

Persuasion in President Biden's Inauguration Speech

Dr. Sarah Abouelenine

Université Française D'Egypte UFE -Egypt

sara.aboueleninen@ufe.edu.eg



0000-0001-5550-5493

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Abstract: Persuasive strategies are very significant as they are found in all human interactions in every aspect of life, particularly in politics. They take place in a way which is recognized and understood by the audience or the addressees. Such strategies are used by speakers in order to influence others to modify and/or change their beliefs, values, attitudes, and way of thinking. They are used to convince others by a certain idea or a concept as well. They also reveal a lot about the identity of the speaker. In other words, persuasive strategies must persuade the addressee at the end. Therefore, this paper examines the persuasive strategies found in President Joe Biden's Inauguration Speech. It aims at highlighting the persuasive strategies used to reveal the identity of the speaker. In the micro-analysis provided by this study, segments of speeches are illustrated to verify the illocutionary act in order to know the speaker's intended meaning in terms of Searle's Speech Act Theory based on the five categories of speech which are: assertives, commissives, expressives, directives, and declaration. Afterwards, the use of deictic pronouns such as: the first-person singular pronoun "I" and the exclusive and inclusive "WE" is analysed based on Fairclough's assumption in Critical Discourse Analysis with the aim to either show the speaker's integrity or to give a devoted and close impression. A brief explanation is provided to facilitate the process of understanding the meaning behind its use. Lastly, the use of Aristotle's persuasion appeal as: Ethos, Logos, and Pathos is examined. Ethos is used to show truthfulness. Pathos is used to express emotions and feelings. Logos is used to support arguments through logical assumptions and facts. The findings indicate that multiple speech acts can occur in a single utterance with different connotations based on the context. The excessive use of a certain act can be significant. The analysis of speech acts reveals a lot about the speaker's identity and the relationship between the speaker and the audience. It also shows that the use of deictic pronouns can be strategic and persuasive as well. This is simply because inclusive "WE" can include both the speaker and the audiences to show unity and solidarity. The exclusive "WE" can include the speaker but not all the audiences. Finally, the process of persuasion can be emphasised by significant resort to logos, which can also reinforce ethos appeal. Keywords: Aristotle's Persuasion Appeals, Biden's Inauguration Speech, Deictic Pronouns, Persuasive Strategies, Political Discourse, Speech Acts Theory

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Corresponding author : Sarah Abouelenine

Strategies, Political Discourse, Speech Acts Theory.

الملخص: يلعب الإقناع دورا فعالا في إقناع الفرد عبر وسائل الاتصال المختلفة. فعادة يستخدم معظم الافراد طرق الإقناع المختلفة في حياتهم اليومية وذلك من اجل التأثير في معتقدات وقيم ومواقف الآخرين. وتعد انخطابات الافتتاحية من اهم امثلة الاتصال بين الرؤساء والمواطنين. فتتناول هذه الدراسة طرق واستراتيجيات الإقناع في خطاب تصيب الرئيس جو بايدن وذلك بهدف إبراز استراتيجيات الإقناع المستخدمة. ويحدث ذلك من خلال تحليل مقتطفات من الخطاب باستخدام نظرية سيرل للأفعال الكلامية ونظرية فيركلاف لضمائر الفاعل. وعلاوة على ذلك، استخدام الإيثوس والباتوس واللوغوس والتي شرح ماهيتها أرسطو- والغرض منها هو الإقناع. وتظهر النتائج ان الافعال الكلامية المتعددة يمكن ان توجد في جملة واحدة وكذلك استخدام ضمائر الفاعل التي يمكن ان تكون مقنعة. وأخيرا، يمكن التأكيد على عملية الإقناع من خلال اللجوء بقدر كبير إلى اللوغوس والتي يمكن ان تعزز الإيثوس.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ابعاد أرسطو الاقناعية - تحليل الخطاب النقدي- استراتيجيات الإقناع- التحليل السياسي- ضمائر الفاعل- نظرية الأفعال الكلامية.

1. Introduction

Texts are shaped by the political, ideological, cultural, and social context in which they are originated” (Shehab et al., 2020). This means that each text has either a political, ideological, or a social implication. Thus, politics is considered as the art of mastering persuasion through the use of both linguistic and non-linguistic approaches. That is why the more persuasive a person is, the more eligible he is to become a politician. Also, politics cannot be separated from persuasion in all cases and situations. In such a process, language plays a crucial role in every political action taken or intended because language is the principle means of human communication. That is the main reason behind the belief that political speeches are very cautiously written.

Moreover, persuasion is expounded as an effort to “influence a person’s beliefs, attitudes, intentions, motivations or behavior.” (Gass & Seiter, 2010, p. 33) A politician’s ideology could be clearly expressed, but the profound ideology is hidden in rhetoric. Johnson and Johnson (2000) believed that political discourse’s concern is to involve audience in the process of decision making, which is based on the valid information and logical message from the speaker. Furthermore, political discourse is used to clarify the act taken to solve a problem, such as a social or a political one. Hence, political discourse is commonly dominated by persuasive strategies. Also, Miller (1991) defined politics as “a process whereby a group of people, whose opinions or interests are initially divergent, reach collective decisions which are generally accepted as binding on the group and enforced as common policy” (Miller, 1991, p. 390). Thus, the political process involves elements of persuasion in order to reach a final decision.

Therefore, this study attempts to examine the persuasive strategies used by President Joe Biden in his inaugural address in light of speech act theory. For this purpose, this study focuses on the use of language in society through the analysis of speech acts in order to show how the different use of language can help in understanding the identity of the speaker and the social implications as well. In other words, it aims at showing how the ways in which politicians deliver their speeches are structured and defined by such particular use of language.

2. Theoretical Framework

This section represents the theoretical background. It provides an illustration of the theories used in the analysis. These theories include Speech Acts Theory, Deictic Pronouns, and Aristotle Appeals.

2.1 Speech Acts

Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory provides a tool to assist in analyzing the pragmatic meaning of spoken or written discourse. It is concerned with the meanings assigned to speech acts by the participants in terms of their relationship and context of use. In other words, it is concerned with what the speaker/producer of the utterance can do once the utterance/act is produced. According to Austin, speech acts are classified into Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts deal with the actual or the literal meaning of words. Illocutionary deals with the speaker's intended meaning. "Illocutionary acts, such as promises and orders, reveal the intention of the speaker through their utterance." (Fairclough, 2001, p. 130)

The validity of an illocutionary act is related to the social roles of the participants in a social institution that permits their speech acts to be effective. For example, a defendant guilty is pronounced in a court, or a couple are declared husband and wife by a priest in a church (Searle, 1978). Also, in terms of political speech, a speech act acts as a persuasive one. Perlocutionary acts deal with the effect of the utterance on the hearer such as to persuade, threaten, convince, promise, and so on. In this study, persuasion is the intended perlocutionary act. Therefore, understanding speech acts would be easier if the relationship between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts were always straightforward, which is not invariably the case (Stubbs, 1983).

Only a good knowledge of the context of the utterance may reveal the intended illocutionary act, which is the essence of pragmatics as the study of language within its context (Fairclough, 2001). Searle (1978) classified illocutionary force into five categories known as Searle's typology of speech acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Assertive speech acts are represented by the speaker's assertion of the truth of what is said such as giving conclusions, complaining, boasting, or describing events or states in the world. Directive speech acts are an attempt to get the hearer to do something through orders, invitations or requests.

Commissive speech acts, such as promises, threats or offerings, express the speaker's intention to take certain actions; in political speeches, usually "fair and responsible" ones. (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p.122) An expressive speech act is performed whenever there is an expression of psychological state by the producer of the utterance; for example, apologizing and thanking. Declarations are speech acts that change the world by declaring or stating that a new state of affairs has come into existence, such as a declaration of war, which must be pronounced by the right person in the right context.

2.2 Deictic Pronouns

In any political speech, "politicians use one deictic category rather than another to express a degree of their involvement." (Ghazani, 2016, p.634) This is found in the use of the first-person plural "We", which can designate the speaker and one or more other

persons. Identity and membership may be expressed through the use of personal deixis as a persuasive technique. Deictic pronouns determine who belongs to the group and who does not. Politicians tend to emphasize this difference through the categorization of groups using person deixis. Also, they tend to use it to manipulate people, make alliances, attack, or express an ideological basis. According to Fairclough (2001), there are two values for 'We': Inclusive We and Exclusive We. The Inclusive We includes addresser and addressees and the Exclusive We includes addresser and one or more others, but not the addressees.

2.3 Aristotle Persuasive Strategies

Aristotle (1967) presented three different persuasive strategies: Logos, Pathos, and Ethos. "These aspects -as explained by Aristotle- are deemed argumentative concepts, firstly intended to persuasion, and emerge from three fundamentals: ethics, affection and mind." (Amin, 2018, p. 60) In other words, the aim of the three appeals is to persuade or convince the addressee to "reach out of free choice a goal desired by the addresser." (Poggi, 2005, p. 298) Logos can be the rational arguments, the logical consequence, or the beliefs.

Poggi (2005) identified the use of logos as a logical, rational means of persuasion as the classical domain of argumentation. In other words, logos deal with the speaker's beliefs and the arguments or facts used by him to support his belief. Pathos deals with emotions or the speaker's ability to control emotions. They are emotions biologically protect the most valued goals, "manifested by either pleasant or unpleasant feelings. These values are emotionally loaded, therefore, pathos are triggered whenever they are invoked. Once the pathos trigger is pulled, the addressee may feel an urgent desire to achieve the goal or goals in question." (Poggi, 2005, p. 314) Ethos deals with attracting the addressee's attention to the credibility and truthfulness of the addresser. Also, it deals with the speaker's character or reputation. Cockcroft (2004) claimed that "ethos is the strongest appeal, since it expresses values shared by the persuader and the persuadee and is used to establish a rapport with the audience." (p. 196)

3. Methodology

This study aims to uncover the inference made by the persuader. Also, it provided an analysis of speech acts, deictic pronouns, and Aristotle appeals in order to find the elements of persuasion or the persuasive strategies used by President Biden in his inauguration speech.

3.1. Context

The data were categorized and analysed from a pragmatic point of view. For this reason, utterances were functioned as the main unit of the analysis dealing with speech acts (illocutionary acts), pronouns (inclusive and exclusive), and appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos). This took place in order to facilitate understanding and comprehending the assigned coherent shared meaning of utterances within their context. The analysis would be on President Biden's inaugural speech.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Speech Acts Theory

The detailed analysis of utterances deals with analysing each illocutionary act in terms of the five assigned categories of Searle's (1978) typology in order to tackle how persuasive President Biden is. In other words, the analysis shows the type of each act used and the meaning behind it.

Assertives are used to assert the truth. Commissives indicate being committed or having the intention to take actions. Expressives are found to express feelings or to show the psychological state of the speaker. Directives deal with forcing or getting the hearer do something. Declaration deals with declaring a new state of affairs. They would all show how persuasive the president is.

3.2.2 Deictic Pronouns

The analysis of segments of utterances sheds light on the distinction between inclusive and exclusive nature of pronouns and their implications through a critical analysis of each chunk of speeches, which is conducted in light of Fairlough's (2001) aforementioned assumptions. Inclusive "WE" indicates that both the speaker and the audiences are included. However, Exclusive "WE" indicates that the speaker and some other parties are included not the audiences. In this context, Inclusive "WE" refers to the president and the American people. Exclusive "WE" refers to the president and the government not the American people. This helps in revealing the identity of President Biden and proves how persuasive he is.

3.2.3 Aristotle Appeals

The critical examination and analysis of the Aristotelian persuasion appeals is essential so as to reveal their complexity. Ethos deal with attracting the audience's attention through the truthfulness of the speaker. Logos deal with the logical argument and facts used by the speaker to support his beliefs. Pathos deal with emotion and the ability to control them. On the other hand, they help in showing how persuasive the president is.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, the analysis of President Biden's first Inauguration speech takes place based on the application of Speech Act Theory, Deixis, and Aristotelian Appeals in order to show how persuasive he is.

4.1 Speech Acts

The analysis of all chunks of sentences by President Biden indicates that approximately more than half of the chunks of sentences of his First Inaugural Speech contains multiple speech acts with different implications to win the American people.

Table 1.

Investigation of Speech Acts

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

Fairclough (2001) argued that the illocutionary force, can be interpreted only within its occurring context. This is simply because it is based on the speaker's intended meaning and the shared or common knowledge between the speaker and the hearer. In other words, an intense awareness of the context permits the investigator to unveil the true illocution behind any statement for better understanding of the speaker's intended meaning.

Consequently, Searle's classification of speech acts provides the following distribution for each speech:

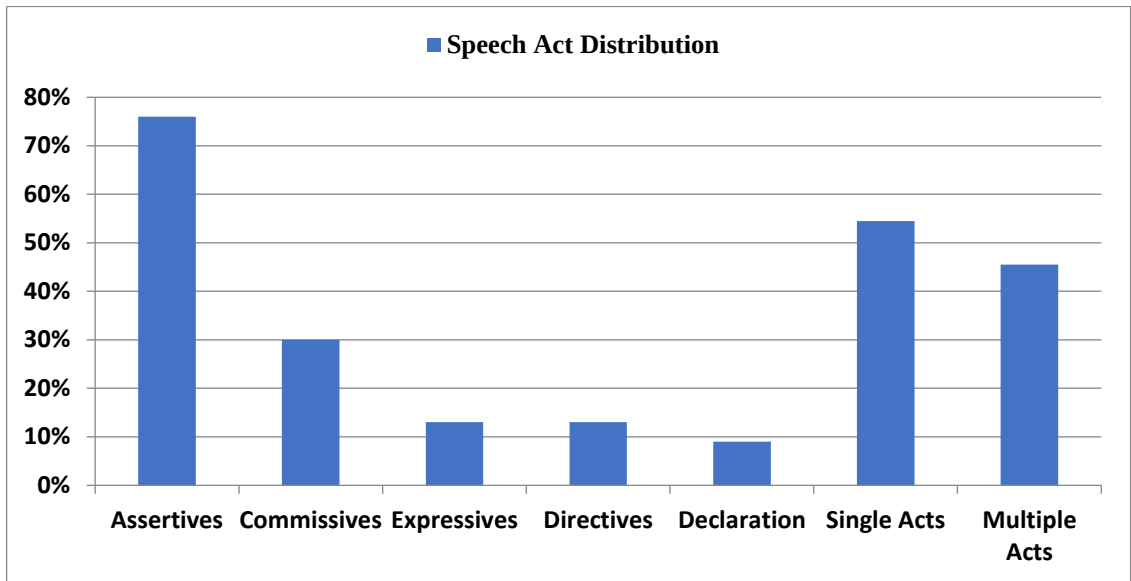


Figure 1. Shows Speech Act Distribution

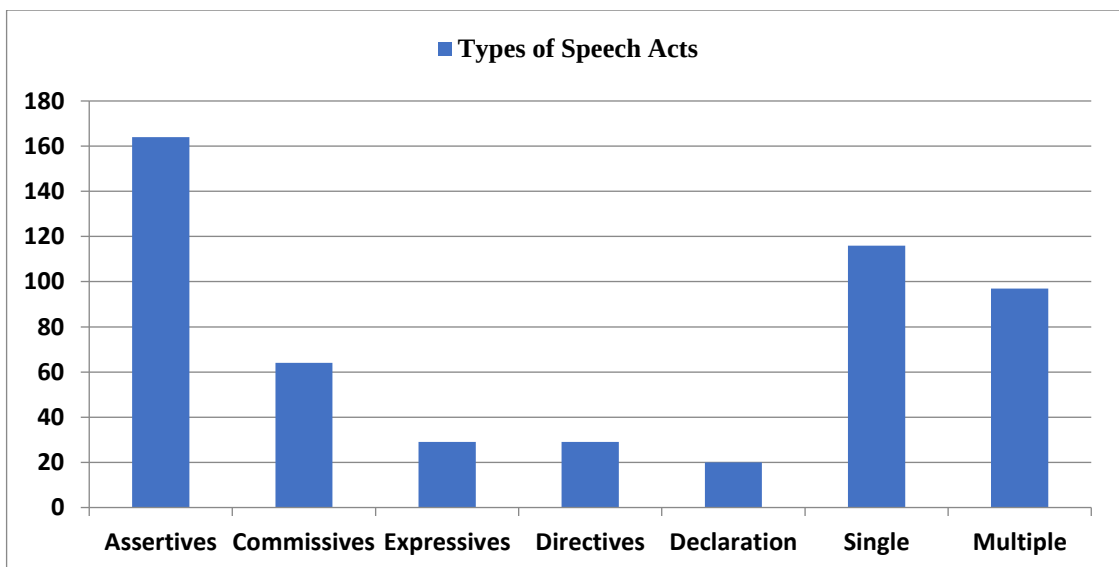


Figure 2. Shows Types of Speech Acts

As shown in the sample of the analysis in Table 1, the use of expressives in presidential speeches is associated with expressing gratitude to the previous presidents for their service and expressing their gratitude or positive feelings for the rendered assistance. Also, it expresses the president's feelings for the American people and what they have been going through to show an adequate level of solidarity. The use of assertives might

be an artful medium to provide the context and pass to another speech act that is intended, dealing with commissives, expressives, and directives. Accordingly, assertive speech acts are used as a subtle medium to achieve the goal of persuasion. This means that President Biden is trying to persuade his people by his plan and vision for the upcoming period through asserting his actions. The figures 1 and 2 above demonstrate that the percentage of assertives use exceeds the other types of acts.

The use of commissives in President Biden’s speech signals his commitments and promises; especially in foreign policy, to fight terrorism and systemic racism, to support democracy, to defeat the pandemic, to maintain dignity, to secure a stable future for Americans, and to bring peace to the world. In addition, there are promises to make determined efforts to address social concerns.

Furthermore, directives are used as an influencing strategy; especially through which President Biden intends to ask the American people to cooperate in order to help in the flourishing the US. He wants the people to forget the past and work together to stand in front of all the obstacles they are facing by the perlocutionary power of taking action. Also, each of the speech acts found in this public speech contains an illocutionary act that can be related to social, political, and contextual analysis. Moreover, the use of declaratives indicates commitment, willingness, and action. This is simply because he is the president, so he has the legitimate power.

According to Searle’s classification, the assertive speech acts are found to build the context for other speech acts whereas the use of declaratives indicate crucial decisions. Therefore, speech act theory is a critical tool to justify writers’ intentions.

4.2 Deictic Pronouns

4.2.1 Analysis of First-Person Singular Pronoun “I”

In the light of Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) and Wilson (1990), who claimed that personal deixis serves to express ideologies and manipulate people in political discourse, the findings confirm that the use of inclusive deixis is to persuade groups and individuals.

Table 2.

Correlation among First Person Singular Pronoun and Speech Acts

Sentence	Type
1. I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here today.	Expressive
2. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.	
3. 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.	Assertive
4. I have just taken the sacred oath each of these patriots have taken — an oath first sworn by George Washington.	Commissive Assertive

5. When he put pen to paper, the President said, and I quote “If my Commissive name ever goes down into history it will be for this act and my whole soul is in it.”
6. My whole soul is in it.
7. Today, on this January day, my whole soul is in this. Commissive
8. I ask every American to join me in this cause. Directive
9. I know speaking of unity can sound to some like a foolish Assertive fantasy these days.
10. I know the forces that divide us are deep and they are real.
11. But I also know they are not new.

The sample of the analysis in Table 2 shows that President Biden has used first person singular pronoun “I” to express his gratitude, greeting with kindness, apologies, and to ask for unity. Also, Table 2 displays the correlation between the use of firstperson singular pronoun and other elements.

4.2.2 Analysis of Exclusive and Inclusive “WE”

In Table 3, the utterances that include first person plural pronouns “WE” along with the assigned speech act which they bear are elaborated. The focus is on pronouns that include or exclude the addressees (either the people or the government). Also, a brief explanation on the use of the pronouns is found.

Table 3.

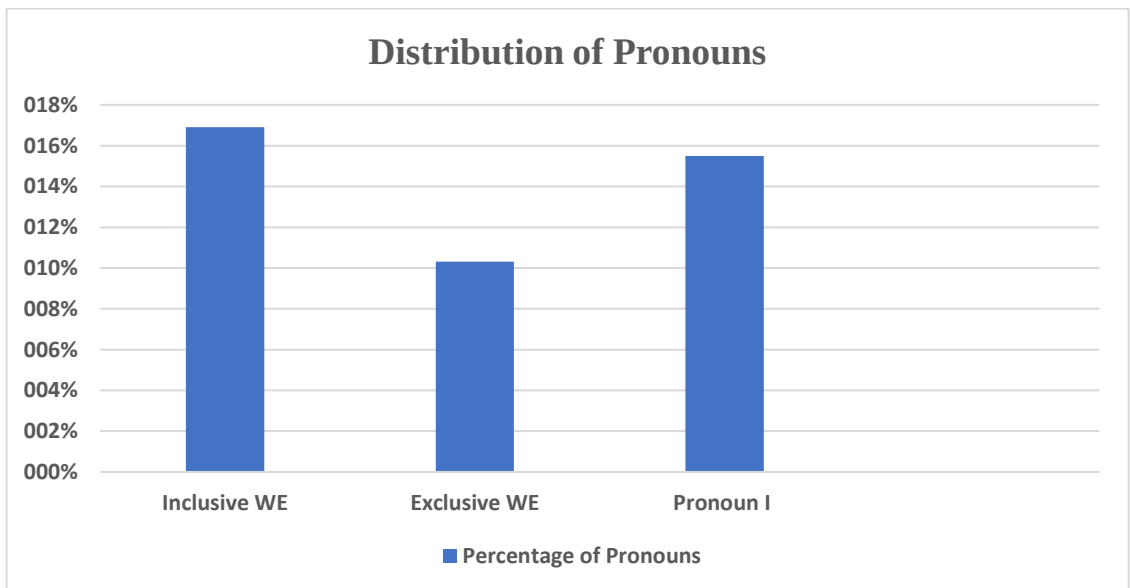
Correlation between Inclusive/Exclusive Deictic Pronouns and Speech acts

Sentence	Type
1. I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here today. 2. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.	Expressive
3. 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.	Assertive
4. I have just taken the sacred oath each of these patriots have taken — an oath first sworn by George Washington.	Commissive Assertive
5. When he put pen to paper, the President said, and I quote “If my name ever goes down into history it will be for this act and my whole soul is in it.” 6. My whole soul is in it.	Commissive
7. Today, on this January day, my whole soul is in this:	Commissive
8. I ask every American to join me in this cause.	Directive
9. I know speaking of unity can sound to some like a foolish fantasy these days. 10. I know the forces that divide us are deep and they are real. 11. But I also know they are not new.	Assertive

In Figure 3, the inclusive first-person pronoun distribution in the inaugural speech of President Biden is shown.



In Figure 4, the Distribution of the use of Deictic Pronouns I, Inclusive and Exclusive WE are shown.



The use of the pronoun “WE” as the deictic pronoun serves for the purpose of segregation or integration in a particular group (Bührig & Thijs, 2006). Inclusive pronouns have been used to reinforce the concept of belonging to the American society and sharing same goals with others, whereas the use exclusive ones has been employed in pursuing manipulative strategies in addressing the opposition groups. Biden made use of exclusive first-person pronouns to show his integrity with all classes with different beliefs and political belongings. He does not belong to a group, but he tries to merge with them to

create sense of sympathy. The frequent use of inclusive pronouns in his speech might suggest that his speech tend to give devoted and close impression.

4.3 Aristotelian Appeals

The following analysis illustrates the appeals; Ethos, Logos, and Pathos found in Biden's Inauguration Speech.

Table 4.

Analysis of Aristotelian Appeals

Sentence	Logs	Ethos	Pathos
1. Chief Justice Roberts, Vice President Harris, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Vice President Pence, distinguished guests, and my fellow Americans.	He has been chosen by the people and this is democracy which has been away for many years.	He is grateful, supportive, and friendly.	He is happy with the victory and after all of his struggle and years of working, he got what he wants through democracy.
2. This is America's day.			
3. This is democracy's day.			
4. A day of history and hope.			
5. Of renewal and resolve.			
6. Through a crucible for the ages America has been tested a new and America has risen to the challenge.			
7. Today, we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy.			
8. The will of the people has been			

heard and the will of the people has been heeded. 9. We have learned again that democracy is precious. 10. Democracy is fragile. 11. And at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed. 12. So now, on this hallowed ground where just days ago violence sought to shake this Capitol's very foundation, we come together as one nation, under God, indivisible, to carry out the peaceful transfer of power as we have for more than two centuries. 13. We look ahead in our uniquely American way — restless, bold, optimistic — and set our sights on the nation we know we can be and we must be.			
14. I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here today. 15. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. 16. You know the resilience of our	He shows the people what they need in order to help America.	His good will towards the other parties and that he is going to help America unite through democracy.	He is grateful for his predecessors of both parties and he explains to the people America's development is his oath.

Constitution and the strength of our nation. 17. 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. 18. I have just taken the sacred oath each of these patriots have taken — an oath first sworn by George Washington. 19. But the American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us. 20. On “We the People” who seek a more perfect Union. 21. This is a great nation and we are good people. 22. Over the centuries through storm and strife, in peace and in war, we have come so far. But we still have far to go. 23. We will press forward with speed and urgency, for we have much to do in this winter of peril and			
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significant possibility. 24. Much to repair. 25. Much to restore. 26. Much to heal. 27. Much to build. 28. And much to gain.			
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As Table 4 illustrates, the appeals are interwoven in most of the cases (Aristotle, 1967). In some of the chunks of speeches, only a single appeal was intended to be found, while in others multiple appeals were implied. In the closing lines, President Biden used logos appeal to emphasize the fact that he supports America, democracy, constitution, and the American people. In other words, he wanted to take the American people back to democracy. Therefore, he supported his stance or position as being democratic. Also, he referred to God in his speech to foster his ethos in order to attract the attention of the American people and to gain their sympathy and support.

President Biden wanted to gain the trust of the American people that he is not like the previous president, and he is different through ethos. Finally, he wanted to express his loyalty to the country and the people and to show solidarity through pathos. President Biden attempted to maintain and refer to his ideology through the use of “a day of democracy”, “a day of history and hope – of renewal and resolve”. Furthermore, the presence of rhetorical devices helped in boosting the force of the speech in terms of logos appeal. Moreover, the syntactic choice of structures, maintenance of the intimacy and inclusiveness in President Biden’s speech gave flow and contributed to logos and ethos appeal. For the use of pathos, the narratives and use of inclusive pronouns raised the shared impression of values related to an individual’s judgments and beliefs.

5. Conclusion

In terms of speech acts and based on the analysis of President Biden’s inaugural speech, multiple manipulation devices are found, according to the context of the speech. In other words, speech can be understood and recognised only within their specific context. In the speech analysed, the president employed assertives in order to narrate events and make intertextual connection with the US history. Moreover, it appeared that President Biden used expressive speech acts in order to express his emotions, gratitude, will, and appreciation. This type of acts, the expressives, probably occurs at the beginning and closing part of speeches.

In terms of the study of deictic pronouns, they are used in a strategic manner. Regarding the exclusive use of ‘WE’, President Biden attempted to build rapport with his realist counterparts and critics with reference to his policies. Moreover, the use of inclusive pronoun in this speech was to reinforce the concept of belonging to the American society and sharing same goals with others. The use of exclusive ones was to pursue manipulative strategies in addressing the opposition groups in the American society. The

use of exclusive first-person pronouns showed his integrity with all classes or categories of people. This revealed a lot about the identity of the president.

In terms of the Aristotelian Appeals, persuasion took place through the identification of logos in most of the utterances of the speech analysed, which might imply that logos increases the power or the force of ethos. This is simply because “the presentation of a rational argument makes the addresser look more reliable and credible” (Ghazani, 2016, p. 645).

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Appendices**Appendix (1)**

1. Chief Justice Roberts, Vice President Harris, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Vice President Pence, distinguished guests, and my fellow Americans.
2. This is America's day.
3. This is democracy's day.
4. A day of history and hope.
5. Of renewal and resolve.
6. Through a crucible for the ages America has been tested a new and America has risen to the challenge.
7. Today, we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy.
8. The will of the people has been heard and the will of the people has been heeded.
9. We have learned again that democracy is precious.
10. Democracy is fragile.
11. And at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed.
12. So now, on this hallowed ground where just days ago violence sought to shake this Capitol's very foundation, we come together as one nation, under God, indivisible, to carry out the peaceful transfer of power as we have for more than two centuries.
13. We look ahead in our uniquely American way — restless, bold, optimistic — and set our sights on the nation we know we can be and we must be.
14. I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here today.
15. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.
16. You know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength of our nation.
17. 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.
18. I have just taken the sacred oath each of these patriots have taken — an oath first sworn by George Washington.
19. But the American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us.
20. On "We the People" who seek a more perfect Union.
21. This is a great nation and we are good people.
22. Over the centuries through storm and strife, in peace and in war, we have come so far. But we still have far to go.
23. We will press forward with speed and urgency, for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibility.
24. Much to repair.
25. Much to restore.
26. Much to heal.
27. Much to build.
28. And much to gain.
29. Few people in our nation's history have been more challenging or difficult than the time one we're in now.
30. A once-in-a-century virus silently stalks the country.

31. It's taken as many lives in one year as America lost in all of World War II.
32. Millions of jobs have been lost.
33. Hundreds of thousands of businesses closed.
34. A cry for racial justice some 400 years in the making moves us. The dream of justice for all will be deferred no longer.
35. A cry for survival comes from the planet itself. A cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear.
36. And now, a rise in political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront and we will defeat.
37. To overcome these challenges – to restore the soul and to secure the future of America – requires more than words.
38. It requires that most elusive of things in a democracy:
39. Unity.
40. Unity.
41. In another January, on New Year's Day 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.
42. When he put pen to paper, the President said, and I quote "If my name ever goes down into history it will be for this act and my whole soul is in it."
43. My whole soul is in it.
44. Today, on this January day, my whole soul is in this:
45. Bringing America together.
46. Uniting our people.
47. And uniting our nation.
48. I ask every American to join me in this cause.
49. Uniting to fight the common foes we face:
50. Anger, resentment, hatred.
51. Extremism, lawlessness, violence.
52. Disease, joblessness, hopelessness.
53. With unity we can do great things. Important things.
54. We can right wrongs.
55. We can put people to work in good jobs.
56. We can teach our children in safe schools.
57. We can overcome this deadly virus.
58. We can reward work, rebuild the middle class, and make health care secure for all.
59. We can deliver racial justice.
60. We can make America, once again, the leading force for good in the world.
61. I know speaking of unity can sound to some like a foolish fantasy these days.
62. I know the forces that divide us are deep and they are real.
63. But I also know they are not new.
64. 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.
65. The battle is perennial.
66. Victory is never assured.

67. Through the Civil War, the Great Depression, World War, 9/11, through struggle, sacrifice, and setbacks, our “better angels” have always prevailed.
68. In each of these moments, enough of us , enough of us have came together to carry all of us forward.
69. And, we can do so now.
70. History, faith, and reason show the way, the way of unity.
71. We can see each other not as adversaries but as neighbors.
72. We can treat each other with dignity and respect.
73. We can join forces, stop the shouting, and lower the temperature.
74. For without unity, there is no peace, only bitterness and fury.
75. No progress, only exhausting outrage.
76. No nation, only a state of chaos.
77. This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge, and unity is the path forward.
78. And, we must meet this moment as the United States of America.
79. If we do that, I guarantee you, we will not fail.
80. We have never, ever, ever , ever failed in America when we have acted together.
81. And so today, at this time and in this place, let us start afresh.
82. All of us.
83. Let us listen to one another.
84. Hear one another.
85. See one another.
86. Show respect to one another.
87. Politics does have to be a raging fire destroying everything in its path.
88. Every disagreement doesn’t have to be a cause for total war.
89. And, we must reject a culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured.
90. My fellow Americans, we have to be different than this.
91. America has to be better than this.
92. And, I believe America is so much better than this.
93. Just look around.
94. 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.
95. Yet we endured
96. we prevailed.
97. Here we stand looking out to the great Mall where Dr. King spoke of his dream.
98. Here we stand, where 108 years ago at another inaugural, thousands of protestors tried to block brave women from marching for the right to vote.
99. Today, we mark the swearing-in of the first woman in American history elected to national office – Vice President Kamala Harris.
100. Don’t tell me things can’t change.
101. Here we stand across the Potomac from Arlington National Cemetery, where heroes who gave the last full measure of devotion rest in eternal peace.
102. 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.

103. It did not happen.
104. It will never happen.
105. Not today.
106. Not tomorrow.
107. Not ever.
108. Not ever.
109. To all those who supported our campaign, I am humbled by the faith you have placed in us.
110. 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.
111. And if you still disagree, so be it.
112. That's democracy. That's America. The right to dissent peaceably, within the guardrails of our Republic, is perhaps our nation's greatest strength.
113. Yet hear me clearly: Disagreement must not lead to disunion.
114. And I pledge this to you: I will be a President for all Americans, all Americans.
115. I will fight as hard for those who did not support me as for those who did.
116. Many centuries ago, Saint Augustine, a saint of my church, wrote that a people was a multitude defined by the common objects of their love.
117. What are the common objects we as Americans love that define us as Americans?
118. I think I know.
119. Opportunity.
120. Security.
121. Liberty.
122. Dignity.
123. Respect.
124. Honor.
125. And, yes, the truth.
126. Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson.
127. There is truth and there are lies.
128. Lies told for power and for profit.
129. 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.
130. Look! I understand that many Americans view the future with some fear and trepidation.
131. I understand they worry about their jobs, about taking care of their families, about what comes next.
132. I get it.
133. 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.
134. We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal.
135. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts.
136. If we show a little tolerance and humility.

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137. 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.
138. There are some days when we need a hand.
139. There are other days when we're called on to lend one.
140. That is how we must be with one another.
141. And, if we are this way, our country will be stronger, more prosperous, more ready for the future and can still disagree.
142. My fellow Americans, in the work ahead of us, we will need each other.
143. We will need all our strength to persevere through this dark winter.
144. We are entering what may well be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus.
145. We must set aside the politics and finally face this pandemic as one nation, one nation.
146. I promise you this: as the Bible says weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning.
147. We will get through this, together, together.
148. Look fogs.
149. The world is watching today.
150. So here is my message to those beyond our borders: America has been tested and we have come out stronger for it.
151. We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again.
152. Not to meet yesterday's challenges, but today's and tomorrow's challenges.
153. We will lead not merely by the example of our power but by the power of our example.
154. We will be a strong and a trusted partner for peace, progress, and security.
155. We have been through so much in this nation.
156. 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.
157. To those 400,000 fellow Americans – mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, friends, neighbors, and co-workers.
158. We will honor them by becoming the people and nation we know we can and should be.
159. Let us say a silent prayer for those who lost their lives, for those they left behind, and for our country.
160. Amen.
161. This is a time of testing.
162. We face an attack on democracy and on truth.
163. A raging virus.
164. Growing inequity.
165. The sting of systemic racism.
166. A climate in crisis.
167. America's role in the world.
168. Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways.

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169. But the fact is we face them all at once, presenting this nation with one of the gravest of responsibilities we have .
170. Now we must step up.
171. All of us.
172. It is a time for boldness, for there is so much to do.
173. And, this is certain.
174. We will be judged, you and I, for how we resolve the cascading crises of our era.
175. Will we rise to the occasion?
176. Will we master this rare and difficult hour?
177. Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world for our children?
178. I believe we must and I believe we will.
179. And when we do, we will write the next great chapter in the American story.
180. It's a story that might sound something like a song that means a lot to me.
181. It's called "American Anthem" and there is one verse stands out for me and goes like this:
182. "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."
183. Let us add our own work and prayers to the unfolding story of our nation.
184. 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.
185. They did their duty.
186. They healed a broken land.
187. My fellow Americans, I close today where I began, with a sacred oath.
188. Before God and all of you I give you my word.
189. I will always level with you.
190. I will defend the Constitution.
191. I will defend our democracy.
192. I will defend America.
193. I will give my all in your service thinking not of power, but of possibilities.
194. Not of personal interest, but of the public good.
195. And together, we shall write an American story of hope, not fear.
196. Of unity, not division.
197. Of light, not darkness.
198. A story of decency and dignity.
199. Of love and of healing.
200. Of greatness and of goodness.
201. May this be the story that guides us.

- 202. The story that inspires us.
- 203. The story that tells ages yet to come that we answered the call of history.
- 204. We met the moment.
- 205. That democracy and hope, truth and justice, did not die on our watch but thrived.
- 206. That America's secured liberty at home and stood once again as a beacon to the world.
- 207. That is what we owe our forbearers, one another, and generations to follow.
- 208. So, with purpose and resolve we turn to the tasks of our time.
- 209. Sustained by faith.
- 210. Driven by conviction.
- 211. And, devoted to one another and to this country we love with all our hearts.
- 212. May God bless America and may God protect our troops.
- 213. Thank you, America.