



A PRAGMA-DISCOURSE STUDY OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES IN JOE BIDEN'S INAUGURAL SPEECH AS THE 46TH US PRESIDENT

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Received: 20.05.2024

Reviewed :22.05.2024

Accepted: 25.05.2024

ABSTRACT

This study explores Joe Biden's inaugural speech as the 46th President of the United States through the lens of nonconventional implicature. The aim is to foreground the implicit meaning in Biden's utterances. Drawing insights from Grice's (1975) concept of conversational implicature, the study uses the descriptive research design in analysing twenty-three (23) utterances from the inaugural speech. The results indicate that the nonconventional implicature serves to convey implicit meaning such as a new lease on life for Americans, positive representation of Biden, negative representation of Donald Trump, criticism of the Trump's led administration, optimism in addressing America's problem, restoration of America's lost grandeur under the Trump's led administration, projection of America at the center stage, solidarity with Americans in crisis, and the fiercely contested presidential election between the democrat and republican. The latent meaning in Biden's utterances, as uncovered above, provides access to a context-sensitive knowledge of America's socio-political realities, revealing Biden's use of a pragmatic instrument in advocating America's socio-political experiences.

KEY WORDS: Joe Biden, inaugural speech, nonconventional implicatures, pragma-discourse

Introduction

Language and politics are inextricably linked, just as language and communication are. Man is a political being whose entire existence is infiltrated by politics, and his gift of speech serves as an appropriate enabler. Every political activity is planned, accompanied, controlled, and influenced by language (Schaffer 1996: 202), which is why language is so important in politics. According to Beard (2000: 2), "understanding how language is used by individuals seeking to acquire, exercise, and maintain power" is the key benefit of studying political language. Politicians utilize language to produce speeches, propaganda, campaigns, and statements. As a result, language is used as a tool to negotiate, harness, secure, and practice political careers, with speech-making as the primary end product. Situations and context dictate how a

language is used. The more appropriate and effective the language of a message is, the more the receiver derives a satisfying, productive and meaningful relationships both in personal, public, social, political and educational lives (Opeibe 2009: 97).

Language is a communication system, and communication is considered as a tool in the hands of speakers/writers for solving issues. This means that the creation of a written or spoken text is a social process that involves the interaction of the writer/speaker and the reader/listener. Social institutions influence how a writer or speaker uses language to express ideas (Edem & Aluya 2019: 92). The use of language provides the opportunity for politicians to explore its verbal communicative resources and manipulate words to suit their intentions. Hence, language could be regarded as

the vehicle of politics (Balogun & Muniru 2018: 65). Similarly, Opeibi (2009) avers that language is the conduit via which candidate's manifestoes, superior political concepts, and party beliefs are expressed, as well as the tool for converting them into social acts for social transformation and continuity. As a result, the importance of language in persuading, organizing, influencing, and illuminating the public cannot be overstated. It is the bridge that connects people's hearts (Aluya & Edem, 2023). The support that politicians receive from citizens is determined by their message and technique of presentation. These elements influence the success of a candidate, programme, or policy (Ayeomoni & Akinkuolere, 2012: 462). Hence, both the political message and the way in which it is delivered are crucial. In an attempt to investigate the many uses of language in politics, this study examines America's President Joe Biden's inaugural speech from a pragma-discourse perspective, using ideas from Grice's theory of conversational implicatures. The selection of Biden's inaugural speech as the 46th President of the United States is based on the fact that, despite the abundance of scholarly works on the speech from the perspectives of pragmatics and discourse analysis, not much has been done in the area of Biden's implicit meanings lurking behind his utterances. The current study intends to analyze the implicit meanings that can be derived from Biden's spoken utterances. The next subsection discusses the notion of pragma-discourse analysis.

Pragma-Discourse Analysis

Studies of pragmatics and discourse analysis have initiated diverse concepts that surround linguistic inquiries and notions like entailments, presuppositions and implicatures. These concepts of linguistic significance have occupied the centrality of discourse in study of pragmatics and semantics (Barron & Schneider, 2014). Pragmatics and discourse analysis involve the study of language in its contexts of use. The former focuses on the effects of context on meaning. Conversely, the latter studies written and spoken language in relation to

its social context (Cutting 2005). Pragma-discourse analysis goes beyond the utterance and takes into account socially influenced language behaviour (Horn & Kecskes 2013: 366). It focuses on the importance of words in communication and how interlocutors express more than the words they use (Cutting 2005: 2). Since the present study examines Joe Biden's inaugural speech from a pragma-discourse perspective with particular focus on nonconventional implicatures, the notion of nonconventional implicature is discussed in the next subsection.

Theoretical Approach

This study is based on Grice's idea of conversational implicature. Conversational implicature (also known as implication) results from reasoning about what a speaker must have intended (Black, 2005). It is a circumstance in which a speaker says something that requires interpretation and is presented in an indirect manner (Wales, 2011). From these definitions, conversational implicature can be defined as the additional meaning provided by not adhering to the maxims. They are classified into two categories: generalized and particularized conversational implicatures. The latter occurs solely in certain circumstances, whereas the former are not or very marginally context dependent (Levinson, 1983). According to Grice, participants in a discussion are guided by a principle that governs how language is employed with optimum efficiency and efficacy to establish logical communication. This informs Grice's proposed cooperative principle, which stipulates that participants anticipate each other to make a conversational contribution as necessary by the recognized purpose or direction of the talk exchange at the time it occurs. Conversational implicatures are explained in part by the cooperative principle, which works in conjunction with conversational maxims. Participants presume that a speaker is cooperative, therefore they make conversational assumptions about what is said (Grice, 1975). The informativeness principle is an implicature in which the addressee is permitted to

use his or her knowledge of the world to deduce an implicature that is more informationally stronger than the real speech. This concept, together with the cooperation principle and conversational maxims, allows the addressee to overcome apparent contradictions with the quantity maxim (Levinson, 1983).

Grice developed his cooperative principles theory on the premise that people in a conversation typically try to be truthful, informative, relevant, and clear to facilitate successful communication (Norgaard et al., 2011). He felt that meaningful dialogue was characterized by cooperation, and based on these assumptions, organized his cooperation concept into four conversational maxims. The four conversational maxims are the maxims of quantity, relevance, quality, and manner. Grice believed that any speaker seeking to participate in meaningful communication would adhere to these principles and anticipate that others would do the same. The quality maxim entails avoiding speaking falsehood intentionally. Speakers communicating with this maxim should only say things that they believe to be true and avoid saying things they cannot corroborate with proof. The quantity maxim states that it is critical for speakers not to withhold information that is required to keep a conversation going. However, it is equally critical not to overwhelm their listeners with irrelevant material. Adhering to this principle during communication, speakers should make their contribution to conversation as informative as possible without contributing more information than is necessary. The relevance maxim requires conversations to be kept on course to prevent random and disconnected conversations. This maxim also assists in understanding utterances in discussions that may not be immediately apparent. The quantity maxim stipulates that all information needed to keep a conversation going should be provided in a communication. However, it adds that caution should be exercised so as not to overwhelm listeners with irrelevant content. Speakers who adhere to this maxim in communication are required

to limit the amount of material they introduce to what is really necessary. The relevance maxim states that conversations should be kept on topic to prevent irregular or intermittent exchanges. This rule also helps speakers understand comments made in conversations that may not be immediately apparent. The manner maxim entails speakers to speak about topics that are pertinent to the discourse. It encourages speakers to explain themselves clearly, concisely, and orderly. For example, when following this principle, speakers should avoid using large or too complex words that they know their listeners would not comprehend, and instead strive to be brief and logical.

Grice's maxims are utterances that represent a rule of conduct; nonetheless, these norms are frequently violated throughout communication. Grice never expected these maxims to be adhered to by everyone. Rather, it intrigued him when the maxims were not adhered to, namely when they were either violated or flouted. Both the quantity and the quality maxims are the most frequently violated ones. The maxim of quality is violated when one tells a falsehood on purpose. Conversely, the maxim of quantity is violated when someone surreptitiously retains information that another person is interested in knowing (Bloom-Tillmann 2013, 12). There are various ways in which the maxims are frequently flouted. The maxim of manner is flouted when speakers employ a lot of huge words and technical jargon that they know their audience will not understand. The maxim of relevance is flouted when someone pretends to misunderstand what has been said in order to change the subject. The maxim of quantity is flouted when someone fails to answer a question completely, which is frequently obtuse or even irritating. The maxim of quality is flouted when someone is ironic (Norgaard et al., 2011: 69). Cutting (2005) defines flouting as when a speaker fails to follow the maxim while yet expecting the listener to understand the implication. Meanwhile, violation occurs to trick the hearer by revealing to them only the surface meaning of a statement. Therefore, breaking a

maxim is always the most significant category of non-observance in the Gricean account, particularly when it is done to create conversational implicature, which is an additional meaning. Ultimately, this article draws pertinent insights from the Gricean approach, which theoretically explains how implicit meaning can be recovered.

Linguistic Studies on Joe Biden's Inaugural Speech

This section discusses previous studies that have been undertaken on Joe Biden's inaugural speech. Linguistic studies on Joe Biden's inaugural speech have been conducted from a variety of angles, including stylistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics among others. Some of these studies will be evaluated here in order to provide empirical backing for the current study.

Renaldo and Arifin (2012) investigated ideology and presupposition in President Joe Biden's inaugural speech. The study used Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis model, with an emphasis on microstructure. The study identified the types of presupposition used in the speech. Findings, indicate that the speech used three sorts of presuppositions: lexical presupposition, existential presupposition, and factual presupposition. The study showed Biden's views on immigration, racism, healthcare, democracy, and climate change which were made explicit through the knowledge of presuppositions. The difference between this study and the current one is that the reviewed study concentrated on presupposition, whereas the current study focuses on conversational implicature.

In another study, Siregar (2021) evaluated Biden's inaugural speech to discover the ideology communicated by his choice of discourse structure. The study utilised Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, with a special emphasis on the macro-structure, micro-structure, and super-structure. According to the findings, Biden used implicit and explicit ideologies to promote unity, equality, and freedom for all US residents. Because of its emphasis on the implicit ideologies expressed by Biden, Siregar's work is pertinent to the current

investigation. The two studies differ in that the reviewed one used Van Dijk's critical discourse model, whereas the present one relies on Grice's conversational implicature.

Amir (2023) analysed Joe Biden's inaugural speech as the 46th President of the United States in his own endeavour to understand him as a professional politician. In analysing speech excerpts, the study relies on insights from Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model. According to the study's findings, Biden's inaugural speech used a range of discourse traits in describing America's heroic past while also revitalizing the virtues of tolerance, unity, and love. This work is pertinent to the current investigation since it focuses on the usage of discourse elements in political speeches using insights from critical discourse analysis.

Nurkhamidah et al. (2021) explored the rhetorical elements in Joe Biden's inaugural speech. Using insights from Aristotle rhetorical theory, the analysis found that rhetorical methods such as logos, ethos, and pathos were creatively utilized by Biden in conveying his agenda to the public as well as persuading them to support his government.

Ahmed & Amir (2021) examined Joe Biden's inauguration address delivered on 20th January 2021 from pragmatic perspective. The study adopted Austin's speech act theory supported with relevant aspects of Searle's model of similar theory. The findings of the study revealed that Biden majorly used directive, representative as well as direct speech acts to convey his message to the audience. The choice of Austin's and Searle's speech act theory adopted for the above study makes it different from the current one.

Xiang (2022) focused on Joe Biden's innovative use of transitivity tools in his inauguration address. The study, looked at the ideational Meta functions of language in the inauguration speech, to identify the range of transitivity elements used in the speech. The study found that the ideational component of language assisted the president in concealing his ideology in

the political speech he delivered. The study also indicated that Biden used several language elements to explain his agenda, convince, and inspire the American people to support his government. This study is related to the current one because both evaluate political speeches in order to determine the linguistic resources used in espousing political views.

The contributions of the preceding studies are appropriate and pertinent to the current study since they provide insights into the quality and breadth of research undertaken on America's President Joe Biden's inaugural speech. While the reviewed scholarly works examined the inaugural speech of America's Joe Biden from the perspectives of stylistics, critical discourse analysis, discourse analysis, pragmatics, to name a few, using a variety of analytical tools from these disciplines, none appear to have examined the first inaugural speech of Joe Biden from a pragma-discourse perspective in order to identify the implicit or indirect meanings inherent in his utterances. The current study is set out to address this gap in the literature of political discourse.

Data and methods

Joe Biden's inaugural speech delivered on 21st January, 2023 served as the data for this study. The selection of this speech is predicated on the need to study Biden's utterances from the perspective of conversational implicature in order to determine the latent meanings contained in them. To that purpose, this qualitative study employed a descriptive method in analyzing twenty-three (23) utterances randomly selected from the inauguration speech. Prior to the data processing, the speech was segmented into paragraphs, each with its own number. The acronyms "BIS" and "PARA" were used in the data analysis. The former denotes Biden inaugural speech while the latter represents paragraph. After the extracts were coded and segmented into different paragraphs, the selected utterances were analyzed to determine their implicit meanings.

Conversational implicatures in Biden's inaugural speech

In an inauguration address of this type, implicature is an expression of the speaker that characterizes his listeners' perceived knowledge about themselves, their concerns as individuals, and the general situation of the nation. Joe Biden's speech shows crucial areas of mutual certainty that he feels his audience, particularly Americans, share with him and on which he needed to express his firm trust in America's democracy, which is the basis for his election. To that purpose, this section examines conversational implicatures (with particular focus on non-conventional implicature) in Biden's inaugural speech in order to foreground the implicit meanings inherent in his utterances. The analysis begins with Biden's opening remarks as captured in [1].

[1] Chief Justice Roberts,
Vice President Harris,
Speaker Pelosi, Leader
Schumer, Leader
McConnell, Vice President
Pence, distinguished
guests, and my fellow
Americans (BIS, 2021:
para 1)

[1] captures the opening of President Biden's address. Here, the president recognized prominent dignitaries while also acknowledging the common American. Politicians frequently appear courteous on the surface. The implicature in [1] is seen the expression "my fellow Americans". This possessive phrase is a non-conventional implicature which is suggestive that Biden was aware of his audience's different class, caliber and provenance. Therefore, he reinforces the American belief that no one is inconsequential or above the law. Also, the president demonstrates that he did not view himself as having a higher rank than any other American and, by extension, that his current position as president is the result of popular vote. In [2] that follows, Biden comments on his inauguration.

[2] This is America's day. This is democracy's day (BIS, 2021: para 2).

Repetition of lexical item as observed in 'day' in [2] is a discourse strategy used by speakers to amplify a word when they want to place a higher premium on it. Biden employs the repeated word in [2] to refer to his inauguration. The implicature here indicates that his inauguration is not a personal venture but a state of national affair that instills and provokes the public consciousness of his emergence as president to be the true American dream, regardless of party affiliation. He succeeds in distancing himself from the event and projecting America as the center of attention. Since democracy is the cradle of civilization, he redirects Americans' attention to the core concept that has made America the pride of the world. Biden proceeds further to allude to America's history as captured in [3] below.

[3] A day of history and hope; of renewal and resolve. Through a crucible for the ages

America has been tested anew and America has risen to the challenge (BIS, 2021: para

2-3).

America has a distinguished history, and as the 46th President, Biden in [3] respects America's dynamic history while also attempting to instill hope in the American people. This was most likely based on the socioeconomic background of the current American civilization, which was dealing with the devastation of the Covid-19 pandemic. Next in the implicature sequence, but most crucial to the speaker, is his assertion that viewers are aware of America's socioeconomic crisis. Consequently, the concepts embodied in the words 'renewal' and 'resolve' are the most significant dispositions necessary in every citizen. This implicature is clear in the preceding clause, which is highlighted lexically by the three words: 'hope', 'renewal', and 'resolve'. After commenting on America's past, Biden moves on to

the electioneering process that brought him to office. This is shown in [4] below.

[4] Today, we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy. The will of the people has been heard and the will of the people has been heeded (BIS, 2021: para 4).

[4] instantiates the projection of the laborious electioneering process that brought Biden to power. The implicature here is observed in the first and second utterances. Biden uses the first utterance to convince his audience that the rigorous electioneering process was a democratic test rather than a popularity battle between him and his opponent. However, the second utterance connotes that democracy belongs to the power of the people to make decisions, not to an individual's fame or affluence. The implication of both utterances in [4] is that Trump's earlier victory could be implied as a failed test of democracy. This is exemplified further in [5] below.

[5] The will of the people has been heard and the will of the people has been heeded.

We have learned again that democracy is precious. Democracy is fragile. And at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed (BIS, 2021: para 4).

Biden's continuous mention of democracy in [5] is a premeditated attempt to promote the concept, which appeals to his listeners' sense of belonging, particularly in a multiculturally diverse American society. He also links democracy's victory to the will of the people. The implicature in [5] is exemplified in the repeated expression "the will of the people", employed by Biden to emphasize the masses' centrality at the heart of democracy. The implication of [5] is that democracy cannot succeed when the popularity of a candidate overshadows the will of the people. As a result, democracy is worth celebrating when the will of the people is "heard" and "heeded." The speaker employs the lexeme "precious" to accentuate that democracy is

worth preserving since it is “fragile” at the same time. From these lexical items, it could be inferred that the fragility of democracy is what makes it valuable. The phrase “my friends” is employed in the middle of the implicature to maintain Biden’s previously established assumption that his audience, not him, is in the focus. In his impressive address, the speaker establishes that his victory is a triumph of democracy and that the masses have triumphed. One of the characteristics of a powerful oration is the orator’s ability to use numerous locutionary acts that engage the audience in the speech. This is exactly what Biden achieves in the above text. In the next extract that follows, he alludes to the transition process.

[6] So now, on this hallowed ground where just days ago violence sought to shake this Capitol’s very foundation, we come together as one nation, under God, indivisible, to carry out the peaceful transfer of power as we have for more than two centuries (BIS, 2021: para 5).

The implicature in [6] is observed in the expressions “hallowed ground”, “violence” and “we look forward”. “Hallowed ground” has a long history in American society. In 2016, the National African-American History Month, popularly known as Black History Month observance, was themed “Hallowed Ground.” The Black History is a celebration aimed to raise awareness of African-Americans’ contributions to American history. It was created in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson. “Hallowed ground” is suggestive of Biden’s recognition of the black race’s contribution to America’s historical progress. Direct tribute seems to be offered indirectly to Barack Obama, the first African-American president, and Biden’s Vice President, who is of Indian and Jamaican origin. “Violence” is indicative of the turbulent and obviously contentious election that brought Biden to power. To him, a series of permutations during the lengthy election process aimed to shake the seat of power (capitol), but with the strong allegiance of the people and God, a seamless transition of power

is achieved in accordance with a long tradition of democratic power shift. The expression “we look forward” implies that the speaker maintains the locutionary act of bringing his listeners along and providing them a place of relevance throughout the entire speech delivery process. As is customary, the continual repeating of “we” roughly four times creates foregrounded emphasis.

Politicians, as is customary in most national events, acknowledge the presence of their predecessors while praising them for their services. In the text below, Biden displays this quality.

[7] I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. You know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength of our nation. As does President Carter, who I spoke to last night but who cannot be with us today, but whom we salute for his lifetime of service. I have just taken the sacred oath each of these patriots took — an oath first sworn by George Washington (BIS, 2021, para 6-7).

Without mentioning his immediate predecessor by name in [7], Biden thanks predecessors in general and rapidly shifts his address to the supremacy of the constitution and the nation’s might. The implicature here is seen his reference to President Jimmy Carter and American’s founding president, George Washington. Biden’s choice of these predecessors is suggestive of his intention to acknowledge their efforts as well as broaden his listener’s awareness of America’s history as a collective endeavour rather than a personal endeavour. Having acknowledge the efforts of his past predecessors, the speaker in [8] alludes to the American people and the great task that is ahead of his administration.

[8] On “We the People” who seek a more perfect Union. This is a great nation and

we are a good people. Over the centuries through storm and strife, in peace and in war, we have come so far. But we still have far to go. We will press forward with speed and urgency, for we have much to do in this winter of peril and possibility.

Much to repair. Much to restore. Much to heal. Much to build. And much to gain (BIS, 2021: para 8-9).

Biden uses several utterances in [8] to communicate implicature. The first utterance, “we the people” is suggestive of his understanding of the necessity of instilling a sense of oneness among the people regardless of party affiliation. The implicatural content of “perfect union” underscores the focus and priority of his government rather than the political ideology of his party. The speaker uses parallelism to flatter the ego of the populace. This is exemplified in the expression “this is a great nation, and we are a good people.” Similar parallelism is observed in the expressions “strife and storm” and “peace and war”. Both utterances imply Biden’s acknowledgement of the many challenges as well as the several stages that the country has gone through in its corporate existence due to the supremacy of the country. The expression “winter of peril and possibility” connote a struggle to overcome America’s current position. To direct the listeners to the focus of his administration, Biden employs the expressions “much to repair, much to restore, much to heal, much to build, and much to gain.” To Biden, the task ahead of his administration necessitates a collaborative effort since it will benefit everyone. One of the difficult problems confronting Biden's administration is how to provide a solution to the Covid-19 outbreak. In [9], Biden alludes to the Covid-19 epidemic.

[9] A once-in-a-century virus silently stalks the country. It’s taken as many lives in one year as America lost in all of World War II. Millions of jobs have been lost.

Hundreds of thousands of businesses closed. A cry for racial justice some 400 years in the making moves us (BIS, 2021: para 10-11).

Americans continue to criticize Donald Trump for his seeming disinterest and blame-shifting to China in the aftermath of the Covid-19 outbreak. Some argued that his policies and techniques for combating the epidemic were delayed long enough to result in the catastrophic death toll. In [9], Biden describes the horror of the experience while expressing hope for rehabilitation. One of the viral views of former President Trump was racism and white supremacy, as deduced from Biden's expression “a rise in political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism”. As a result, Biden assures his audience that he would deal with these problems democratically and with what he thinks to be elusive in the previous government, which is unity. These are more conversational implications that he emphasizes in his inaugural speech. After assuring his audience of his willingness to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, Biden goes on to demonstrate his dedication to the American people while also requesting their support in [10] as captured below.

[10] My whole soul is in it. Today, on this January day, my whole soul is in this:

Bringing America together. Uniting our people. And uniting our nation. I ask every

America to join me in this cause. Uniting to fight the common foes we face: Anger, resentment, hatred. Extremism, lawlessness, violence. Disease, joblessness, hopeless-

-ness (BIS, 2021: para 17-19).

In [10], Biden continues to instill hope and devotion to the goals that his government intends to pursue. Drawing inspiration from Washington's speech, he uses the expression “my whole soul is in it” to depict his steadfast attempt to reconcile all

Americans who have been divided by class, extremism, the Covid-19 pandemic and its concomitant job loss, and eventually despondency that has resulted from the pandemic. In an indirect manner, the speaker connects all of these terrible experiences to the administration from which he is taking over and then promises to use unity to combat division as an opponent that they face. The foregoing is why in [11] that follows Biden emphasizes the need for unity in America.

[11] With unity we can do great things. Important things. We can right wrongs. We can put people to work in good jobs. We can teach our children in safe schools. We can overcome this deadly virus. We can reward work, rebuild the middle class, and make healthcare secure for all. We can deliver racial justice. We can make America, once again, the leading force for good in the world (BIS, 2021: para 19).

Biden implies in [11] that prior to his election, America was divided, and he aims to inculcate unity as the essential mechanism that may secure a progressive country. He believes that unity is the key to achieving success in education, healthcare, and the legal system. The expression “we can make America great again” is a conversational implicature that encourages listeners to feel that America has fallen far below their expectations. When the speaker refers to America as “the leading force for good in the world,” he also suggests that America has lost its place in international order. It is evident that one of the political strategies that politicians use efficiently is to outshine their predecessors by identifying, capitalizing on, and finally discrediting their shortcomings. When he says, “I know speaking of unity can sound to some like a foolish fantasy,” and “I am aware that the forces that divide us are deep and real,” (BIS, 19), he discreetly urges the audience to assume that the previous administration sown the germ of divisiveness. The speaker employs conversational implicature to persuade his audience that the

previous administration failed to unite the country. This is why [12] alludes to America’s trying period.

[12] This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge, and unity is the path forward.

And, we must meet this moment as the United States of America. If we do that, I guarantee you, we will not fail. We have never, ever, ever failed in America when we have acted together. And so today, at this time and in this place, let us start afresh (BIS, 2021: para 24).

In [12], Biden implies that his audience is aware of the current devastating circumstances confronting the American nation. To him, it is historic since it was unprecedentedly avoidable if not for the previous administration's apparent indifference. Through conversational implicature, his listeners are led to believe that the failure of the previous administration has generated division and that unity is the only viable route forward. However, the expression, “...let us start afresh” implies that the previous administration led them amiss and that a new and fresh commitment based on unity is their only hope for a truly great nation. It is a decision that cannot be postponed; it must be made immediately. Having stressed the need for unity among all citizens, Biden refers to American politics in [13].

[13] Politics need not be a raging fire destroying everything in its path. Every disagreement doesn’t have to be a cause for total war. And, we must reject a culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured. My fellow Americans, we have to be different than this. America has to be better than this. And, I believe America is better than this. Just look around! (BIS, 2021: 26-27).

Here, Biden leads his audience in [13] to appreciate the fruit of unity as an elixir that will appeal to both their auditory and visual senses. In

doing so, he declares that in an atmosphere of unity, it will be easier to appreciate one another. Furthermore, he contends that the conflict arising from political ideologies should not affect peace and national unity. He admits that disagreement is inevitable but that peace and unity are paramount and non-negotiable. When Biden says, "...my fellow Americans, we have to be different than this..." he is consciously introducing a new order and pattern that will prioritize corporate unity over personal interest. He charges his audience to a higher purpose and course that he has set for them. Hence, they just have to look around. Biden proceeds further to allude to the realization of Martin Luther King's dream in [14] as captured below.

[14] Here we stand looking out to the great mall where Dr. King spoke of his dream.

Here we stand, where 108 years ago at another inaugural, thousands of protestors tried to block brave women from marching for the right to vote. Today, we mark the swearing-in of the first woman in American history elected to national office – Vice President Kamala Harris. Don't tell me things can't change (BIS, 28-30).

Biden refers to Martin Luther King's dream in [14] as one of the principles of equity, justice, and probity. Through this allusion, he appears to identify with the movement that resulted in the emancipation of the black race. He affirms that the secret to America's success is their capacity to appreciate history and the importance of learning from their rich history. Significantly, his election, as well as that of his vice, who became the first Black-American woman to be sworn in, fulfilled the dream of Martin Luther King. Conversational implicature is expressed as the speaker affirms that if a black woman could succeed in becoming the first woman in American history to hold the position of vice president, then the success of his

administration and the changes he foresees are certainly conceivable.

[15] To all those who supported our campaign I am humbled by the faith you have placed in us. To all those who did not support us, let me say this: Hear me out as we move forward. Take a measure of me and my heart. And if you still disagree, so be it (BIS, 32).

By implication, Biden in [15] leads his audience to believe that he is aware of two realities: his supporters and opponents. Sincere gratitude is offered to his supporters, while his opponents are given the opportunity to watch and align with the course of his administration. Again, he admits that his declaration was a project of American desire for him, and that is faith. Another truth portrayed by the speaker is that while it is still a part of democracy for Americans to disagree and form opposition, it should not be allowed to undermine the unity that links Americans together. Regardless of the aforementioned, he promises to be neutral and fair to everyone, regardless of political affiliations. Again, this is political politeness on display in his inaugural address.

[16] Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson. There is truth and there

are lies. Lies told for power and for profit. And each of us has a duty and responsibility,

as citizens, as Americans, and especially as leaders – leaders who have pledged to honor

our Constitution and protect our nation — to defend the truth and to defeat the lies (BIS,

35).

In [16], it is inferential for the speaker to state that "recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson..." This expression implies that all the

moment during the campaigning and election were very indicative. The personality of his opposition candidate was smeared with controversies that the democrats consider as lies. It was the state of candidate's controversies that the democrats capitalized on to power the strength of their campaign; posing indirectly that the presidential candidate of the republican vies for the seat on two premises: power and profit and as such has nothing to offer the American people. He concludes by reminding American people especially leader to defend the truth and defeat the lies. One of the most potent ingredients of an effective speech is the ability to convey diverse meaning in one utterance. Biden's speech succeeds at great extent through conversational implicature. Biden urges all American citizens to unite together in supporting his administration so that their plans and vision for the nation will be accomplished. [17] captures this solicitation for the people's support.

[17] My fellow Americans, in the work ahead of us, we will need each other. We will

need all our strength to persevere through this dark winter. We are entering what may

well be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus. We must set aside the politics and

finally face this pandemic as one nation (BIS, 40).

For every utterance in [17], Biden directs and redirects his listeners to the centrality of his discourse – unity. The whole paragraph resonates his unending quest for a united nation. The third person pronouns, 'us', 'we', and 'our' are used to imply his resolute commitment to carry all the American people along in the journey of nationhood characterized by peace and unity. Hence, politics to him would be a distraction as the only conception that matters most to American at a period he referred to as "toughest and deadliest" will be their

ability to harness their individual strength, geared towards a united front to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic. To convince his audience about his seriousness and readiness to begin duty as the president-elect, he makes the following pledge.

[18] I promise you this: as the Bible says weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning. We will get through this, together. The world is watching today (BIS, 41).

It is typical for to appear sanctimonious, making strong references to the religion they follow. By quoting the Holy Bible in [18], Biden demonstrates that he is a devout Christian, and the biblical phrase that encourages patience and endurance in the face of adversity is likely to encourage the American people. Weeping is associated with the night, which he discreetly presents as the current state of affairs in America, whereas joy and light indicate the beginning of a new administration that he would lead. In [19] that follows, Biden assures all American citizens of the kind of government his administration intends to lead.

[19] We will lead not merely by the example of our power but by the power of our example (BIS, 42).

Rhetorical expressions are another vehicle that great orators utilize to demonstrate their oratory skills. Biden through [19] implies that America is renowned for its economic, political, and military might - influence by force and solidarity. However, his administration will be defined by sterling traits of progress and security, as well as being charming and sociable - the hallmarks of democracy.

[20] This is a time of testing. We face an attack on democracy and on truth. A raging virus. Growing inequity. The sting of systemic racism. A climate in crisis.

America's role in the world. Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways (BIS, 44).

In [20], Biden reminds his audience of the challenges ahead of them: the quest to sustain honest democracy, the fight against corruption, the battle to reduce the increasing rate of inequity, the pursuit to end all forms of discrimination, and the never-ending quest to improve the climate and ecosystem. Again, he places his audience at the center of these difficulties by emphasizing that everyone has a collective responsibility to play. Biden has regularly referenced "racism" in order to undermine the previous government, which is seen as perpetuating endemic discrimination.

[21] My fellow Americans, I close today where I began, with a sacred oath. Before God and all of you I give you my word. I will always level with you. I will defend the Constitution. I will defend our democracy. I will defend America (BIS).

Similarly, leaders are expected to end their remarks with promissory notes, establishing their vow in oath taking. The tempo shifts from "we" to "I". Biden indicates that he will always defend America and pay undivided fealty to the process of democracy and the constitution. These he will do not to show off his might, but to represent the potential of what power may produce; not for personal gain, but for the greater good. This also sounds very sanctimonious. The speaker's continuous repetition of "I will" indicates that he is willing to lead by example; he is not going to call the shots, but he will promote the shooting.

[22] And together, we shall write an American story of hope, not fear. Of unity, not division. Of light, not darkness. An American story of decency and dignity. Of love and of healing (BIS).

The expression "And together, we shall write an American story of hope, not fear" in [22] is a conversational implicature that further underscores Biden's quest for unity, a state of affairs in which everyone is united by hope. It is also clear that he has succeeded in instilling optimism into his audience rather than fear. The preceding line suggests that the American history before his emergence as the president has lacked love, dignity, and decency, and hence required repair. As is customary, the deliberate repetition of "an American story" is a discourse strategy used by Biden to downplay his person and personal interest while presenting America's supremacy.

[23] So, with purpose and resolve we turn to the tasks of our time. Sustained by faith.

Driven by conviction. And, devoted to one another and to this country we love with all our hearts. May God bless America and may God protect our troops. Thank you, America (BIS).

The conclusion of Biden's speech is embellished with conversational implicatures. The expression "...with purpose and resolve we turn to the task of our time..." in [23] implies that he wants all America to be intentional in their commitment to the path into nationhood, which will be powered by their unwavering trust (faith) in their own country. The words "faith" and "conviction" are carefully and synonymously employed to emphasize the necessity of believing in the American project. However, lexical items such as "sustained" and "driven" are conversational implicatures suggesting practical action rather than a static or passive disposition. Such practical action will lead the American people to devote genuinely to one another in a country they adore.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis indicate that the dominant feature of conversation implicature observed in the

utterances is non-conventional conversation implicature which served to convey implicit meanings such as a new lease on life for Americans, positive representation of Biden, negative representation of Donald Trump, criticism of the Trump's led administration, optimism in addressing America's problem, restoration of America's lost glory, projection of America at the center stage, rejection of racial, ethnic and political prejudice, solidarity with Americans in crisis, and the fiercely contested presidential election between the democrat and republican. The covert meaning in Biden's utterances provides access to a context-sensitive knowledge of America's socio-political realities, thereby revealing Biden's use of a pragmatic instrument in advocating America's socio-political experiences. Biden utilizes conversational implicatures to demonstrate his great understanding of Americans and contemporary socio-political reality in the United States of America throughout the speech. Conversational implicature serves as the foundation for all the indirect meanings expressed in his utterances. The inaugural speech, as a type of discourse, provides elected public office holders with the opportunity to make pledges and provide assurance of good governance through effective language use.

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TEXT ANALYSED