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An Analysis of the Social Roles and Practices and Interactional Metadiscoursal Resources in American Former President Trump's Facebook Text Messages

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Abstract

Facebook is a means of interaction through which individuals most frequently relate to others. Most of the studies that have attempted to analyze Trump's messages or speeches were descriptive. They have not critically pinpointed some of the socio-cultural motivations that have given rise to the linguistic options utilized by the writer. Therefore, the present study purports to critically analyze the experiential social roles and practices articulated by Trump's Facebook messages and the socio-cultural factors motivating these roles. It also attempts to examine the interactional meta-discoursal persuasive linguistic strategies employed to qualify these roles and practices. To this end, a corpus of two hundred posted texts was selected from Donald Trump's personal Facebook page. We drew on Van Laween's (2008) CDA model and Hyland's (2005) interactional meta-discourse framework to analyze these texts. The results have provided insights about Trump's identity and his various relationships. Trump utilized a high frequency of active material social processes to construct a positive image of himself as an active leader who shares common concerns with his audience, whereas he evaluated his opponents negatively by presenting them as always being involved in negative social processes. Besides, he utilized certain interactional cues to affect his addressees' attitude in order to secure their positive reaction to the propositional content and to involve them collaboratively through his messages.

Keywords: Interactional Meta-Discourse, Social Processes, Trump, Critical Discourse Analysis.

1. Introduction

Facebook is a global social means of communication, which is internationally used in daily interactions. Participants communicate via Facebook to establish and maintain friendly-based relationships and respond to verbal messages.

Facebook written messages are responsive to participants' needs to voice their demands depending on their communicative purpose which can be articulated in the propositional content and the linguistic metadiscoursal features qualifying this content. Before voicing their communicative purposes and being engaged with their addressees, writers tend to weigh up the effects of their statements on their audience. They decide what propositional content to include, what to exclude and what rhetorical and linguistic

choices to be used to construct their propositions based on readers' expectations and interests. That is because texts are not only informative but also interactional in the sense that they involve a kind of mutual engagement with the anticipated reader, who is also engaged in rhetorical reasoning in the process of reading and interpreting to determine the writer's purpose. If the writer can create texts that relate to his/her audience in ways that they will expect and understand, these texts will be 'easier to comprehend, more interesting and more likely to create the desired response (Hyland 2005, 5). To construct a successful text message, writers set out the proposition they seek to convey relying on two main language functions: the experiential and the interactional discoursal meta-functions. Regarding the former, Halliday (1994) thinks of it as the experience through language expressed through the system of transitivity. Transitivity carries out the experiential meaning by focusing on the type of process realized by the verbal group in the clause and the participants involved in the process. The experiential function of a text is realized by the strategic selection of the verbal processes and the participants involved in such processes in the real world. Therefore, written texts are perceived as a reflection of the participants' roles and identities and how these identities are constructed when participants are involved in social interactions. To articulate the experiential function, the writers of text messages resort to clusters of specific rhetorical features and linguistic choices related to the type of processes and participants involved in. Beside the experiential content used to construct the message, the writers utilize interactional meta-discoursal linguistic devices in order to persuade the intended readers and engage them intentionally and functionally throughout the text messages. The interactional metadiscoursal function of the text is realized by linguistic discoursal choices that are intentionally and functionally oriented to complement, qualify and present the propositional content persuasively to the audience addressed.

To clarify the nature and the communicative purpose of the Facebook messages, we investigate and critically analyze the linguistic options utilized to express the experiential content of Trump's personal Facebook messages and the interactional discoursal linguistic strategic choices accompanying their experiential content within the bounds and constraints of their particular social and cultural context which is not only reflected but also constructed by these texts. Therefore, the present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the social processes and social roles Trump tends to construct for himself and his opponents, and what are the linguistic features utilized to signal these social practices?

2. What are the interactional meta-discoursal choices employed to persuade the readers of the messages?

Such a kind of research enables the participants to identify the various social roles, actions, and relations between the interlocutors. It has the function of equipping language writers with the knowledge and skills of using the discoursal linguistic strategic options to successfully weigh the effect of their messages on their readers. Readers of the texts, on the other hand, can think of these texts not only as informational but also as socio-culturally grounded, which in turn motivate them to identify the social roles and verbal processes of the interactants and to reconstruct the reasoning behind the discoursal linguistic choices used to signal them.

Such a kind of research will hopefully highlight the cooperative interactions between the writers and readers of the text as both seek to reconstruct interaction from the features of the text based on their

mutual assumptions related to text production. Moreover, this kind of analysis enables language users to reveal stated and hidden social values and cultural perspectives that are not stated explicitly in the text (Paltridge 2006).

2. Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted on Trump's speeches. A pioneering study was conducted by Liu (2016) who used Rhetorical Theory and Metaphor instrument to analyze Trump's tweets. He found that Trump's tweets were mainly used to establish a close relationship with American citizens, connect with voters, show his political personality, and share his goals through rhetoric. The researcher concluded that following such strategic choices in such tweets enabled Trump to become the 45th President of the United States. Zhao and Zhang (2017) discussed the transitivity system in Trump's Inaugural Address focusing only on the ideational function of discourse. They found out that Trump employed six types of processes related to the ideational function of language; they occurred with various frequencies. Material processes occupied the largest proportion with 68.6% of all the clauses, while relational processes occupied 15.7%. However, the researchers' analysis was mainly descriptive, as they did not relate their results to the real communicative purposes of these frequencies and the socio-cultural motivations that have given rise to them. Examining the linguistic realization of the interpersonal function of language in Trump and Hillary's election speeches, Ping and Lingling (2017) adopted the systemic functional linguistics to describe the interpersonal meaning and how it is realized through language; they found that the declarative mood was the most frequently used system in the two candidates' speeches to convey information. Besides, both candidates relied frequently on median modal verbs (will, would, should) to avoid being aggressive and bossy when expressing their views. They also found that both candidates adopted first personal pronouns (we, I) to help them build a close and harmonious relationship with others. Likewise, they tended to employ the simple present tense which has not only narrowed the gap between the audience and the speaker, but also helped the presidential candidates to state the current situation of America.

Some researchers such as Mohammadi and Javadi (2017), Rachman et al. (2017), Kreis (2017), Chen (2018) and Munawar (2018) adopted critical discourse analysis (CDA) to reveal the covert strategies used by Trump. Mohammadi and Javadi (2017) analyzed the experiential, relational, and expressive values of the wordings, metaphors, and grammatical structures of Trump's language use. They found that Trump used simple words and short sentences to minimize the distance between himself and his audience. Using wording, rewording, and over wording, Trump tried to show himself sympathetic and responsible for dealing with the main problems that the Americans face, whereas he tried to present his opponent not only as careless but also as responsible for the disastrous events in the country. Their study was only concerned with vocabulary and grammar although they argued that they intended to conduct a critical discourse analysis, which means that they should have interpreted and explained their results by relating them to the sociocultural motivations behind their choice. Rachman et al. (2017) study reported

that Donald Trump delivered his political discourse using informal language to let his audience feel close and important to him. Therefore, Trump was ideologically powerful in having the ability to control and win his audience' hearts. Applying a discourse-historical approach to critical discourse analysis, Kreis (2017) explored how Donald Trump employed Twitter as a strategic instrument of power to disseminate his right-wing populist discourse. The findings showed how Trump used an informal, direct, and provoking communication style to construct and reinforce the concept of homogeneous people and a homeland threatened by the dangerous other. Kreis (2017) and Rachman et al. (2017) studies were mainly qualitative in that their results were based on few examples selected from the texts analyzed to support their views. Neither of these studies went further to analyze the data critically.

In the same vein, Munawar (2018) analyzed Trump's political discourse delivered at the White House on Jan 30, 2018, drawing on Fairclough's theoretical framework. The researcher found that Trump's speech was framed into narrative mood and grounded on lexical density. He frequently used certain linguistic features such as the pronoun (we) to minimize the distance with the listeners, repetition of certain words to stress national patriotism, the present progressive tense to emphasize the code of action, and words out of political jargon as a persuasive style. Such linguistic options were generally used to convince listeners of Trump's achievements, arguments, and ideas. Likewise, Chen (2018) found out that Trump chose material processes, the first personal pronoun, and the declarative mood to show that he could change things.

Most of the studies reviewed so far (Mohammadi & Javadi 2017, Rachman et al. 2017, Kreis 2017, Munawar 2018 and Chen 2018) have claimed that they drew on Fairclough's CDA model to analyze samples of Trump's discourse. However, none of these studies has provided a full-fledged critical discourse analysis of the texts selected because the researchers did not go beyond the descriptive level of the language meta-functions in order to provide enough interpretations and explanations that reflect the complex relation among language, power, and ideology. For example, Chen (2018, 971) mentioned that the researcher's 'inadequacy of pragmatic knowledge may affect preciseness of the study'. Moreover, Rachman et al. (2017), Kreis (2017) and Munawar (2018) did not conduct a statistical analysis to find out the significant linguistic features used by Trump and their functions. Rather, they based their analysis on few individual examples to illustrate the linguistic options utilized by Trump. They neither interpret these options critically by relating them to their intertextual aspects nor explain these choices by relating them to socio-cultural and ideological aspects.

In contrast, the present study utilized two complementary frameworks: CDA and interactional meta-discourse. The function of the first was not only to examine the participants' roles in terms of the 'actor' and 'goal' and what social practices they are involved in, but also to reveal the social contexts related to the allocation of participants' roles since meaning is related to the socio-cultural context than to the lexicogrammatical choices. The purpose of the latter is to reflect how Trumps's identity and responsibilities have been constructed and qualified throughout the use of different persuasive interactional metadiscoursal strategies proposed by Hyland's model. Analyzing such messages plays an important role in revealing Trump's real personal identity, which can be recovered from his choices of social processes and the social participants involved in such practices as well as the interactional strategic

linguistic choices used to qualify them in order to persuade his audience. Furthermore, unlike the studies reviewed, which were mostly qualitative and restricted to particular social or political events, the present study dealt with Trump's written texts in a broader sense without being restricted to a particular social event and analyzed the data statistically in order to reflect on Trump's real linguistic and stylistic choices.

3. Theoretical Framework

The present study drew on two complementary theoretical frameworks: Van Leeuwen's (2008) critical discourse analysis (CDA) of social processes and social participants and Hyland's (2005) interactional meta-discourse resources. To figure out how Trump's social roles, identity, and social practices have been constructed through the Facebook messages, this study drew on Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework. His notion of process and social participants is borrowed from Halliday's (1994) experiential meta-function of language. The purpose of using Van Leeuwen was to examine the allocation of the participants' roles in terms of 'actor', 'goal', 'senser', 'phenomenon', etc. related to the material, mental, and verbal social processes, respectively and in what social context they were represented. His framework is also an extension of Fairclough's (1989) notion of CDA, which is used to reveal stated and hidden values, beliefs that are not always stated explicitly in discourse (Paltridge 2006). Furthermore, CDA aims to a make clear connection between discourse, social practices, and social structure which is not clear for several people (Fowler 1991); this can be further explicated by exploring the relationships between text, discursive practices, social and cultural structures, relations, and processes (Fairclough 1992).

The purpose of using Hyland's interactional meta-discourse framework was to examine the interactional linguistic resources used by Trump in order to qualify the experiential content of the messages and present them persuasively to the intended readers and engage them throughout the text messages. As pointed out by Hyland (2005, 37), this kind of analysis reflects self-expressions "used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers".

The interactional meta-discoursal text markers proposed by Hyland (2005, 52) include the following: boosters, which are words used to express certainty such as 'clearly', 'demonstrate'; self-mention, which indicates the degree of explicit author presence in the text realized by the first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives; engagement markers that address readers explicitly such as reader pronouns directive and questions; and attitude markers that include importance signals, and punctuation marks. These text markers help to negotiate the interactional meaning of language in the text, assisting the addresser to express a viewpoint and engage with addressees. By utilizing such a model, writers try to affect their audience using meta-discursive analysis for both text and its purpose. For Yazdini and Salehi (2016, 41), it is helpful to apply meta-discursive analysis to mass media texts since it is an available context for communication. Therefore, adopting two analytical frameworks in this study attends to different aspects of discourse and can reveal the multi-functions of the text messages analyzed.

4. Method and Procedure of Data Analysis

Trump shares the political and social events on Facebook almost 6 times daily; therefore, there was a large number of Facebook messages available. We focused only on the posts issued between June 1, 2019, and March 31, 2020, as this period included several important issues that have influenced Trump in particular and the United States of America in general. Such events included the U.S House impeachments against Trump, the 'fake' news against Trump, the U.S- North Korea nuclear talks, the U.S-Iran's negotiations on nuclear deal, the U.S-China trade war, the impact of the Coronavirus worldwide, and issues related to internal and foreign policies. To illustrate one of such issues, 'fake news', for example, Trump and his supporters criticized his opponents' media coverage of falsified news and fake stories which were critical of President Trump during the US election campaign. The Washington Post and the New York Times were examples of such media. The following Facebook message posted by President Trump and Example 15 in Section 5 exemplify this issue:

"Wow, so many Fake News stories today. No matter what I do or say, they will not write or speak truth.
   The Fake News Media is out of control!"

For this study, we manually collected almost all of Trump's Facebook messages issued during those ten months; they were about 2000 messages from Donald J. Trump's personal Facebook account. Following the stratified sampling research tool, we divided the text messages into strata each of which included all the text messages issued in each month of the abovementioned period and from each of these months, we drew at random a sample of ten percent of the texts (i.e., twenty messages) from each month. This selection resulted in 200 posts; their length ranged between 10 and 150 words.

To examine how Trump's social roles, identity, and social practices have been constructed, we drew on Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework. We analyzed the linguistic choices based on the experiential values that involve three processes: material, mental, and verbal. Material processes involve social participants such as actor, goal, and sometimes beneficiary; mental processes have participants like senser and phenomenon; and verbal processes include sayer, receiver, reported, and verbiage. We also utilized Hyland's interactional meta-discourse framework to examine the interactional linguistic resources. This involves the strategic choices illustrated in Section 3 including self-mention, engagement markers, and attitude markers that signal how the addresser builds an explicit relationship with his audience. Furthermore, the messages in the post texts were analyzed based on how information is rhetorically ordered and introduced either deductively or inductively.

5. Results

5.1 Social processes and practices in Trump's Facebook messages

Since the main aim of this study is to find out what roles and social practices were Trump and his opponents involved in, this subsection shows the frequency of the different social processes realized by the material, mental, and verbal processes representing the social interactions and the social participants involved in. We found the following types of social processes that the participants were mainly involved in: material, mental, and verbal. As shown in Table 1, the frequency of social processes related to Trump

as a social participant is the highest (66.3%) in comparison to those related to his opponents, the Democrats, and others (33.7%). Table 1 also indicates that the frequency of material processes used in Facebook messages is represented with 71.1% in comparison to mental processes (22.1%) and verbal processes (6.8%).

Table 1: The frequency of social processes

processes	Trump		Other parties		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Material	200	48%	96	23.1%	296	71. 1 %
Mental	56	13. 5%	36	8. 6%	92	22.1%
Verbal	20	4.8%	8	2%	28	6. 8%
Total	276	66.3%	140	33.7%	416	100%

Material processes are those that involve doing; they include action verbs such as, *work*, *do*, and *build*. Van Leeuwen (2008) classified material processes into transactive and non-transactive. The former is of two types: transactive that takes two participants, i.e. the actor and the goal; and ditransitive which takes three participants: an actor, a goal, and a beneficiary. The non-transactive verb is an action that is performed by one human participant, the actor.

Table 1 shows that the material processes related to Trump make 48%, while those attributed to his opponents are represented in 23.1% of the material processes. The following examples represent the material processes:

1. "We are **building** large movie screens outside to take care of everybody."

2. "I am **promoting** FAIR and RECIPROCAL trade at the G20…"

3. "We are **fighting** the seriously dishonest and unhinged Lamestream Media."

4. We are **doing** great Economically as a country, number one, despite the Fed's antiquated policy on rates and tightening."

5. "The Democrats **delay** the approval process to levels unprecedented in the history of our Country!"

6. The Obama Administration **built** the **cages**, not the Trump Administration."

7. "The Do Nothing Dems are now **doing even less** - and soooo much work to be done!"

8. "General Qassem Soleimani has **killed** or **badly wounded** thousands of Americans over an extended period of time and was **plotting to kill** many more...but got caught!"

Examples 1 to 3 include transactive material processes that involve two participants, where the human actors of these examples are the pronouns *we* and *I* that refer to Trump. The processes are the verbs 'building', 'promoting', 'fighting', and the non-human goals of them are 'large movie screens", 'FAIR and RECIPROCAL trade', and 'the seriously dishonest and unhinged Lamestream Media', respectively. Example 4 includes a non-transactive material process, *doing*, where the human actor is the first-person plural pronoun, *we*, referring to Trump and his administration. The process 'built' in Example 6 has two participants: an actor, 'the Obama Administration', and a goal, 'the cages'.

As shown in the examples above, all the material processes related to Trump involve action and effect signaled by positive social processes like 'building', 'promoting', 'confronting', and 'doing'. In contrast, all the material processes related to the Democrats and Iranians are either negative social actions

realized by verbs related to negative actions like 'delay' in Example 5 and 'kill', 'wound', and 'plot' in Example 8, or have negative goals like 'built the cages' and 'doing even less' as in Examples 6 and 7, respectively.

Regarding the mental processes, they include a senser, a mental verb, and a phenomenon. Van Leeuwen (2008) argues that mental processes are considered reactions rather than actions. He further indicates that their role is not merely a regulatory pattern for externally visible actions; they also embody emotions. The following exemplify mental processes:

9. "I **want** to congratulate Mitch McConnell and all Republicans. Today I signed the 160th Federal Judge to the Bench."

10. "Some of the best Economic Numbers our Country has ever **experienced** are happening right now."

11. "They **want** Open Borders, which means massive crime and drugs."

As shown in Table 1, mental verbs have the percentage of 22.1% of the total processes, 13.5% of which is related to Trump and his administration as participants, whereas 8.6% is associated with the Democrats and others, respectively. The senser of the mental process, 'want', in Example 9 is Trump. The mental verb 'experienced' in Example 10 relates to 'our country' as a 'senser', whereas the phenomenon of this process is 'some of the best economic numbers'. Instance 11 exemplifies the Democrats' negative mental reaction, 'want', to the phenomenon, 'Open Borders, which means massive crime and drugs'. The text messages in these examples present Trump and his country as experiencers or sensers of positive social actions, as in Examples 9 and 10. Democrats, on the other hand, are represented as experiencers of negative phenomena like 'Open Borders, which means massive crime and drugs', as shown in Examples 11. Such negative tasks are only restricted and attributed to the Democrats.

Concerning the verbal processes, Van Leeuwen (2008) classified the three processes into the following categories: material processes as actions, mental as reactions, and verbal ones are in the middle of the former two. Verbal processes include a sayer, a process, and a receiver or verbiage. They constitute 6.8%, most of which (4.2%) are related to Trump, in contrast to 2% attributed to the Democrats, as exemplified in the following:

12. "I am pleased to **announce** that Congressman Mark Meadows will become White House Chief of Staff…"

13. "Also, see where I **say** 'us' (our Country) as opposed to 'me' (meaning me) and where I then **say** that the Attorney General (of the United States) will call you."

14. "Now the Radical Left Democrats and their Partner, the Lame Stream Media,… are **talking** loudly of their favorite word, impeachment."

15. "The Fake News **is saying** that I am willing to meet with Iran, 'No Conditions.' That is an incorrect statement (as usual)."

The sayer in Examples 12 and 13 is the first-person pronoun *I* referring to Trump; the process in 13 is *say*, while 'us' and 'that the Attorney General' are the verbiage; and the process in 12 is 'announce' and the verbiage is what comes after the process. Example 14 includes 'the Radical Left Democrats and their Partner, the Lame Stream Media', as the sayer of the non-transactive process 'talking', whereas their verbiage is the negative 'favorite word, impeachment'. These findings are also in harmony with the

results related to the material and mental processes that have shown that Trump used positive expressions to talk about himself and negative ones to talk about the Democrats. All the social actions above present Trump as a man of doing and give him a high degree of competency in contrast to the Democrats who have been described as incompetent and doing nothing. However, even when Trump's opponents did any material thing or thought about anything or verbalized anything, Trump employed negative expressions to describe all their social practices.

5.2 Interactional meta-discoursal linguistic choices

Interactional choices concern the way addressers interact with and involve members of a given society by alerting them to the addresser's perspective towards propositional information and engaging them as discourse participants. These strategic choices include self-mention, engagement markers, attitude markers, and topic introduction pattern. Table 2 shows the frequency of these relational interactional values identified in the texts analyzed.

Table 2. The frequency of interactional metadiscoursal markers

Category	Subcategory	No.
Self-mentions	First-person singular pronouns	116
	First-person plural pronouns	202
	Second-person plural pronouns	32
Engagement markers	Imperative mood	108
	Interrogative mood	8
	Obligation modals	40
	Importance markers	82
Attitude markers	Punctuation (exclamation and capitalization)	78
Topic introduction pattern	Deductive or inductive	162

5.2.1 Self-mentions

This strategic option refers to the degree of the author's presence in the text (Hyland 2005). It is realized by the first-person pronouns (*I*, *me*, *mine*). Trump used the first-person pronoun *I* in 116 instances not only to acknowledge his presence as the addresser, but also to give individual addressees the impression that he is addressing them personally.

16. "I will be making a public statement tomorrow at 12:00pm from the White House to discuss our Country's VICTORY on the Impeachment Hoax!"

5.2.2 Engagement markers

These linguistic devices refer to the persuasive strategic options addressers utilize to bring their addressees' attention, highlight the presence of the addressees in the text messages and engage them in the argument (Hyland 2005). They mainly focus on addressees' participation as in Examples 17 and 18. in which they are addressed with the inclusive first-person plural pronoun, *we*, which was very frequently used (202 instances). Such a high occurrence of *we*, *us*, *our*, and *ours* signals Trump's involvement of his associates as participant authors of the text messages, which in turn can engender solidarity with them, e.g.,

17. "**We** are doing GREAT things for women and all Americans."

In other instances of first-person plural like 18, Trump addresses his audience as partners in 'doing these great things' in order to involve them and create harmony with his followers.

18. "It is very important that **we** totally protect **our** Asian American community in the United States, and all around the world…"

This also applies to Trump's use of the second person pronoun (32 times) as in Example 19.

19. "It was a great and triumphant evening for our Country. Thank **you** for all of the nice remarks and wonderful reviews of my State of the Union Speech…"

Trump also endeavored to establish a relationship with his addressees in order to pull them into discourse at certain points by the frequent use of directives. The main function of directives is to 'instruct the reader to perform an action or to see things in a way determined by the writer' (Hyland 2005, 154). The directive signals mainly include the imperative mood (108 instances), the main function of which is to shorten the distance between the addresser and his audience as in Example 20; obligation modals (40 times) emphasizing that the addressee should attend to the argument and understand the point in a certain way, as in 21 and 22; and sometimes Trump raised questions (8 times) in order to engage the addressee and bring him or her to an arena where they can be led to the addresser's viewpoint (Hyland 200) as in 23.

20. "**MAKE** AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, which is happening, and then, **KEEP** AMERICA GREAT!"

21. "In one voice, our nation **must** condemn racism, bigotry and white supremacy…"

22. "It is **imperative** that you heed the directions of the FEMA, State & Local Officials..."

23. "We have THE BEST economy in the history of the United States of America. **This is what the democrats want to impeach?**"

5.2.3 Attitude markers

According to Hyland (2005), these markers are affective rather than epistemic; they instantiate the addressee's attitude to the propositional content of the message in order to express surprise, importance, obligation, etc. It is expressed by punctuation marks as useful signals for the readers, especially exclamation marks to show astonishment and surprise as in 24, capitalization to indicate emphasis as in 25, and adjectives indicating importance and obligation as in 26.

24. "The Crazed, Do Nothing Democrats are turning Impeachment into a routine partisan weapon. That is very bad for our Country, and not what the Founders had in mind**!!!!**"

25. "MEXICO HAS AGREED TO IMMEDIATELY BEGIN BUYING LARGE QUANTITIES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT FROM OUR GREAT PATRIOT FARMERS."

26. "It is **very important** that we **totally** protect our Asian American community in the United States, and all around the world…"

5.2.4 Topic introduction pattern

The addresser can introduce his main topic deductively or inductively. The former rhetorical strategic pattern can be used to introduce the main topic first at the beginning of a message and then the

supporting justifications are presented afterwards. The latter rhetorical pattern, inductive strategy, enables the addresser to delay the main topic until he presents the minor points of the argument first and then introduces the main topic as a conclusion from the introductory points. Our analysis of the messages revealed that Trump introduced 81% of his text messages deductively starting with the main point, whereas he introduced 29% of the texts inductively starting with subtopics. The following example shows how Trump organized his messages deductively:

27. "In one voice, our nation must condemn racism, bigotry and white supremacy. Hate has no place in America. Hatred warps the mind, ravages the heart and devours the soul."

In Example 27, the topic is introduced deductively starting with the main important idea, and then the writer moved to the comments. According to the example, Trump presented the main topic that is condemning racism, bigotry, and white supremacy; then he commented on these sinister ideologies by identifying the negative effects and consequences of such ideologies.

6. Discussion

As stated in the introduction section, the study purports to identify the linguistic features adopted in Trump's messages to construct his and others' social roles and practices, and the interactional metadiscoursal choices employed to engage and affect addressees' behavior to create a positive personal image of Trump and a bad one of his opponents. The analysis undertaken revealed two types of discourse operating in the process of text production: the experiential or propositional aspect of the discourse and the meta-discoursal interactional linguistic options. The function of the former is to encode some of the addresser's beliefs, understandings and conceptualizations of social practices and participation that he wants to convey to the social community within which and for which these conceptions and beliefs are presented. Embedded within these propositional discourse material and beliefs are the meta-discoursal or non-propositional options, the function of which is to 'facilitate communication, supporting the addressees' position and building a relationship with the audience' (Hyland 2000, 110) in order to present this propositional material persuasively.

Examining the various linguistic options signalling the social practices and relationships embedded in the propositional content, we identified Trump's and others' roles and their social practices and responsibilities. The texts analyzed portray Trump as a man of doing whose actions are not only restricted to Americans in public and private spheres but also extended to serve the international community. Such doings and social roles are evident in the high frequency (71.1%) of the material processes, 48% of which describes his doings and successes, whereas the rest of the material processes (23.1%) describes his opponents' actions as a failure. This result agrees with Zhao and Zhang's (2017) findings that material processes occupied the largest proportion in Trump's discourse. To further highlight his social roles and goals, Trump opted for material action processes that appear in the form of active sentences rather than passive ones to present himself as a human agent and the doer of many actions for the benefit of Americans and the international community. These actions have a strong presence in positive social

processes like 'building large movie screens', 'promoting FAIR and RECIPROCAL trade', and 'doing grate economically'. In contrast, all the material processes and social participants including the agents and goals as participants used by Trump to describe his opponents (i.e., Democrats and others) are negative ones related to negative doings as is shown in 28.

28. "**Sleepy Joe Biden** making a speech. Sooo Boring!... not to mention the fact that **our Country will do poorly with him.**"

Negative material practices like 'delay', 'kill', 'wound', and 'plot' are the preserve for Trump's opponents who are recognized either as negative social actors (e.g., sleepy Biden) or having negative goals like **built** *the cages* as in Example 6. Such a result supports Mohammadi and Javadi's (2017) finding that Trump always tried to present his opponent not only as careless but also as responsible for the disastrous events in the country.

Trump's achievements are further emphasized by the frequent use (22.1%) of mental verbs that denote his own and others' thoughts and perceptions. In fact, Trump relied on transactive mental verbs more than non-transactive ones to highlight the phenomena of these processes. Besides, most of these mental verbs appear as active sentences presenting himself as a human senser who thinks of America and has great feelings toward his country. On the other hand, he employs mental verbs having negative phenomena as participants to portrait the Democrats as sensers experiencing negative thoughts that are not appreciated by Americans (e.g., "They want Open Borders, which means massive crime and drugs.").

In sum, relying on the linguistic options related to the social processes and the participants involved, Trump promoted himself as a dedicated and intensive carer for the life aspects of his people and his country's affairs. In contrast, he evaluated his opponents negatively and represented them as participants who are good for bad doings. This was strategically constructed by using certain linguistic options related to social practices. In so doing, Trump identified himself as a leader who shares common interests and concerns with his audience by supporting the protesters for their freedom, bringing peace not only for America but also for all around the world. For instance, he used phrases like 'America first' and 'Great America' to show that he works for the interests and the protection of America; this in turn evokes a nationalist discourse and manifests patriotism and nationalism through being politically and ideologically engaged in fights and negotiations for peace and justice and projecting the aspirations of national greatness. On the other hand, he focused on the scandals of the Democrats and the bad things done by his opponents in order to let his audience draw a comparison between the two parties and choose between them.

Embedded within these propositional discourse beliefs are the interactional meta-discoursal or non-propositional options the function of which is to help create and facilitate a social relationship with the audience and support the addressee's position (Hyland 2000, 2005) as well as to present this propositional material persuasively. Our analysis revealed that these interactional options including engagement markers, attitude signals, self-mentions and deductive rhetorical patterns are extensively used to qualify Trump's propositional material in order to involve and solidify the relationship between the interlocutors.

Engagement markers address readers to attract their attention or to include them in the text (Hyland 2005). They are largely conveyed through first- and second-person plural pronouns, imperative and

interrogative moods as well as obligation modals. We found that the most frequent feature of engagement (101 instances) through which readers were brought into the texts was the first-person inclusive, *we*, to speak on behalf of the addresser and his audience. In so doing, Trump is making an authority claim to speak for his audience. His way of binding himself and his readers through the inclusive, *we*, and treating them as equivalent to himself sends a clear signal of involvement which stresses the participants' shared interests and intentions. In sum, it is a strategy to include readers and lead them with the writer.

Another means of appealing, and involvement is to address audience directly utilizing the second-person plural pronoun, *you*. It is usually used in Trump's texts as an indefinite pronoun, where there are many addressees, whose specific identity is indefinite to the writer, as is shown in Example 29.

29. "Congratulations to the Great State of Louisiana. A big night. **You** will soon have a new and wonderful Governor, Eddie Rispone. **Your** Taxes and Car Insurance Payments will go DOWN!"

The use of *you* and *your* in this example implies a relationship of solidarity between Trump (the president) and the people of the State of Louisiana in general.

A further engagement feature that occurred frequently (78 instances) in Trump's messages was directives. They were mainly signaled by imperative (54 instances) like 'watch', 'MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN', 'KEEP AMERICA GREAT', and 'Never have'; modals of obligation addressing the readers (e.g., *must, should*) and adjectives indicating importance or necessity (e.g., *It is important*…, *It is imperative*…). Trump tended to use directives to pull his readers into discourse to perform actions or understand a point in a certain way. In other words, he tried to get readers to see things in the way he perceived them. Sometimes, Trump dealt with his audience as equals by raising questions to draw their attention, or preparing the ground for what he was going to talk as in Example 30:

30. "**Did you hear the latest con job?** President Obama is now trying to take credit for the Economic Boom taking place under the Trump Administration."

Often such a strategy acts as a 'pre-sequence' device (Cook 1990, 58) for getting the reader to continue reading a longer text to find the answer to this kind of questions. While raising a question is used infrequently, it is a key reader-oriented strategy as it adds more to the interlocutors' relationship than to the propositional content.

Interactional metadiscoursal choices are also further emphasized by explicit writer's presence realized by the high proportion of self-mention in the written texts. Trump used the first-person pronoun *I* in 116 instances not only to acknowledge his presence, but also to express his convictions, emphasize what he has done, distinguish his contribution from those of others, and to demarcate his work from that of others by showing his audience the difference between where he stands, and where others stand in relation to a certain issue, as it is exemplified in 31.

31. "**I** was very surprised & disappointed that **Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia voted against me** on the Democrat's totally partisan Impeachment Hoax. **No President has done more for the great people of West Virginia than me (Pensions), and that will always continue**... I was told by many that Manchin was just a puppet for Schumer & Pelosi. That's all he is!"

As stated in the results section, Trump also used affective attitude markers to encode the propositional content of the messages; this was signaled by adjectives or adverbs indicating importance and obligation. His attitude was also conveyed by using punctuation marks like exclamation as illustrated in Example 31 and capitalization as exemplified in 25. These are useful signals for the readers to show one's astonishment and surprise and to amplify the negative or positive tone toward the message presented. Furthermore, capitalization and exclamations in these messages can help to impart an informal tone to encourage readers to engage with the message.

A further involvement strategy is related to how the main topic of the messages is introduced. Our analysis showed Trump's preference for deductive rhetorical strategies, as 81% of his text messages were introduced deductively. According to Scollon and Scollon (2012), introducing one's topic deductively is an involvement politeness rhetorical strategy through which users can emphasize solidarity and what they have in common. It gives a speaker the right to advance his opinion on the grounds that the addressee will be interested in that opinion and on the assumption that s/he shares membership in the same social community. The addresser also anticipates a close relationship between himself and the other party as both are pursuing a shared goal (Scollon and Scollon 2012).

7. Conclusion

The study has explored the linguistic features adopted in Trump's messages to construct his social roles and practices, and to engage and affect his addressees' behavior to create a positive personal image of himself. The two analytical focuses adopted in this study attend to different aspects of discourse and analyzed Trump's messages in terms of their representation of social roles and social interactions, on the one hand, and their interactional meta-discoursal meanings, on the other. Such analytical approaches reveal the multi-functionality of the text messages analyzed (Li 2009) and present them as being inherently linked to the events happening and the participants involved in the sociocultural and physical context in which the texts are constructed (Halliday 1994, Fairclough 2003, Van Laween 2008). Such an analysis has also enriched our understanding of the texts by revealing the specific motivations that have given rise to the linguistic choices used to construct the texts (Al-Ali and Shatat 2022).

The texts analysed have provided insights about Trump's identity and his various relationships with his associates, opponents, Americans in general and the international community by developing a discourse that constructs a positive image about himself and a negative one about his opponents. His text messages were structured to promote the idea of the intensive carer, who is stereotyped as the leader who sacrifices for the life aspects of his people, and as a default carer for internal and external American affairs, whereas his opponents were stereotyped as significantly having nothing to do with the essentials of the American domestic affairs. However, when his opponents were involved in social practices, Trump, as a text producer, evaluated them negatively by representing them as a 'political threat rival to the USA's politics'. These alternative constructions of Trump's positive image and his opponents' negative image in the texts analyzed emerge in relation to specific sociocultural purposes and political motivations informed by the discourse-relative social practices that are reflected by participants' interaction with the real world, with one another, and with themselves in discourse.

An Analysis of the Social Roles and Practices and Interactional Metadiscoursal Resources in American Former President Trump's Facebook Text Messages

Our analysis has also revealed a further aspect of discourse, which is *how* to present *what*, in the sense that what matters is *how* the writer persuasively qualifies and presents the propositional content of the social interactions and the participants involved (Al-Ali and Sahawneh 2011; Al-Ali 2018). Such conclusions lend further support to research findings by Thetela (1997, 101) that good writers should maintain an appropriate balance between 'topic-based' and 'human-face' discourses. Analyzing the interactional linguistic features has provided insights into the many strategic interactional meta-discourse cues utilized by Trump to affect his addressees' attitude in order to secure their positive reaction to the propositional content and to involve them collaboratively through his messages.

تحليل الأدوار والممارسات الاجتماعيّة ووسائل الخطاب التفاعليّ في رسائل الفيسبوك الخاصة بالرئيس الأمريكي السابق دونالد ترامب

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الملخص

يعدّ الفيسبوك من أكثر وسائل التواصل بين الأفراد. فمعظم الدراسات السابقة التي حاولت تحليل رسائل ترامب وخطاباته كانت وصفيّة، ولم تقدم هذه الدراسات تحليلاً نقدياً للدوافع الاجتماعيّة والثقافيّة التي دفعت ترامب لاستعمال بعض الاختيارات اللغويّة دون غيرها. لذلك هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل الخيارات اللغوية المتعلقة بالأدوار والممارسات الاجتماعيّة للمخاطبين في رسائل ترامب والاستراتيجيات اللغويّة التفاعليّة المختلفة التي استعملها لعرض هذه الأدوار والأفعال بطريقة مقنعة. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف اخترنا مائتي منشورٍ نصي من صفحة الفيسبوك الخاصة بدونالد ترامب كعينة لهذه الدراسة، وحللناها استناداً إلى منهجيّة فان لوفين (2008) لتحليل الخطاب النقديّ ومنهجيّة هايلاند (2005) لتحليل وسائل الخطاب التفاعلي. وقد قدمت النتائج رؤى حول هويّة ترامب وعلاقاته المتنوعة مع المخاطبين موضحةً أن ترامب يستعمل أفعالاً اجتماعيّة ماديّة بصيغة المبني للمعلوم بصورة متكررة لبناء صورة إيجابيّة لنفسه كقائد عملي مهتم بالقضايا والاهتمامات العامة لدى الجمهور، في حين يُظهر معارضيه بصورة سلبيّة لمشاركاتهم الدائمة بأعمال اجتماعيّة سلبيّة. زيادة على ما سبق، فهو يستعمل إشارات تفاعليّة من شأنها التأثير في مواقف جمهوره لضمان ردود أفعال إيجابيّة حول محتوى رسائله ولضمان دمجهم وتعاونهم من خلالها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الخطاب التفاعليّ، الأدوار والممارسات الاجتماعيّة، ترامب، تحليل الخطاب النقديّ.

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