

Give me a Vote: How Nepalese Mayoral Candidates Perform Speech Acts on Facebook?

Yog Raj Lamichhane*, Suresh Raj Dhakal**

*School of Business, Pokhara University, Pokhara, Nepal

**Gandaki University, Pokhara, Nepal

Abstract

Backgrounds: Social media, particularly at the time of the election, are frequently used by politicians for communication with their voters. Among different social media, Facebook is the most popular media in Nepal.

Objectives: In this context, the paper has analyzed how the eighteen mayoral candidates of the Local Election-2022 from six Metropolises of Nepal have performed different illocutionary speech acts while communicating with their voters through posts on Facebook.

Methods: Developing a protocol, selected 394 posts of two candidates of the major political parties and one independent candidate from each metropolis are selected as data for analysis. The status updates on Facebook of these candidates from the day of their nomination to the election silence period before the voting day are collected for analysis. The taxonomy of illocutionary speech acts developed by Searle is taken as the theoretical base to analyze the collected written updates.

Results: The study has found extreme use of assertive speech acts and occasional use of declarative speech acts in the status updates by the mayoral candidates. There are no fundamental differences between the winning and losing candidates regarding their culture of using or ignoring particular speech acts.

Conclusions: Communicating the certainty or the inaccuracy of the proposition in the form of extreme assertive speech acts by the candidate indicates the usual reporting character of them rather than adopting other rational and expressive speech acts to move the audience. It also indicates that they perform different speech acts without being conscious of the inherent characteristics of the acts. The study supports scrutinizing the communication skills of the politicians of urban Nepal in terms of doing politics with words.

Keywords: Facebook, political communication, social media, speech acts, status update

JEL Classification: F43, N17, N70, O47

Received: 28 Nov 2022

Reviewed: 04 March 2023

Accepted: 24 March 2023

Published: 31 March 2023

Correspondence:

Yog Raj Lamichhane
email: lcyograj@gmail.com

Citation:

Lamichhane, Y. R., & Dhakal S. R. (2023). Give me a vote: How Nepalese mayoral candidates perform speech acts on Facebook? *The Journal of Business and Management*, 7(1), 170-184.

<https://doi.org/10.3126/jbm.v7i01.54561>

Introduction

In politics, people can support politicians by following them on social media. Steinberg (2015) argues that following a politician's page is equivalent to wearing a campaign button, having an extra-large sticker on a car, and having a sign in front of the house. A single click can work as a virtual vote for the candidates. The incorporation of social media in political campaigns in recent years allows politicians to promote themselves, communicate interactively with voters, and disseminate information without the interference of traditional media. They have evolved into semi-public and semi-private spaces where politicians can engage users in online encounters (Quinlan et al., 2018). Users can exchange content, acknowledge it with a like and interact with other users by leaving a remark on a post in diverse forms of utterances on social media.

Social media as a form of new media engage people in their networks for different forms of communication. Because of that, people can hardly escape the popular network in modern times. Carr and Hayes (2015) remark, "Social media are Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others" (p. 50). Different from the earlier print and electronic media, social media provides extensive opportunities for its users. The value of the content communicated through social media can never be unilateral. Interlocutors collectively generate meanings in the process of interaction by evaluating the context.

Among diverse social media, Facebook has the largest number of users among different social networks in Nepal. It has 1,45,04,800 users accounting for 46.8% of the entire population of Nepal ("Facebook users in Nepal"). In comparison to other social networks, "most accounts on Facebook are private and its usage is based on one-way or reciprocal friendship ties. Information travels less fluidly through this medium, also due to the extensive algorithmic filtering of contents" (Stier et al., 2018, p. 54). The content shared through Facebook primarily goes to a previously connected users' community. Facebook has been classified as a social networking site that can assist users in understanding politics, building and maintaining social capital and initiating online conversations, all of which can lead to political participation (Bosch, 2018). In politics, Facebook works as a presentation and discussion forum. Facebook users can express their views, participate in discussions and just demonstrate their support for various political parties, candidates, and their ideals (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2018). Thus, it has become a tool for a political campaign to mobilize potential voters as Bronstein et al. (2018) observe its emergence as a new type of political platform that allows politicians to express themselves uniquely. Realizing its strength, most politicians seem involved in this network.

Thus, this paper examines the Facebook status updates of the eighteen mayoral candidates in Nepal's Local Election-2022 of six metropolitan cities to identify how the five illocutionary speech acts as categorized by Searle are used in the updates by them while virtually communicating with their potential voters. Out of 293 municipalities in Nepal, there are only

six metropolitan cities. The basic requirements concerning population, revenue, infrastructure, health and education are to be fulfilled to be declared a city as a metropolitan city. Bharatpur, Biratnagar, Birgunj, Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Pokhara fulfilled these thresholds and declared metropolitan cities. During election time, the mayoral candidates of metropolitan cities are expected to have effective communication through such media for transferring information and meanings and it is also believed that that could be pragmatically understood by decoding particular speech acts performed by the users.

By collecting and analyzing the written Facebook posts of the mayoral candidates of six metropolises either from the pages or from profiles, the study adds to the current literature on social media and political communication regarding the usage of speech acts. To do so, the study primarily examines:

- How are the mayoral candidates engaged with Facebook status updates in a particular timeframe?
- How do they apply different illocutionary speech acts in their updates?
- What might be the interpretation behind using or ignoring certain speech acts in comparison to others?

In the Nepalese context, no studies have been undertaken to examine the intended meaning of lexical choices of political candidates on Facebook. This paper, therefore, primarily aims to expand the horizon of political communication associated with social media, particularly Facebook, decoding the illocutionary speech acts performed in the form of Facebook posts. Such audition of the performative speech acts of the candidates reveals the communication culture of leadership that might be adopted in the business and managerial communication.

Review of Literature

In Speech Acts theory, Austin establishes the idea that language is not only used to describe or inform things but to perform. He further opines that to “say something is to do something, or in which by saying or in saying something we are doing something” (Austin, 1962, p. 12). It reveals the performative part of the language and aims to support effective communication. Rosaldo (1982) asserts that speech acts theorists try to grasp the idea that requires more than just propositions to be examined for truth: it also requires a communicative goal and as a result, the meanings conveyed by our words must be determined not just by what we say but also by who we are and what we want our audience to understand. It gives more space for contexts which can be understood as different appropriate conditions.

Concerning the functions communicated through linguistic acts, Austin (1962) categorizes the speech acts mainly into locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary forces of utterance. Moreover, the locutionary act signifies the fundamental act of utterance which has referential value, the illocutionary act represents the communicative purpose of the utterance and the perlocutionary act denotes the perceived effect on the interlocutor. Then, the illocutionary speech acts are further divided by Austin into “verdictives (typical examples: giving a verdict, estimating, and appraising), exercitives (examples: ordering, urging, and warning),

commissives (promising, pledging, declaring), behabitives (thanking, apologizing, and resenting), and expositives (affirming, informing, and correcting)” (Campbell, 1973, p. 285) types using performative verbs. Searle (1976) denounces the classification of the illocutionary speech acts of Austin declaring defective and argues for revisiting it to correct the prevailing faintness. In the revised taxonomy, Searle proposes an alternative classification in the forms of assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative illocutionary acts. In the reviewed taxonomy, the assertive act explains the world's order by presenting a state of circumstances, the directive act tries to persuade the listener to take action, the commissive act obligates the speaker to take part in some future activity, the expressive act describes a person's mental condition and the declarative act causes a shift in the status quo by employing words to change the world. Thus, using or ignoring of particular speech acts by the specific performers might be related to their intention.

Among the studies related to computer-mediated communication, speech acts have a significant presence. Speech acts are communicative activities carried out in response to the aim of the speaker and the perception of the audience in a definite situation. Tsoumou (2020) looks at how people use their words in politically charged Facebook conversations with a dataset of over 265,147 words using speech acts and finds that “no illocutionary force could exist per se without its perlocutionary counterpart effect. Every speech act is complete as long as both forces illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect are considered indispensable parts of the utterance” (p. 80). It reflects the interconnectivity between other types of speech acts excluding the locutionary one. Differently, Abels et al. (2021) have investigated whether there is a difference in speech acts between child and adult interlocutors in the Hadza community of Tanzania and discovered that adults employ more requests for actions, questions and information to infants, but children use more assertive speech acts. The variation in the illocutionary speech in terms of age signals that the nature of doing with words also changes within an individual at different times.

Social media brings individuals into the public arena. While investigating the role of social media in enlarging democratic space in two African nations Zimbabwe and Kenya, it is explored that “digital media platforms such as Facebook pages constitute a realization and an extension of the original public sphere” (Bosch et al., 2020, p. 360-361). Such expansion leads society to more democratic practices. It seems that politicians use the platform as a virtual stage for the election campaign and as a tool for polarization. Candidates and their overt addressees prioritize subjects differently than their general audience (Stier et al., 2018). Leadership and the active members of the political parties appear to manipulate social media strategically for their political motives using diverse speech acts.

Politics is a public issue but politicians also use social media like Facebook for self-personalization. Metz et al. (2020) examine both the use and consequences of self-personalization on Facebook arguing:

The use of a more emotional and private style provides a beneficial tool for politicians’

impression management. Publishing emotional and private content yields positive effects on audience engagement, suggesting audiences' demand for more intimate and emotional impressions of public figures on the web. (p. 1)

Such emotionally loaded expressive utterance content concerning self-personalization intimately and positively contributes to persuading the audience. A study by Bronstein et al. (2018) on the different types of use of personalization elements as engagement strategies, the Aristotelian language of persuasion, the level of social media engagement in terms of likes, comments and shares and the vividness features used in the post concerning text, photographs and video in Facebook updates by the politicians from Israel during the General Election-2015 concludes that "the dominance of pathos was a salient element in the data demonstrating the politicians' need to create an effective alliance with the public and it was the element that resulted in a higher number of likes, shares and comments" (p. 551). The emotive language of the politicians seems to affect generating more feedback rather than logical and credible words. Differently, sometimes, Facebook has become a site for expressing individual depression. Seabrook et al. (2018) look for links between inconsistent harsh depression in emotional word expression on Facebook and Twitter throughout status updates and they come up with the conclusion that "instability in the negative emotion expressed on Facebook provides insight into the presence of depression symptoms for social media users, and greater variability of negative emotion expression on Twitter may be protective for mental health" (p. 13). In this way, social media has also become a tool to test not only social well-being but also mental well-being.

Nowadays, Facebook has also become a forecasting network for the election result specified by various indicators such as likes, comments, reactions and emojis. Barclay et al. (2015) identify a positive correlation between the number of 'likes' a party or its leader has on its official Facebook page and its vote share. Likewise, likes and comments have become integral parts of Facebook use. Almoqbel et al. (2018) examine inspirations for comment reading and liking on social media news articles responding to whether reading comments before or after reading the full article is related to different commenting and liking motivations as well as scrutinizing how political extremism and cultural orientation are related to users' motivations and find "cultural orientation was a salient independent variable" (p. 118) reflected through social media while discussing politics. Both culture and politics are rooted in the belief system. However, the political view seems a little weaker as compared to the culture in social media.

The review indicates that significant studies on Facebook as social media and its role in political communication are globally available but there is the scarceness of the study on how the Facebook status updates by the political candidates perform with words requesting votes in local settings. So, the study examines the written status updates on Facebook by eighteen mayoral candidates of six metropolitan cities of Nepal in the Local Election-2022 focusing on illocutionary speech acts.

Materials and Methods

The study has analyzed the Facebook status updates of the eighteen mayoral candidates of Nepal's Local Election-2022 of all six metropolises from Nepal. That comprises Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Pokhara, Biratnagar, Birgunj and Bharatpur. The status updates of two candidates from major political parties and one independent from each metropolis were considered as data. The candidates were of three categories: an alliance of the ruling parties led by the Nepali Congress, an alliance of the opposition parties led by the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) and the self-motivated independent class in which the candidates were Balen from Kathmandu, Ganesh from Pokhara, Jagan from Bharatpur, Sarina from Lalitpur, Umesh from Biratnagar and Radheshyam from Birgunj. The links to the Facebook page of the eighteen candidates were listed in the form of references in the appendix. Generally, the first names of the candidates were highly practiced this paper as they were not matching with others. The classification of the candidates could not be done in terms of political ideology because of the ideological mismatch in these political alliances. These updates were collected from the day of nomination (April 24-25, 2022) to the start of the silence period for the poll (May 11, 2022). The official Facebook page or profile of each candidate was used to collect the posts. Excluding the pictorial and visual updates as well as shared items from other sources, the study included purely the written updates of the candidates.

The posts which did not talk about the candidacy and election were also excluded from the study though they were posted within the timeframe of the data collection. Following the protocol, finally, 394 posts were considered for analysis in this qualitative descriptive study. The candidates seemed to access Facebook pages and profiles publicly. Thus, no consent was taken from the candidates to use the updates for the analysis. The status updates from the candidates' Facebook pages or profiles were manually collected simply by copy-pasting them on word files. Among various social media in Nepalese context, Facebook is selected because of its popularity.

As the study aims to identify the communication strategies of the political candidates connecting to performative speech acts on Facebook posts, the data were classified in terms of five illocutionary speech acts; assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative according to the classification of speech acts proposed by Searle (1976). Actually, that became the theoretical base for the study.

Results and Discussion

To reflect different kinds of speech act used by the mayoral candidates of metropolitan cities of Nepal in the Local Election-2022, the study concentrates on illocutionary acts classified by Searle.

Candidates, Status, Speech Acts and Metropolis

The following table shows the list of six metropolitan cities of Nepal and includes the list of eighteen mayoral candidates that comprises three candidates from each metropolis. The number

of written status updates by the individual candidates is categorized into five illocutionary speech acts. The total use of these acts in the updates is shown in number and percentage.

Table 1

Candidates' Names, Metropolises and Frequency and Percentage of Five Illocutionary Acts as Classified by Searle

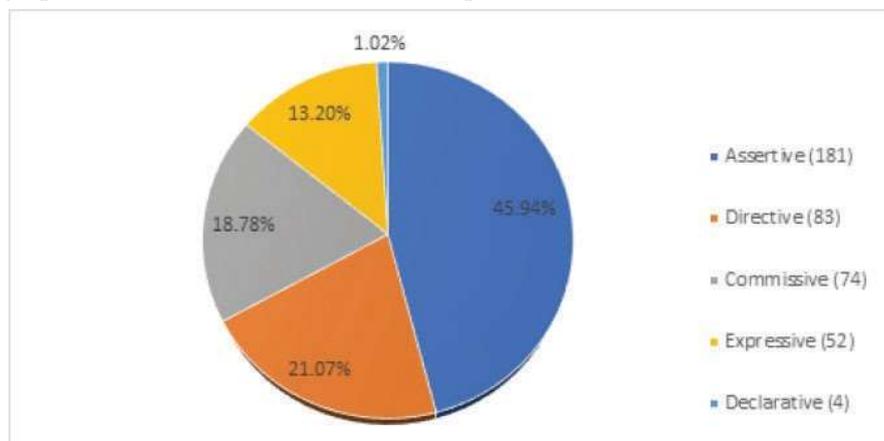
Types of Illocutionary Acts			Assertive		Directive		Commissive		Expressive		Declarative		Σ
S/N	Candidate	Metropolis	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Balen	Kathmandu	4	30.76	1	7.69	2	15.38	6	46.15	0	0	13
2	Sagar	Biratnagar	12	54.54	1	4.54	9	40.9	0	0	0	0	22
3	Dhan	Pokhara	7	43.75	4	25	3	18.75	2	12.5	0	0	16
4	Ganesh	Pokhara	3	50	1	16.66	0	0	2	33.33	0	0	6
5	Keshav	Kathmandu	3	13.04	7	30.43	7	30.43	5	21.73	1	4.34	23
6	Srijana	Kathmandu	16	64	3	12	3	12	3	12	0	0	25
7	Renu	Bharatpur	6	54.54	0	0	1	9.09	4	36.36	0	0	11
8	Krishna	Pokhara	17	34	15	30	12	24	5	10	1	2	50
9	Bijay	Bharatpur	2	40	1	20	1	20	1	20	0	0	5
10	Jagan	Bharatpur	8	66.66	1	8.33	0	0	3	25	0	0	12
11	Chiri	Lalitpur	7	29.16	15	62.5	2	8.33	0	0	0	0	24
12	Hari	Lalitpur	0	0	1	33.33	0	0	2	66.66	0	0	3
13	Sarina	Lalitpur	4	26.66	2	13.33	2	13.33	7	46.66	0	0	15
14	Nagesh	Biratnagar	3	21.42	0	0	4	28.57	7	50	0	0	14
15	Rajesh	Birgunj	38	53.52	3	4.22	27	38.02	3	4.22	0	0	71
16	Vijya	Birgunj	38	92.68	0	0	0	0	1	2.43	2	4.87	41
17	Umesh	Biratnagar	4	12.12	27	81.81	1	3.03	1	3.03	0	0	33
18	Radhe	Birgunj	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Total Performance of Speech Acts			181		83		74		52		4		394

Note. Only the first names of the mayoral candidates are written in the above table.

The table 1 incorporates the names of eighteen mayoral candidates of six metropolises, their metropolises, and usages of five illocutionary speech acts classified by Searle during the local election, as well as the frequency and percentage of those speech acts.

Occurrence of Diverse Speech Acts in Facebook Updates

The following figure shows the categorization of all 394 Facebook posts in terms of the use of different illocutionary speech acts as selected for the analysis where assertiveness covers nearly half among the total performances of speech acts.

Figure 1*Frequency of Speech Acts in Facebook Status Updates*

Note. It is the frequency of all the selected status updates for the study.

The above figure shows the total usage of assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative acts by the candidates which are 45.94%, 21.07%, 18.78%, 13.20% and 1.02% respectively. Among five illocutionary acts, all the mayoral candidates, except one, have used assertive speech acts in their status updates. Among assertive interlocuters, there is a variation that the usage ranges from 12.12% to 92.68%. Surprisingly, the usage of declarative speech acts is rare. Out of 394 status updates selected for this study, only four updates represent the declarative speech act. One candidate has written two declarative statuses and the other two candidates have posted single status concerning it. This study differs from the study of Mohamad et al. (2018) on Facebook status updates by an apostate of Islam where “expressive speech act is the most frequent speech act (33%, n=2), followed by the directive (27%, n=177), assertive (22%, n=141), and commissive (18%, n=115), respectively” (p. 226). The variation can be perceived normally that the average result of the political Facebook users can be different in terms of their settings and social character.

This study has identified assertive and directive speech acts as the first and second predominant forces of utterance respectively. Likewise, the study of Sri and Thooyibah (2017) regarding the teachers’ talk in a classroom interchangeably finds directive and assertive speech acts as the first and second dominant forces of utterance covering 70% and 21% of the usage of speech acts respectively. Similarly, in this study, the average use of commissive acts covers 18.78% and expressive acts cover 13.20%, whereas the study of Sri and Thooyibah (2017) reveals the presence of only 6% and 3% of expressive and commissive speech acts respectively. It shows that the content related to feelings and commitment is less in teachers’ talk. This study has also explored that the usage of expressive acts by the candidates is just 13.20% in total.

However, Carr et al. (2012) examine the usage of status messages on social network sites of students from a public university in the Midwest United States and find the excessive usage of expressive speech acts that represents almost 60% of updates comprising emotion toward the audience. A similar type of result is also found in the study among Pakistani youth from

the eighteen to twenty-four age group, which explores that the “Status messages were most frequently constructed with expressive speech acts, followed by assertive and directives” (Ilyas & Khushi, 2012, p. 500). However, in this study, assertive speech acts are followed by directive and commissive. Then only, the status updates are formed with expressive speech acts.

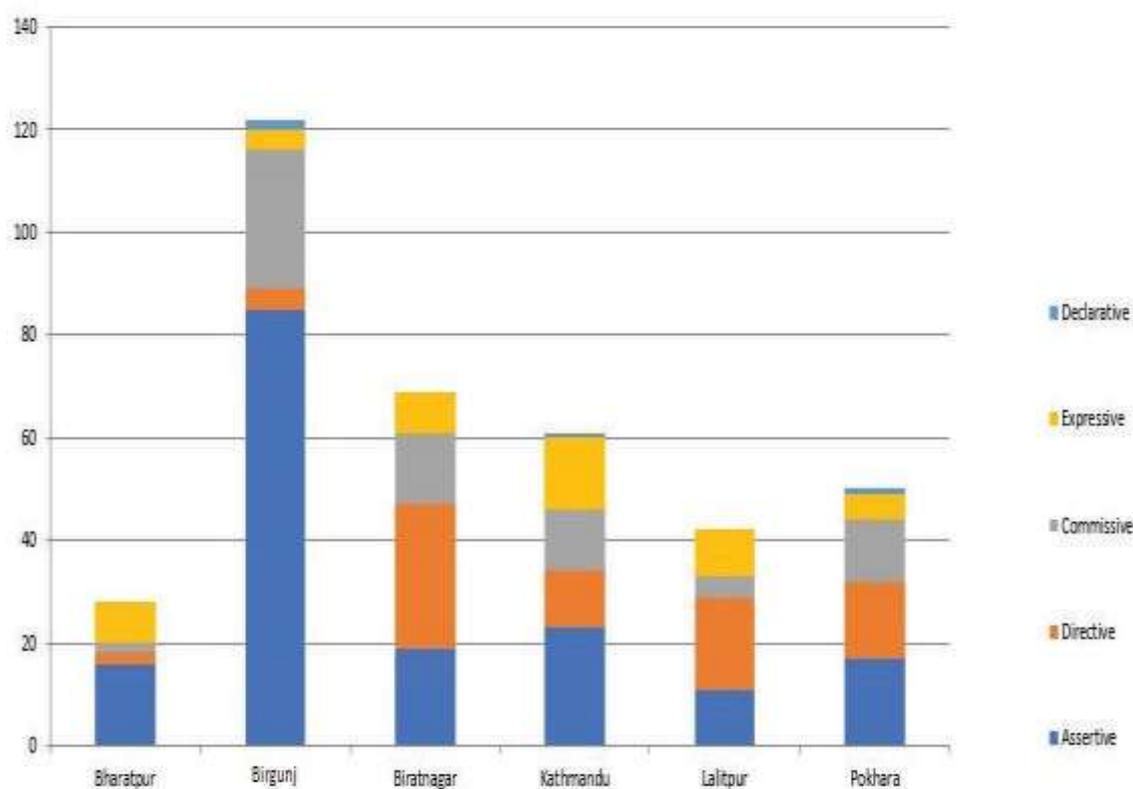
About a fifth of the total selected Facebook status updates in this study perform commissive speech acts which are four times more in comparison to the study on the first prime ministerial announcement of Malaysia and Singapore (Krishnan et al., 2021) concerning Covid-19. In this sense, the usage of the commissive speech act seems satisfactory.

Six Metropolises and Five Speech Acts

The following figure shows the proportion of the different speech acts used by the candidates from six metropolitan cities of Nepal where Birgunj stands first.

Figure 2

The City-wise Frequency of Different Speech Acts in Status Updates



In terms of 6 metropolitan cities, as shown in Figure 2, the three candidates from Birgunj collectively contribute the highest number of written updates on Facebook. The number of updates of the candidates from Biratnagar and Kathmandu is somehow similar. Likewise, the updates of the candidates from Pokhara and Lalitpur are nearly the same in counts. Moreover, the Facebook status updates of the candidates from Bharatpur are the least in number. While counting the number of status updates, the updates from Birgunj are four times more than Bharatpur. Again, while comparing the number of individual status updates from the other five

metropolitan cities, the number of usages of the single assertive speech acts from Birgunj is significantly high.

Particularly, the mayoral candidate of Birgunj, Vijaya Sarawagi has mostly performed assertive acts but he fails to use directive and commissive speech acts. On the contrary, the least use of the assertive act; the mayoral candidate of Biratnagar, Umesh Kumar Yadav has used the highest directive act. The studies on the students at Nommensen HKBP University of Indonesia regarding the post and comments on students' Instagram accounts and the defamation act of Indonesian people on social media such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook during 2017-2019 have similarly identified assertive illocutionary speech act as the most dominant speech act (Hidayatillah et al., 2021; Natalia et al., 2022) as Vijaya of this study.

Exceptionally in totality and significantly in the case of Vijaya, two declarative usages of speech acts are experienced. Krishna Thapa and Keshav Sthapit have also used declarative speech acts in their single status updates. Moving a step forward, a study by Faizin et al. (2018) establishes a surprising result where there is total absenteeism of declarative speech acts in the usage of WhatsApp messages by Indonesian adults who have different educational backgrounds. The result of this study concerning the rare use of declarative speech act can be accepted normally as the earlier result of Indonesia.

Among eighteen mayoral candidates, there lies only three female candidates. Renu Dahal and Srijana Singh have contested representing political parties and Sarina Lakhe has stood independently. These two female candidates from political parties have dominantly used assertive speech acts in their Facebook statuses whereas the independent candidate, Sarina has prominently used expressive speech acts in her status updates. The two female candidates from political parties have used the majority of their status updates using assertive speech acts but the independent woman candidate has used expressive speech acts nearly in half of her total Facebook posts. Hutahaeon and Hamuddin (2018) in a study regarding the usage of illocutionary acts by Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton in the presidential election 2016 find Hilary's inclination to expressive speech acts more than other performative speech acts like Sarina of this study. However, in totality, this study has shown less use of expressive speech acts in the written status updates of the candidates. As Sarina from Lalitpur, the independent candidate from Kathmandu, Balen Shah in his Facebook posts has used maximum expressive speech acts. Out of his thirteen posts, six posts are formed using expressive speech acts and the remaining seven are formed using assertive, directive and commissive speech acts.

Regarding the excessive usage of different illocutionary acts in the Facebook status updates, Rajesh Man Singh and Vijaya Sarawagi have used a maximum number of statuses infused with assertiveness. Out of 181 statuses in assertive speech acts in the study, these two candidates have equally used thirty-eight assertive speech acts. In the case of directive speech, Umesh from Biratnagar has posted the highest number of his statuses using the directive speech acts. Among his total Facebook statuses, a third of the statuses belong to directive speech acts. Moreover, Rajesh has used the highest commissive speech acts among all eighteen candidates.

Out of a total of seventy-four statuses in commissive speech acts in this study, only he has used twenty-seven statuses. Regarding expressive speech acts, out of a total of fifty-two statuses of expressive speech acts in this study, Nagesh Koirala from Biratnagar and Sarina Lakhe from Lalitpur have significantly used expressive speech acts which is closer to the majority of their total updates. The usage of expressive speech acts by Hari K. Byanjankar counts for more than 60% of his total status updates. However, the percentage has raised because he has used two statuses using expressive speech acts among his total three updates in this study. Finally, in the case of declarative speech acts, Vijaya has used half of the declarative acts among the total number of declarative speech acts in this study. Exceptionally, it is also found in this study that Vijaya is only the candidate who has used the majority of two illocutionary speech acts writing statuses among 6 candidates.

Regarding the maximum and minimum usage of status updates in the election campaign, Krishna and Rajesh have posted fifty or more than fifty statuses whereas Bijaya from Bharatpur and Hari from Lalitpur have five or below five Facebook statuses from the day of their nomination until the election silence period before the voting day. Out of eighteen mayoral candidates, two have used all five forms of illocutionary speech acts, seven candidates have used four forms of these acts and the other seven candidates have used three different illocutionary speech acts in their status updates. Likewise, the remaining two candidates have used only two forms of the acts.

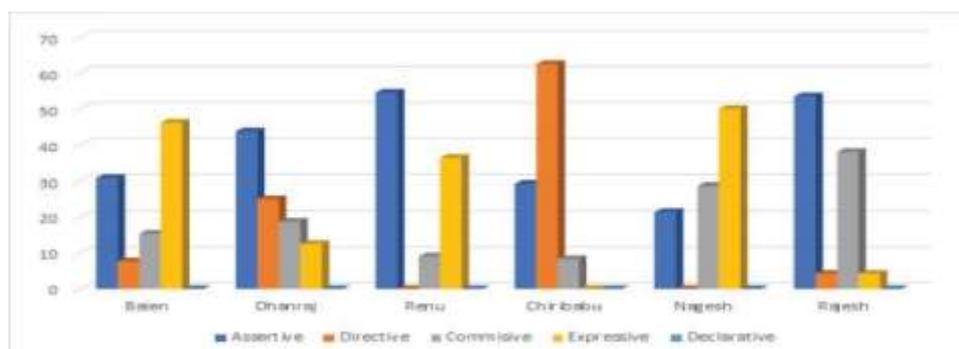
Based on the usages of the different illocutionary speech acts by the eighteen mayoral candidates from 6 metropolises on social media during election time in Nepal, a pattern of political communication can be identified but that can be further rationalized by involving more updates from diverse social media of the candidates from the different wards, rural municipalities, municipalities and sub-metropolises in case of the local election and the federal parliament as well as national assembly in national level.

Using Speech Acts by Winning Candidates

The following figure represents the elected Candidates-wise percentage of the use of different illocutionary speech acts in the Facebook status updates but serves no comprehensive pattern.

Figure 3

Elected Candidates-wise Percentage of the performance of Speech Acts in the Updates



The above figure indicates the use of illocutionary speech acts only by the six winning mayoral candidates in the Local Election-2022. Among winning candidates, Dhanraj, Renu, and Rajesh seem to use assertive, Balen and Nagesh appear to use expressive and Chiribabu seems to use directive speech acts much in their Facebook posts. However, the experience is not fundamentally different from the overall experience of all eighteen candidates, especially in the case of assertive and declarative speech acts. It indicates that the use of particular speech acts by the candidates does not have any relation to winning or losing the election.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results and their discussions in this study support to notice that there is excessive practice of assertive speech acts and rare exercise of declarative speech acts in the Facebook status updates by the eighteen mayoral candidates of six metropolitan cities of Nepal in the Local Election- 2022. The study finds no association between the use of a particular type of speech act and the number of votes obtained by the candidates. Likewise, no relationship is found between the use of particular speech acts and the nature of candidacy either from political party or independent side. Generally, expressive and commissive forms of illocutionary speech acts are predominant in political discourses and even within them, the commissive acts hold the uppermost application in the language of politicians (Mišić Ilić & Radulović, 2015). In this regard, the politicians from Nepal seem strategically illiterate in terms of doing politics with words. Precisely, communicating the truth or the falsity of the proposition in the form of excessive assertive speech acts by the mayoral candidates in this study signals the habitual reporting nature of the politicians rather than developing logical and emotional speech acts for moving the voters. At the same time, as the study has shown no variation in the pattern of using speech acts in the winning and losing mayoral candidates. So, it seems illogical to infer the effectiveness of particular speech acts to change the voting pattern. Although the article focused only on Facebook status updates of the candidates of the Local Election-2022 in Nepal, this result cannot be generalized to different types of election and leaders. The further incorporation of status updates from diverse social media and elections as well as feedback concerning them from the voters' side may reflect more reliable results related to the culture of effective political communication.

References

- Abels, M., Kilale, A., & Vogt, P. (2021). Speech acts addressed to Hadza infants in Tanzania: Cross-cultural comparison, speaker age, and camp livelihood. *First Language, 41*(3), 294-313. <http://doi.org/10.1177%2F0142723720972000>
- Almoqbel, M. Y., Wohn, D. Y., Hayes, R. A., & Cha, M. (2019). Understanding Facebook news post comment reading and reacting behavior through political extremism and cultural orientation. *Computers in Human Behavior, 100*, 118-126. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.06.006>
- Austin, J. L. (1975). *How to do things with words*. Oxford University Press.
- Barclay, F. P., Pichandy, C., Venkat, A., & Sudhakaran, S. (2015). India 2014: Facebook 'like'

- as a predictor of election outcomes. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 23(2), 134-160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02185377.2015.1020319>
- Bronstein, J., Aharony, N., & Bar-Ilan, J. (2018). Politicians' use of Facebook during elections: Use of emotionally-based discourse, personalization, social media engagement and vividness. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 70(5), 551-572. <http://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-03-02-2018-0067>
- Bosch, T. (2018). Digital media and political citizenship: Facebook and politics in South Africa. In *Perspectives on Political Communication in Africa* (pp. 145-158). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62057-2_9
- Bosch, T. E., Admire, M., & Ncube, M. (2020). Facebook and politics in Africa: Zimbabwe and Kenya. *Media, Culture & Society*, 42(3), 349-364. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0163443719895194>
- Campbell, P.N. (1973). A rhetorical view of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary Acts. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 59(3), 284-296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335637309383177>
- Carr, C. T., & Hayes, R. A. (2015). Social media: defining, developing, and divining. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 23(1), 46-65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870.2015.972282>
- Carr, C. T., Schrock, D. B., & Dauterman, P. (2012). Speech acts within Facebook status messages. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 31(2), 176-196. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0261927X12438535>
- Facebook users in Nepal. (Accessed 26 May 2022). *Napoleon Cat*. www.napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-nepal/2022/04/.
- Faizin, B., Ramdhani, M. A., Gunawan, W., & Gojali, D. (2018). Speech acts analysis in Whatsapp status updates. *Education and Humanities Research*, 260, 189-191. <http://doi.org/10.2991/icomacs-18.2018.46>
- Gerodimos, R., & Justinussen, J. (2015). Obama's 2012 Facebook campaign: Political communication in the age of the like button. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 12(2), 113-132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2014.982266>
- Hidayatillah, A., Subyantoro, S., & Haryadi, H. (2021). Types of defamation speech acts on social media Instagram, Twitter and Facebook in 2017-2019. *Seloka: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 10(3), 184-193. <https://doi.org/10.15294/seloka.v10i2.45647>
- Hutahaean, S., & Hamuddin, B. (2018). Language and Power in Presidential Speech Campaign Discourse: Donald Trump vs. Hillary Clinton. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 175(1), 1-4. <http://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/175/1/012082>
- Ilyas, S., & Khushi, Q. (2012). Facebook status updates A speech act analysis. *Academic Research International*, 3(2), 500-507. www.savap.org.pk
- Krishnan, I. A., De Mello, G., Arumugam, N., Suppiah, P. C., Paramasivam, S., & Bin Ibrahim,

- M. N. A. (2021). A comparative study of speech acts between Malaysia and Singapore on the first MCO announcements of Covid-19. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(8), 992-1008. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v11-i8/10792>
- Metz, M., Kruike-meier, S., & Lecheler, S. (2020). Personalization of politics on Facebook: Examining the content and effects of professional, emotional and private self-personalization. *Information, Communication & Society*, 23(10), 1481-1498. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1581244>
- Mohamad, A., Rashid, R. A., Yunus, K., Rahman, S. B., Darus, S., Musa, R., & Teh, K. S. (2018). Speech acts in the Facebook status updates posted by an apostate. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8(4), 226-232. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v8n4p226>
- Ilić, B. M., & Radulović, M. (2015). Commissive and expressive illocutionary acts in political discourse. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics*, 11(1), 19-49. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lpp-2015-0003>
- Natalia, C., Gaol, D. S. L., Simatupang, J. A., & Tampubolon, S. (2022). Analysis of illocutionary speech acts on posts and comments on students' Instagram account. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 6(2), 8728-8731. <https://www.jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/3735>
- Quinlan, S., Gummer, T., Robmann, J., & Wolf, C. (2018). 'Show me the money and the party!'- Variation in Facebook and Twitter adoption by politicians. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(8), 1031-1049. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1301521>
- Rosaldo, M. Z. (1982). The things we do with words: Ilongot speech acts and speech act theory in philosophy. *Language in Society*, 11(2), 203-237. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404500009209>
- Seabrook, E. M., Kern, M. L., Fulcher, B. D., & Rickard, N. S. (2018). Predicting depression from language-based emotion dynamics: a longitudinal analysis of Facebook and Twitter status updates. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 20(5), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.9267>
- Searle, J. R. (1976). A classification of illocutionary acts. *Language in Society*, 5(1), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404500006837>
- Steinberg, A. (2015). Exploring Web 2.0 political engagement: Is new technology reducing the biases of political participation? *Electoral Studies*, 39, 102-116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2015.05.003>
- Stier, S., Bleier, A., Lietz, H., & Strohmaier, M. (2018). Election campaigning on social media: Politicians, audiences, and the mediation of political communication on Facebook and Twitter. *Political Communication*, 35(1), 50-74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1334728>
- Tsoumou, J. M. (2020). Analysing speech acts in politically related Facebook communication. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 167, 80-97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2020.06.004>

Appendix

- Acharya, D. R. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/dhanaraj.acharya.589>
- Byanjankar, H. K. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100080223593378>
- Dahal, R. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/renu.dahal.9>
- Lakhe, S. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/sarina.lakhe.52>
- Maharjan, C. B. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/mayoroflalitpur>
- Koirala, N. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100074165895995>
- Paudel, G. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/paudelganess>
- Paudel, J. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/jagannath.paudel.12>
- Sha, R. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://m.facebook.com/radheshyam.sah.9081>
- Shah, B. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/balenOfficial>
- Singh, R. M. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <http://www.facebook.com/rajeshmanleads>
- Singh, S. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.facebook.com/sirjanaformayor>
- Sthapit, K. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <http://www.facebook.com/KeshavSthapitOfficial>
- Subedi, B. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <http://www.facebook.com/bijay.subedi.754>
- Thapa, K. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <http://www.facebook.com/krishnathapaofficials>
- Thapa, S. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <http://www.facebook.com/thapasagarbrt>
- Sarawagi, V. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <http://www.facebook.com/vijaysarawagiofficial>
- Yadav, U. K. Home [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <http://www.facebook.com/umeshyadav.leader>