

Forced Displacement and Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis of Presuppositions and Speech Acts in Trump's Discourse on the Gaza Strip

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Abstract—This study explores the rhetorical strategies used by US President Donald Trump's proposal for the forced displacement of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. It employs a pragmatic analysis framework to scrutinize Trump's statements, focusing on pragmatic presuppositions and speech acts. By examining purposively sampled extracts from Trump's White House meetings, this study provides an in-depth analysis of Trump's rhetorical strategies in his proposal for the forced displacement of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The findings highlight Trump's discourse on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and his rhetoric of forced displacement, disregarding international law and Palestinian rights. His speech acts employ various functions, shaping the dominant narrative surrounding Gaza and Palestine. At the same time, his approach to conflict resolution relied on economic incentives and US control, neglecting the conflict's intricacies and power dynamics. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of Trump's rhetorical approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its implications for international relations.

Index Terms—Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rhetorical analysis, political discourse, forced displacement

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a powerful tool in political discourse that shapes public perception and constructs ideological narratives. It extends beyond mere communication to functioning as a power, persuasion, and control mechanism. According to Thiers (2024), political figures, especially those with global influence, strategically craft rhetoric to frame events that serve their interests, reinforce worldviews, and justify policy decisions.

This study examines presuppositions and speech acts in the rhetoric of U.S. President Donald Trump regarding the forced displacement of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Through pragmatic analysis, it aims to uncover the implicit linguistic mechanisms in Trump's discourse, particularly the underlying assumptions embedded in his statements and speech acts that shape their performative force.

Forced displacement is a major humanitarian consequence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, often resulting from military operations and airstrikes that render areas contested or depopulated. However, the political framing of displacement determines how global leaders, international organizations, and the public interpret these crises. Politicians often construct displacement as an inevitable consequence of wars, security threats, or humanitarian emergencies. This study investigates how Trump's statements on Gaza contribute to such framing through presuppositions—implicit assumptions that shape meaning—and speech acts—utterances that perform actions such as asserting, commanding, or justifying.

Trump's rhetorical style is known for its directness and controversy. His statements on the Middle East, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, have shaped U.S. foreign policy and influenced global discourse. A pragmatic analysis of his language is particularly valuable for revealing how rhetoric extends beyond the literal meaning of performing ideological and strategic functions. This study contributes to political linguistics, discourse analysis, and Middle Eastern studies by systematically assessing how a high-profile political figure constructs narratives around one of the most urgent humanitarian crises of the modern times.

The Gaza Strip has endured prolonged political and humanitarian crises characterized by cycles of violence, blockades, and displacement. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has caused immense suffering, with millions of Palestinians facing starvation, inadequate healthcare, and restricted mobility. Global geopolitical interests, historical narratives, and diplomatic interventions further complicate the humanitarian situation. Trump's rhetoric and policy decisions have significantly shaped the U.S. discourse on the conflict, often reinforcing certain ideological positions while strategically deploying implicit assumptions and performative speech acts to justify policy stances.

Despite Trump's significant influence, the pragmatic presuppositions and speech acts underlying his discourse on Gaza remain underexplored. This research addresses this gap by analyzing how his statements frame the humanitarian crisis and their implications for Palestinian rights and sovereignty.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the themes emerging from Donald Trump's discourse on the Gaza Strip?
2. How do presuppositions and speech acts contribute to the construction of these themes?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Forced Displacement in the Israel-Palestinian Conflict (Historical Context)*

Forced displacement has been a fundamental and persistent aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with historical origins dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The conflict escalated during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, referred to as the Nakba or 'catastrophe' by Palestinians, resulting in a displacement of approximately 700,000 Palestinians from their residences (Morris, 2004). This mass displacement resulted from military actions and intentional policies by Zionist forces alongside fear and coercion (Pappé, 2006). A multitude of Palestinians either fled or were forcibly removed from their villages, resulting in the confiscation of their properties under Israeli legislation, including the Absentee Property Law of 1950 (Khalidi, 1992).

The 1967 Six-Day War resulted in a subsequent wave of displacement, with approximately 300,000 Palestinians compelled to evacuate the West Bank and Gaza Strip, alongside the displacement of Syrians from the Golan Heights and Egyptians from the Sinai Peninsula (Farsakh, 2012). The Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem post-1967 intensified the situation, as Israeli settlement policies resulted in the appropriation of Palestinian land and the displacement of communities (UN OCHA, 2021).

The compelled displacement continues to be a significant concern. In Gaza, successive military operations, including those in 2008-2009, 2012, 2014, 2021, and 2023-2024, have resulted in extensive devastation and internal displacement (UNRWA, 2021, 2025). In the West Bank, home devastations, evictions, and the expansion of settlements persist in displacing the Palestinians, especially in regions such as East Jerusalem and South Hebron Hills (Amnesty International, 2023).

B. *Presuppositions and Speech Acts in Political Discourse*

Presuppositions and speech acts are essential elements of political discourse that influence message conveyance, interpretation, and legitimization. Yule (1996) defines presupposition as 'something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance' (p. 25). He asserted that speakers possess presuppositions rather than sentences. Therefore, it is a premise or basis presumed by the speaker concerning the hearer's knowledge. Presupposition refers to the explicit assumption that speakers hold, which significantly influences the meaning of an utterance (Lawal, 2003).

Yule (1996) stated that presuppositions use many different words, phrases, and structures. He divided them into different types, such as existential presupposition, which refers to the existence of things that the speaker refers to and assumed to be present in the conversation; factive presupposition, which can be seen in verbs like know, realize, and regret; and lexical presupposition, where the use of a word implies both an understood (nonasserted) meaning and a conversational meaning. Along with counterfactual presupposition, other examples of lexical presupposition are 'stop,' 'start,' and 'again.' There are also structural and non-factual presuppositions that deal with the use of certain words and phrases that are thought to be valid. Van Dijk (2006) asserts that presuppositions are especially potent in political communication, as they function subconsciously, leading audiences to accept specific premises without critical examination.

Speech acts, a concept grounded in pragmatics (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), denote the actions performed through language, including promising, threatening, or declaring. In political discourse, speech acts are employed to attain specific objectives such as mobilizing support, delegitimizing adversaries, or asserting authority. Speech acts may function as directives and are frequently employed by politicians to instruct or persuade audiences (Chilton, 2004). They can also serve as commissives denoting promises or commitments (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). Moreover, they may be expressions that communicate emotions or assessments (Wodak, 2015). Speech acts function as a powerful tool in

political discourse, conveying information while simultaneously performing actions that affect social and political realities (Fairclough, 2015). The interplay between presuppositions and speech acts enables politicians to formulate compelling narratives (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). This interaction strengthens ideological stances and galvanizes public sentiment.

C. Trump's Rhetorical Style

Trump's rhetorical style is marked by distinct characteristics such as simplicity, repetition, hyperbole, and a direct, conversational tone. Trump frequently employs uncomplicated language and concise sentences, rendering his messages comprehensible to a broad audience. This strategy coincides with his populist allure, as it eschews intricate policy terminology and prioritizes direct emotionally impactful assertions (Ott & Dickinson, 2019). Repetition is the defining characteristic of Trump's rhetoric. He often reiterates pivotal phrases or slogans (e.g., 'Make America Great Again') to reinforce his messages and ensure that they resonate with his audience. This method is proficient in generating memorable soundbites and highlighting fundamental concepts (Carpenter, 2017).

Trump frequently utilizes hyperboles to emphasize his arguments, whether to address the magnitude of a rally's attendance or the efficacy of his policies. This propensity for hyperbolism has been observed as a method of attracting attention and controlling media discourse (Jamieson & Taussig, 2017). Moreover, Trump's employment of informal language encompassing slang and colloquialism enhances his persona as an outsider who communicates akin to the populace. His regular use of Twitter enhanced this approach, enabling direct communication with the public devoid of conventional media intermediaries (Enli, 2017). Furthermore, Trump often employs confrontational rhetoric, criticizing opponents, the media, and other perceived enemies (Körner et al., 2022). According to Savoy (2018), this adversarial strategy bolsters his portrayal as a formidable leader prepared to advocate for his constituents. Similarly, Moffitt (2016) contends that Trump's rhetoric is associated with broader trends in populist communication, highlighting emotional appeals and anti-establishment narratives.

D. Review of Recent Studies on Trump and the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

Several studies highlight the symbolic and practical ramifications of the Trump administration's 2018 decision to acknowledge Jerusalem as Israel's capital and transfer the U.S. embassy there. This action was perceived as a deviation from the United States' longstanding neutrality regarding the status of Jerusalem (Erdogan & Habash, 2020; Lazin, 2023). Lazin (2023) asserts that this decision sought to unify support from evangelical Christians and pro-Israel lobbyists in the U.S., yet it alienated Palestinian leadership and jeopardized the viability of a two-state solution. Conversely, Erdogan and Habash (2020) contend that actions aligned with Trump's transactional foreign policy emphasize domestic political advantages over global consensus.

Viveash (2020) contends that President Trump's anticipated Middle East peace plan is a unilateral declaration of the conditions for Palestinian capitulation rather than a genuine peace initiative, Jerusalem as the indivisible capital of Israel, no right of return for refugees, and Israel's annexation of Jordan Valley and all West Bank settlements. Similarly, Fraihat and Ezbidi (2023) argue that Trump's 'Deal of the Century' significantly influenced the colonial framework in Palestine, further obliterating the notion that a fair resolution to the Palestinian predicament could be achieved. Trump's plan has influenced three critical domains: the conceptualization of a resolution, the methodology of conflict resolution, and the setting in which the conflict transpires.

The Trump administration's notable accomplishment was facilitating the Abraham Accords, which established normalized relations between Israel and multiple Arab nations, including the UAE, Bahrain, and Morocco. Sevilla (2024) asserts that the Abraham Accords are fundamentally driven by the national interests of the signatories and facilitator, the United States, rather than primarily aimed at reestablishing Israel-Arab relations and regional peace and security. On the other hand, Lazin (2023) emphasizes the potential ramifications of the Accords on Israel's relations with Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the prospective policy implications for Palestinians.

These studies explain the Trump administration's strategy for the Israel-Palestinian conflict, highlighting significant changes in U.S. policy, particularly regarding recognition, diplomatic strategy, and their impact on regional dynamics. Research on the Trump administration's strategy regarding the Gaza Strip post-October 7th conflict, specifically Trump's position on Palestinian rights and the proposed forced displacement of Gazans, is scarce. This study examines the structure of presuppositions and speech acts in Trump's statements regarding the Gaza Strip and their role in perpetuating forced displacement of the Gazans. Our research expands the scope of existing studies by examining the discourse on forced displacement employed by President Trump to express his views on the future of the Gaza Strip. This study advances the current scholarship on displacement discourse by addressing a notable gap in the literature on the forced displacement of Palestinians.

III. METHODOLOGY

We employed a qualitative approach and adopted a thematic analysis framework integrated with a pragmatic analysis of presuppositions and speech acts. This allowed for a detailed exploration of Trump's rhetorical strategies in his proposal for the forced displacement of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The dataset consisted of two press interviews conducted at the White House. The first meeting, lasting 40 minutes, was held on February 4, 2025, and attended by President Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QeZfWQ76x3s>). The second meeting, lasting 20 minutes, was held on February 11, 2025, with attendance from President Trump and King Abdullah II of Jordan (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1OaqhNk7CI>). Both press interviews addressed pivotal matters in the Middle East, particularly the future of the Gaza Strip.

Purposive sampling was used to compile the data. This sampling method enabled us to choose instances that contained a significant quantity of information (see Patton, 2002) and enhanced our capacity to address the research questions. Furthermore, the purposive sample allowed us to choose instances that incorporated strategies closely linked to presuppositions and speech acts. After amassing 62 instances from the two press interviews, we reviewed each and filtered out those that did not include sufficient information to answer the research questions. We excluded 27 instances from the dataset because of their lack of relevance to the study inquiries. For example, we eliminated instances of Houthis, senior ISIS leaders, and Iran's aggression in the region.

Employing Patton's (2002) six phases of thematic analysis, we acquainted ourselves with the data, performed an exhaustive review, and recorded detailed notes to facilitate the coding process. Next, we developed preliminary codes (e.g., power and influence in the Middle East). Next, related codes were methodically organized into overarching categories and themes. After identifying the initial themes, they were assessed to confirm their alignment with consistent patterns in the data. Finally, we developed themes (e.g., US Ownership and Dominance in the Middle East) and employed them to produce the report.

This study organized all the 35 statements and assigned them unique codes such as;

S1/M 6.11/PI1 stands for 'statement number 1 that was told in minute 6.11 in press interview 1';

S21/M 5.11/PI2 stands for 'statement number 21 that was said in minute 5.11 in press interview 2';

and

S14/M 7.51/PI1 stands for 'statement number 14 that was mentioned in minute 7.51 in press interview 1'.

To make sense of the themes, we drew on presuppositions and Speech Act theory, which are the theoretical underpinnings of this study. We scrutinized the syntactic characteristics, lexicalization, and semantics of the coded material, which helped identify the rhetorical strategies used to develop the themes. In presenting the data analyzed, it is not feasible to include all 35 statements in full because of word limit constraints. After careful consideration, we chose the extracts that best explained the identified themes and supported our arguments.

To augment rigor, the dataset was independently scrutinized by two researchers to ensure consistency in coding and thematic classification. The initial findings were presented to a cohort of discourse analysts for critique and validation to enhance the credibility of the research process.

This study meticulously adhered to ethical considerations despite the public accessibility of press interviews. This study complies with ethical standards for digital content analysis, ensuring respect for political figures, while valuing the academic significance of analyzing public discourse.

IV. FINDINGS

This section examines the rhetoric of forced displacement in Trump's statements, with a focus on presuppositions and speech acts. This analysis is presented thematically with an in-depth examination of verbatim extracts to elucidate the rhetorical strategies utilized by the US President in the context of the Gaza Strip.

Theme 1: US Ownership and Dominance in the Middle East

This theme is related to the notion that the United States has considerable power and influence in the region, frequently undermining local autonomy and the right to self-determination. US involvement in the Middle East began in the first half of the twentieth century. For example, this presupposition is reflected in the statements, as shown below:

We're not going to buy anything. We're going to have it.

(S1/M 6.11/PI1),

The U.S. take control of Gaza and turn it into "the Riviera of the Middle East".

(S2/M 6.42/PI1), and;

I'd like Egypt to take people.

(S14/M 7.51/ PI 1)

Trump conveys a sense of power and entitlement. From a pragmatic perspective, this presupposes that the speaker has the authority and capability to acquire something without the need to purchase it. This assumption presupposes that buying is an option that is rejected. This rejection implies that there are alternative means of acquiring something, which is reinforced by the second part of the sentence (S1/M 6.11/PI1). The use of "we are going to have it" (S1/M 6.11/PI1) implies a sense of inevitability and certainty, suggesting that the speaker's desire will be fulfilled regardless of the means. This phrase also presupposes that the speaker has a legitimate claim to the thing in question and that acquiring it is a matter of when, not if. Furthermore, the contrast between "buy" and "have" (S1/M 6.11/PI1) implies that the speaker views the acquisition of this thing as a matter of taking or claiming, rather than purchasing or negotiating. This dichotomy presupposes a power imbalance, where the speaker can take what they want, rather than needing to engage in reciprocal exchange. From a theoretical perspective, his statement illustrates the concept of "constancy under negation" (Geurts,

1999). Even if we negate this statement, the underlying presuppositions remain intact. For instance, if we say, “we are not going to have it,” the assumption of ownership or control is still implied.

Trump’s saying “I’d like Egypt to take people” (S14/M 7.51/ PI1) is a complex example of pragmatic presuppositions. The phrase “I’d like” (S14/M 7.51/ PI1) is a polite expression that presupposes a power imbalance, where he is able to make requests or demands. He also presupposes that Egypt is capable and willing to accept people, which may not be the case. This presupposition is an example of an existential presupposition that assumes the existence of entities or situations (S14/M 7.51/ PI 1). Stalnaker (1999) argues that pragmatic presuppositions can be used to convey complex social relationships and power dynamics. In this case, his statement reveals a power imbalance between the United States and Egypt.

In terms of speech acts, his speech demonstrates various functions. On the one hand, it serves an assertive purpose in which he states clearly that the US will not carry out a purchase transaction but will instead obtain something through other channels (S14/M 7.51/ PI 1). Simultaneously, the same sentence functions as a declarative speech act in which he announces a future course of action or situation, implying that the US will obtain something without using traditional procurement procedures (Searle, 1976). Additionally, the sentence serves as a commissive function in which he pledges the US to a particular course of action, suggesting that the nation will take possession of something, regardless of the methods used to accomplish this goal.

Statement 14 in press interview 1 can be classified as directive, which is a type of speech act that tries to attract the hearer to do something. Specifically, it is a request, which is a polite directive that presupposes a certain level of cooperation between the speaker and the hearer. The statement also has a perlocutionary effect, which the speaker intends to achieve by making a statement. In this case, the perlocutionary effect persuades or influences Egypt to take people.

Theme 2: Unilateral Imposition of Permanent Solution: Disregard for International Law and Denial of Palestinian Rights

Trump's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict involved imposing a permanent solution without Palestinian input, disregarding international law and Palestinian rights, and forcing Palestinians to relocate, potentially leading to displacement and humanitarian crises.

His statements reveal several pragmatic presuppositions that disregard international law, particularly in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For example, these presuppositions are manifested in the statements below:

Think of it as a big real estate site, and the United States is going to own it and will slowly, very slowly, we're in no rush, develop it. We're going to bring stability to the Middle East, to a totally war-torn part of the Middle East.

(S21/M 5.11/PI2),

We're going to bring stability to the Middle East, to a totally war-torn part of the Middle East.

(S22/M 8.2/PI2), and;

Palestinians would have no right of return to Gaza under my plan for the United States to take over the territory.

(S34/M 12.21/PI2)

Statement 21 in press interview 2 embodies a trio of presuppositions that warrants critical examination. First, his characterization of Gaza as a "big real estate site" (S21/M 5.11/PI2) presupposes that the United States possesses the authority to own and develop land, thereby disregarding Palestinian sovereignty. Furthermore, his plan to develop Gaza without involving international institutions or acknowledging international law presupposes that the United States is not bound by international norms or institutions. This presupposition underscores a unilateral approach to conflict resolution, wherein the US imposes its own vision for Gaza's future without regard to international law or the input of other stakeholders. Additionally, his statement presupposes that Gaza is a "war-torn" (S22/M 8.2/PI2) region, beset by severe human suffering, economic devastation, and infrastructure destruction (S22/M 8.2/PI2). This presupposition provides the rationale for his unilateral imposition of a permanent solution, wherein the US assumes control over Gaza's development and dictates the terms of its future. This approach disregards the agency and self-determination of the Palestinian people, instead positing the US as the sole arbiter of Gaza's fate. This unilateral approach to conflict resolution raises significant concerns regarding disregard for international law and the marginalization of Palestinian rights.

He reveals a profound presupposition that underpins his approach to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Specifically, this indicates that he presupposes that Palestinians have no inherent right to return to their ancestral lands in Gaza. This presupposition is rooted in a broader discourse that disregards international law, particularly UN Resolution 194, which enshrines the right to return to Palestinian refugees. By denying the Palestinians’ right to return, his plan disregards international law and the principles of self-determination and refugee rights (S34/M 12.21/PI2). Fairclough (2010) claims that presuppositions can be used to “naturalize” certain ideologies to make them appear as common sense or inevitable. His presupposition about Palestinian rights of return can be seen as an attempt to naturalize the discourse on Palestinian rights and legitimate Israel’s control over Gaza.

His statements 21, 22, and 34 in press interview 2 on Gaza and Palestine exhibit a multifaceted array of speech acts. Notably, his comparison of Gaza to a "big real estate site" (S21/M 5.11/PI2) exemplifies a directive speech act, instructing the audience to conceptualize Gaza in a specific manner. The assertion that "the United States is going to own it" (S21/M 5.11/PI2) embodies a declarative speech act, declaring a future situation. Furthermore, statement 22 in interview 2, which says "we're going to bring stability to the Middle East" constitutes an assertive speech act, making a claim about a future

event. This act is significant because it presents his vision as a factual assertion rather than a subjective opinion. Similarly, his declaration that "Palestinians would have no right of return to Gaza" (S34/M 12.21/PI2) under his plan constitutes a directive speech act, instructing the audience regarding the terms of his proposal. The illocutionary force behind his statements conveys his intent to shape the narrative of Gaza and Palestine. By employing assertive, directive, and declarative speech acts, he sought to establish his vision as a *fait accompli*.

Theme 3: The Intersection of Politics and Violence: Threats to Hamas Sympathizers

In this theme, Trump employs veiled threat rhetoric to target Hamas supporters. He wanted to isolate Gaza from the world. He also sent a message to Hamas' allies that if they continue to support them, they will face the same fate. Even international humanitarian organizations are included in threats. For example, the veiled threat rhetoric is manifested in the statements below:

I ended the last administration's de facto arms embargo on over \$1bn, in military assistance for Israel. And I'm also pleased to announce that this afternoon, the United States withdrew from the anti-Semitic UN Human Rights Council and ended all the support for the UN Relief and Works Agency, which funneled money to Hamas, and which was very disloyal to humanity.

(S13/M 9.13/PI1), and;

Making sure that Hamas doesn't move back.

(S17/M 25.19/PI1)

This extract contains several presuppositions that reveal his thoughts and beliefs. A closer look at these presuppositions reveals a complex set of ideas that support his views. He presupposes Israel as a key ally that deserves significant military aid. This presupposition implies that Israel's security concerns align with those of the United States. Some experts argue that Israel's actions in the occupied territories intersect US values and interests (e.g., Freedman, 2014; Jackson, 2015). Trump also presupposes that the UN Human Rights Council is biased towards Israel. Some critics disagree with Trump's assumptions toward UN bodies' bias; others argue that UN bodies play a vital role in promoting human rights globally (e.g., Schrijver, 2020; Banchuk-Petrosova et al., 2024). Additionally, Trump claims that the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) funds Hamas (S13/M 9.13/PI1). He threatens all sympathizers of Hamas, and this assumption justifies his decision to end US support for the agency, affecting humanitarian aid for Palestinian refugees. He is labeling Hamas as a terrorist organization as another presupposition. While some countries, including the US, designate Hamas as a terrorist group, others argue that this label oversimplifies the complex context in which Hamas operates. Finally, he presupposes that the US plays a leadership role in global affairs, influencing international organizations and geopolitics. This presupposition reflects a view emphasizing national security, a special relationship with Israel, and skepticism towards international institutions. However, some experts argue that the US's ability to shape global events is increasingly limited by rising powers and shifting geopolitical dynamics. Simply put, his statements are based on several presuppositions that might not be entirely accurate or universally accepted. These presuppositions underlie his decisions and views on Israel, Hamas, and the US's role in global affairs.

Statement 17 in press interview 1 embodies a complex array of presuppositions that underline the speaker's message, which can be analyzed through the lens of Yule's (1996) theory of presuppositions. According to Yule, presuppositions can be categorized into various types, including existential, lexical, factive, and structural.

In this context, the statement 13 in press interview 1 operates based on an existential presupposition wherein the speaker assumes the existence of Hamas as a viable entity capable of spatial movement. This presupposition is a fundamental aspect of the speaker's message as it establishes Hamas as a relevant actor in the situation. Furthermore, the lexical choice of the word "back" (S17/M 25.19/PI1) precipitates a presupposition regarding Hamas's prior presence in the area, thereby establishing a temporal and spatial framework of the speaker's concern. This lexical presupposition is a subtle yet significant aspect of his message, as it implies a particular history and context for Hamas's actions. The statement also embodies a factive presupposition wherein the speaker implies that Hamas's presence in the area is a problem that necessitates attention and remedial action. This presupposition is a critical aspect of the speaker's message as it establishes a particular moral and evaluative framework for understanding Hamas's actions. Finally, the structural configuration of the sentence presupposes that the speaker possesses the requisite authority and agency to "make sure" (S17/M 25.19/PI1) that Hamas does not "move back" (S17/M 25.19/PI1). This structural presupposition reinforces the speaker's implicit claim of a position of power and influences the situation. In conclusion, statement 17 in press interview 1 embodies a complex array of presuppositions that can be analyzed through the lens of Yule's theory. These presuppositions, including existential, lexical, factive, and structural presuppositions, work together to convey a distinct message and perspective on the situation, one that is freighted by implicit assumptions and ideological commitments.

Statements 13 and 17 in press interview 1 are replete with various types of speech acts, which can be scrutinized through the lens of illocutionary act theory. Statement 13 exemplifies assertive speech acts that aim to inform or assert a fact. Conversely, Trump's announcement in statement 13 epitomizes a declarative speech act, declaring a specific action taken by the United States (Searle, 1969). Moreover, statement 17 can be interpreted as a commissive speech act committing the speaker to a specific course of action (Searle, 1969). In addition, his statements exhibited both direct and indirect illocutionary speech acts. For instance, statement 13 is a direct illocutionary speech act that explicitly states the action taken, whereas statement 17 is an indirect illocutionary speech act, implying a commitment to a specific course of action without an explicit statement. Ultimately, his statements demonstrate a multifaceted array of speech acts, including

assertive, declarative, commissive, direct, and indirect illocutionary, offering a nuanced understanding of his communication style.

Theme 4: Economic Incentives and Resettling Palestinians

Trump's proposal involves utilizing economic incentives to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and offering financial aid to Palestinians in exchange for concessions. This approach employs economic statecraft, leveraging economic benefits to influence Palestinian behavior, but critics argue it oversimplifies the conflict's complexities. Trump's proposal for economic incentives is exemplified in the following statements:

This can be paid for by neighboring countries of great wealth. It could be one, two, three, four, five, seven, eight, twelve. It could be numerous sites, or it could be one large site. But the people will be able to live in comfort and peace and we'll make sure something spectacular is done.

(S8/M 15.57/PI1), and;

So, I'd rather get involved with some of the Arab nations, and build housing in a different location, where they can maybe live in peace for a change.

(S18/M 18.26/PI1)

Statement 8 in press interview 1 is laden with pragmatic presuppositions that warrant a critical examination. Specifically, two key presuppositions have emerged: economic incentives and Palestinian resettlement. He presupposes that neighboring countries with substantial wealth will be willing to finance the resettlement of Palestinians. This assumption is rooted in the idea that economic incentives motivate countries to support resettlement plans. However, this presupposition raises questions about these countries' willingness to bear the financial burden of resettlement. Furthermore, it overlooks the complex geopolitical dynamics at play that may render such a plan unfeasible. His statements also presuppose that Palestinians will be resettled in alternative locations rather than returning to Gaza. This assumption is based on the notion that the current situation in Gaza is unsustainable, and that a new solution is needed. However, this presupposition ignores the Palestinian people's right to return to their ancestral homeland and the complexities of implementing large-scale resettlement programs. According to Levinson (1983), presuppositions are tacitly accepted in each context. In this case, his speech relies on presuppositions that are not necessarily shared by all parties involved. By examining these presuppositions, we can gain a deeper understanding of the underlying assumptions and power dynamics at play in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Statement 18 in press interview 1 reveals several pragmatic presuppositions on economic incentives and Palestinian resettlement. He presupposes that Arab nations will be willing to collaborate in building housing for Palestinians in a different location, based on the idea that economic incentives can motivate these nations to support the resettlement plan. This assumption is rooted in the notion that economic growth follows the resettlement plan. He implies that building housing in a different location will bring economic benefits, possibly through investment or infrastructure development. This presupposition assumes that economic growth will follow the resettlement plan, overlooking the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the various factors contributing to violence. He also presupposes that Palestinians desire peace, implying that their current situation is unstable and violent. Additionally, he presupposes that resettling Palestinians in a different location will solve the conflict and bring peace, oversimplifying the issue and neglecting the underlying power dynamics.

The speech acts in statements 8 and 18 reveal a pragmatic approach to resolving the Palestinian issue, relying heavily on economic incentives and US control. His proposal assumes that neighboring countries with great wealth will be willing to finance the resettlement of Palestinians, either on numerous sites or on one large site. This assumption is based on the idea that economic incentives motivate countries to support resettlement plans. In terms of economic incentives, his speech act can be seen as an attempt to persuade Arab nations to participate in the resettlement plan by highlighting potential economic benefits. Regarding Palestinian resettlement, his speech act presupposes that Palestinians will be willing to relocate to a different location, where they "maybe live in peace for a change" (S18/M 18.26/PI1).

According to speech act theory, his statements can be seen as a form of a direct speech act aimed at persuading others to adopt a particular course of action. However, the success of this speech act relies on Arab nations' willingness to participate in the resettlement plan and the acceptance of Palestinians to relocate.

V. DISCUSSION

This study provides a critical analysis of the role political rhetoric plays in shaping narratives around forced displacement, emphasizing the intersection of language, power, and policy. By examining Donald Trump's statements on Gaza through the lenses of presuppositions and speech acts, the findings reveal how discourse operates as more than mere communication, but serves as a mechanism for legitimizing political agendas, marginalizing alternative perspectives, and redefining humanitarian crises in ways that benefit dominant geopolitical players.

A defining characteristic of Trump's rhetoric is the assertion of U.S. dominance in the Middle East. His statements reinforce a narrative in which the United States assumes the role of an ultimate decision-maker regarding Gaza's fate, mirroring long-standing patterns of interventionist discourse in U.S. foreign policy. This linguistic strategy aligns with Fairclough's (2015) argument that political language constructs power hierarchies, often positioning dominant states as natural arbiters of international conflict. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) similarly highlighted how political elites employ

discourse to reinforce ideological supremacy, and Trump's statements reflect this by implicitly negating Palestinian agency and self-determination.

Beyond asserting dominance, Trump's rhetoric constructs forced displacement as a matter of inevitability, echoing the broader ideological patterns observed in U.S. policies toward Israel and Palestine. His administration's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the promotion of the "Deal of the Century" reflected similar unilateral decision-making processes that disregarded Palestinian rights and sovereignty (Erdogan & Habash, 2020; Lazin, 2023). Fraihat and Ezbidi (2023) argued that such policies were designed to eliminate any meaningful Palestinian autonomy, replacing it with a framework that prioritized Israeli territorial expansion. The findings of this study reinforce these arguments, illustrating how Trump's speech acts, particularly his declaratives and assertives, function as mechanisms to impose policy decisions while presenting them as already determined outcomes.

One of the most significant contributions of this study is its exploration of how economic incentives are deployed rhetorically to justify resettlement. Trump's assertion mirrors the broader patterns of economic statecraft observed in U.S. foreign policy. Sevilla (2024) critiques the Abraham Accords for their emphasis on economic normalization at the expense of substantive conflict resolution, arguing that economic cooperation was framed as a replacement for political negotiations. Similarly, Lazin (2023) highlights how financial agreements have been positioned as diplomatic victories even when they fail to address the core grievances of displaced populations. This study extends these discussions by demonstrating how economic rhetoric is not merely a policy tool but also a linguistic device used to depoliticize displacement, framing it as a logistical issue rather than a humanitarian crisis.

Another key finding is Trump's use of securitization to frame forced displacement as a necessary counterterrorism measure. His statements, particularly those targeting Hamas sympathizers and international humanitarian organizations, align with Wodak's (2015) analysis of right-wing populist rhetoric, which often constructs external threats to justify aggressive policies. Van Dijk (2006) similarly argues that political elites use language to manipulate public perceptions of security, embedding implicit assumptions that make extraordinary measures appear justified. Trump's rhetoric follows this pattern, positioning forced displacement as a strategic necessity rather than a violation of human rights. This aligns with broader critiques of the securitization of Palestinian displacement, as documented by Amnesty International (2023) and UN OCHA (2021), both of which highlight how security narratives have been historically used to justify territorial dispossession and military occupation.

The findings of this study also contribute to the historical analyses of forced displacement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Morris (2004) and Pappé (2006) documented how narratives of displacement have evolved over time, showing that language has always played a central role in justifying population transfers. Khalidi (1992) further illustrates how legal frameworks such as Israel's Absentee Property Law were accompanied by rhetorical strategies that framed Palestinian displacement as an administrative necessity rather than a political crime. The parallels between these historical justifications and Trump's contemporary rhetoric are striking; his statements reflect a continuation of discursive patterns that have long been used to legitimize displacement as a strategic or economic imperative.

This study aligns with existing research on populist political communication. Trump's rhetorical style—marked by direct, repetitive, and hyperbolic statements—mirrors the patterns observed in other populist leaders (Moffitt, 2016; Körner et al., 2022). Ott and Dickinson (2019) emphasize that Trump's use of informal and emotionally charged language enhances his populist appeal, making complex geopolitical issues appear simple and decisive. Jamieson and Taussig (2017) further argued that his communication style is designed to disrupt traditional political discourse, creating an "us vs. them" dynamic that strengthens his authority. This study extends these discussions by illustrating how these rhetorical techniques are applied specifically to the discourse on forced displacement, reinforcing narratives of control while suppressing dissenting perspectives.

VI. CONCLUSION

This research highlights the profound influence of political rhetoric on shaping international policy, humanitarian discourse, and public perception. It demonstrates that language is not a neutral vehicle for policy expression but an active force in constructing political realities. Through the strategic use of presuppositions and speech acts, political leaders like Donald Trump do not merely describe events; they shape narratives that justify actions, reinforce ideologies, and define the parameters of global debate.

By exposing the implicit assumptions embedded in Trump's discourse on Gaza, this study contributes to the growing field of political linguistics and discourse analysis. It challenges readers to critically examine how language is used to legitimize power, marginalize certain voices, and normalize contentious policies. In doing so, it highlights the urgent need for deeper scrutiny of political communication, particularly in contexts where rhetoric directly impacts the lives of displaced and vulnerable populations.

Looking ahead, this research paves the way for broader inquiries into the rhetoric of forced displacement across different political leaders, historical moments, and media narratives. A comparative analysis of global leaders' discourses could reveal common linguistic patterns that sustain displacement ideologies, while an examination of media amplification could uncover mechanisms that either reinforce or resist such rhetoric. Understanding these dynamics is not just an academic pursuit but also a crucial step toward holding political actors accountable for the realities they create through language.

Political speech does not simply reflect policy; it crafts the world in which policy operates. The power of rhetoric in shaping international crises, dictating humanitarian responses, and defining the fate of entire populations cannot be overstated. This study serves as a call to action for scholars, policymakers, and media analysts to engage critically with political discourse because the way we talk about displacement determines whether it is challenged or perpetuated.

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