

# A Move-based Analysis of illocutionary Speech Acts in American Presidential War Rhetoric

<sup>1</sup>ALI SALMAN HUMMADI, <sup>2</sup>SERIAZNITA BINTI MAT SAID

**Abstract--** *Presidential war discourse in particular is commonly investigated through the use of critical discourse analysis tools. Seldom attempts have been carried out to study this type of rhetoric in view of a move-based analysis of illocutionary speech acts. Being a genre in its own, the particulars of the presidential war rhetoric are framed into narrated events within conventional move-structures realized by illocutionary speech acts indicative of the communicative function of each move to justify American present course of military action. After the study shows that American presidents organize their war rhetoric, in terms of a succession of seven cognitive move-structures, the study mainly focuses on investigating the types of illocutionary speech acts performed in each exigence or rhetorical move and identifying how they behave in realizing the local communicative function of the moves which, in turn, contribute to the communicative purpose of the genre as a whole. These exigences or move-structures are established by the events, the needs of the audience, and the purposes of the president. The results of the study show that the types of illocutionary speech acts performed by presidents vary in terms of the way these acts respond to the exigences that call them forth (the rhetorical moves in the present study).*

**Keywords:** *illocutionary speech acts; presidential war rhetoric, move-based analysis*

**Original Contribution:** In contrast to the previous studies in which the speech acts are analysed across the text in view of the purposes of its deliver, this study attempts to analyse the illocutionary speech acts in terms of the exigences or rhetorical moves for which these speech acts are performed. These exigences or move-structures are established by the events, the needs of the audience, and the purposes of the president to justify the undertaken military action or a future course of action.

## I. Introduction

### 1.1 Presidential War Rhetoric

War rhetoric is established and processed when the president attempts to justify the use of force and prove that the military action undertaken was the right and the only option required to protect America (Campbell

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<sup>1</sup> language academy, fssh, university teknologi malaysia, Kuala Lumpur 54100, Malaysia.

<sup>2</sup> language academy, fssh, university teknologi malaysia, Kuala Lumpur 54100, Malaysia.

& Jamieson, 2008). Sometimes, without formal declaration of war by the American Congress, the nation's troops are sent to carry out major military actions. In this situation, the use of presidential war rhetoric becomes necessary and increasingly dominant in presidential discourse to help presidents justify the military actions, legitimize their initiatives, and undermine the possibility of robust opposition (Hart, 1984; Campbell & Jamieson, 2008).

Hauser (1999) points out that presidential rhetoric is primarily dedicated to gain the citizens' support and approval necessary to enact the presidents' policies. Hauser also adds that presidents' rhetorical tactics must be directed towards moving public sentiment into line with their own political ends. Presidents, in times of crisis, are called upon and demanded to build support for proposed policies, including military actions. Glover (2007) exemplifies this when he argues that when a nation is attacked, the understanding of the crisis as shared by the public will be shaped and reflected by the president's language choices while describing the event.

Presidential rhetoric is highly differentiated as a genre and worth to be deeply analysed by researchers. This view is also supported by Hodges (2013) who points out that genre is considered as the main tool used to make sense of human happenings. He argues that "genres help to situate the particulars of narrated events within conventional models ... for interpreting those particulars". To put it differently, presidents employ a generic precedent to craft a story "by mapping the particulars of the narrated events onto that framework" (Hodges, 2013: 50). Pertinent to the current study, the genre interacts with the rhetoric through providing, besides conventional move-structures to narrate events (Hodges, 2013), illocutionary speech acts performed intentionally to realize the semantic or rhetorical functions of each of these moves. Move analysis can be seen as a tool that is typically applied in communication studies to highlight commonalities or structural regularities inherited in a particular genre as an essential part of its discourse organization; for it is similarities of text structure established in a group of discourse which unify them into a particular rhetorical genre distinct from others (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990; Sigelman, 1996; Benoit, 2009). In contrast to the previous studies in which the speech acts are analysed across the text in view of the purposes of its deliver, this study attempts to analyse the illocutionary speech acts in terms of the exigences or rhetorical moves for which these speech acts are performed. These exigences or move-structures are established by the events, the needs of the audience, and the purposes of the president to justify the undertaken military action or a future course of action.

## **II. Methodology**

### **2.1 Material**

The data collected for the qualitative analysis in this study comprised eleven American presidential war addresses which are concerned with finding out the typicality of the types of illocutionary speech acts performed to realize the cognitive move-structures and their local rhetorical functions. The data were selected from different decades though the U.S. history to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings' interpretations. These addresses are distributed among six American presidents during their office terms. All the addresses collected focused mainly on war waged on Islamic and Arab issues and extended during the period 1986-2018. Table 1 below surveys the titles, years, and number of words of those war addresses delivered by American presidents that were under the scope of analysis of the present research:

**Table 1: American presidential war rhetoric addresses as the sample of the study**

President	Title of Address	Year	No. of Words
Ronald Reagan	Speech to the Nation on Air Strikes Against Libya	1986	1000
George W. H. Bush	Address on Iraq's invasion of Kuwait	1990	1416
	Address to the nation on the invasion of Iraq	1991	1454
Bill Clinton	President Clinton explains Iraq strike	1998	2053
George W. Bush	Bush Announces Strikes Against Taliban	2001	969
	Address to the Nation on Iraq	2003	1768
	Address on the Start of the Iraq War	2003	581
	Address on Military Operations in Iraq	2007	2928
Barak Obama	Speech on Syria	2013	2216
Donald Trump	Trump's Address on Afghanistan, Plans for U.S. Engagement	2017	2937
	Full transcript of Trump's address on Syria airstrikes	2018	866

## 2.2 Data Analysis

To analyse the data and reach the findings, the research adopts Bhatia's move analysis. According to Bhatia's theory of genre analysis, communicative purpose of any genre is recognized through organizing the content of discourse into certain sequence of cognitive move-structures, and other rhetorical and linguistic structures realizing them. Move analysis is a type of discourse analysis that looks for linguistic structures beyond the level of sentence (Bhatia, 1993, 2004). The text is analysed as a sequence of move-structures where each move is assigned a label only when it fulfils a specific meaning and represents a unit of a discourse that serves for a specific local communicative function which in turn serves for the communicative purpose of the genre. Subsequently, selected texts are analysed through segmenting each text into moves, noting the type of each move and its communicative or rhetorical function. Rhetorical moves used widely and frequently through a given genre are called conventional or obligatory, while those moves that recur infrequently in texts of a given genre are known as optional. In turn, all the semantic and rhetorical functions of a sequence of moves running in the text interact to put into practice the entire communicative purpose of the genre under study (Bhatia, 1993; Upton & Cohen, 2009). A genre is primarily defined in terms of its shared communicative purposes; these purposes, accompanied with the role of the genre within its context, lead to specific textual regularities (Bhatia, 1993; Freedman & Medway, 2005). Pertinent to the current study, war rhetoric is established and processed by presidents

with a communicative purpose of justifying the use of force and proving that military action undertaken was the right and the only option required to protect the nation.

To carry out a move-based analysis of speech acts as the main focus of the current research, the study adopts Bach & Harnish's (1979) Taxonomy of Speech Acts to investigate the types of illocutionary communicative acts performed and how they behave in realizing the communicative function of each move structure. Basically, Bach & Harnish's (1979) work proposes an 'intention and inference approach' to speech acts similar to Grice's intention-based and inferential view of communication where they argue that the process of linguistic communication is basically an inferential one in the sense that the interpretation of any speech act uttered by speakers depends on the hearer's interpretation of that speech act. This process of the speaker's production of a speech act (illocutionary act or force) and the hearer's right interpretation is greatly influenced by what Bach & Harnish (1979) call the Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MCBs) of both the speaker and hearer – contextual information familiar to the speaker and hearer.

Bach & Harnish (1979) illustrate that MCBs can be used by the hearer to bridge the gap between what the speaker says and what he intends. They affirm (1979: 5) that "the contextual beliefs that figure in speakers' intentions and hearers' inferences must be mutual if communication is to take place". Accordingly, to understand the real communicative intention of any utterance, the hearer takes into consideration MCBs to decide on "the meaning of the sentence uttered what the speaker is saying, and from that the force and content of the speaker's illocutionary act" (Bach & Harnish, 1979: 6). Bach & Harnish label this process of inferring the intended meaning of an utterance as the 'speech act schemata' (SAS) which can be defined as a set of inferential steps processed in the hearer's mind to understand an utterance as a type of speech act. In other words, any communicative speech act, according to SAS, involves four sub-acts as its constituents (where S is the speaker, H is the hearer, *e* is an expression in language, C is the context of utterance).

Utterance Act: S utters *e* from L to H in C

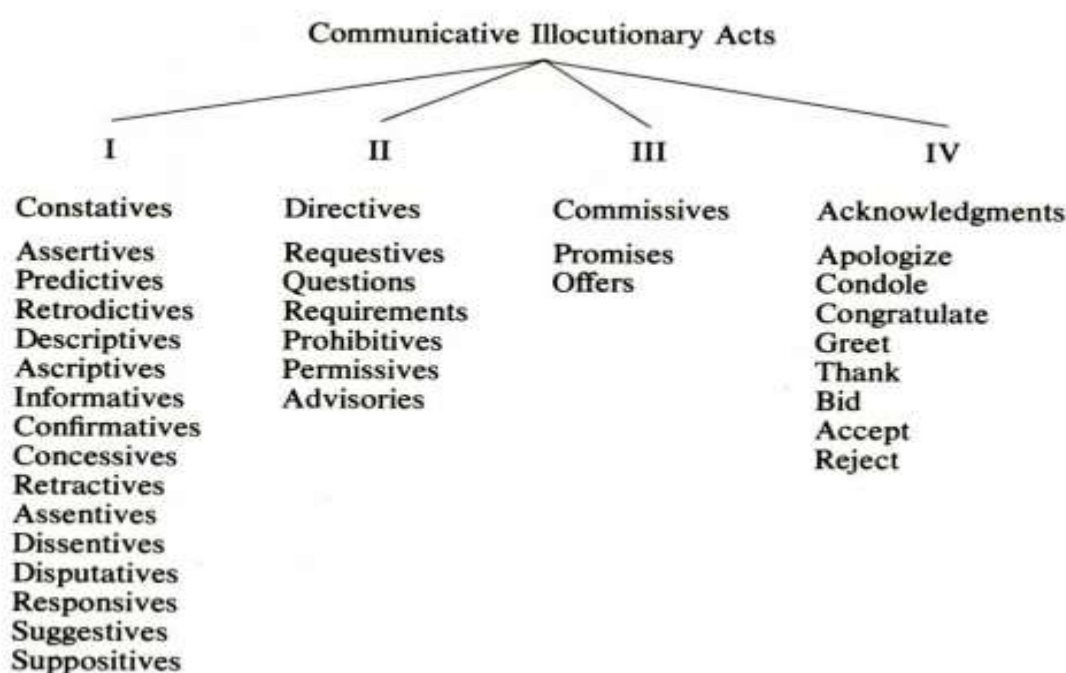
Locutionary Act: S says to H in C that so-and-so

Illocutionary Act: S does such-and-such in C

Perlocutionary Act: S affects H in a certain way

In view of their classificatory schema, Bach & Harnish (1979) classify types of illocutionary acts in terms of types of expressed attitudes. Expressing an attitude by the speaker's uttering something is, in Bach and Harnish's model, to R-intend that the hearer takes the speaker's utterance as reason to believe he/she has the attitude. Thus, Bach and Harnish's communicative acts or intentions are classified with respect to the kind of attitude that is expressed by each communicative act in the sense that "the satisfaction of the acts resides in the hearer identifying the attitude expressed in the way the speaker intends him/her to identify it" (Łazuka, 2006: 303). In their (1979) work, Bach and Harnish present four types of communicative illocutionary act, with every act type being further differentiated in terms of the reasons for or the strengths of the attitudes expressed as shown below in Figure 1.

- A- Constatives express the speaker's belief and his/her intention that the hearer has or forms a like belief.
- B- Directives express the speaker's attitude towards a future action by the hearer and his/her intention that the utterance be taken as a reason for the hearer's action.
- C- Commisives express the speaker's intention that the utterance obligates the hearer to do something. And finally,
- D- acknowledgements express the feeling towards the hearer, or in the case of formal utterances, the speaker's intention that his/her utterances satisfy certain social expectations regarding the expression of certain feelings.



**Figure 1: Classification of communicative acts (as adopted from Bach & Harnish, 1979)**

To ensure the reliability of the process of coding (moves labelling and speech acts categorization) and interpreting the data, the study adopted the method of constant comparison when it compared coding over and over again to codes and classifications that have already been done. Data that has already been examined and classified into codes is not finished, but it is used to be continually integrated into further process of comparison (Flick, 2009; see also Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, two raters' services were asked as well to avoid subjectivity of analysis and interpretation and to more ensure inter-rater reliability.

### **III. 3. Results and In-depth Discussion**

As a result of a close-reading and careful study of the selected American presidential war addresses, the study arrived to a set of cognitive-move structures where each move structure is elaborated with some concrete examples of the performed speech acts extracted from the corpus of the study. Despite the variation in the

cognitive move-structures (rhetorical moves) extracted, it has taken the sequential predictable order shown in table 2 below:

**Table 2: Move-structure of the presidential war addresses**

<b>Move 1.</b> Precipitating Event Showing the Enemy's Act of Aggression.
<b>Move 2.</b> Self-defensive Nature/Mission of Military Action.
<b>Move 3.</b> Communicating Enemy's Atrociousness and Savagery
<b>Move 4:</b> War as a Last Resort after Aborting Diplomatic Solutions by Enemy
<b>Move 5:</b> Legitimate Authority of Military Action and Collective Will of the World
<b>Move 6:</b> Objectives and Real Intentions of Military Action
<b>Move 7:</b> Consequences of Failing to Respond Militarily (Inaction)

**Move 1. Speech Acts Analysis in *Precipitating Event Showing the Enemy's Act of Aggression***

As for the illocutionary communicative acts performed in this move, Table 3 below shows the types of speech acts used to realize its communicative function.

**Table 3: Frequencies of Speech Acts in Move 1**

Number and Title of Move	Types of Speech Acts		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Move 1:</b>  <b>Precipitating event showing the enemy's act of aggression</b>	Constatives	Assertives	8	13.55%
		Informatives	38	64.40%
		Confirmatives	2	3.38%
		Retrodictives	6	10.16%
		Descriptives	1	1.69%
		Retratives	1	1.69%
		Concessives	1	1.69%
	Directives	Requestives	2	3.38%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

As clear in the table above, results of the analysis have shown that informatives constitute the highest population of the used speech acts. It stands for 38 occurrences out of 59 and with 64.40 percent. As the communicative function of this type of speech acts is to inform hearers, this illocutionary force is widely and frequently used by presidents to more inform audiences of the enemy's act of offence represented by the precipitating evil event undertaken by enemies and for which the United States is forceful to militarily respond. Citing a speech delivered by George H. W. Bush to the Nation on the Invasion of Iraq in January 16, 1991, the president starts the first move of the speech with informing the audience of the precipitating event which represents the evil action of the enemy against which America is forceful to respond. As shown in the excerpt below, Bush recounts, through utilizing informative speech act, that in August 2d, Saddam Hussein invaded his neighbour,

Kuwait. He goes further in employing informatives in order to report that Kuwait which is “a member of the Arab League and a member of the United Nations” was destroyed and its people were killed by the Iraqi regime. After that, Bush confirms the informativity of the communicative act used when he narrates in another way the starting date of the cruel war of the enemy against Kuwait. He finalizes the first move when he informs the nation of the exact time by which the United States responded.

This conflict started August 2d when the dictator of Iraq invaded a small and helpless neighbour **(Informative)**. Kuwait—a member of the Arab League and a member of the United Nations—was crushed; its people, brutalized **(Informative)**. Five months ago, Saddam Hussein started this cruel war against Kuwait **(Informative)**. Tonight, the battle has been joined **(Informative)** **(Bush, January 16, 1991)**.

In another example taken from Reagan’s address in April 15, 1986, the president recounts past aggressive events when a nightclub frequented by American servicemen in West Berlin was exploded by a terrorist having relations to the Libyan government. Involved within these past events stated by informative type of communicative acts is, as a result of the terrorist bomb, the killing of Sgt. Kenneth Ford, a young Turkish woman, and the wounding of 230 people including 50 American military men and women. As usual in all the excerpts representing the first move in most of the war addresses, after informing the audience and making clear of what has happened and what is happening, presidents tend to either assert or confirm the enemy’s act of aggression through the use of assertive speech acts as it is shown in the excerpt below.

On April 5 in West Berlin a terrorist bomb exploded in a nightclub frequented by American servicemen **(Informative)**. Sgt. Kenneth Ford and a young Turkish woman were killed and 230 others were wounded, among them some 50 American military personnel **(Informative)**. Evidence Is Now Conclusive **(Assertive)** **(Reagan, April 15, 1986)**.

To show the cruelty of the enemy’s aggression and justify the American response, Reagan continues informing the nation or audience, besides the immediate aggression happened in the days prior to the American military response, other previous initial evil aggressive acts conducted by the enemy. Reagan reports an earlier precipitating event taking place on March 25, 10 days before the terrorist attack in Berlin where “On March 25, more than a week before the attack, orders were sent from Tripoli to the Libyan People's Bureau in East Berlin to conduct a terrorist attack against Americans, to cause maximum and indiscriminate casualties **(Informative)**. Libya's agents then planted the bomb” **(Informative)**.

Returning back to the Table above, assertives represent the second most frequently used subtype of speech acts. It stands for 8 occurrences out of 59 with a percentage of 13.55. As for assertive speech acts, they are used to represents a state of affairs. One of the affairs and facts that has been asserted is when George H. W. Bush states, in view of Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, that “there is no justification whatsoever for this outrageous and brutal act of aggression”. Another state of affairs is presented by Trump’s address On Afghanistan, Plans For U.S. Engagement, August, 2017, when he states that “nearly 16 years after September 11 attacks, after the extraordinary

sacrifice of blood and treasure, the American people are weary of war without victory” (Assertive). A third example is represented by Reagan in APRIL 15, 1986 “evidence is now conclusive” (Assertive) as a result of the terrorist bomb conducted in Berlin by a terrorist having connection with Libyan government where by using assertive, as this is also true of other examples, presidents assert the belief that what had happened are explicit acts of aggression conducted deliberately and with evidence by enemies.

Retrodictive is the third category of speech acts that is frequently used in the first rhetorical move. It accounts for 6 occurrences and a percentage of 10.16%. Retrodiction is defined as stating, explaining or interpreting of a past event, action, etc. by inference based on information currently available (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). The communicative function of retrodictive speech act is to represent “the belief that it was the case that p” whereas the perlocutionary intention of retrodictive is to represent “the intention that H believe that it was the case that p”. Examples of retrodictive speech acts in this move are indirectly constructed to function as stating or interpreting facts about the past based on inference or deduction according to currently happening events. The following retrodictive speech act remarked as “*The international community had good reason to set this requirement*” (**Retrodictive**) has been uttered by Clinton to assert the belief that the international community was right in its decision to require Iraq to destroy its arsenal of weapons as a condition to cease the military action against Iraq as a result of its invasion of Kuwait in 1991. In this type of speech acts, the speaker does not inform events, rather he states or explains a past fact based on currently available information which is reflected by assertion through a speech act of assertive that Iraq had and now has an arsenal of chemical weapons, and through speech acts of confirmative that it did use them as remarked “*Other countries possess weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles*” (**Assertive**). *With Saddam, there is one big difference* (**Confirmative**): *He has used them*” (**Confirmative**). Other examples of retrodictive type of illocutionary acts, as shown in the excerpt below, are articulated by George W. Bush in his address on Military Operations in Iraq in January 11, 2007 when he presents a past fact and retrodicts that the Iraqi elections of 2005 were a stunning achievement. He presents such a past fact based on current situation of Iraq assigned by the time of delivering his speech. Bush continues through retrodictives to present past facts depending on his deduction and inference. Pertaining to Iraqi elections and depending on Iraqi situation in 2007, Bush retrodicts the belief that the Iraqi elections would unite Iraqis and that, by training Iraqi security forces, the United States could perform its mission in Iraq with fewer American troops.

The elections of 2005 were a stunning achievement (Retrodictive). We thought that these elections would bring the Iraqis together (Retrodictive), and that as we trained Iraqi security forces, we could accomplish our mission with fewer American troops (Retrodictive) (Bush, January 11, 2007).

Confirmative, requestive, descriptive, retractive and concessive types of speech acts are used with a very low frequency compared to informatives as shown in the table above. Thus, because the communicative function of this specific strategy is to comfort audiences, to enlighten them, to increase their understanding of a matter of concern and to remove the distressing situation, informative type of illocutionary acts is most frequently used to define and realize this function.



### Move 2. Speech Acts Analysis of *Self-defensive Nature/Mission of Military Action*

Looking at the communicative illocutionary acts performed to constitute the meaning of this move and to achieve its the local rhetorical function, they are used cautiously and intentionally with following frequency and distribution as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Frequencies of Speech Acts in Move 2**

Number and Title of Move	Types of Speech Acts		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Move 2:  Self-defensive nature of military action</b>	Constatives	Assertives	25	23.14%
		Informatives	14	12.96%
		Confirmatives	34	31.48%
		Predictives	8	7.40%
		Responsives	4	3.70%
		Suppositives	1	0.92%
		Descriptives	2	1.85%
	Directives	Requestives	5	4.62%
	Commissives	Promises	14	12.96%
		Offers	1	0.92%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>108</b>	<b>100</b>

As displayed in Table 2 above, confirmatives make up the first biggest set of illocutionary speech acts in the cognitive move-structure of *Self-defensive Nature of Military Action*. It has been used with a frequency of 34 out of 108 and with a percentage of 31.48%. Confirmatives are illocutionary speech acts expressing “not only the speaker’s belief that *P* but that he believes it as a result of some truth-seeking procedure, such as observation, investigation, or argument” (Bach & Harnish, 1979: 46). Presidents quite frequently use confirmative type of illocutionary acts in this specific move to explicitly and implicitly confirm the self-defense nature of the conducted military action. Explicitly stated references to the self-defense nature of the military actions taken against enemy are cited in George H. W. Bush’s address in 1990 as a result of Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait remarked as “the mission of our troops is wholly defensive (Confirmative), and in Reagan’s 1986 address when he states that “self-defense is not only our right (Confirmative), it is our duty (Confirmative). It is the purpose behind the mission undertaken tonight - a mission fully consistent with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter” (Confirmative). Other references of the self-defence right are implicitly stated by presidents when they verify and conclude a group of affairs. The first of these is the enemy’s use of, or intention to use, chemical and killing weapons as cited in Clinton’s speech in 1998 when he assesses that “the international community had little doubt then (Confirmative), and I have no doubt today (Confirmative), that left unchecked, Saddam Hussein will use these terrible weapons again”, and in Obama’s speech in 2013 when he certifies that “no one disputes that chemical weapons were used in Syria (Confirmative). The world saw thousands of videos, cell phone pictures, and social media accounts from the

attack, and humanitarian organizations told stories of hospitals packed with people who had symptoms of poison gas” (Confirmative). Second, the self-defence nature of the military action taken is underlined through confirming the ability of the enemy to initiate hostilities and act aggressively as remarked by George H. W. Bush in his speech of 1990.

We can no longer be silent about Pakistan's safe havens for terrorist organizations, the Taliban, and other groups that pose a threat to the region and beyond (Confirmative) (Trump, August 21, 2017).

A third form of justifying the self-defense policy of the United States and its allies are discursively identified through validating and assessing the necessity of the pre-emptive war to defeat enemies and pursue peace as shown in the example below

In the face of today's new threat, the only way to pursue peace is to pursue those who threaten it (Confirmative) (Bush, October 7, 2001).

A fourth discourse used by the United States and its allies to justify the right of self-defence is to confirm the enemy's emerging threat and danger as this is clear in the following example

Third and finally, I concluded that the security threats we face in Afghanistan and the broader region are immense (Confirmative). Today, 20 U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations are active in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Confirmative). The highest concentration in any region anywhere in the world (Confirmative) (Trump, April 13, 2018).

Confirming the intention of destroying and knocking the enemy's nuclear weapons is the fifth discourse used to authorize self-defence as remarked by George H. W Bush in his address of 1991 when he states that

We are determined to knock out Saddam Hussein's nuclear bomb potential” (Confirmative) (Bush, 1991),

and by Obama in his speech of 2013 when he certifies that

and that is why, after careful deliberation, I determined that it is in the national security interests of the United States to respond to the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons through a targeted military strike (Confirmative) (Obama, 2013).

The sixth strategy used by the United States to realize the self-defence nature of the military intervention conducted is through confirming the evidence of the enemy's responsibility of evil attacks as shown in Reagan's speech of 1986 remarked as

Our evidence is direct (Confirmative), it is precise (Confirmative), it is irrefutable (Confirmative). We have solid evidence about other attacks Qaddafi has planned against

the United States' installations and diplomats and even American tourists **(Confirmative)**.  
Other Attacks Prevented **(Confirmative)**.

The second most frequently used type of constative speech acts in the generic move of *Self-defensive Nature of Military Action* is assertives. Assertive speech acts have been used with a frequency of 25 and a percentage of 23.14%. Assertives are one sub-type of constative speech acts that express “a belief, together with the expression of an intention that the hearer form, continue to hold, a similar belief” (Bach & Harnish, 1979: 46). By the increased use of assertive speech acts in this specific strategy, presidents want to assert a series of beliefs or to represent states of affairs. Similar to the function of confirmative speech acts, assertives are also used to establish that America’s response comes up as a self-defence through stating a group of beliefs including assertions of the peaceful nature of Americans as shown in the examples below.

America does not seek conflict, nor do we seek to chart the destiny of other nations  
**(Assertive) (Bush, January 16, 1990)**.

We're a peaceful nation **(Assertive) (Bush, October 7, 2001)**

The United States and other nations did nothing to deserve or invite this threat  
**(Assertive) (Bush, March 17, 2003)**.

Another group of beliefs asserted by presidents include the clarity of emerging threat and danger that urges the United States to take a defensive position as shown in the following excerpts.

This situation presents a clear and present danger to the stability of the Persian Gulf  
and the safety of people everywhere **(Assertive) (Clinton, December 16, 1998)**.

The danger is clear **(Assertive) (Bush, March 17, 2003)**.

Further assertive speech acts are represented in the presidents’ beliefs that the military mission conducted by the United States is oriented to secure the world as this is clear in the following examples.

Secure World Is Nearer

this mission, violent though it was, can bring closer a safer and more secure world  
for decent men and women **(Assertive)**. **(Assertive) (Reagan, April 15, 1986)**.

This is not a world we should accept **(Assertive)**. This is what’s at stake **(Assertive)**  
**(Obama, September 10, 2013)**.

We never want to see that ghastly specter return **(Assertive) (Trump, April 13, 2018)**

Also characteristic in Table 2 above is the presidents’ use of commissive speech acts. Commissives are used in this specific strategy with a frequency of 15. They are “acts of obligating oneself or of proposing to obligate oneself to do something specified in the propositional content, which may also specify conditions under which the deed is to be done or does not have to be done” (Bach & Harnish, 1979: 50). Two types are distinguished under this category: promises and offer. Promises are speech acts “of obligating oneself; offers are proposals to obligate oneself” (Bach & Harnish, 1979: 50). In this specific generic move of *Self-defence Nature of Military*

*Action*, offers are used with one frequency only, and promises are used with a frequency of 14 and a percentage of 12.96%. Indicative in the speech acts of promises used by presidents in this move is the use of promises addressed to oaths taken by presidents to protect American lives and interests.

When our citizens are abused or attacked anywhere in the world, on the direct orders of a hostile regime, we will respond, so long as I'm in this Oval Office (Promise) **(Reagan, April 15, 1986)**.

Promises are also used by presidents to address the presidents and the United States' commitments to continue self-defence through promises of defeating global threat and destroying the enemy's chemical weapons.

But we will do everything to defeat it (Promise). Instead of drifting along toward tragedy, we will set a course toward safety (Promise). Before the day of horror can come, before it is too late to act, this danger will be removed (Promise) **(Bush, March 17, 2003)**.

Other forms of promises are used to address the United States' perseverance of self-defending itself and its allies and friends against the enemy's threat and danger.

But America will stand by her friends (**promise**)... Hopefully, they will not be needed long (**Predictive**). They will not initiate hostilities (**Promise**), but they will defend themselves, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and other friends in the Persian Gulf (**Promise**) **(Bush, August 8, 1990)**.

We will persevere (**Promise**) **(Reagan, April 15, 1986)**.

Overall, these findings are in accordance with findings reported by Łazuka (2006) whose analysis also demonstrated characteristic use of promises by speakers addressed to the people of Iraq during the war and to the American people in September 2003. As is the case in our study, by employing this strategy, speakers attempt to ensure a positive image of themselves and their government, renewing their commitment towards the American people. On the contrary, in Alattar's (2014) analysis of American presidential speeches, none of the presidents performed commissive type of speech act (promises) except George W. Bush in his speech on Iraq war in 2003 with a very slight rate 0.9%.

Returning to Table 4 above, predictives are used with a frequency of 8 and a percentage of 7.40%. In some examples, the speaker uses them with respect to both the government and the speaker, pointing to positive aspects of their future activities, for example, as stated by Reagan in his address of 1986

We believe that this pre-emptive action against his terrorist installations will not only diminish Colonel Qaddafi's capacity to export terror (**Predictive**) -it will provide him with incentives and reasons to alter his criminal behaviour (**Predictive**) **(Reagan, April 15, 1986)**.

Another example of predictive is delivered by Bush in his address of 1991, this time with respect to the enemy and the probability of using chemical weapons to kill innocent people in America and any other countries.

using chemical, biological or, one day, nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country, or any other **(Predictive) (Bush, March 17, 2003)**.

Responsives, suppositives, descriptives, and requestives are also used in this specific move-structure with very low rates of frequency as referred to in the table above.

### Move 3. Speech Acts Analysis in *Communicating Enemy's Atrociousness and Savagery*

As for the frequency and distribution of the performed speech acts in move 3, they are clearly explained in the Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Frequencies of Speech Acts Move 3**

Number and Title of Move	Types of Speech Acts		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Move 3:</b>  <b>Communicating Enemy's Atrociousness and Savagery</b>	Constatives	Assertives	6	23.07%
		Informatives	9	34.61%
		Confirmatives	10	38.46%
	Directives	Requestives	1	3.84%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>100%</b>

As demonstrated in Table 3 above, confirmatives occupy the first rate among the types of illocutionary speech acts employed by presidents in this important generic move. They account for 10 occurrences out of the performed speech acts with a percentage of 38.46%. In the same vein, informative and assertive types of illocutionary acts are frequently used in this strategy as well. Informatives stand for 9 frequencies and a percentage of 34.61% and assertives are used with a frequency of 6 out of 26 and a percentage of 23.7%. As for requestive speech acts, they stand for 1 frequency and a percentage of 3.84%. Among the types of constative speech acts used, confirmative, informative and assertive speech acts are more focused in this specific strategy as they define and realize the persuasive nature of the second move-structure *Communicating Narratives and Arguments to Justify Military Action*. Presidential war narrative is not only constructed and framed to inform the audiences of the atrocities and inhuman and evil actions committed earlier by enemies, as shown in the examples below,

He (Saddam) subjected the people of Kuwait to unspeakable atrocities—and among those maimed and murdered, innocent children **(Informative) (Bush, August 8, 1991)**.

Saddam Hussein has placed Iraqi troops and equipment in civilian areas, attempting to use innocent men, women and children as shields for his own military -- a final atrocity against his people **(Informative) (Bush, March 20, 2003)**.

but is also used to assert the beliefs and facts of the enemy's possession of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, the enemy's history of committing aggression and the inhumanity of enemies as shown in the following examples.

Other countries possess weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles  
**(Assertive) (Clinton, December 16, 1998).**

Given the Iraqi government's history of aggression against its own citizens as well as its neighbors, to assume Iraq will not attack again would be unwise and unrealistic  
**(Assertive) (Bush, August 8, 1990).**

In addition, to justify the military action conducted by the United States, presidential war narrative goes further to persuade audience of the right the decision already taken through utilizing, besides informing and asserting, the speech acts of confirmative in an attempt to confirm and verify what events have been informed and what opinions and beliefs have been asserted related to the savagery and cruelty of the enemy.

Colonel Qaddafi is not only an enemy of the United States (Confirmative). His record of subversion and aggression against the neighboring states in Africa is well documented and well known (Confirmative). He has ordered the murder of fellow Libyans in countless countries (Informative). He has sanctioned acts of terror in Africa, Europe and the Middle East, as well as the Western Hemisphere **(Informative) (Reagan, April 15, 1986).**

In contrast to our study and Łazuka's (2006) study which demonstrated an overt characteristic use of confirmative type of speech acts, Alattar (2014) revealed the complete absence of this type of speech acts in her analysis of American presidential speeches.

#### **Move 4: Speech Acts Analysis of War as a Last Resort after Aborting Diplomatic Solutions by Enemy**

Illocutionary speech acts are performed cautiously and intentionally by presidents to define and realize the communicative function of this specific move as shown Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Frequencies of Speech Acts in Move 4**

Number and Title of Move	Types of Speech Acts		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Move 4:</b>  <b>War as a Last Resort</b>	Constatives	Assertives	19	22.35%
		Informatives	50	58.82%
		Confirmatives	5	5.88%
		Predictives	1	1.17%

after Aborting Diplomatic Solutions by Enemy		Concessives	2	2.35%
		Retrodictives	1	1.17%
		Suppositives	2	2.35%
		Predictives	1	1.17%
	Commissive	Promises	3	3.52%
	Acknowledgments	Bids	1	1.17%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>

As demonstrated in Table 4 above, informative speech acts have been excessively used in this generic move with a frequency of 50 out of 85 and a percentage of 58.82%. As have been used to tell of the precipitating event of the second move, informatives are also widely used by presidents to focally tell audience of the huge contribution that the United States and the world carried out to avoid war and resort peace. Mostly, informatives have been employed to express how the enemy has exhausted all the diplomatic efforts to avoid military action and that the United States and its allies are forceful, after considerable thought and deliberation, to take such a decision. Citing a speech delivered by Clinton 1998, it sounds that the generic move of *War as a Last Resort after Aborting Diplomatic Solutions by Enemy* has been dominantly prevailed with informative speech acts reporting the diplomatic detailed efforts taken by the United States and its allies as a last resort to avoid the war.

The United States has patiently worked to preserve UNSCOM as Iraq has sought to avoid its obligation to cooperate with the inspectors (**Informative**). On occasion, we've had to threaten military force, and Saddam has backed down (**Informative**).

Faced with Saddam's latest act of defiance in late October, we built intensive diplomatic pressure on Iraq backed by overwhelming military force in the region (**Informative**). The UN Security Council voted 15 to zero to condemn Saddam's actions and to demand that he immediately come into compliance (**Informative**).

Eight Arab nations -- Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Oman -- warned that Iraq alone would bear responsibility for the consequences of defying the UN (**Informative**) (**Clinton, December 16, 1998**).

Assertives represent the second category of speech acts that dominates this specific move. Assertive speech acts are used with a frequency of 19 and a percentage of 22.35%. Mostly, assertive type of illocutionary acts associates informatives in this specific move to express a group of beliefs involving the unwillingness of the United States to commit America's Armed Forces to a dangerous mission as conducting war.

No one commits America's Armed Forces to a dangerous mission lightly (**Assertive**) (**Bush, August 8, 1990**).

No President can easily commit our sons and daughters to war (**Assertive**). They are the Nation's finest (**Assertive**) (**Bush, January 16, 1991**).

Assertives are also used to represent an affair or belief that peace is the most preferable option to the United States and that the mission of conducting a war or using force is forcibly thrust on the United States of America as a last Resort.

Now, I know that after the terrible toll of Iraq and Afghanistan, the idea of any military action, no matter how limited, is not going to be popular (**Assertive**). After all, I've spent four and a half years working to end wars, not to start them (**Assertive**) (**Obama, September 10, 2013**).

We Americans are slow to anger (**Assertive**). We always seek peaceful avenues before resorting to the use of force (**Assertive**) (**Reagan, April 15, 1986**).

Confirmatives represent the third category of the performed illocutionary acts which constitutes 5 occurrences and stands for 5.88%. A further novel finding in the analysis of this move-structure is that each one of these five confirmative speech acts follows a long series of informative and assertive illocutionary speech act and this is natural as one of the communicative function of this generic move is to inform, assert and confirm that the enemy has made fun of all the political solutions and aborted all the peaceful options to settle the issue and that resorting to war was the last resort for the United States and the international community. Other types of illocutionary speech act such as promises, bids, predictives, concessive, retrodictives, and suppositives are used with very low rates of occurrence as shown in Table 6 above.

#### **Move 5: Speech Acts Analysis of *Legitimate Authority of Military Action and Collective Will of the World***

For the speech acts analysis, Table 5 below shows the most frequently used speech acts to assist this move-structure achieve its local communicative intention.

**Table 5: Frequencies of Speech Acts in Move 5**

Number and Title of Move	Types of Speech Acts		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Move 5:  Legitimate Authority and Collective Will of the International Community</b>	Constatives	Assertives	11	18.03%
		Informatives	26	41.62%
		Confirmatives	10	16.39%
		Predictives	1	1.63%
		Assentives	2	3.27%
	Commissives	Promises	4	6.55%
	Acknowledgments	Thanks	3	4.91%
	Directives	Advisory	2	3.27%
		Requestives	2	3.27%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>61</b>	<b>100</b>



Informatives are the most frequently type of speech acts used in this generic move where it stands for 26 frequency and a percentage of 41.62%. Imbedded within the use of informative speech acts is the discourse of the support of collective will of world to the military action taken. In other words, informative speech acts have been widely used in this specific move to show the unity of the world in its opposition to the enemy's act of aggression and its consent to waging a war or to conduct a response in terms of self-defense. This is obvious in the excerpts below.

Tonight, 28 nations—countries from 5 continents, Europe and Asia, Africa, and the Arab League—have forces in the Gulf area standing shoulder to shoulder against Saddam Hussein **(Informative) (Bush, January 16, 1991).**

More than 35 countries are giving crucial support -- from the use of naval and air bases, to help with intelligence and logistics, to the deployment of combat units **(Informative)**. Every nation in this coalition has chosen to bear the duty and share the honor of serving in our common defense **(Informative) (Bush, March 20, 2003).**

Thus, the consent or assent of the international community to the conducted military intervention has been implicitly inherited and realized through the informative type of speech acts. Because presidents are talking about an already taken military action, thus, the best way to prove and tell about the lawful authority or legitimacy of war is to realize the inherited assentive speech acts through informatives.

Assertives are the second most frequently used type of constative speech acts. They have been frequented for 11 times and with a percentage of 18.03% in this specific generic move. Assertive speech acts, in this move-structure, are used to assert the belief that the United States represented by its presidents has the sovereignty and the lawful authority to respond militarily against any threat. Assertive speech acts are also used by presidents to more justify the military action through asserting that the decision taken was under the umbrella of a lawful authority such as the Congress or the international world.

The United States of America has the sovereign authority to use force in assuring its own national security **(Assertive) (Bush, March 17, 2003).**

I believed it was right, in the absence of a direct or imminent threat to our security, to take this debate to Congress **(Assertive)**. I believe our democracy is stronger when the President acts with the support of Congress **(Assertive)**. And I believe that America acts more effectively abroad when we stand together **(Assertive) (Obama, September 10, 2013).**

Confirmatives represent the third most frequently type of speech acts used in this generic move. It has been used with a frequency of 10 and a percentage of 16.39%. Most confirmative illocutionary acts used in this generic move are directed to address the certainty and verification of either the authority of the United States and international community to respond militarily to the enemy's act of aggression as shown in the examples below,

The United States of America has the sovereign authority to use force in assuring its own national security (**Assertive**). That duty falls to me, as Commander-in-Chief, by the oath I have sworn, by the oath I will keep (**Confirmative**) (**Bush, March, 20 2003**).

So even though I possess the authority to order military strikes (**Confirmative**) (**Obama, September 10, 2013**)

or the certainty of the accord and consent of the international community towards the military action taken.

So today, the nations of Britain, France and the United States of America have marshaled their righteous power against barbarism and brutality (**Confirmative**) (**Trump, April 13, 2018**).

And in 1997, the United States Senate overwhelmingly approved an international agreement prohibiting the use of chemical weapons (**Informative**), now joined by 189 governments that represent 98 percent of humanity (**Confirmative**) (**Obama, September 10, 2013**).

Thanks are another frequently occurring type of communicative acts. As Acts expressing gratitude, the category of 'thank' occurs with a frequency of 3 and a percentage of 4.91%. Such actions, in addition to their function to both establish "rapport with the audience and add positively to the speaker's overall self-presentation" (Łazuka, 2006: 319), have implicitly referenced to the unification and consent of the world in the military action taken. Advisory, requestive, and predictive speech acts are employed with 3.27%, 3.27% and 1.63% respectively.

Thanks to close cooperation with our friends (**thank**).

To our friends and allies in Europe who cooperated in today's mission, I would only say you have the primary gratitude of the American people (**thank**) (**Reagan, April 15, 1986**).

Other types of illocutionary speech acts are performed by presidents with low rates of frequency to define and realize this move structure. Advisory, requestive, and predictive speech acts are employed with 3.27%, 3.27% and 1.63% respectively.

### **Move 6 Speech Acts Analysis of Objectives and Real Intentions of Military Action**

For the speech acts analysis, Table 6 below shows the most frequently used illocutionary communicative acts performed to realize the communicative function of this specific move.

**Table 6: Frequencies of Speech Acts in Move 6**

Number and Title of Move	Types of Speech Acts		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Move 6:</b>	Constatives	Assertives	22	25.28%

<b>Objectives and Real Intentions of Military Action</b>		Informatives	7	8.04%
		Confirmatives	13	14.94%
		Predictives	2	2.29%
		Retrodictives	1	2.24%
		Descriptives	12	13.79%
		Responsives	1	1.14%
		Suppositives	1	1.14%
	Commissives	Promises	20	22.98%
	Acknowledgments	Bids	3	3.44%
	Directives	Requestives	4	4.59%
		Advisory	1	1.14%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>87</b>	<b>100</b>

A characteristic and self-explanatory attribute in the generic move of *Objectives and Intentions of the Military Action* is the speaker's use of assertive illocutionary acts. Assertives are a type of constative speech acts that are employed in this generic move. They come first in the distribution and frequency rate in this move structure. They stand for 22 out of 87 with a percentage of 55.28%. As the representation of a state of affairs is the communicative function of assertive speech acts which may be verified as true and false (Trosborg, 2000), mostly, they have been commonly utilized by presidents in this generic move to state the objectives of the already taken military action and the clarity of this specific mission as this is shown in the following examples.

Four simple principles guide our policy (**Assertive**). First, we seek the immediate, unconditional, and complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait (**Assertive**) (**Bush, August 8, 1990**).

Our objectives are clear (**Assertive**) (**Bush, January 16, 1991**).

In Afghanistan and Pakistan, America's interests are clear (**Assertive**) (**Trump, August 21, 2017**).

Assertive type of illocutionary speech acts is also used by presidents with the intention that audiences in general form the belief that the United States is a friend to all peaceful people and its hostility is addressed towards terrorists and barbaric criminals, and that it cares a lot for people's feelings, culture and history.

The United States of America is a friend to the Afghan people (**Assertive**), and we are the friends of almost a billion worldwide who practice the Islamic faith (**Assertive**).

The United States of America is an enemy of those who aid terrorists and of the barbaric criminals who profane a great religion by committing murder in its name (**Assertive**) (**Bush, October 7, 2001**).

The Libyan people are a decent people caught in the grip of a tyrant (**Assertive**) (**Reagan, April 15, 1986**).

Other set of assertive illocutionary acts are performed by presidents in their presidential war narrative to state that the use of power is established for a truly just cause and solely for that purpose—correcting a suffered wrong is considered a right intention, while material gain or maintaining economies is not.

We have no ambition in Iraq, except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people (**Assertive**) (**Bush, 20 March, 2003**).

America does not seek an indefinite presence in Syria under no circumstances (**Assertive**).

The United States will be a partner and a friend, but the fate of the region lies in the hands of its own people (**Assertive**) (**Trump, April 13, 2018**).

Promises represent the second category of the most frequently performed speech acts. They have been used with a frequency of 21 and a percentage of 24.13%. Some of the speech acts of promises used by presidents to realize this specific move are addressed to the nation to state the United States and its presidents' commitment to the security and stability of the world through degrading the enemy's capacity to develop and deliver weapons of mass destruction, degrading its ability to threaten the security and peace of the world, and retrieving the wrongly taken land to its real owners as these are made clear in the following examples

And third, my administration, as has been the case with every President from President Roosevelt to President Reagan, is committed to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf (**Promise**) (**Bush, August 8, 1990**).

We will also destroy his chemical weapons facilities (**Promise**). Much of Saddam's artillery and tanks will be destroyed (**Promise**) (**Bush, March 17, 2003**).

Other speech acts of promises are addressed to the people against the governments the United States and its allies are waging war. The purpose of their uses is to establish rapport with these people and befriending them, to show them that the United States has no argument or hostility with them, and the tendency that the citizens of the nation against which the United States undertaking military action are also included in the principle of the universal interests of everyone around the world that the United States is fighting for. This is clearly explained in the excerpts below.

At the same time, the oppressed people of Afghanistan will know the generosity of America and our allies (**Promise**). As we strike military targets, we will also drop food, medicine and supplies to the starving and suffering men and women and children of Afghanistan (**Promise**) (**Bush, October 7, 2001**).

Confirmatives represent the third category of speech acts that is dominantly performed in this generic move. Confirmative speech acts are used with a frequency of 13 and a percentage of 14.94%. Some of the speech acts of this type are used by presidents to verify and confirm the belief and intention that the United States has no

argument or quarrel with people of the countries against which they are fighting. Rather, by employing this type of speech acts, presidents not only confirm that they have no quarrel with countries' people but they also come for restoring control and for liberating people.

We have no quarrel with them **(Confirmative) (Clinton, December 16, 1998).**

We have no argument with the people of Iraq **(Confirmative) (Bush, January 16, 1991).**

Our goal is not the conquest of Iraq **(Confirmative)**. It is the liberation of Kuwait **(Confirmative) (Bush, January 16, 1991).**

We are a partner and a friend **(Confirmative) (Trump, August 21, 2017).**

Other uses of confirmative speech acts vary from addressing the friendship of the United States to people and countries, to confirming the rationality of the mission of the military action, to validating the greatness of the American warriors doing the military action job.

Another self-explanatory attribute in the generic move of *Objectives and Real Intentions of the Military Action* is the speaker's use of descriptive illocutionary acts. Because one of the central communicative functions of this move structure is to tell about the objectives of the taken military action, the researcher expected that a set of descriptive illocutionary speech acts will be identified to offer elaborated details of the military mission taken. Descriptive speech acts account for 12 occurrences and a percentage of 13.79% and have been basically employed to realize the military objective of the conflict as shown in the examples below.

The purpose of this strike would be to deter Assad from using chemical weapons, to degrade his regime's ability to use them, and to make clear to the world that we will not tolerate their use **(Descriptive) (Obama, September 10, 2013).**

The attacks were concentrated and carefully targeted to minimize casualties among the Libyan people **(Descriptive) (Reagan, April 15, 1986).**

Requestive speech acts which are used for 4 times with a percentage of 4.95% are also used by presidents to request the nation to actions and to fulfil the future objectives and the intentions of the conducted military action. As shown in the table above, other types of illocutionary acts are also used but with quite low frequency and percentages.

### **Move 7: Speech Acts Analysis of *Consequences of Failing to Respond Militarily (Inaction)***

Indicative in this specific move-structure is the frequency and distribution of the illocutionary speech acts performed in this move are shown in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Frequencies of Speech Acts in Move 7**

<b>Number and Title of Move</b>	<b>Types of Speech Acts</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Move 7:</b>	Constatives	Assertives	11	12.94%

<b>Consequences of Failing to Act Militarily (Inaction)</b>		Informatives	14	16.47%
		Confirmatives	5	5.88%
		Predictives	35	41.17%
		Retrodictives	6	7.05%
		Suppositives	5	5.88%
	Commissives	Promises	3	3.52%
	Directives	Requestives	4	4.70%
		Questions	1	1.17%
		Requirements	1	1.17%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>

As has been demonstrated in earlier generic moves, the types of illocutionary speech acts employed by presidents in this specific move have been operationalized to serve realizing in a rhetorical way the semantic function of this move. The increased use of predictive speech acts can be clearly seen in the generic move of *Risks of Failing to act Militarily (Inaction)*. They are used with a frequency of 35 out of 85 and a percentage of 41.17%. This rate does not cause a surprise for the researcher as the study expected the frequent use of predictive speech acts to depict the fearful hypothetical present and future that may exist in case America fails to respond militarily against the constant aggressive behaviours of the enemy. The speakers use them most often with respect to the enemies, pointing to negative and evil aspects of their future activities if the United States fails or failed to act. Citing Clinton's 1998 speech, the presidents make use of the predictives as a type of constative speech acts to communicate the evil aspects that the enemy may act in case the United States fails to respond militarily to the enemy's act of aggression. By portraying the fearful results and the risks of inaction, presidents are closer to the legitimacy of the military intervention conducted and more to attract the audience's support and acceptance.

If Saddam defies the world and we fail to respond (**Assertive**), we will face a far greater threat in the future (**Predictive**). Saddam will strike again at his neighbors (**Predictive**). He will make war on his own people (**Predictive**).

And mark my words, he will develop weapons of mass destruction (**Predictive**). He will deploy them (**Predictive**), and he will use them (**Predictive**).

Because we're acting today (**Assertive**), it is less likely that we will face these dangers in the future (**Predictive**) (Clinton, December 16, 1998).

Another example is also taken from a speech delivered by George W. Bush in 2003 where the president explains the harmfulness and evilness that may be brought to the United States and the World in case America will not respond to the emerging threat.

We are now acting because the risks of inaction would be far greater (**Predictive**). In one year, or five years, the power of Iraq to inflict harm on all free nations would be multiplied many times over (**Predictive**). With these capabilities, Saddam Hussein and his

terrorist allies could choose the moment of deadly conflict when they are strongest  
**(Predictive) (Bush, March 17, 2003).**

Indicative and self-explanatory in constructing and realizing the function of this generic move is the predictivity, as opposed to confirmability of the projected future actions that enemies *might* or *will* take if the United States fails to act. Thus, by portraying a future of fear and threat resulting from military inaction which is oppositional to the privileged future of freedom and peace planned by presidents' administrations capitalize audiences and create a vital and ubiquitous discourse of emerging threat and danger (Jackson, 2004). However, although the main purpose of constructing a powerful discourse of threat and danger is to legitimise and normalise the conducted military action or the pre-emptive war against enemies, the evil and the fearful future actions of these enemies resulting from inaction are undermined by presidents and not given heavy centrality through the excessive use of the predictive speech acts.

Informatives are the second category of illocutionary speech acts of constatives that is used to construct and realize the function of this generic move. They are used with a frequency of 14 and a percentage of 16.74%. Some informative speech acts are used by presidents to tell audience of the military response the United States and its allies have already conducted to be then justified and normalised through predictive discourse of the future threats and dangers posed by the enemy.

Because we're acting today **(Informative)**, it is less likely that we will face these dangers in the future **(Predictive) (Clinton 1998).**

We choose to meet that threat now, where it arises, before it can appear suddenly in our skies and cities **(Informative) (Bush March 17 2003).**

Our nation enters this conflict reluctantly **(Informative) (Bush, March 20 2003).**

Assertives represent the third type of speech acts that is frequently performed in this generic move where it stands for 11 frequent with a percentage of 12.94%. As they serve to express beliefs and represent a state of affairs, assertive speech acts used in this move are addressed to express beliefs and states of affairs contributing in constructing the function of this move and, generally, justifying the doctrine of the fearful future in case of inaction. The following are some examples of the use of assertive speech acts.

Second, the consequences of a rapid exit are both predictable and unacceptable  
**(Assertive) (Bush, March 17 2003).**

And for us to ignore, by inaction, the slaughter of American civilians and American soldiers, whether in nightclubs or airline terminals, is simply not in the American tradition  
**(Assertive) (Reagan, April 15, 1986).**

As the notion of emerging threats and dangers is discursively frequent in the presidential war narrative as a rhetorical way to gain the audience's support and to normalise the war against enemy, these threats and dangers are marginalized by the use of predictive speech acts as have been earlier declared. Other types of speech

acts are also used by presidents to refer to the probability or supposition of these threats through the use of suppositive type of speech acts. Suppositives are expressions of beliefs that they are worth considering the consequences of proposition, irrespective of whether they are true (Bach & Harnish, 1979). As such, suppositives are another way used by presidents to mitigate the consequences of the of present and future threats and dangers posed by enemies with the ideological purpose of pushing audience into accepting the decision taken as this is shown in the examples below.

If Saddam defies the world and we fail to respond (**Suppositive**), we will face a far greater threat in the future (**Predictive**) (**Clinton, December 16, 1998**).

In desperation, he and terrorists groups might try to conduct terrorist operations against the American people and our friends (**Suppositive**). These attacks are not inevitable (**Suppositive**). They are, however, possible (**Suppositive**) (**Bush, March 17, 2003**).

Because the rhetorical function of this the generic move of *Risks of Failing to Act Militarily (Inaction)* is to suppose or predict the threats and dangers that may be brought to the United States and the world in case the United States fails to act militarily in response to these threats, retrodictives are also utilized by presidents to recount disastrous past facts that took place as a result of failing to act. They account for 6 occurrences and a percentage of 7.05% out of the performed illocutionary acts. In the following examples, presidents affirm that leaving appeasement and immediately resisting aggression and threat is the only way of not experiencing the severe events and facts that the nation witnessed in the past.

Appeasement does not work (**Assertive**). As was the case in the 1930's (**Retrodictive**), we see in Saddam Hussein an aggressive dictator threatening his neighbors (**Assertive**) (**Bush, August 8, 1990**).

The consequences of failure are clear (**Assertive**) ... On September the 11th, 2001, we saw what a refuge for extremists on the other side of the world could bring to the streets of our own cities (**Retrodictive**) (**Bush, January 11, 2007**).

Of interesting finding in the analysis of this move is that mostly predictive illocutionary speech acts follow either informative, assertive or confirmative speech acts in an attempt to capitalize the psychological state of the audience of the presence of the threat and danger and that, in case of not responding, that threat will result in a fearful and disastrous future that America may witness. In the excerpt below taken from George H. W. Bush, the president initiates his utterance with an informative speech act about the American history that audiences must make use of followed by a requestive speech act of the necessity of rebuffing aggression as American ancestors already did, or that aggression and others will destroy America's freedom as this is hypothetically represented in the predictive speech act in the example below.



But if history teaches us anything **(Informative)**, it is that we must resist aggression **(Requestive)** or it will destroy our freedoms **(Predictive)** (Bush, January 16, 1990).

Requestive, promise, question and requirement types of speech acts are also used in one way or another to serve the communicative function of this move structure. However, they are used with a very low of rate of frequency as shown in the table above.

### 3.1 General Discussion

As for the analysis of the illocutionary speech acts in the moves of the generic structure which is the focus of the third research question, the following table summarizes the analysis of the speech acts and their frequencies and distribution in the moves.

**Table 12: Frequency of Illocutionary Speech Acts in the Rhetorical Moves and Strategies**

Based on the table above which indicates the comparative frequencies and percentages of the total number of illocutionary acts performed in all the moves of the addresses, it is observed that informative type of speech acts is the category of illocutionary acts that is most frequently performed with the highest rates in all of the moves of the generic structure of American presidential war addresses. Informatives, across all the moves of the generic structure of the war speeches account for 158 occurrences out of 511 performed speech act with a rate of 30.09%. Similar to the finding of our study, informative speech acts were most frequently used in the president's speeches in an attempt to provide the nation with much information and to make citizens feel suitably informed.

Assertives represent the second category of illocutionary speech acts which are performed in all the move structures of the war addresses. As informatives, they have been widely used by presidents to presents beliefs and have hearers hold the same beliefs. As observed in the table above, the total number of the assertive speech acts used in all the moves is 102 with a percentage of 19.96%. In our study, the increased use of assertive illocutionary acts proves effective in allowing presidents to assert a series of beliefs and states of affairs related to the communicative functions of the generated move structures. Presenting beliefs related to arguments of the right of self-defense, the United States' efforts to solve the crisis and restore peace, legitimate authority and the lawful responsibility of the international community to rebuff aggression and terrorism, and risks of not responding militarily to enemy's atrocities are vitally beneficial in serving and achieving the communicative purpose for which the genre in question is established.

Confirmatives represent the third category of speech acts performed in almost all the moves. Confirmatives account for 79 occurrences out of 511 and with a rate of 15.45%. As has been observed in the analysis of speech acts represented in the table above, confirmative type of illocutionary acts constitutes a fundamental constituent justificatory element in the presidential war narrative especially when it comes to confirm and verify the *Self-*

Speech Acts		M		M.		M		M		M		M		M		F	P
. 1		2		. 3		.4		. 5		.6		.7					
Type																	
Assertive		3.55	5	3.14		3.07	9	2.35	1	8.03	2	5.28	1	2.94	02	9.96	
Predictive				.40				.17		.63		.29	5	1.17	7	.19	
Retrodictive		0.16						.17				.24		.05	4	.73	
Descriptive		.69		.85				.17			2	3.79			6	.13	
Informative	8	4.40	4	2.96		4.61	0	8.82	6	1.62		.04	4	6.47	58	0.09	
Conformative		.38	4	1.48	0	8.46		.88	0	6.39	3	4.94		.88	9	5.45	
Commissive		.69						.35							3	.58	
Retractive		.69													1	.19	
Assessive										.27					2	.39	
Responsive				.70								.14			5	.97	
Supportive				.92				.35				.14		.88	9	.76	
Requisitive		.38		.62		.84				.27		.59		.70	8	.52	
Question														.17	1	.19	
Requirement														.17	1	.19	
Advisories										.27		.14			3	.58	
Promises			4	2.96				.52		.55	0	2.98		.52	4	.61	
Offers				.92											1	.19	

Condole																
Congratulate																
Greet																
Thank										.91					3	.58
Bid								.17				.44			4	.78
Total	9	.33	08	3.43	6	.23	5	0.57	1	.58	7	0.82	5	0.57	11	00

*defensive Nature of Military Action, Enemy's Atrociousness and Savagery, War as a Last Resort after Aborting Diplomatic Solutions by Enemy, and the Real Intentions of Military Action.* This finding, the frequent use of confirmative type of speech acts, goes in line with Łazuka's (2006) previous study in which confirmative speech acts are also widely used.

Predictives are another frequently occurring type of illocutionary communicative acts. They are used totally in the moves with a frequency of 47 out of 511 of the performed speech acts with a percentage of 9.19% and used mostly in the seventh move structure of *Consequences of Failing to Act Militarily (Inaction)* to depict the fearful hypothetical present and future that may exist in case America fails to respond militarily against the constant aggressive behaviours of the enemy. Employing this deliberative strategy invoke the feeling of fear in the audiences' minds and psychologically prepare their social cognition to accept without challenges any undertaken or proposed policies. Predictive type of speech acts constitutes an essential element in defining and realizing the seventh generic structure and its communicative function which in turns serves for accomplishing the communicative purpose of the address as a whole. Thus, performing predictive illocutionary acts is rendered one of the rhetorical strategies that is frequently advocated in presidential war addresses to justify waging wars.

Although not used in all of the moves of the generic structure as observed in the table above, promises occupy the fifth category or type of illocutionary acts out of the performed speech acts. This category of illocutionary communicative acts stands for 44 frequency out of 511 with a percentage of 8.61% and has been majorly performed in move 5 which requires deliberative rhetoric that concerns future actions or events (Kennedy, 2007) or establishes "the expediency of action taken in an effort to gain public support" (Dow, 1989). To put it differently, because wars have been waged without formal sanction of the Congress and that public demonstration of such deliberation necessarily came after-the-fact, it became necessary for national addresses in this situation to discuss the undertaken military action and highlight the deliberative characteristics of the process, the use of promises as one of these, in order to keep the minds of audiences away from the negative memories of undeclared and secret wars and to reassure a democratic society (Dow, 1989).

Although used with lower rates of frequency, all other categories of illocutionary speech acts are indicative of the communicative intention of the move-structures in which they are intentionally performed as clear in the table above.

#### IV. Conclusion

As for the analysis of the types of illocutionary speech acts performed by presidents to realize the communicative function of each move-structure, it was observed that the presidents' selection of speech acts was indicative of their communicative intention and that socio-political context that surrounded the presidential addresses had a great impact on the types of illocutionary speech acts performed by the American presidents resulting in a presidential speech which can either be informative, assertive, confirmative, justificatory, or persuasive. When carrying their presidential war addresses, presidents strategized their discourse in a particular intentional way through the selection of appropriate speech acts in an attempt to influence some intended present and future outcomes. To rally the public support and to justify the undertaken military action or prepare for a future course of action, presidents generated the content of their addresses consciously with respect to the exigency or the function of the move-structures in which they were mentioned. The study observed that the types of the illocutionary speech acts employed by American presidents in their war narrative were consistent with the rhetorical moves and their communicative functions. It has been found that the rhetorical moves constituting the generic structure of this specific genre were laced with a preponderance of informative speech acts and established for a predominantly informative mode of speaking reflecting an informational goal to give every single detail of why the U.S. was going to war against enemies. These reflected the pair function of defining and understanding the newly happening events (Condit 1985), the enemy's act of offence, the negative image of the enemy, the diplomatic efforts exerted to avoid war and restore peace, and the legitimacy of going into war. Similar to the function of informatives across the move-structures, assertive goal was another characteristic that presidents intentionally assumed in the move-structures in order to move the nation to accept and have the same presidents' beliefs related to the legitimacy discursual frame America adopts regularly in justifying its formally undeclared wars.

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