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LITERATURE, LINGUISTICS & CRITICISM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Towards a performative theory of solidarity discourse

Ahlam Alharbi[1]*

Abstract: The present study attempts to sketch a theoretical model entitled "a Performative Theory of Solidarity Discourse" to analyze solidarity as a discourse. The data of this study is selected speeches that were delivered in the 2016 AIPAC Conference by seven influential American politicians. This theory puts forward eight assumptions and six hypotheses. These assumptions along with the hypotheses of this theory viewed solidarity discourse (SD) as performing a number of acts, namely identifying, assertive, regrouping, and commissive.

Subjects: U.S. Politics; Communication Theory; Language & Linguistics

Keywords: solidarity discourse; performative theory; speech acts; Burke's identification

1. Introduction

Etymologically, the Roman law of obligations, *"obligatio in solidum,"* is the root of the term *solidarity* (Bayertz, 1999, p. 3). Unlike the English definition, obligation here, as Zimmermann (1990) explains, refers to "a two-ended relationship which appears from the one end as a personal right to claim and from the other as a duty to render performance [i.e., bound]" (p. 1). However, since the end of the eighteenth century, the term solidarity has been used beyond the Roman law of obligations. In his 1822 book titled *The Theory of Universal Unity*, Stjernø (2005, p. 1) credits French social philosophers, such as Charles Fourier, as the first to use the term solidarity as a social concept. Yet, according to Wilde (2013, p. 22), the first theorist of solidarity is Pierre Leroux who published a book entitled *Humanity* in 1840. The term solidarity has evolved since then. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the term solidarity became part of political terminology and gained prominence after the French Revolution. During the twentieth century, as Prainsack and Buyx (2011, p. x) explain, solidarity as a concept attracted the interest of communitarian thinkers and became a pivotal concept to other approaches, such as rational choice, feminist theory, and modern Marxist and Leninist theories. Despite being influential as a social concept, solidarity is

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ahlam Alharbi is an assistant professor at the Department of English, at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia. She holds a doctoral degree in linguistics from Monash University, Australia. Her major research interest is discourse analysis in general and critical discourse analysis in particular. This paper is closely related to her interests, as it investigates solidarity discourse, which is an under-theorized discourse. By proposing a theory, Alharbi hopes she will attract scholarly attention to enrich this field with studies to offer a better understanding of solidarity.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Solidarity has always been closely confined and strictly connected with political concepts such as socialism and leftist ideologies. This paper is an attempt to enrich the field of discourse analysis in general and critical discourse analysis in particular by investigating an under examined discourse, i.e., solidarity discourse. In so doing, it proposes a theory that views solidarity as a discourse rather than a notion. In addition, the proposed theory is applied to verify its validity. The data under examination comprised purposively selected speeches delivered by American politicians in the 2016 AIPAC Conference through which speakers usually aim at creating solidarity with their audience and show support to the Jewish community.

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under-theorized (Pensky, 2008, p. 1). Throughout the twentieth century, solidarity, as an analytical and theoretical concept, suffered "undeserved neglect" (Thalos, 2012, p. 57). Fortunately, "references to solidarity are on the increase in public discourse" despite the small number of "books and papers that are dedicated to this concept explicitly" (Prainsack & Buyx, 2011, p. 1)

Historically, solidarity has always been closely confined and strictly connected with political concepts such as socialism and leftist ideologies. Hence, it has been studied by a number of prominent sociology and political scholars such as Émile Durkheim and Peter Kropotkin, and more recently, Barbara Prainsack and Sally Scholz. Solidarity as a term is not only elusive and hard to define, as Prainsack and Buyx (2011, p. 1) suggest, but its inclusivity also encompasses a number of interrelated meanings. According to Fourier (1822), solidarity refers to sharing, unity, reciprocal attitudes and relations, association, and harmony (cited in Wilde, 2013, p. 20). In addition, Scholz (2008, p. 1) indicates that some scholars perceive solidarity as "a shared consciousness, experience, history, or identity." In contemporary political theory, Bayertz (1999) interestingly suggests that solidarity is "a mutual attachment between individuals, encompassing two levels: a factual level of actual common ground between the individuals and a normative level of mutual obligations to aid each other" (p. 3). In other words, solidarity "encompasses the duty of assistance" (Trifunovic, 2012, p. 155).

To further our understanding of solidarity, Scholz (2008) identifies a number of characteristics related to the nature of solidarity. First, solidarity mediates between individuals, communities, or groups. That is, solidarity "can be identified through contrast or opposition with a larger or different social grouping" (Scholz, 2008, pp. 18–19). In addition, while solidarity acknowledges individuals, yet "emphasizes the bonds with the others or interdependence" (Scholz, 2008, p. 19), it is the opposite of individualism, which emphasizes independence. Second, solidarity is a form of unity. The term itself assumes "that there is an identifiable group...[s]omething binds people together." Third, solidarity implicates "positive moral obligations [and duties]" (Scholz, 2008, pp. 18–19). Furthermore, in the available literature on solidarity, this notion has two senses, namely: descriptive and normative. Solidarity in the descriptive sense is concerned with the setting, namely, social or political. It refers to existing ties and the types of ties between individuals or groups. On the other hand, the normative sense of solidarity "is used as a postulated and the most frequently positively valued model of relations (bonds) between social entities. In this context, solidarity is a postulated good, a value on which the relations between the acting entities should be based" (Dobrzanski, 2005, p. 135).

Based on the polycentric definitions mentioned above, briefly, solidarity is a relational (reciprocal) term that can imply resistance, support, social cohesion, and anticipation for the future. It requires self-recognition, shared interests, goals, causes, enemies, or danger, as a common cause, ground, or interest to achieve consubstantiality, commonalities, or sameness/oneness, which in turn achieves solidarity. This definition not only underscores the multidisciplinary nature of solidarity, it also highlights the fact that solidarity is not simply a concept, but it is also a discourse. In this sense, solidarity discourse (SD) is a form of consolidating social practice that is manufactured in text, speech, and communication. Along with the other unifying social practices and policies, SD reproduces consolidation as a form of an ideology of one-ness. It does so typically through a number of (non) linguistic features. It should be noted that previous studies on solidarity fell short of investigating solidarity as a discourse and revealing its features. The failure to view solidarity as a discourse might be the reason why solidarity is under-theorized and suffers underserved neglect. On the other hand, viewing solidarity as a discourse allows us to describe and scrutinize it extensively and fully. Due to the nature of discourse, it is a means to encapsulate its multiple levels, distinctive features, and polycentric nature. Unfortunately, discourse studies have failed as well to investigate solidarity. Such a failure resulted in having a pivotal discourse unexamined within discourse studies. Such a discourse is needed now especially because of the divisiveness of political and social issues. Most of the literature pertaining to discourse has examined a number of aspects extensively, such as power, ideology, racism, and representations. However, solidarity has been indirectly

and shyly acknowledged in the representation of the "Self." Yet, such studies on self-representations do not address solidarity as a discourse on its own. Hence, this paper attempts to bridge this gap. To this end, this paper brings questions about the discursive nature of solidarity and its discourse to the table. It takes an initial step towards theorizing solidarity as a discourse hoping to fill in the theoretical void and encourage analysts to explore the different discursive (non)linguistic features that can create entities besides the "Self" and the "Other." First, I will present and explain the different assumptions of the proposed theory. Second, in sections 4 and 5, which form the primary argument of this paper, I will apply this theory to selected political speeches to formulate hypotheses that can guide our understanding of SD.

2. A performative theory of solidarity discourse

In the field of discourse analysis, there is an agreement on the fact that discourse is performative and constitutive (Meyer, Höllerer, Jancsary, & van Leeuwen, 2013, p. 183). However, not every constitutive discourse is performative. For example, the discourse of the "Self" and the "Other" is constitutive; yet, it is not performative in nature. On the other hand, SD is performative, i.e., it performs a function, and in this case, it builds solidarity; at the same time, it is constitutive in terms of constituting alignments. The performative nature of solidarity goes hand in hand with Zimmermann's (1990, p. 1) idea that at the other end of the relationship that exists through obligation/solidarity is "a duty to render performance," which is supported in this case.

Central of the performative theory proposed in this study is the understanding that SD acts on the three levels as specified by Austin: locution, illocution, and perlocution. In more detail, at the locutionary and illocutionary level, the speaker shows solidarity by committing themselves to future actions (commissive), making assertions by declaring their position, attitude, and ideology (assertive), and then identifying with the interests of the other (identifying) and/or regrouping the different entities involved (regrouping). Finally, at the perlocutionary level, a speaker can achieve the ultimate goal by being persuasive (persuasive). The perlocutionary nature was highlighted by Jordan (2005), who explains that "identification, in short, becomes as much a process and structure as a discrete perlocutionary act" (p. 268). Accordingly, the performative nature of solidarity is not baseless.

The Performative Theory proposed here is based on eight assumptions; SD is a performative discourse that involves a number of acts, namely, commissive (promising), assertive/representative (asserting a reality), identifying (achieving sameness/oneness), regrouping (creating the "self" and the "Other"), and persuasive. For example, if a speaker says to a hearer "I'm on your side," the speaker does not merely utter the words "I," "am," "on," "your," and "side" at the locution level, but they also perform an illocution act, namely, an implicit promise. In the same vein, uttering this sentence makes assertions regarding the speaker's position, ideology, and beliefs and regroups them to become one group. However, to create solidarity, sometimes one needs to say more regarding common and shared interests to achieve oneness, both on the locution and illocution levels; that is, to identify with a hearer or audience to be more persuasive. If, as a consequence of these utterances, a hearer takes the speaker's statements at face value and believes them, then, on the perlocutionary level, the speaker persuades the hearer to trust that they are on his side. These different acts constitute the assumptions of the proposed theory.

Having said this, a performative analysis is feasible for investigating SD. In order to achieve these acts, two rhetorical strategies are being implemented and utilized in this discourse, namely, Burke's (1969) theory of identification and consubstantiality, and Bormann's (1996) Symbolic Convergence Theory (Fantasy Theme theory). In this paper, an analysis of SD is presented utilizing the former theories while mainly stressing the performative nature of this discourse based on Austin's (1962) Speech Acts theory and the assumptions proposed in this study.

2.1. The assumptions of the performative theory

As noted above, the performative acts encapsulate the assumptions of the current theory. Each of the acts mentioned above has their own technique. It should be mentioned that these acts are not mutually exclusive. A statement can perform two acts at the same time; for example, a statement can be assertive and identifying as well. It should be noted that these acts are not ordered in a particular way. Below is a more detailed account of these assumptions:

(1) SD is a *commissive* act.
(2) SD is built on two types of support (topics) (policy and personal support).
(3) SD is an *identifying* act.
(4) SD messages allow speakers to identify themselves.
(5) SD is a *regrouping* act (i.e., unifying and disuniting).
(6) SD is an *assertive* (representative) act.
(7) SD messages are conveyed through storytelling.
(8) SD is a *persuasive* act.

2.1.1. Solidarity discourse is a commissive act

Typically, to establish solidarity, the speaker assures and confirms to the hearer that they commit themselves willingly to a future course of action. In other words, in SD, more often than not a promise is made, a vow is taken, or an offer is given. In the same vein, the decision not to take certain actions is considered a commissive act as well. It should be noted that this commissive act can be implicit, explicit, or both. However, explicit acts in general and promises in particular show the speaker as more forceful, committed, and hence, persuasive. Concerning the speech act theory, this commissive act has the characteristic of adjusting the world to the word. In this sense, this commissive act is building a future. Similarly, this act assists in determining the type of solidarity by specifying the actions that the speaker is committing themselves to. Accordingly, it has a dual function, namely, showing solidarity and delimiting its boundaries. This interdependence aspect of solidarity echoes the notion of *organic* solidarity by Durkheim, which generates social solidarity through interdependence not sameness and oneness. It should be mentioned here that Durkheim (1893/1997) differentiates between two types of solidarity, namely, mechanical and organic. The former is held by traditional societies whose cohesion is built on the similarities among the members, whereas the latter is held by modern societies whose social cohesion is based on the differences among members, hence they are interdependent. Even from Durkheim's perspective of solidarity, one can see that solidarity is more than a term; it is a discourse.

2.1.2. Solidarity discourse is built on two types of support (or topics) (i.e., personal and policy support)

The first assumption presupposes the second assumption. Previously, it has been noted that SD is commissive, as speakers tend to commit themselves to actions in the future to support the involved party. Thus, one of the topics that are available to speakers has to be related to support. There are two discursive forms of action or support (or topics as they are referred to in this theory) that are available to speakers, i.e., personal (physical/emotional) support and policy support, depending on the context; hence, there are two manifesting types of topics in such a discourse. Personal support utterances provide either physical or emotional support on an individual basis, for example, personal support among different members of social groups such as abused women or minority groups. On the other hand, policy support utterances are related to governmental actions (past, current, or future). Interestingly, the notion of solidarity itself entails support. However, the kind of action or support is limitless. Support or action can range from publishing articles in newspapers to protesting in the street to joining groups and being on the frontline.

2.1.3. Solidarity discourse is an identifying act

The third assumption is that SD is an identifying act. Fireman and Gamson (1988, p. 21) believe that solidarity is grounded in establishing relationships to bring people together. In essence, commitment and identification often appear together in the literature as they are interrelated (Cheney & Tompkins, 1987, p. 9). In more detail, "commitment can be seen as an individual's identification with a collectivity that leads to instrumental, affective, and moral attachments" (Hunt & Benford, 2004, p. 440). Hence, if commitment and identification are necessary to show solidarity, then this, in turn, suggests that there are differences. As Burke (1969) explains, "to begin with 'identification' is, by the same token, though roundabout, to confront the implications of *division*" (p. 22). It is "(in a sense) the "substance" of action-patterns; commitment is the 'form'" (Cheney & Tompkins, 1987, p. 9). Thus, identification as a persuasive strategy is needed to bridge gaps (Burke, 1969, pp. 20–22) and over-come differences. According to Paul and Philpott (2011), "identification works to build a sense of 'we' among individuals and, through consubstantiality, can demonstrate representations of what can bring a group together" (cited in Rutten, Vrijders, & Soetaert, 2014, n.p.).

2.1.4. Solidarity discourse messages allow speakers to identify themselves

Due to the commissive and identifying nature of SD, a speaker needs to establish similarities, or at least common interests, to achieve oneness. Identification is about "finding a shared element between the speaker's point of view and the audience's, or finding the audience's point of view and the speaker's convincing them that they share a common element" (Rosenfeld, 1969, p. 183). Hence, in SD, a speaker's attempt at identification entails finding "substance," to use Burk's term, that the two groups or individuals have (or assume to have) in common, be it an ideology, a stand, or values. Hence, SD is "identifying" common causes or interests to achieve consubstantiality. When the speaker specifies these common substances, these two individuals or groups are "consubstantial," to use another Burkean term. In the process of identification, the speaker aligns with the audience and their interests, beliefs, and motives. The more the speaker can identify with the audience, the more they can consolidate and show consubstantiality, and in turn, the more persuasive they will be. Establishing identification is pivotal as it directs the involved parties to act in the best interests of the group(s). As Littlejohn and Foss (2011, p. 142) explain, identification can increase or decrease based on the communicators.

In this sense, identification can be viewed as "a dynamic social process" (Scott et al., 1998, p. 306). Interestingly, what people can identify with will reconstruct their reality accordingly. According to Burke, the possible discursive techniques (or the discursive identification markers) are endless and overlapping. Yet, Burke (1966, p. 486) specifies three overlapping sources of identification, namely, material identification, idealistic identification, and formal identification. Material identification is through physical items such as goods, foods, clothes, objects, and so on. Idealistic identification refers to shared ideas, beliefs, attitudes, values, feelings, experiences, and so on. Formal identification "results from the arrangement, form, or organization of an event in which parties participate" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011, p. 142). On the other hand, Cheney (1983, p. 148) identifies and operationalizes three essential strategies that were derived from Burke, namely, the common ground technique, identification through antithesis, and the assumed or transcendent "we." To establish a common ground, the speaker needs to specify the common aspects the two parties share, such as belief, values, dreams, identity, ideology, and so on. The second strategy requires the "act of uniting against a common enemy [any idea or entity]" (Cheney, 1983, p. 148). The last strategy aims at creating "we" vs. "they" to connect the two parties. It should be mentioned that in the current theory, the last two strategies are examined under the regrouping act.

2.1.5. Solidarity discourse is a regrouping act (unifying and disuniting)

The process of identification leads to the fifth assumption, that is, SD is a regrouping act; hence, it is unifying and disuniting. By convention, any regrouping act is an identifying act. In other words, in SD, as a speaker consolidates with others, they implicitly separate themselves from others, as "identification always suggests a 'we' and a 'they'" (Paul & Philpott, 2011, p. 188). It should be noted that this "Other" could be a physical or abstract group or entity, such as poverty or diseases.

If the other group or entity did not exist, the reason behind showing solidarity would be meaningless. It should be noted that identification is a necessary act to achieve regrouping. When identification ceases, groups tend to disunite looking for other groups whom they can identify with to regroup. Therefore, it is safe to claim that identification and regrouping are two essential discursive acts in SD.

2.1.6. Solidarity discourse is an assertive/representative act

As noted above, a speaker needs to identify with a group in order to unify with the group, on one hand, and disunite from other groups, on the other hand. Therefore, SD needs to be an assertive (representative) act. Assertive statements are declarative in nature and describe one's reality to assist in the process of identification and regrouping. From the perspective of the Symbolic Convergence Theory, the message "must tap into the factual reality of a given situation and the audience's interpretation of that reality" (Walton, Price, & Zraly, 2013, p. 80) in order to be persuasive and heighten a group's cohesiveness. Accordingly, SD needs to make a number of assertions that are related to attitudes, beliefs, ideology, positions, as well as the audience's reality through which identification can be constituted, constructed, confirmed, and rooted. These assertions can be viewed as representative, as they represent a reality that the speaker, as well as the audience, believes to be true. With reference to the speech act theory, the speaker is adjusting the word to the world. Hence, a speaker's words should echo reality.

2.1.7. SD messages and acts are conveyed through storytelling

Storytelling is considered as one of the multifunction strategies to perform the different acts of SD. It is a powerful technique due to its capabilities of building an argument without challenging the audience's mental resistance (Friedlander, S, 1992). In such a discourse, storytelling is utilized communicatively to identify with the audience, regroup, assert, and represent reality. It should be noted that telling a compelling story is more persuasive than statistics, expert testimony, or logical deduction (Wood, 2005). It persuades the audience of the speaker's viewpoints or the validity of his claims (Lucaites & Condit, 1985; Sunwolf, 1999). Hence, a successful act of storytelling is one of the subtle persuasion tools that can re-establish the different solidarity acts.

Bormann's (1985, p. 128) Symbolic Convergence Theory highlights the fact that sharing stories (common fantasies) can turn a group of individuals into a cohesive group. Central to his theory is fantasy, "which refers to the creative, imaginative, and shared interpretation of real events" (Gyimothy, 2013, p. 61). The first fundamental term of fantasy analysis is that of *dramatizing message* and the second is of *shared group fantasy*. "When people dramatize an event, they must select certain characters to be the focus of the story and present them in a favorable light while [sometimes] selecting others to be portrayed in a more negative fashion" (Bormann, 1985, p. 9). These shared fantasies "are coherent accounts of experience in the past or envisioned in the future that simplify and form the social reality of the participants" (Bormann, 1996, p. 95). Dramatizing messages through fantasies, symbolic cues, or sagas can increase the cohesiveness of a group and in turn build solidarity. It should be noted that storytelling is an assertive/representative act as the speaker often refers to an event or a character from the past or the present that relates to the audience and their situation. Hence, SD dramatizes messages to be consistent with the fantasies (the existing mental world) and representations of the reality of the audience members, leading to symbolic cues to identify with the audience.

2.1.8. Solidarity discourse is a persuasive act

It should be noted that persuasion is one of the most widely studied perlocutionary acts (Cialdini, 2000; Marcu, 1997; Searle, 1969; Walton, Reed, & Macagno, 2008). By now, the words "persuasive" and "persuasion" have been mentioned eight times in the previous assumptions. In order to establish solidarity successfully, one's message has to be persuasive. It is worth noting that any identifying or assertive acts are persuasive acts. A speaker attempts to be persuasive through different acts and techniques, such as telling stories, in order to succeed in creating solidarity and "we-ness." Hence, SD is discursively a persuasive act.

3. Methodology and data

To examine SD, it is necessary to choose a methodological approach that suits the purpose of the present study. Hence, a critical discourse analysis was conducted employing the assumptions of the Performative Theory of Solidarity Discourse. First, a critical based reading of the text was conducted to probe the content against the assumptions and reveal textual and contextual techniques to deepen our understanding of solidarity. By convention, the analysis is descriptive, focusing on the performative acts and linguistic features necessary to create solidarity. However, a quantitative method of analysis was employed to quantify the presence of the different acts and techniques under examination.

The selected texts were based on purposive rather than random sampling. A number of speeches that were delivered at the 2016 AIPAC conference, which was held on March 20–22, 2016 in Washington, D.C., were selected for analysis, as one of the conference goals was to create solidarity and show support for the Jewish community. The data under investigation consists of seven speeches that were delivered by influential American politicians, namely, Vice President Joe Biden, Gov. John Kasich, Donald Trump (presidential candidate), the Speaker of the House Rep. Paul Ryan, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Vice President Joe Biden, and Sen. Robert Menendez. The transcripts of these speeches were provided by the website of the AIPAC Conference (see Appendix 1).

3.1. Procedures

The coding procedures required three steps. First, statements in each speech were unitized into four acts, namely, commissive, identifying, regrouping, and assertive. As noted above, the persuasive act is discursively a result of all the previous acts; hence, it will be analyzed inclusively with the other acts. Second, each act was examined in light of its related assumptions. Third, the stories were coded, and the different acts they serve were specified. Intercoder reliability was calculated using Cohen's (1960) κ, as a measure of agreement to correct of the amount of agreement that would be expected by chance. The kappa for coding was 0.85, which demonstrates almost perfect agreement between coders. Coding procedures produce frequency data, so chi-square was used for statistical analysis. According to Landis and Koch (1977), κ values of 0.81–1.00 demonstrate almost perfect agreement among coders.

4. Data analysis

After the compilation of the corpus, the different performative acts in the selected texts were probed. As mentioned above, the analysis was mainly qualitative, following the tradition of critical discourse analysts. Nevertheless, quantitative data were presented to offer a preliminary context and to demonstrate the presence and the prevalence of the different acts that create solidarity. In addition, the last section of the analysis was devoted to storytelling as an interesting discursive technique in the current data.

4.1. Quantitative analysis

The synoptic summary in Table 1 and Figure 1 below demonstrates the different types of acts performed by the speeches analyzed in the present study. Viewing the data collectively (Figure 1), demonstrates that the most frequent act was the identifying act, which constituted 35% of the data. By way of contrast, the least frequent act was the commissive act, which was no more than 17%. Regarding the other two acts, the assertive act was 30% of the data whereas the regrouping act consisted of 18%. It seems that the SD primarily aims to identify with the audience and establish similarities and connection. This identifying act results in a process where the speaker can share a reality with the audience through asserting his position, ideology, beliefs, and so on, in order to regroup with his audience. Finally, a speaker may commit themselves to future actions to show support to his audience.

Examining speeches individually demonstrates some variations (see Table 1 and Figure 2). That is, in speeches 1, 4, 5, and 7, the frequency order of the performative acts was as follows: identifying, assertive, regrouping, and commissive. On the other hand, the frequency order of the

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No.	Speeches	Total	Commissive		Identifying		Regrouping		Assertive		Stories
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No
1	Kasich	139	34	24.46	41	29.49	29	20.86	35	25.17	5
2	Trump	85	22	25.88	25	29.41	11	12.94	27	31.76	1
3	Ryan	97	6	6.18	33	34.02	16	16.49	42	43.29	3
4	Cruz	66	14	21.21	23	34.84	13	19.69	16	24.24	8
5	Hillary	115	12	10.43	49	42.60	27	23.47	27	23.47	2
6	Biden	100	18	18	34	34	10	10	38	38	6
7	Menendez	86	10	11.62	34	39.53	19	22.09	23	26.74	1
	Total	688	116	16.86	239	34.73	125	18.16	208	30.23	23

Table 1. Performative acts frequency

Figure 1. Percentage of performative acts in the data.
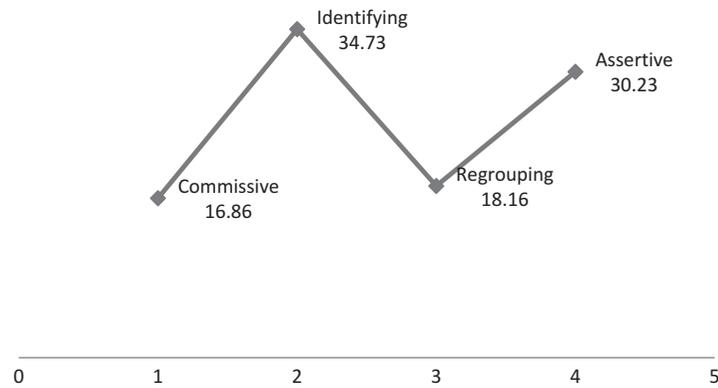
Figure 2. Percentages of performative acts in each speech.
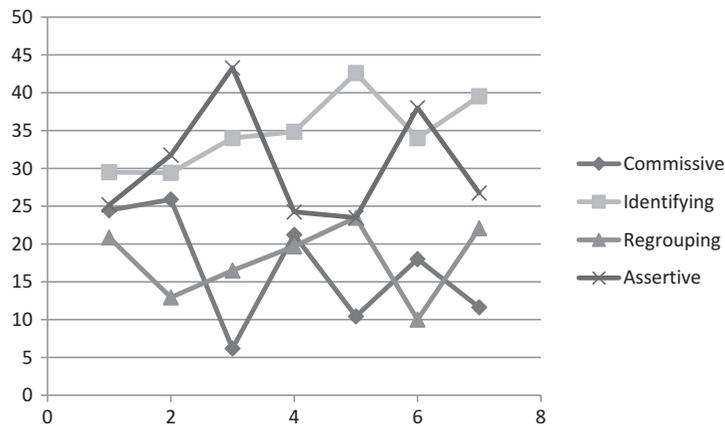
performative acts in speeches 2 and 6 is as follows: assertive, identifying, assertive, commissive, and regrouping. Speech 3 demonstrates a different pattern, namely, assertive, identifying, regrouping, and commissive.

With reference to the performative theory, it is evident that SD is primarily identifying and assertive. Regrouping and commissive acts seem to be the least prevailing. This might be a result of the type of data under examination. In other words, to commit or regroup entities publicly in the political arena can have significant sequences and ramifications. However, it is necessary to analyze the speeches critically in more detail following the assumptions of the theory proposed in the present paper.

4.2. Qualitative analysis

From the above quantitative analysis, it has been noted that the main purpose of such a discourse is to establish a connection and a link between the speaker and the audience, namely, to identify. With reference to the sources of identification, there are three sources, namely, material identification, idealistic identification, and formal identification. Material identification is outside the scope of the current study; hence, it is discarded. On the other hand, the political nature of the data makes idealistic and formal identifications ideal sources, as politicians tend to highlight, share, and manipulate beliefs, attitudes, values, feelings, and ideologies (i.e., the common ground technique) in events that have been organized in which different parties usually participate or attend.

Having said this, the data under examination comprised of speeches that were delivered in a political conference; hence, such an event in itself is a source of formal identification. The following examples demonstrate how speakers utilized this formal identification to create solidarity and connection with the audience:

(1) "I'm delighted to be back at AIPAC, an organization an organization I've known and worked with since the early 1980s." *(speech 1)*

(2) "I've spoken at a lot of AIPAC conferences in the past, but this has to be one of the biggest." *(speech 5)*

(3) "It's wonderful to be back with so many friends." *(speech 6)*

(4) "In the many years in Washington that I have had the honor to speak at AIPAC." *(speech 7)*

The speakers in examples 1–4 highlighted and reiterated this aspect of identification in their speeches by reminding the audience of an event that brought them together. That is, from the very beginning of their speeches they attempted to establish a bond with the audience by reminding them that they have attended, worked, and spoken at this annual conference before. Subtly, these speakers implied that it was not the first time that they were part of this event, and subsequently, they had always been identified with the cause and purpose of the conference.

The second source of identification that prevails in the current data is the idealistic identification. To establish a common ground, the speakers need to specify the common aspects that they share such as beliefs, values, dreams, identity, ideology, and so on. The following examples are illustrative:

(5) "Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East… We share a critically important common interest in the Middle East…" *(speech 1)*

(6) "I came here to speak to you about where I stand on the future of American relations with our strategic ally, our unbreakable friendship and our cultural brother, the only democracy in the Middle East, the State of Israel." *(speech 2)*

(7) "America is safer when we stand with Israel." *(speech 3)*

(8) "Today, we are reliving history, facing a similar time of challenge for America and for Israel… God bless America and am Yisrael chai" *(speech 4)*

(9) "Today, Americans and Israelis face momentous choices that will shape the future of our relationship and of both our nations." *(speech 5)*

(10) "We are all united by our unyielding, and I mean it literally, commitment to the survival, security and success of the Jewish State of Israel." *(speech 6)*

(11) "For both the United States and Israel, getting it wrong is not an option." *(speech 7)*

The examples above are representative of identifying acts employed in the selected texts. In these examples, the speakers emphasized and capitalized on shared values, connections, ideologies, and beliefs to create bonds between both parties. That is, they underscored friendship, similar interests, shared challenges, and destiny. In doing so, they created solidarity and reasons for being united. Interestingly, in example 8, the speaker used Hebrew to communicate and connect with the

audience. It is important to note that the identifying acts in these examples created one united entity; however, they did not specify or even refer to the "Other." Hence, they are identifying acts, not regrouping acts.

The second prevailing act in the current data is assertive. In the assertive acts, speakers are required to represent reality from the perspective of the speaker, the audience, or both. The examples below demonstrate how assertive acts function in SD:

(12) "The American friends of Israel are not fair-weather friends…I am also very concerned about rising attacks on Israel and Jewish students on our college campuses." *(speech 1)*

(13) "But when the United States stands with Israel, the chances of peace really rise and rises exponentially." *(speech 2)*

(14) "It is fantastic to be with you … it's always a good thing when America's leaders declare their support for Israel." *(speech 3)*

(15) "In the four years I've been serving in the Senate, I've been privileged to travel three times to the State of Israel." *(speech 4)*

(16) "They are the future of our relationship and we have to do more to promote that." *(speech 5)*

(17) "We have no closer military ally than Israel, no closer ally than Israel." *(speech 6)*

(18) "Israel and Israeli democracy has always offered educational opportunity, economic stability, social justice, and the hope of identity in the face of those who would turn back the clock to another century." *(speech 7)*

The examples above are illustrative of assertive acts that can build solidarity. As noted earlier, performative acts are not mutually exclusive. Thus, some of the above examples can be assertive and identifying at the same time. However, the focus here is on the assertive parts of these examples, e.g., "The American friends of Israel are not fair-weather friends," "the chances of peace rise and rise exponentially, " "It is fantastic…it's always a good thing," "I've been privileged," "They are the future," "no closer ally than Israel," and "Israel and Israeli democracy has always offered educational opportunity, economic stability, social justice, and the hope." These examples are claims and representations of the speakers' reality that the audience may or may not share with them. However, such assertions can confirm and strengthen the previous identifying acts as well as represent a reality that the speaker wants the audience to share.

The third act to be analyzed is the regrouping act. Regrouping acts are identifying acts that enforce elements of identification and create the "self" while regrouping parties and creating the "Other." The following are some representative examples:

(19) "Israelis live in one of the world's roughest neighborhoods and Iran is not the only threat that the U.S. and Israel both face there." *(speech 1)*

(20) "My number one priority is to dismantle the disastrous deal with Iran, this deal is catastrophic for America, for Israel and for the whole of the Middle East." *(speech 2)*

(21) "Instead of dismantling Iran's nuclear program, we legitimized it. This is a huge threat to the State of Israel and it is a threat to our country too." *(speech 3)*

(22) "America will stand with Israel and defeat radical Islamic terrorism." *(speech 4)*

(23) "And your support helped us expand security and intelligence, cooperation, develop the Iron Dome missile defense system, build a global coalition to impose the toughest sanctions in the history on Iran and so much more." *(speech 5)*

(24) "The United States of America stands with our allies, Israel and Turkey, in that fight against terrorism, against the thugs and the cowards who murder innocents and seek to impose their will through fear and intimidation." *(speech 6)*

(25) "Getting it right means recognizing the real threats that Israel faces from its neighbors and from an increasingly emboldened Iran. It means redoubling our efforts to keep Israel secure, safe, and powerful in the face of those threats." *(speech 7)*

The examples above regroup the speaker, the audience, and a third party. The third party in these examples varies; they are Iran, the deal with Iran, Iran's nuclear program, radical Islamic terrorism, and terrorism. Regrouping different parties publicly has higher stakes than identifying acts; hence, some of the entities specified in the selected data are abstract entities such as Iran's nuclear program and (Islamic) terrorism. These regrouping acts help in uniting the audience and the speaker on a different level compared to the previously mentioned identifying act. However, uniting acts are more effective than identifying acts.

   The last performative act to probe is the commissive act. This act is the least prevalent act due to its nature. That is, it is confining and restraining; yet, it can be delimiting at the same time. It can delimit and define one's support. The following examples are illustrative of this act:

(26) "Let me also tell you, no amount of money that's being made by any business will stand in the way of the need to make sure that the security of Israel is secured and that Iran does not have a nuclear weapon." *(speech 1)*
(27) "I will veto any attempt by the U.N. to impose its will on the Jewish state." *(speech 2)*
(28) "My colleagues and I will do everything we can to strengthen our friendship, not just with words, but with concrete achievements." *(speech 3)*
(29) "America will stand with Israel and defeat radical Islamic terrorism." *(speech 4)*
(30) "I will make a firm commitment to ensure Israel maintains its qualitative military edge." *(speech 5)*
(31) "I will work tirelessly to advance the cause of peace as a partner and as a friend to Israel." *(speech 6)*
(32) "I will continue to stand with you against any nation, any power, any potential threat to Israel's right to exist, no matter what it takes, no matter what political powers I have to take on, even if they are in my own party." *(speech 7)*

The speakers in the above examples made promises to show how far they were willing to go to support the AIPAC causes. It is noticeable that these promises are loose and do not hold anyone confined to anything specific except for example 27. Commissive acts have the power to comfort the audience and overcome their doubts if they have any; in turn, they have undeniable expectations of the speaker's support.

   It has been noted that these performative acts highlight similarities, downplay differences, speak the audience's language, and echo ideologies to identify with the audience. In addition, they use "we vs. they" to regroup entities. Needless to say, these discursive tools are essential to critical discourse analysis. However, one assumption of the performative theory has not been examined yet, and that is storytelling. Below is an overview of this technique as it was utilized in the present data.

4.3. Storytelling technique
As mentioned earlier, SD messages are usually conveyed via storytelling through which the messages are dramatized by praising, choosing, and mentioning specific people, places, events, and quotes. It has been noted that storytelling is a technique to convey the different performative acts of SD. The following are illustrative examples:

(33) "You know, I first visited Israel in 1983 with my late dear friend Gordon Zacks. As you all know, Gordon was a founding member of AIPAC and it was on that trip that I actually visited Bethlehem and I called my mother on Christmas night from Jerusalem. As you could imagine, it was a very, very special moment and Gordon always reminded me of it. Gordon helped me, as much as anyone has over the years, to know and to appreciate the importance of our relationship with Israel and Israel's unique security challenges and I can't think of a better guy who could've taken me to Israel." *(speech 1)*
(34) "In 2001, weeks after the attacks on New York City and on Washington and frankly, the attacks on all of us, attacks that perpetrated and they were perpetrated by the Islamic

fundamentalists, Mayor Rudy Giuliani visited Israel to show solidarity with terror victims. I sent my plane, because I backed the mission for Israel 100%." (*speech 2*)

(35) "That is why two years ago when the rockets were falling on Tel Aviv, the House approved emergency support for the Iron Dome. And that is why within just two months of my taking the speakership, we voted to fund every penny of our security assistance commitments." (*speech 3*)

(36) "I was proud to join with New York Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand in authoring a resolution condemning Hamas's use of human shields as a war crime and that resolution passed both houses of Congress unanimously. In the midst of these rocket attacks, we saw the Obama Administration cancel civilian airline flights in the nation of Israel. When that happened, I publicly asked the question, did this administration just launch an economic boycott on the nation of Israel?" (*speech 3*)

(37) "We should be like U.S. Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds, who when his Nazi captor pointing a pistol at him and demanding to know which of his fellow prisoners in Ziegenhain Stalag were Jewish, ordered more than a thousand of his fellow soldiers who were prisoner to stand in front of the barracks. And then Sergeant Edmonds said, 'We are all Jews here.' The act of defiance in January of 1945 spared the lives of as many as 200 Jews in his command." (*speech 7*)

In these examples, the speakers narrated stories in order to achieve a number of performative acts. In example 33, the speaker attempted to establish some links between themselves and the audience in order to identify themselves with them by telling them a story they might be able to relate to in terms of place, people, events, and experience. This type of identification is idealistic as it highlights values, beliefs, and ideology. In this story, the speaker selected places (Israel, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem), a character (Gordon Zacks), and an event (AIPAC—formal identification) to represent themselves in a favorable light, create bonds, and identify themselves with the values and belief systems their audience shared. In doing so, the speaker dramatized the message by selecting specific aspects, in turn evoking certain feelings and attitudes; they then connected these (positive) feelings and attitude with the speaker. Similarly, in examples 34, 35, 36, and 37, the speakers told compelling stories in which they choose events (attacks) dramatizing the messages to evoke the audience's feelings and represent a reality that both the speaker and the audience shared. Hence, through these stories the speakers achieved at least one performative act, namely, regrouping, by indicating the party they supported at that time. However, as mentioned before every regrouping act is an identifying act. Hence, storytelling can be a subtle way of identifying, asserting, and regrouping.

5. Discussion

From the analysis above, it is obvious that solidarity is a discursive practice a speaker can create through discourse. In doing so, performative acts are required to establish a bond between the speaker and the audience. Based on the performative theory proposed and employed in the current paper, SD performs four acts, namely, identifying, assertive, regrouping, and commissive. However, the quantitative analysis allows the researcher to formulate six hypotheses. They are as follows:

H1. Identifying acts are the prevailing act in solidarity discourse.

Identifying is the basis of solidarity and has no inherent drawbacks, as it is not commissive by nature. In addition, identifying demonstrates a more positive attitude unlike regrouping, which indicates openly the "Other" and separation and may create enmity. Even though identification may create the "Other," it does so subtly. Hence, a speaker can successfully establish solidarity at a lower cost through creating bonds with the audience.

H2. Assertive acts are employed more often than regrouping and commissive acts.

Assertive acts are utilized more often as they achieve the purpose of SD as well as confirm, affirm, and strengthen the identifying acts. Hence, they have dual functions: (1) represent a reality that

the speaker wants the audience to share and (2) confirm the identifying acts through assertions. As identification, assertions have no inherent drawbacks, as they are not commissive. Although they may create the "Other," they do so subtly.

H3. Regrouping acts are more than commissive acts.

In essence, regrouping acts are identifying acts; hence, they serve the same purpose of identifying but at a higher cost, because regrouping acts go a step further by creating the "Other." In doing so, the speaker shows more determination. Largely, unlike identifying acts, which create solidarity based on similarities, regrouping acts create solidarity based on similarities as well as differences and opposition. Hence, regrouping acts are not positive in nature, and the stakes can be higher than identifying acts, especially in the political arena.

H4. Commissive acts are the least utilized act in solidarity discourse.

Commissive acts are confining and may have significant sequences and ramifications. Thus, they are used scarcely. They are necessary to show commitment; yet, solidarity can be created without such an act, especially if the speaker is not in a position to commit to future action. Although commitments show how far one is willing to go to support a party, they subtly delimit one's support.

H5. Policy support is used more often than personal support.

In political discourse, policy support and commitment are employed more often than personal support. With reference to politics, policy support is far more robust, more valuable, and is likely driven by one's personal support. Thus, if personal support is not backed up by policy, it might be meaningless unless the speaker is not in a position to offer this type of support.

H6. Storytelling as a technique is used to identify, assert, and regroup.

As noted earlier and based on the analysis, through telling a story, a speaker can create bonds by choosing specific characters and events (dramatizing messages), regroup, assert, and represent a reality that will bring both parties together. It is a subtle way of persuading the audience, as it is hard to challenge the implied meanings and assertions.

6. Conclusion

Solidarity messages have always been an important message form. It is a social practice that can remap communities and individuals. Although it is not a new notion, it has been under-examined. This might be due to its complex and multifaceted nature. Through reviewing the literature of solidarity, this paper has suggested that solidarity is and should be examined and viewed as a discourse and a social discursive practice. In doing so, the multifaceted nature of solidarity can be better developed and understood. On the other hand, it can help discourse studies expanding the investigation of the "Self" and the "Other" focusing on how to build internal ties among different groups. Hence, this paper attempted to uncover the tip of the solidarity iceberg and shed some light on this discourse by viewing solidarity as a discourse and proposing a performative theory. This theory puts forward eight assumptions and six hypotheses. These assumptions, along with the hypotheses, viewed SD as performing a number of acts, namely, identifying, assertive, regrouping, and commissive. However, it was found out that the ultimate acts of such a discourse are identifications and assertions, and the least frequent acts are regrouping and committing. Finally, this paper calls for more scholarly attention to examine different types of data in order to test and fully develop the assumptions and the hypotheses of the present theory.

Author details
Ahlam Alharbi[1]
E-mail: amalharbi@iau.edu.sa
[1] Department of English, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Citation information
Cite this article as: Towards a performative theory of solidarity discourse, Ahlam Alharbi, *Cogent Arts & Humanities* (2018), 5: 1495044.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Speech 1

Monday 21 March 2016 Gov. John Kasich (R-OH)

http://www.policyconference.org/article/Transcripts.asp

Speech 2

Monday 21 March 2016 Donald Trump

http://www.policyconference.org/article/Transcripts.asp

Speech 3

Monday 21 March 2016 Speaker of the House Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI)

http://www.policyconference.org/article/Transcripts.asp

Speech 4

Monday 21 March 2016 U.S. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)

http://www.policyconference.org/article/Transcripts.asp

Speech 5

Monday 21 March 2016 Hillary Clinton

http://www.policyconference.org/article/Transcripts.asp

Speech 6

Sunday 20 March 2016 Vice President Joe Biden

http://www.policyconference.org/article/Transcripts.asp

Speech 7

Tuesday 22 March 2016 Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ)

http://www.policyconference.org/article/Transcripts.asp