



## A Comparative Study of Politeness Strategies: An Analysis of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris Speeches in the Presidential Election Campaign

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### Abstract

*This study explores politeness strategies in the campaign speeches of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris during the 2024 U.S. presidential election. According to Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987), linguistic strategies of face management, political identity construction, and audience engagement were examined. A total of seven speeches per candidate have been analyzed qualitatively in NVivo 12 based on four main strategies—Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Bald On Record, and Off-Record. Both candidates use positive politeness as the main strategy, but for different purposes. If, as in Trump's case, positive politeness is mixed with some on-record directness, Trump mostly uses it to establish his authority and rev up his primary group. Harris, by contrast, uses all four strategies to convey cooperation and inclusiveness in institutional decorum through hedging, irony, and metaphor. The research has established that politeness strategies are highly strategic tools for managing face while creating political identities that influence voters in contemporary political discourse.*

**Keywords:** *Politeness Strategies; Political Discourse; Election Campaign Speeches; Brown and Levinson; Donald Trump; Kamala Harris*

### 1. Introduction

Language constitutes more than a mere tool of communication; it is a means by which relations are shaped, identities are performed, and power is exercised. Politeness does not equate with good manners alone but rather plays an important role in managing discourse in institutional and formal domains, such as those found in political speech (Watts, 2003; Locher & Watts, 2005). In campaign discourse, especially speeches, politeness strategies are highly relevant. As indicated by Ilie (2010) and Benoit (2011), political speechwriting heavily relies on rhetorical and pragmatic strategies of politeness to achieve its persuasive goals. Even though interest in political language has increased significantly, very few works have focused solely on politeness strategies in the speech genre of political campaigning. Since speeches are controlled and structured, it is within this domain that an explicit choice of politeness strategies which would serve the rhetorical goals can be made. Hence, campaign speeches remain an excellent yet underexploited domain for politeness research.

The gaps that it identifies are multifold. First, since most comparative analyses focus on Trump, Clinton, or Biden- the more talked-about figures- there has been relatively less attention paid to Kamala Harris. Harris offers a particularly compelling case through which to consider how gender identity might inflect rhetorical style and, by extension, politeness strategies. Females do have normative pressures on their performance as politicians to be both polite and assertive (Mullany, 2007; Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008).

This study fills the gap on strategies of politeness in campaign speeches by analyzing how two great candidates, Trump and Harris, construct their political discourse politely during the campaign for the 2024 U.S. elections. Existing research has mostly considered audience impact or media framing; this paper focuses solely on linguistic features in speeches. This study adds results from a comparison of the genre of two major prepared campaign speeches on politeness to the growing body of literature on political discourse.

## 2. Literature Review

The concept of Politeness was primarily proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), thereby providing a strong framework for analyzing how individuals attempt to maintain their public self-images during social interactions. Politeness has been defined in various ways over time. Mahmud (2019) says earlier works, like Geertz (1960), defined politeness as “etiquette”, while Scupin (1988) and Agha (1994) named it “honorification,” thus showing respect to others. In a related view, Lakoff (1976) saw politeness as a “form of behavior” saying that it smooths interaction between individuals.

Fairclough (1989, 2001) argues that language does not reflect but constructs and legitimizes relations of power. This has been further elaborated by Van Dijk (2006), who argues that, in sustaining existing ideologies, political discourse helps frame issues and construct arguments to control public perceptions. Politeness is strategically used to build credibility while simultaneously attacking an opponent. As noted by Boicu (2007), language serves not only as a vehicle for ideology but also as a means of exercising authority.

Donald Trump’s rhetorical style has attracted much study because of its unconventional nature and, thus, its effect on political communication. Trump’s use of politeness is also strategic and context-dependent—combining directness and moments of confrontation with selective instances of politeness to the same end of achieving specific political goals. Megah (2020) analyzed mainly those speeches by Trump at Capitol Hill on January 21, 2017, in which positive politeness strategies were dominant toward public engagement and rapport building.

The presidential debates are a most fertile ground for analysis of Trump’s rhetoric and politeness strategies. An advanced study by Batubara, Rahila, and Fitri (2022) examined the 2016 Trump-Clinton debate and identified 86 instances of politeness strategies. In this somewhat odd tally, negative politeness was most frequently recorded, followed by positive politeness, bald-on-record, and off-record, respectively. Prasatyo and Gustary (2024) again note, from the Trump-Biden debates, a consistent preference on Trump's part for bold, on-record directness, contrasted with Biden's resort to more positive politeness. Public speeches by Trump reflect not only persuasion but also authority and, at times, politeness.

Contrary to Trump, Kamala Harris has not yet been brought to the forefront of scholarly evaluation of politeness strategies during election campaigns. In the 2020 vice-presidential debate between Harris and Mike Pence, Sukmawati et al. (2022) identified four impoliteness strategies: bald-on-record impoliteness, positive and negative impoliteness, and sarcasm. Negative imposition was more prevalent, while withholding of imposition was notably absent, resulting in a balance between assertive and decorous dynamics in the imposition of adversarial debates.

A feminine style characterized by references to personal experience, focus on feminist issues, and the use of an inclusive language approach was identified by Amaireh (2022) in a corpus-based analysis of 40 speeches. Such delivery shows empathy by addressing all forms of inequality, including social justice, through linguistic strategies that connect in different ways with various audiences.

The use of linguistic features helps to balance the power with politeness, that is, to impose herself without repelling the audience. Wibhisana, Ayomi, & Maharani (2023) also used Harris's speeches in conjunction with Fairclough's three-dimensional model, which demonstrated her strategic targeting of a minority and feminist audience on unity, equality, and justice. This makes her deliberately use politeness strategies that support inclusivity, as well as build a coalition.

Additional study places Harris's rhetoric at the intersection of race, gender, and political power. In their analysis of three campaign speeches, Tsani and Ratnadewi (2022) discussed her approach to issues related to women and racial issues, which brought systemic inequalities to the fore and offered collective action as a remedy. Magazzù (2025) also found that her addresses consistently placed feminism and racial equity in parallel, noting inclusive language use as a politeness strategy and a political tool for trust-building.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory serves as the basis for the analytical reading of Trump and Harris's speeches. Core to this theory is the notion of "face" (Goffman, 1967)—it represents the public self-image an individual carries about himself. In Brown and Levinson's terms, positive face refers to a desire for social approval, while negative face refers to a desire for autonomy.

Positive politeness tries to save the hearer's positive face by recognizing wants, showing approval, and making social interaction (Kuzhevskaya, 2019). Negative politeness puts weight on not intruding on the hearer's freedom by being very indirect with hedges and modal verbs (Teitelbaum & Ben-Ze'ev, 2023). It goes Bald on record. Without any mitigation — just being direct — usually when clarity or urgency is more important than face concern or if speaker dominance allows it (Hutabarat, 2021). Off record is the most indirect strategy, since its use involves hints, metaphors, or irony and permits the hearer's interpretive effort while reducing the pressure of any relation (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Earlier studies took place in varying contexts – be it a debate, social media, international meetings, or even campaign speeches – and consistently noted with concern the relative paucity of research on Harris's use of politeness. By comparing Trump and Harris's rhetoric in the 2024 presidential campaign, this paper attempts to fill a research gap in existing literature. The study adds to the existing literature by analyzing strategic use of language by these candidates as they negotiate the interplay of politeness, power, and persuasion within the context of an election campaign.

### **3. Methodology**

An adequately defined methodology is used to strategically study the use of politeness strategies in prepared political discourse. The design of this study is qualitative, using qualitative content analysis to examine the politeness strategies in campaign speeches by Donald Trump and Kamala Harris for the 2024 U.S. presidential election. Qualitative research is appropriate when an inquiry into patterning, meaning, language use, and interpretation is undertaken rather than testing variables for statistical analysis (Creswell, 2013).

The dataset contains campaign speeches by Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, available on YouTube. The official transcripts attached to the selected videos served as the primary textual data for analysis.



#### 4.1.1 Positive Politeness Strategies

A linguistic review of Donald Trump's campaign language shows that Positive Politeness was the main strategy, accounting for most of his coded words, as per an NVivo study. As shown in Figure 4.1, Exaggeration is one of the most emotionally positive techniques. A clear example comes from his 2024 campaign, where he repeatedly puts forward his movement as the pinnacle of political action with statements like, "We have the greatest movement in the history of the world," more specifically telling his audience, "You are the most incredible people I have ever seen in one place." Strategic uses of exaggeration mask the degree of imposition in political requests for votes, donations, or a rally.

The strategic use of in-group identity markers is the second-most-used sub-strategy. For example, first-person plural pronouns are used abundantly by him to merge his personal goals with those of the audience: "Together we will determine the course of America and the world for many, many years to come," and "This is our movement, and we are going to win it together" By framing these as collective acts, Trump reduces the perception of imposition- at the same time satisfying the positive face of the audience by emphasizing their central role in the movement.

Trump frequently employs the strategy of noticing or attending to the hearer. In speeches, Trump uses this very strategy to personalize his gigantic crowds by acknowledging individual and group efforts: "I see you back there with that beautiful sign, thank you," or "I know what you've been through; I see the struggle of the hardworking families in this room." Integrating these observations aligns Trump's political vision with his voters' personal experiences; in doing so, it reaffirms the collective goal highlighted earlier through exaggeration and markers of in-group identity.

Besides the above-highlighted positive politeness sub-strategies, it can be observed from Fig. 4.1 that this individual applies other positive politeness strategies, such as being optimistic, asserting common ground, giving reasons, offering promises, and others. The fact that these sub-strategies are less frequent indicates that they are nonetheless very important in shaping the rhetorical texture of his speeches.

#### 4.1.2 Bald On-Record Strategies

Bald on-Record serves as the major linguistic instrument that helps him assert authority. Trump uses Bald On Record Case 1 more than Case 2. Trump directly uses this case to mobilize supporters at his campaign rallies, commanding them to "get out and vote" he restates his promises of action with instructions such as "Build the wall, close the border, and do it now" - or orders that discipline be kept by the base, "Stay in line, don't leave. We have to win this election," promising economic revitalization with "We are going to bring our jobs back to this country." Besides establishing Trump as a commander with an order to prioritize action over normal political decorum, it makes the audience feel directly involved in executing his vision.

Figure 4.2 shows that Bald On Record Case 2 is slightly less frequently used by Trump in his speeches. The actual statements made by Trump in the debates as a true representation of Case 2 include statements like "My opponent is a low-IQ individual," "she has no idea what the hell she is doing," and he raises attacks by calling political opponents the worst president in the history of our country.

Presenting his opinions as facts, without hedging, in a strong manner, strengthens the populist image of Trump as a leader who speaks the truth, however blunt it may be. Trump helps to solidify who the in-group and out-group are, which enhances solidarity among supporters who view these statements as truthfully reflecting their shared grievances. Followers simultaneously

interpret the unmitigated directness as authenticity and decisiveness, thereby reinforcing their perception of him as a strong, authoritative leader.

#### **4.1.3 Off-Record Strategies**

Trump rarely employs off-the-record strategies (Figure 4.1), but he strategically uses these strategies when he wants to blame or criticize his opponents indirectly. He uses overstatements like "No one has ever done more for our country than we are doing right now." Trump preserves the advantages of off-the-record communication, allowing the audience to process a message while maintaining their freedom.

Trump frequently uses metaphors in Off-Record operations to recast abstruse or complex socio-political realities into potent images laden with emotion. For example, he described the state of the economy as an "economic nightmare," but soon it would be turned into an "economic miracle" by invoking a pseudo-religious metaphor to describe both the problem and its solution. With such metaphors, Trump can threaten or articulate policy objectives or moralize in an indirect manner that lowers any perception of imposition.

Trump also utilizes irony as an off-the-record strategy. One such instance from his campaign speeches goes: "Sure, the other side really knows how to run the economy just ask anyone who lost their job," and "They're doing a fantastic job, if by fantastic you mean completely failing." Through irony, Trump conveys his disapproval as well as skepticism, inviting listeners into a decoding exercise while at the same time gaining flexibility through off-record strategies.

#### **4.1.4 Negative Politeness Strategies**

Trump employs this strategy rarely, but still it comes in as a formality and strategic necessity in institutional discourse where social distance and power have to be recognized. While Trump speaks in general, bold terms with absolutist statements, he frames claims as possible outcomes rather than actual facts by using modal verbs, adverbs, or qualifiers. E.g., "After today, hopefully everything will work out," or "I think we're going to get a lot of Democrats voting for us," linguistic choices serve several purposes.

Donald Trump rarely uses convenient indirectness. For example, when discussing matters of foreign policy, instead of issuing a direct command, he says, "I think we might consider some adjustments to our approach if that seems appropriate." Trump sometimes uses and expresses nominalization and pessimism. These have been identified through NVivo coding as illustrated in Figure 4.3. Nominalization helps soften statements by turning actions into abstract notions. E.g., "The implementation of these policies could create challenges for small businesses." Pessimism also helps frame possible negative outcomes conditionally; e.g., "We might face difficult times if leadership does not change," thereby allowing Trump to express caution or even convey a warning against the decision without offending the audience or their right to make the decision.

#### **4.2 Politeness Strategies in Harris's Campaign Speeches**

In opposition to Trump's populist and combative rhetoric, Kamala Harris exhibits a discourse style that is both collaborative and aligned with institutional style.

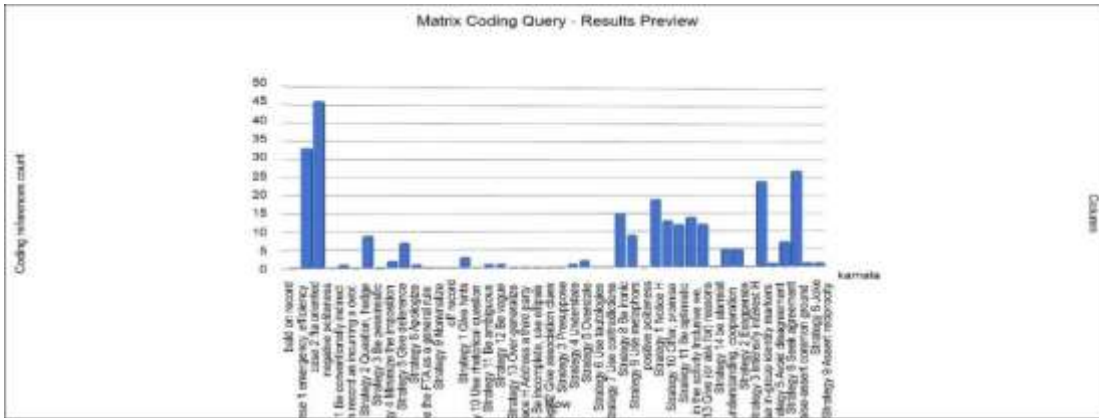


Figure 4.2: Harris’s Use of Politeness Strategies

4.2.1 Positive Politeness Strategies

Positive Politeness is the dominant aspect of Harris’s rhetoric. The presumption of common ground is by far the most frequent. When she says, “We all have so much more in common than what separates us,” and “We all believe in the promise of America,” She typically uses these statements to presuppose the values, beliefs, and aspirations of her audience; thus, in rhetorical terms, she affirms constituents’ positive face. Harris does not simply position herself as a candidate or officeholder, but rather as an embodiment of shared American ideals.

Pronouns, kinship terms, and collective nouns inclusively comprise the key building blocks of Harris’s speeches. For example, when she says, “I’m talking about our neighbors, our friends, our family,” the repetitive use of the possessive “our” creates a sense of commonality and shared responsibility. She resorts to these linguistic resources to signal group membership and reduce social distance.

Inclusive language is what Harris occasionally applies toward the distribution of agency and co-creation of political tasks between her and her audience. “Because we, the people, have the power to build a better future”, or “We have a lot we need to handle in the days ahead, but I know together we can get it done” From policy implementation and civic duties being transformed into joint projects, solidarity cooperation is created.

Kamala Harris applies other positive politeness strategies by being optimistic, making promises, and offering various other reasons. The fact that these sub-strategies are less frequent indicates that they are nonetheless very important in shaping the rhetorical texture of his speeches.

4.2.2 Bald On-Record Strategies

Kamala Harris frequently employed bald on record strategies but less aggressively than Trump(Figure 4.2). Kamala uses Case 2 bald on record slightly more than Case 2. This is very clear in her attacks on Donald Trump. “Donald Trump has failed the American people,” and “Donald Trump’s leadership has left this country divided and unsafe.” Those are unmitigated, bald-on-record positive face-threatening acts addressed directly to the addressee. However, rather than functioning as personal insults, these attacks are carefully calibrated to foreground political accountability and moral responsibility.

Kamala uses Case 1 bald on record slightly less, according to analysis done in NVivo and as illustrated in Figure 4.2. The message becomes very clear and actionable due to direct imperatives, parallel structure, and repetitive emphasis. "Now is the time to rise," "Now is the time to raise a voice," "Now is the time to cast a vote" will be using this setup. By using Bald On-Record strategies in this way, she shows her authority, decisiveness, and institutional responsibility, thereby adding to her image as the courteous prosecutor.

### 4.2.3 Negative Politeness Strategies

By using Negative Politeness, she clearly puts herself in a framework of institutional authority, at the same time keeping a professional distance and recognizing the autonomy of the public. Harris often uses hedging to soften her directives, thereby reducing the force of an FTA and, at the same time, giving the audience space to exercise their autonomy. She has mostly framed her recommendations in the form of the statement, "I would recommend you vote," rather than giving direct orders. Moreover, she also implies hedging when she says, "I think we should consider all options." This would prompt the audience to internalize and come up with their own judgement. She would still be able to sustain control but make the coaching look collective rather than imposing.

Deference lies in the heart of Negative Politeness strategies in the Harris rhetorical style. She always emphasizes the honor of her office: "I have been honored to serve as Joe Biden's vice president." She presents directives in a way that shows respect for democratic processes, in an impersonal manner: "We must respect the rule of law, even when it challenges us." The giving deference addresses negative face needs for listeners, as she thus expresses that she does not assume authority over their choices but rather acts within responsibility and ethical frameworks. Apart from hedging questions and giving deference, the negative politeness of avoiding direct use of "I" and "you" by Kamala Harris was very frequent. "Decisions must be made that put the well-being of all Americans first," purposely avoiding 'I' or 'you'. Minimizing imposition is also another negative politeness strategy used by Kamala Harris frequently in her speeches. She says in her campaign speech, "If possible, we should work together to ensure that everyone has access to safe voting," where 'if possible' minimizes the directness of the request.

Kamala Harris sometimes used other negative politeness strategies, though not often. These are being conventionally indirect, showing pessimism, apologizing, and nominalization which also help keep politeness and lower the risk of face-threatening acts within certain situations. Even though these methods appeared less frequently, their presence still points to Harris's care for audience sensitivity as well as her constant drive to save listeners' negative face during her campaign talks.

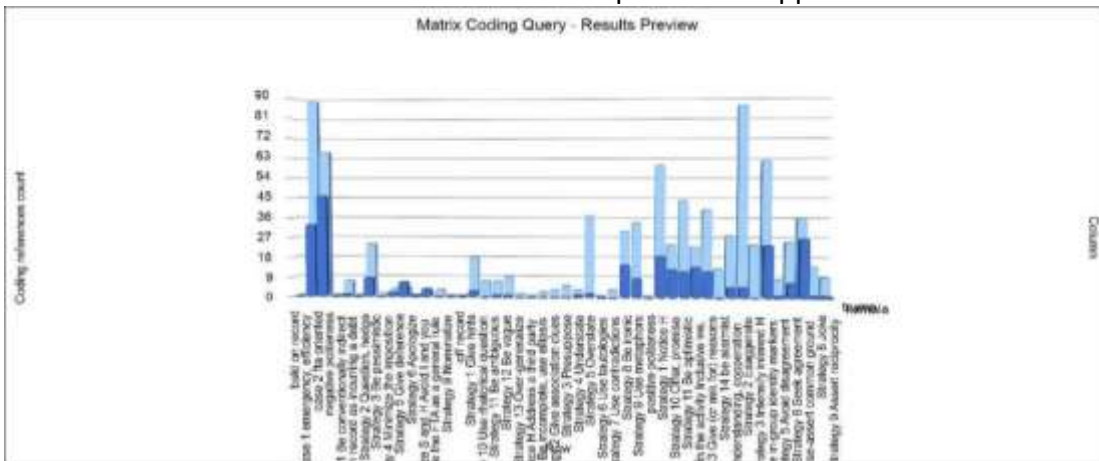
### 4.2.4 Off-Record Strategies

Kamala Harris's Off-Record strategies comprise the most indirect and nuanced empirically polite strategies that speech acts can ever realize. Irony is the major Off-Record strategy used in her speeches. When Harris says, "And we know who he is," On one level it is neutral, but on another conveys an ironic undertone of critique: his behavior, decision-making, and character are so well known as to be problematic that there needs to be no further exposition.

At the center of Kamala Harris's Off-Record approach is metaphors. From making something abstract turn into pictures that can be easily visualized, Harris succeeds in delivering urgency, importance, and moral weight here without ever giving a direct command. For example, 'Your vote is your voice and your voice is your power,' she relates the act of voting to personal agency. Harris also makes much use of the technique of giving hints. It is through this strategy that she can surface potential threats or make her opponents explicit, again with interpretive responsibility shifted onto the audience. For example, she said: "Think about the power he will have immediately following a decision by the United States Supreme Court that rules he would be immune." She has not, in direct terms, said 'he will abuse power,' but provides factual cues that lead an audience toward this conclusion. In general, her use of off-record strategies complements the approach of negative politeness by allowing indirect expression without imposing on the audience's face.

**4.3 Comparative Analysis of Politeness Strategies: Harris vs Trump**

A striking difference lies in the scope of strategies both candidates embrace. The strategies of politeness in political communication between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump differ. While both politicians employ Positive Politeness, Harris's pragmatic profile is more varied. She skillfully uses, in addition to Positive Politeness, the Negative Politeness, Bald On-Record, and Off-Record strategies to successfully address the face concerns and establish her rhetorical identity. She uses these strategies to invoke shared responsibility between her and the audience for building the future that she believes everyone knows they can build together. In this way, her other Off-Record strategies also allow for reflection, including irony and metaphors, which invite the audience to read between the lines of her critiques of her opponent.



**Figure 4.3: Use of Politeness Strategies: Trump vs Kamala**

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Bald on record integrates clarity with a shared moral frame, while negative politeness in hedging, deference, and apologies preserves the institution's autonomy. Thus, Harris emerges as a collaborative visionary who enables solidarity - collective action at the same time as she foregrounds the multiple political realities that have been negotiated.

Donald Trump shows a tight, high-impact pragmatic style. His Positive Politeness use centers more on exaggeration and hyperbolic praise, which seeks to build aspirational loyalty while also fostering in-group solidarity. In Bald On-Record strategies, Trump uses just slightly more of Case 1, where direct and unambiguous statements can convey clarity, authority, and decisiveness than any other type. Therefore, his use of Negative Politeness is relatively minimal; when it does occur, it is directed more towards the institution or public than towards typical hedging, which allows him to appear respectful while maintaining his high-power stance. Concerning Off-Record strategies, he prefers the use of irony most often against opponents or in contrast; therefore, urgency is highlighted, and the audience is mobilized.

**5. Discussion**

A comparison of the speeches delivered by Harris and Trump reveals a significant gap in their use of politeness strategies. Trump predominantly uses Positive Politeness to create a very strong in-

group identity between himself and his supporters. In the discourse of Trumpism, Positive Politeness becomes an alignment and mobilization tool, superficially to cement the leader-follower relationship around a movement. Exaggeration and hyperbolic praise are key features of Trump's Positive Politeness. Exaggerated affirmation builds group cohesion,, raising the collective self-image of the audience and thereby fulfilling positive face wants.

Bald On-Record strategies also form the core of Trump's campaign rhetoric. While most speakers mitigate their directives to save the hearer's face, what Trump often does is prioritize communicative efficiency by using directness to institute immediacy and decisiveness rather than confrontation. His speeches also feature a Case 2 FTA-oriented approach. By issuing direct imperatives, rhetorical challenges, and unmitigated evaluations, he puts himself in the role of a dominant political actor who has a right to speak authoritatively on behalf of the nation. On the one hand, he establishes very strong emotional solidarity with his addressees, while at the same time imposing himself as an authority by unmasked directness.

Trump uses Negative Politeness relatively less. Negative Politeness, which would include hedging, indirect requesting, or even formal deference, is actually expressed as respect toward the autonomy of the hearer and to avoid imposition. Apparently, Trump's campaign discourse relies less on such strategies, thereby expressing less concern for preserving the negative face of the audience. Trump uses off-record maneuvers selectively and strategically when their direct exposition would not attract instantaneous institutional censure or would not carry legal consequences against him, even when he is not making allegations.

Trump does not use politeness strategies in the usual way to ease face concerns, but instead tries to redefine what being polite means in his campaigns. In his words, being polite does not mean lowering threats; rather, it connects more with acts of loyalty, authority, and shared goals. So, as an answer to the first question, yes, strategic language use in this context greatly affects the view of audiences that drives political support, while maintaining a bold, clear leadership identity that is confrontational.

The use of Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Bald On-Record, and Off-Record strategies somewhat exposes the highly calibrated rhetorical architecture of Harris's campaign speeches. Positive politeness fulfills the engagement and solidarity. Negative politeness preserves her autonomy and respect as a professional. Bald on record provides clarity where urgency is expressed. Off record strategies of subtle critique and indirect persuasion. This mixture, in sum, develops a multidimensional method of political communication, balancing emotional, cognitive, and moral appeals to make her discourse inclusive yet authoritative, and reflective at one and the same time. The mixture varies strategically based on audience sensitivity and situational awareness.

She uses a fair amount of Positive Politeness in high-energy rallies, strategically applied to inspire collective action. She applies negative politeness and off-record strategies when addressing anyone formally, showing institutional attentiveness and the normative expectations of her audience. In essence, she mastered different communicative contexts to deliver the same political messages that would help build her credibility and place her in the right books.

Harris's use of such politeness strategies goes on to show how crucial face management is in political campaigns. Her repertoire enables effective communication by sustaining institutional respect, embodying authority, and fostering collective identity, in which leaders place a premium on asserting their authority. This merges leadership as a communal and moral act rather than a very explicit version. It denotes that high-order political communication is beyond content delivery, as it involves relational orchestration and cognitive and ethical dimensions, with both persuasive and normative effects.

Differences in rhetorical philosophies compel differences in strategies. Harris is obligated to implement a multidimensional strategy that involves maintaining credibility while simultaneously sustaining inclusivity and an indirect route to persuasion. On the other hand, what Trump mostly tries to achieve is effectiveness and high mobilization for collective self-esteem enhancement without much of the hedging and subtlety that, apart from being quantitatively measured, qualitatively speak to the tone, impact, and relational dimension of campaign communication.

The use of Positive Politeness by both candidates is massive but functionally, stylistically, and directionally diverse. In Harris's application, Positive Politeness is used as an invitation to shared responsibility and joint action. Whereas, Trump applies to reinforce group identity and loyalty. Where Harris's way helps mutual understanding and moral tuning, Trump's favorable politeness works inside an ordered setup, claiming control while also raising.

The bald-on-record of Harris occurs mostly in case 2, within the moral context, to give instructions, issue a call to action, or clarify an issue, not seeming forceful. Trump makes good use of Bald On-Record acts in the Case 1 variant, which prefers clarity, efficiency, and immediacy. He performs direct commands and declarative statements as well as interrogatives that would assert his authority, energize his supporters, and signal dominance.

It is in Negative Politeness that the difference in orientation to communication between the two becomes most glaring. Harris does make active use of hedges, deference, and impersonalization to protect the audience's autonomy and respect the institution. Whereas, Trump uses very little Negative Politeness. He does not soften directives. He does not hedge assertions. Minimal Negative Politeness reveals a communicative philosophy in which directness and assertiveness are perceived as strengths, and in which mitigation is not required to be strong in political engagement.

Harris heavily depends on irony, metaphor, and insinuation to send her critique and moral insight indirectly. On the other hand, the few off-record strategies that Trump does not use are mostly rhetorical and based on exaggeration. As Harris goes Off-Record to call for more moral judgment and interpretation, Trump mostly uses such techniques to raise the betting, thus proving his dominance.

This difference indicates that the two candidates' pragmatic choices were shaped by their political roles, leadership styles, and campaign objectives. Also, Harris changes the place by shifting strategies between rally-stage setups and formal addresses and interviews across different contexts. She keeps up with audience expectations at all levels. Trump has focused more on a single approach, which offers little flexibility but is highly impactful in situations that demand high energy directly related to the crowd; immediacy and clarity take precedence over subtlety. Within the intended purpose of politeness strategies and face management, as well as audience management, both would work, but they seem to be two different philosophical approaches.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study discusses and analyzes the strategic use of politeness by Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in their 2024 presidential campaign, thereby discussing how language becomes a strategy of manipulation, a mark of leadership quality, and a means to engage an audience. Thus, it can be seen that both candidates use politeness as a strategy for face management and rapport building, but with different ranges and functions emanating from different philosophies of communication. Trump leverages direct, confident, and high-energy speaking content, with a strong reliance on Positive Politeness and Bald On-Record strategies. He applies hyperbole and strong declaratives to motivate the crowd, show his leadership, and create a narrative of urgency

or achievement, with very little regressive action, most of the time through the dominance he attains rather than through nuanced negotiation of face.

Harris applies all four strategies described by Brown and Levinson 1987. She does build cooperation and inclusion in the conversation. The strategy of indirectness she uses, with ironic comments and metaphors, does create solidarity, yet it maintains the professional and institutional decorum she has. Hedges, more deferential, more circuitous forms of critique allow her to keep rapport with the audience, thereby honoring their positive face as well as their negative face. Basically, the difference between the two philosophies of communication is that Trump focuses on mobilization and high-impact persuasion. Harris focuses on collaborative engagement, strategic subtlety, and moral appeal. This analysis underscores politeness strategies as conscious tools in the making of political identity.

This study also has limitations, as the data are drawn only from selected campaign speeches within a specific election period and thus cannot fully represent the wider repertoire of communication strategies each candidate employs. The paper only analyzes the use of spoken words; no prosodic features, body language, or interaction with an audience has been considered. This study also applies only one theoretical framework. Though it is a very strong approach, alternative interpretations might be limited, which can be brought in by other pragmatic or critical discourse approaches.

However, this study extends Brown and Levinson's framework by indicating that politeness in political speech acts not only serves to maintain harmony in interpersonal relationships but also serves ideological and mobilized functions. This study shows the way political leaders use language to strategically manage and manipulate audience perceptions. Future studies may expand the dataset by including debates, interviews, or social media discourse to examine how politeness strategies change across different platforms. Comparative studies involving candidates from other cultural or political systems will help extend the understanding of the function of politeness in global political communication.

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