. The existence of two different negative operators 'no' and comparative context 'longer' in quote 6, portrays his dissatisfaction regarding the signing of the Obama administration of many deals with other countries without reading or putting the interests of America first. Here, the audience would presuppose that Trump would stop these deals in the future space. Trump presents the actions of 'other' in a non-persuasive way because no one believes that the previous American government in the previous history of America sign any deal without reading. However, this clear exaggeration of the speaker again leads him to flout one of the conversational maxims: the maxim of quality 'say what you believe to be true' (Grice, 1975).

The final utterance has four direct negative spaces, creating various alternative scenarios to build meaning. First, the linguistic use of the negative operator 'can't' implies 'the possibility of having the country you want. Here, he suggests the lies of the Democrats in this issue. The second negative element, 'wouldn't' in a hypothetical space also reveals the lies of the same people who wrongly said that Trump does not have a chance of winning the Republican nomination. Therefore, Trump's standing here is clear evidence of their lies. Then, Trump explicitly explains this wrong attitude in the third and fourth negative unreal spaces that 'Trump doesn't have a chance of being here tonight' and 'not chance' 'to emphasize the idea that the Democrats are the only ones lying. All these negatives show that the face-damaging or negative presentation of the 'other' is one of the distinguished characteristics of Trump's personality.

## **5. Discussion and Findings**

The analysis of the negative frequencies in the two selected speeches presented in Tables (2) and (3) shows there is no significant difference in the use of negatives by Trump and Clinton. However, this increased frequency of negation first suggests that both Clinton and Trump are more predisposed to the negation phenomenon in their election speeches. The two American politicians are more likely to use negation to criticize or present the negative ideology of the opponents or out-groups to display their roles as good leaders who would bring a change to the situation regardless of the party they belong to. Clinton is a Democrat, while Trump belongs to the Republican Party. The two American parties have significantly different political ideologies and strategies in dealing with home and international political issues. Comparably, Trump has employed more direct negative types than Clinton with 107 and 88, respectively. This statistical evidence initially suggests that political discourse linguistically shares similar characteristics of other discourse genres based on the occurrence of increased frequencies of the direct negatives in the American society as a feature of English language speakers in general. Second, the nature of the political goal has a great impact on

the use of direct or indirect negation. The greater average of direct negatives in Trump and Clinton's speeches shows that they are more interested in demonstrating their imbalanced power to attack others to achieve targeted political goals than in maintaining the social relationship with the others. From a pragmatic perspective, politeness has also an effect on directness.

Trump and Clinton seem socially do not care much about face-saving of the 'others' in their attack, persuasive or manipulative strategies. For instance, Trump roughly attacks Clinton in his election campaign and describes her as 'crooked Hillary'. Alemi and Latifi's study (2019) have concluded that the use of impolite strategies such as 'face-threatening, dissociation, mock from other' by the Republican and Democrat parties can be attributed as one feature of political debate in the US. Moreover, the strong direct negative type 'not' (as a sentential and constituent negation) obtains the highest average among other direct negatives in speeches by the two figures. This can suggest that the negative operator 'not' can first be considered the most negative element adopted by politicians in general.

In contrast, the direct negative operator 'but-conjunction' exhibits the lowest rates among direct negatives. This finding indicates that the use of the 'not X but Y' is not given more priority by Trump and Clinton. They psychologically do not have the desire to adopt new action or attitude by denying previous possible expectation or attitude via applying the linguistic strategy 'not X but Y' in the same contrastive situation. However, 'negative affixes' are used with higher frequency in Trump's speech than in Clinton's speech at 24 and 12, respectively. According to Evans (2006, p. 516), "meaning construction entails the meaning of the whole before the contributions of the parts can be determined". Therefore, the process of adding a suffix or prefix to the word to change its meaning would functionally contribute more to achieve at the level of the interpretation of the whole utterance in communication than the meaning at the level of word meaning itself.

This finding indicates the following: first, the use of this type of negation in the political discourse explains that political discourse is not different from other genres of discourse. Negative affixes are generally more familiar in the scientific and medical discourse because they are structurally economic in showing negation (Joshi, 2012). Second, negative affixes do not have a strong negative meaning in contrast to the use of the negative operators 'not' or 'no' because they can show the opposite between two entities at any degree on a scale of the contrary. Trump employs this linguistic pattern to make the understanding of cognitive meaning by readers or listeners more difficult than Clinton for showing dissatisfaction, discrediting the face of other attitudes about specific situations. The frequency of the indirect negative type 'negative meaning' is remarkably higher in Clinton's than in Trump's speech with 24 and 0, respectively. This significant difference suggests that Clinton successfully minimizes the social distance between her and the participants by presupposing her denials in a tactic style or criticism by implying her denials or dissatisfactions towards actions than Trump does. As noted earlier, the higher average of negatives goes to 'if-clause with 13 (9.28%) in Clinton's campaign speech while it only records (3), indicating that Clinton attempts to build more negative mental spaces than Trump to direct the audience to a dangerous political situation in the present to implicate the good ideologies and attitudes of the conservative to change or manipulate the situation towards the best in the future. However, there is no significant difference in the use of the linguistic strategy of 'question' between two figures. They intentionally use rhetorical questions for persuasive purposes. Finally, they do not show any interest in using 'too - expression'.

Pragmatic strategies in American and British speeches

The five pragmatic strategies are used 31 instances in Clinton's speech, whereas Trump uses 35 instantiations of pragmatic strategies in his election speech as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Pragmatic strategies in Clinton and Trump's speeches

Type of pragmatic strategy	Clinton	Trump
Presupposition	11 (35.48%)	11 (31.42%)
Speech Act	10(32.25%)	9 (25.71%)
Off-Record	5 (16.12%)	4 (11.42%)
On-Record	3 (9.67%)	8 (22.85%)
Violation of cooperative principle	2 (6.45%)	3 (8.57%)
Total number of pragmatic strategies	31	35

'Presupposition' is highly used – with a frequency of 35.48% and 31.42% among other pragmatic strategies in the two speeches – to argue that the nomination of Trump for the American presidency by the Republicans is a big mistake. According to Fauconnier (1975), negative spaces presuppose corresponding positive spaces. Thus, the study of presupposition plays a vital role in drawing mental spaces in the minds of the audience or listeners in discourse studies.

Comparatively, Trump primarily presupposes the unfavorable conditions of the country during the Obama administration, such as the high crime rate, poverty, lack of jobs, and lack of safety, to suggest America's need for a good and wise leader to enact changes and save the country in his election campaign speech. Trump is highly self-confident and definitely tries to presuppose that he would be a man of change in the minds of the audience. The juxtaposition of two contrastive images between the past and the future has made Trump more attractive or closer to the audience by sharing knowledge of what people actually think about their lives. While Clinton mostly employs presuppositions to explain dangerous situations and economic crises that the country would face in case Trump becomes a president in her campaign speech and her ability to raise the income of poor families in the American society in her future programs. The second highest frequency is the use of the 'speech act' strategy, which accounts for 32.25% and 25.71% in Clinton's and Trump's speeches, respectively. Notably, the commissive speech acts are highly exploited in the election campaign speech, the case of Trump and Clinton to commit themselves to changes and improve their people's conditions. Trump has also made many promises that he would keep if he became the President. Besides, assertive speeches are exploited to state that the American people have to put the future of men and women in safe hands, and she would do anything to stop Trump in his efforts to attain the White House. On-record presents a significantly higher average in Trump's speech with 22.85% because Trump is a bold and aggressive character. It also registers just 3 (9.67%) in Clinton's speech since she needs the support of the American people, and she has a personal tact and diplomacy that Trump does not have in his personality. Off-record follows this presents at just 11.42% in Trump's speech, as he does not care much about saving the faces of others. At the same time, it constitutes 16.12% of Clinton's speech because most presidential candidates employ this strategy to get the audience's support by showing that they socially share the Americans' problems and will be their voices in the future. Moreover, 'violation of the cooperative principle' has the lowest frequency with only 6.45% and 8.57% in Clinton's and Trump's speeches, respectively, because she introduces her speech systemically as a lawyer and good politician. The value of the violation of the cooperative principle generally has the lowest value because Trump and Clinton are clear and direct in their speeches.

## 6. Conclusion

The choice of negatives by the selected political characters is not random. That is the employment of different types of negatives is purposeful since it can contribute to achieving different political

practices such as the negative value of others, self-good presentation, persuasion, and power inequities. Thus, the linguistic meaning of negatives impacts meaning construction in political discourse. Meaning construction built by negative affixes or double negation is not as easy as other direct negatives because these have more than one interpretation on the linguistic scales of negation. Similarly, the two genders tend to use more direct than indirect negatives in their speeches to draw positive images about their ability to meet challenges, and perform actions in the high position of authority. Similarly, the negative constructions built by the negative elements if – clause, not X but Y, and comparative context are long and complex since the alternative spaces built by these negatives require more time and mental energy from the listener to understand the meaning as compared to other types of negation. Moreover, there is a correlation between political ideology and the use of negation in political discourse.

The findings show an increase in the frequency and the types of negatives in their speeches because of the exchanges of accusations about each other's negative performance in social and economic issues during their election conferences. The complex or simple level of meaning construction is related more to the linguistic meaning scale of negatives and to the context of speech than it is related to the gender variable. There is no statistically significant difference between Trump and Clinton speeches in the frequency of the selected pragmatic strategies. The findings show that both genders similarly succeed in using pragmatic strategies within the scope of negative spaces, with some differences to mention. Presupposition strategy plays a vital role in meaning interpretation in alternative spaces in the selected speeches.

The frequencies of on-record and off-record strategies in both selected figures indicate that the meaning construction in the application of these two strategies is affected by the social distance between the speaker and the listener. Trump is highly self-confident and bold. He employs a novel technique of using definite and rude descriptions within the scope of negation to send clear messages to others. This feature has made him more attractive and closer to the hearts of the people and finally to an elected president. The results of speech act performance state similar values between the two genders in frequency and type of speech acts. They mainly exploit them to present a promised future. The findings of data analysis indicate the low value of violation of the cooperative principles in the monologue format of the political discourse of the two genders.

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