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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Constructing unity and prosperity in diplomatic economic discourse: Insights from positive discourse analysis

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Abstract – This study applies positive discourse analysis (PDA) to the rhetoric of U.S. President Donald Trump delivered during a 2025 speech at the Saudi-U.S. Investment Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. It attempts to provide answers to the following central questions: How are certain words and phrases utilised to tell stories of hope, unity, and shared values in a political-economic context where politics and economics are typically precarious matters? In what ways does President Trump use language to create an empowering message in his speech? What positive visions of cooperation and respect are expressed? In what ways do these language strategies help the U.S. achieve its goals in the Middle East? While critical discourse analysis focuses on power struggles and tension, PDA is concerned with how language is used to unite people, foster hope, and promote cooperation. This research utilises qualitative methods to analyse President Trump's 2025 address and focuses on inclusive pronouns, metaphors, and respectful language as salient discursive tactics. These rhetorical devices help create a diplomatic message grounded in shared values and goals, suggesting that the speaker wants to strengthen alliances and encourage cross-cultural understanding. The research finds that even controversial leaders in public discourse can, on occasion, use constructive language aligned with the audience and context. The research also suggests that political rhetoric can help build confidence and solidarity, as well as validate the fundamental ideals of PDA. While the study is limited to one speech, the analysis can be extrapolated to international diplomacy in general and thus provide input to the emerging PDA discipline. It also calls for additional research on the power of positive and cooperative language in world politics, especially in alliance formation and conflict resolution.

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1. Introduction

Political speeches can shape international diplomatic relationships and influence domestic public opinion. One such speech was delivered by U.S. President Donald Trump at the Saudi-U.S. Investment Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on May 13, 2025. The forum was held at a challenging time for the Middle East, marked by concerns about security, the economy, shifting alliances, and other regional issues. U.S. officials organised the event to attract investment and strengthen relationships, particularly with Saudi Arabia. The President's address was therefore instrumental in demonstrating the U.S. approach to economic cooperation, especially regarding the Middle East, and international diplomacy more generally. Although political communication and expression have been widely researched, positive discourse analysis (PDA) has not often been employed in the study of speeches by controversial politicians such as President Trump. PDA offers a relatively novel perspective on language by emphasising its positive and constructive aspects and exploring how it can encourage harmony and inspire constructive change in communities. PDA examines how language can facilitate connection, solidarity, and hope, unlike critical discourse analysis, which primarily investigates language from the perspective of power struggles and other negative aspects. PDA is employed in this study to analyse the language used in President Trump's speech to the Riyadh forum, focusing on the way in which he uses specific words and forms of expression to convey optimism, harmony, and shared values in a part of the world where the discussion of political and economic topics requires sensitivity. The following key questions are posed in this research study:

a. How does President Trump use language in his speech to convey a message of empowerment?
b. What ideas of hope, cooperation, and respect are expressed?
c. How do the language strategies help the U.S. achieve its goals in the Middle East?

By answering these questions, the study adds to the growing discussion on PDA, offering practical insights into how this approach can be used in political communication. It highlights how positive language can support diplomacy and build stronger international relationships.

1.1 Studies on Political Speeches

Political speeches are a crucial part of shaping public opinion, creating authority, reinforcing social identity, sustaining power relations, and reproducing institutional beliefs (Fairclough, 1995). By using rhetorical devices such as modality, metaphor, and repetition, politicians can shape their message to engage the public's emotions and enhance their credibility. Van Dijk (1997) added that such speeches shape how people think about politics and leaders. These mental models are shaped by specific discourse strategies that help politicians create a positive image in the minds of citizens. Politically

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experienced leaders do not just deliver messages—they justify actions and perform roles that support their ideologies and tighten their control. Wodak (2001) further explained that leaders often use references to the past and collective memories to legitimise their actions, following the discourse-historical approach. By linking policy goals to national history or patriotic symbols, they create a sense of unity and belonging. Shared stories, cultural references, and historical context—when used skilfully—can help ease tensions and build alliances in diplomatic settings. When applied effectively, this type of language can support international cooperation and increase public trust in leadership (Taubaldiyev et al., 2024). Political speeches, therefore, go beyond announcing policies; they are symbolic acts that merge a leader's identity with that of their audience.

Despite the importance of political reasoning, much research focuses only on its negative and divisive aspects. Common themes in discourse analysis include power struggles, ideological control, and the silencing of opposing views (Discourse Analyzer, 2024). Although this critical approach is valuable, it is equally important to explore how political speeches can promote unity, build trust, and support diplomacy. Scholars such as Darnton (2019) have called for new frameworks that recognise the positive and constructive potential of language. By focusing only on division, we overlook how political rhetoric can also bring people together. Highlighting its unifying role offers a more balanced perspective. This study aims to bridge that gap by exploring how political discourse can facilitate harmony and inclusion and promote international peace.

1.2 Positive Discourse Analysis

Whereas other models and frameworks take a more critical approach to discourse, paying regard to power, conflict, or social inequality, PDA does not. In PDA, the power of language and its operation within culture and society are highlighted. Martin (2004) described how PDA examines how language can precipitate division and decline, or ideally, social progress, identity, and unity. It also considers how shared values can encourage optimism and social action, rather than critical discourse analysis, which is geared towards uncovering ideologies and the power relationships hidden behind them. Martin and White (2005) analysed the vocabulary of appreciation, judgment, and feeling in language, which provides the basis for PDA. Politicians employ evaluative language to communicate information to the masses and to reach out to them emotionally by providing interesting stories that can bring them together. PDA is versatile and far-reaching. It can find application in areas such as education, organisational studies, and media. For example, Gu (2023) found that applying PDA in the classroom fostered positive dialogue between students and teachers and inspired them to cultivate cooperation and academic resilience. According to Deroncele-Acosta and Ellis (2024), the application of PDA in media communication promotes inclusivity and minimises fear.

The use of PDA also demonstrates how political figures can unite audiences through inclusive pronouns, leveraging them as metaphorical representations of partnerships and shared values. Perhaps the most potent example of this in action is President Trump's speech to the Riyadh forum. In his speech, Trump used all these strategies to engage national and international audiences alike and communicate that cooperation benefits everyone. PDA also represents a valuable method of examining political speeches in the context of diplomacy as it relates to building alliances and mutual understanding. According to Muñoz et al. (2024), politicians often seek to align their values with those of their constituents by appealing to emotions, with the underlying objective of constructing a common identity. Alenizi and AbuSa'aleek (2022) further examined Trump's 2025 Riyadh speech, where they concluded that the favourable adjectives used in the speech successfully framed identity and relations, and, in support of the contention that, despite problematic contexts, PDA can identify the positive impact of political rhetoric. Aside from this, PDA helps us realise that language can instil optimism and consensus rather than disagreement. Political communication analysis through the prism of PDA is crucial for understanding how diplomacy can succeed during a period requiring cooperation to address global challenges. This section lays the theoretical groundwork for analysing Trump's speech and the positive political strategies it employed.

1.3 Research Gap

Despite its increasing popularity, there is a lack of studies on the application of PDA in political speeches, especially those delivered by controversial figures. Most academic studies have centred on how political language can divide, create fear, and isolate some aspects of society, often reinforcing inequalities and entrenching power imbalances. These studies have shown how political language can be used to sow division within societies; however, they frequently disregard the ways positive strategies can be employed alongside negative ones or in isolated situations (Marttila, 2025). In particular, few studies have examined how political leaders use language to advocate for hope, unity, and collaboration, especially on the international stage. This gap in the literature underscores the need for further research on the positive aspects of political rhetoric to enable a more nuanced understanding of political communication.

As mentioned above, little research has examined how PDA can be applied to political speeches, especially those delivered in complex global contexts. International relations involve a vast array of interactions across trade, security, cultural exchange, and diplomacy, and these interactions require language that defuses tensions, increases mutual understanding, and unites people. However, few studies have examined how positive political rhetoric in these contexts can encourage the required cooperation and peaceful dialogue. The value of inspiring and inclusive language in improving communication and collaboration in both education and diplomacy in these international arenas should be acknowledged. The way in which language contributes to collaboration between nations can be effectively studied through the analysis of political speeches.

This study aims to address these gaps by employing PDA to analyse an address given by a high-profile politician in an international diplomatic setting (Dunmire, 2012). Moreover, it examines how political leaders use language to highlight shared values and convey messages of hope and solidarity, seeking to broaden the scope of PDA and to provide new insights into political communication in international diplomacy. The findings are expected to show that even controversial politicians can use language to facilitate collaboration and trust. This study contributes to academic knowledge and provides practical insights for those in the diplomatic, policy-making, and communication arenas whose aim is to strengthen relationships between countries.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, PDA approach to analyse a speech delivered by U.S. President Donald Trump in 2025 at the Saudi-U.S. Investment Forum in Riyadh. PDA was selected because it offers a method for investigating how political discourse can be utilised to build support, foster cooperation, and motivate positive action (Alenizi & AbuSa'aleek, 2022). Specifically, the study is interested in how the use of specific speaking styles, delivery, and word choice can effectively promote unity and shared values. Data used in this study were gathered from the official transcript of President Trump's speech, chosen for its diplomatic tone and relevance to international political relations. Thematic coding and pattern identification based on PDA theory (Oo & Dai, 2025) are used in analysing the data. By understanding the language used in this speech, the aim is to illustrate how trust, comprehension, and rapport between nations can be developed and strengthened through effective political communication.

2.1 Data Source

The source of data for the present study is mainly the transcript of President Donald Trump's speech given on May 13, 2025, at the Saudi-U.S. Investment Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (Appendix). The publicly accessible transcript online was retrieved from Roll Call Factba.se, a widely used website that provides access to government speeches and statements, including official ones. The occasion is considered to be a landmark in U.S.–Middle East relations.

The value of the speech in discourse analysis lies in its official diplomatic setting, the multilingual audience of participants—government officials, businesspeople, and foreign investors—and its content, which aimed to cement bilateral relations. The speech was selected for analysis because it represents a significant diplomatic occasion, demonstrating how politicians use rhetoric to convey messages of partnership, shared goals, and optimism. Through an analysis of this speech, this study aims to reveal how language can be used to establish alliances and trust in complex international contexts. This research draws on the PDA theoretical and methodological framework. Traditional approaches tend to focus on uncovering inequality, bias, or harmful language; PDA, in contrast, examines how language can positively contribute to, empower, and spark change. Researchers have used PDA to examine how specific linguistic choices convey messages of hope and inclusion that foster collaboration and social improvement, facilitating strong relationships and cooperation within and among communities (Mallet & Mahboob, 2023), ultimately benefiting everyone.

More particularly, PDA may be utilised to analyse the speeches of political or diplomatic leaders that aim to convey messages of hope and cooperation, exhibit leadership, and rally people towards a shared goal. Through PDA, particular linguistic strategies instantiating positive relations can be uncovered. For instance, speeches often have phrases such as 'we are together' or 'our values unite us' that represent relations as partnerships or shared missions and stress mutual respect and shared values. These modes of communication together create a narrative that supports diplomacy and trust among all involved. The goal of this study is to reveal how President Trump used positive messaging in his speech to convey optimism and encourage global collaboration. By applying PDA, the analysis not only illuminates the effectiveness of these types of speeches but also contributes to the growing body of research on PDA in political communication scholarship.

2.2 Analysis Procedures

The reading of the speech was a multi-stage process. The first step was reading the transcript multiple times to determine the structure, tone, and principal ideas, which helped provide an impression of the setting, speaking style, and overall theme of the speech. Such close reading of the text provided insight into subtle patterns and enabled to possess the background required for effective coding and interpretation. It was a good idea to know both the overall message and the emotional tone of the speech, which enabled to gauge the audience's experience and direct the analysis. In step two, the qualitative data were systematically coded from the transcript, searching for recurring PDA themes of optimism, solidarity, shared values, alliance building, and mutual respect. During this stage, specific language reflecting these positive elements was identified and labelled. This method enabled a structured analysis, discerning how the speaker used language to achieve particular aims. The coding process helped organise the evidence and link the observations to direct quotes from the speech. The third stage involved analysing the use of specific language strategies, known as 'discourse moves'. These were employed by the speaker to support his message and included the use of inclusive pronouns such as 'we' and 'our' to create a sense of shared responsibility, as well as metaphors related to partnership, construction, and progress, which are common in diplomatic language. Expressions of hope and calls for collaboration were also observed. Their function was to engage the audience at both the emotional and intellectual levels and provide a positive vision for U.S.–Middle East relations (Ehibor et al., 2025). Aside from coding, speech's themes, delivery style, and structure are also interesting to be examined.

Repetition, parallel phrasing, and forceful word choices were also examined to enhance the effectiveness and memorability of the speech (Neale & Ely, 2007). The main message was that recursion reinforced positive thoughts, while parallel sentence structures led to a well-organised and engaging speech. Specific word choices facilitated optimism and credibility, both of which are critical in PDA. This close analysis of the words and imagery used in the speech showed how words can shape political thinking. A second researcher reviewed the coded data and the themes revealed to determine the reliability of the results (Roberts et al., 2019). Both researchers conducted independent reviews and used only one label per speech segment to avoid overlap. Disagreements were argued until a consensus was reached. This triangulation process increased the validity of the analysis and ensured that the findings were supported by linguistic evidence, which is essential given the complexity of political communication. In the final step, the language themes and strategies were integrated into a cohesive explanation of how the speech conveyed a positive message. By using direct quotes and observational themes, the study demonstrated how these rhetorical choices promoted unity, global collaboration, and mutual values. The analysis indicated that the speech did not merely convey a diplomatic message but also a therapeutic and unifying one. By using this PDA-inspired framework, how President Trump strategically used rhetoric to inspire and unite his listeners could be ascertained. As the results show, the use of positive language in political communication is instrumental in improving international relations and cross-border cooperation.

3. Results

This article presents the general themes and argumentative tendencies identified by PDA in President Trump's 2025 speech at the Saudi-U.S. Investment Forum in Riyadh. The analysis revealed three central themes that combined to create a discourse focused on positivity, optimism, and collaboration. The first of these themes, optimism and hope, represents the way the speech encourages looking ahead and stresses the need to persevere through adversity to achieve success for all. The second theme, partnership and coalition building, highlights the inclusive rhetoric and reconciling metaphors employed in the speech to encourage partnerships between the U.S. and Middle Eastern nations. The third theme, shared values and mutual respect, emphasises the common economic, political, and cultural principles that strengthen diplomatic ties. Each theme is supported by corresponding examples and direct quotes from the speech, illustrating how various linguistic strategies work together to create an optimistic, affirming message. This thematic structure reveals how hopeful and cooperative language can be effective in high-level political discourse.

Table 1

Key themes and supporting quotes from President Trump's 2025 speech

Key theme	Quotes from the transcript, Trump, 2025, p. 4, lines 206–208
Hope and optimism	'Together, we had obliterated the killers of ISIS.' 'After so many decades of conflict, finally it is within our grasp to reach the future that generations before us could only dream about, a land of peace, safety, harmony, opportunity, innovation, and achievement right here in the Middle East.' 'Together, we will overcome challenges and seize new horizons.'
Alliance and partnership building	'With this historic state visit, we celebrate more than 80 years of close partnership between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.' 'Strengthening our bonds of friendship and cooperation.' 'The foundation of our alliance is built on trust and mutual respect.'
Shared values and mutual respect	'Our partnership is founded on mutual respect and a deep appreciation of our unique cultures.' 'Our shared vision promises new opportunities for all.' 'We have a shared commitment to peace.'

3.1 Hope and Optimism

This paper presents the prevailing themes and argumentation strategies identified through PDA in President Trump's 2025 Saudi-U.S. Investment Forum address in Riyadh. As shown in Table 1, three prevailing themes emerged that collectively form a discourse of positivity, optimism, and collaboration. The first theme, hope and optimism, represents how the speech encourages thinking ahead and focuses on overcoming challenges to achieve success for all. The second theme, alliances and partnerships, demonstrates the application of inclusive language and unifying metaphors in the speech to establish partnerships between Middle Eastern nations and America. This positive message not only inspires confidence but also positions the U.S. as a solid and committed partner in building the region's future (The White House, 2025). The speech reassures the reader and conveys a positive message that encourages cooperation and co-development, thereby presenting a promising prospect.

One such instance is where President Trump stated, 'Together, we had obliterated the killers of ISIS', reasserting a message of shared achievement and mutual responsibility in having together defeated a significant challenge. He continues to envision 'a land of peace, safety, harmony, opportunity, innovation, and achievement right here in the Middle East', a positive vision of the future. This type of language conveys the possibility for rejuvenation and progress, and a collective identity founded upon hope. There are also utterances in the speech which are intended to motivate, such as 'Together, we will overcome challenges and seize new horizons'. This type of language encourages resolve and a forward-

looking attitude and calls upon the audience to see themselves as active participants in shaping a more hopeful tomorrow. With such optimistic words, the speech conveys messages of cooperation, solidarity, and trust, all of which are fundamental to strengthening diplomatic and economic ties between America and its allies. The optimistic tone also helps create the confidence and unity that the world, in its complex state today, needs.

3.2 Alliance and Partnership Building

Another prevailing theme in President Trump's speech is the intense focus on establishing alliances and partnerships, particularly between the U.S. and Middle Eastern countries. A range of linguistic techniques is employed throughout the speech to emphasise cooperation, mutual support, and collective strength. This kind of message framing urges the relationship to be considered a joint endeavour working towards shared goals to respond to both regional and global challenges (Aysar & Lucy, 2019). For example, Trump stated, 'With this historic state visit, we celebrate more than 80 years of close partnership between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia', pointing to the long and vital nature of the relationship. By framing the U.S.–Middle East relationship as ongoing, the language conveys confidence and promotes continued efforts to strengthen diplomatic, economic, and security ties. This message provides more than hope, offering a long-term commitment to mutually beneficial collaboration.

One of the main strategies used to promote this sense of solidarity is the use of inclusive pronouns such as 'we' and 'our.' This type of language is employed to create a sense of unity and shared agenda. For example, when Trump stated, 'Together, we will succeed, he made an image of the U.S. and Middle Eastern countries as allies with a shared agenda. Employing these types of words serves to close emotional and political gaps, fostering cooperation rather than estrangement. President Trump also used building and connection metaphors in the speech. 'Drawing from our relationship' and 'coming together' are expressions that create vivid images of cooperation, advancement, and mutual success. The metaphors simplify the complex diplomatic and strategic ideas so that they are relatable to the public. By using terms related to building and cooperation, the implication is that these relationships are strong, dynamic, and long-lasting, reinforcing the theme of collaboration, the main message. Also, the frequent references to 'our alliance' and 'our partnership' reinforce the impression that these are time-tested and trustworthy connections, helping build trust and express mutual agreement. By avoiding language that suggests control or hierarchy and instead focusing on shared responsibility and respect, the speech encourages a sense of shared values and cooperation and seeks goodwill in diplomatic relations.

3.3 Shared Values and Mutual Respect

The third broad theme readily apparent in President Trump's speech is the shared cultural, economic, and political values that inform the U.S.–Middle East relationship. In referencing these values, the speech narrates a story that is backed by the pillars needed for long-term economic and diplomatic collaboration, i.e., shared goals and mutual respect. This theme goes beyond transactional diplomacy for the moral and ethical foundations of global cooperation (Sheerin, 2025). Essentially, the speech aims to bring the parties into line regarding commonalities and the deeply held values that legitimise and reinforce their bond. Trump repeatedly emphasises throughout the speech themes of 'common goals' and a 'shared commitment to peace' in an effort to reinforce the notion that the two parties are united both in values and in aspirations. His rhetoric casts the relationship as principled rather than short-term convenience, appealing to both pragmatic interests, such as security and prosperity, and moral values, such as fairness, justice, and cooperation. This positioning creates trust in the partnership, demonstrating that a common goal and trust are the foundations.

Terminology such as 'mutual respect' and 'understanding' is used to illustrate the importance of recognising each other's cultures, beliefs, and freedoms. For example, Trump stated, 'We understand each other as partners with mutual respect for what defines our cultures, and this kind of discourse promotes equality and inclusion, indicating that both sides value each other's input. When concepts such as education, fairness, and diversity are positioned as mutual obligations, the relationship appears more level and inclusive. The language reminds both sides of the foundational basis of their alliance by recalling their shared values. References to former leaders, such as President Kennedy, help re-establish the notion that diplomacy must be for the good of all people, not merely governments, through investment, trade, and shared development. When the focus is on equity and moral duty, the relationship gains moral credibility. This ethical aspect strengthens trust, supports diplomacy, and promotes collaboration as a shared duty, rather than a mere convenience.

3.4 Illustrative Examples and Quotes

Specific terms and lines from President Trump's 2025 address to the Saudi-U.S. Investment Forum are analysed to provide a better understanding of the key themes. The speech emphasises partnership through consistent use of inclusive language, such as *"we"* rather than *"I"*, thereby reinforcing a sense of shared effort and collective unity. In this context, Trump states that the Middle East can now find *"stability, harmony, and opportunities for all to succeed and prosper"* (Trump, 2025, p. 4, lines 206–208), offering a message of hope for the region after decades of conflict. This positive orientation is further underscored by expressions such as *"weakening our bonds of enmity and strengthening our ties of cooperation"* (Trump, 2025, p. 3, lines 123–128), which place alliance building and cooperation at the centre of the speech's discourse. Moreover, when Trump refers to the partnership as being *"based on trust and respect for one another"* (Trump, 2025, p. 2, lines 64–68), he highlights the core values underpinning the diplomatic relationship. Finally, the assertion that *"our shared vision promises a future for all"* (Trump, 2025, p. 11, lines 497–498) encapsulates the speech's overall optimistic tone, signalling a long-term commitment to mutual benefit and enduring cooperation. These quotations illustrate how

President Trump employs positive discourse strategies that promote togetherness, stress cooperation, and encourage hopefulness, and how language can be intentionally used to frame political alliances in a positive, unifying light.

3.5 Summary of Discourse Moves

The speech employs a range of linguistic and rhetorical techniques to build a positive message of cooperation:

(1) Inclusive pronouns such as 'we' and 'our' evoke a feeling of solidarity and joint purpose.

(2) Metaphors relating to building and alliance to foster a sense of enduring collaboration and cooperation.

(3) Repeating phrases of hope to create a message of optimism that resonates with the audience.

(4) Explicit references to mutual respect highlight equality and balanced diplomatic relations.

(5) Emotive language that appeals to shared values and collective aspirations.

The combined use of these rhetorical strategies contributes to a narrative that presents the U.S. and Middle Eastern countries as committed partners, working together in pursuit of shared goals in an environment characterised by trust, optimism, and mutual respect.

4. Discussion

The findings of this research show that President Trump's address to the Saudi-U.S. Investment Forum in 2025 rigidly adheres to the fundamental principles of PDA. Beyond political rhetoric, the speech conveys messages of hope, unity, and shared values, which are imperative given the long, problematic history of U.S.-Middle East relations. The speech calls for cooperation and mutual respect among government officials, business leaders, and global partners, intending to unite them. The speech employs inclusive, positive language to diffuse tensions and demonstrate that political, economic, and cultural collaboration among nations is attainable (Blaydes et al., 2022). The message of positivity fosters an atmosphere of trust and confidence, which is vital for effective, long-term diplomatic and economic relationships. As presented in Table 2, this research illustrates that optimistic and inclusive rhetoric can facilitate favourable political outcomes. Thus, international diplomatic coalitions can be well served by communication that highlights a shared purpose, unity, and respect for one another.

Table 2

Discourse strategies and their functions in President Trump's 2025 speech

Discourse strategy	Transcript Trump, 2025, p. 4, lines 215–216	Function/Purpose
Inclusive pronouns ('we', 'our')	'Together, we had obliterated the killers of ISIS.'	Creates shared identity and unity between the U.S. and the Middle East.
Metaphors of building/partnership	'Strengthening our bonds of friendship and cooperation.'	Presents diplomatic relations as concrete and relatable, emphasising collaboration.
Repetition of hopeful phrases	'Together, we will overcome challenges and seize new horizons.'	Reinforces optimism and embeds positive perceptions in the audience's mind.
Explicit statements of mutual respect	'Our partnership is founded on mutual respect and a deep appreciation of our unique cultures.'	Highlights the partnership's commitment to equality and ethical principles.
Emotive language	'A land of peace, safety, harmony, opportunity, innovation, and achievement.'	Evokes emotional investment and fosters positive social cohesion.

4.1 Interpretation of Findings using Positive Discourse Analysis

PDA highlights the potential of language to empower, inspire, and strengthen social relationships. In contrast to methods that are more likely to highlight conflict or inequality, PDA highlights the uniting and positive potential of language. As shown in Table 2, President Trump's 2025 speech demonstrates key PDA principles through positive vocabulary, inclusive pronouns, cooperative metaphors, and respectful language. An example of this is the constant use of inclusive pronouns such as 'we' and 'our', which invites those listening to be part of a shared narrative. Inclusive rhetoric such as this creates a sense of joint responsibility and belonging, and fosters a collective identity that transcends cultural, political, and ideological boundaries. In international diplomacy, this type of inclusive language is vital for building mutual understanding and fostering cooperation.

The positive, constructive message of President Trump's speech is also conveyed through partnership and building metaphors. Descriptive words like 'building closer ties' and 'deepening cooperation' turn the world of diplomacy, which is so abstract, concrete, and out of reach, into concrete images and strengthen the theme of unity. In addition, the repeated references to shared values and respect for one another are consonant with the inherent assumption of PDA: using language as a tool for inclusion rather than exclusion (Xin & Matheson, 2018). By repeatedly invoking shared aspirations and moral foundations, President Trump's speech aims to reduce tension and foster trust among global partners.

The rhetorical strategies utilised in the speech all achieve a range of significant purposes. They shift the focus from competition to cooperation, a step necessary in places with complex, nuanced political landscapes. By building trust, these

rhetorical choices lay the foundation for long-term alliances and help formulate a message grounded in collaboration, shared purpose, and ongoing communication. In such politically charged contexts, applying positive, inclusive language can transform potential conflict into opportunities for cooperation and common advancement.

4.2 Comparison with Similar Studies

Political rhetoric literature has predominantly examined how President Trump's speeches tend to be polarising and divisive. The majority of writers have noted that he has applied populist rhetoric, addressing fear and anxiety amongst some sections. This type of rhetoric tends to produce an 'us and them' dynamic that widens political and social divides. By framing adversaries or aliens as threats, this type of discourse tends to heighten tensions both foreign and domestic. These analytical perspectives give valuable insights into populist discourse and how this influences political culture and civic discourse (Bergmann, 2024), as well as how political communication can be used in a way that mobilises support through convincing the audience to reject and dread the 'other', often at the cost of social cohesion and democratic values. Because of this, the disruptive quality of Trump's communication has been the primary focus of concern of the research done so far.

This paper, however, offers a more nuanced view by demonstrating that President Trump can adapt his rhetoric to context and audience. In his 2025 speech at the Riyadh Investment Forum, he employed positive discourse strategies based on bridging approaches, emphasising collaboration and inspiring optimism. This notion suggests that his communication style is more flexible than revealed in earlier studies that focused on his populist rhetoric. As with all political leaders, President Trump appears able to adapt his communication style to his audience's expectations. Here, in the political context, he employed inclusive metaphors and pronouns, as well as spoke of alliances and shared beliefs to convey a message of cooperation and unity. This shift in tone is part of an overall trend in political speech where leaders can toggle between divisive and constructive language at will.

As demonstrated in other research, political leaders across cultures use positive language when delivering diplomatic addresses to promote cooperation and peace. Accordingly, President Trump's Riyadh speech created an agenda of hope, shared goals, and mutual benefit. As Alenizi and AbuSa'aleek (2022) further asserted, PDA can be applied beyond cultures to reveal the unifying potential of language. Politicians in most political settings typically employ inclusive pronouns, allusion metaphors, and appeals to shared values to foster trust and harmony. U.S. Republican and Democratic politicians were noted to have found their actions on such tactics in foreign policy situations, thus facilitating the overall diplomatic value of a positive style of communication, regardless of personal political orientation. By examining President Trump's speech in this broader political and historical context, the research reveals how political rhetoric can be both a source of conflict and a tool of coalition-building. Political language can also be conceived of not only as contributing to misunderstanding and conflict but also to cooperation and diplomacy.

4.3 Constructing Hope, Alliances, and Values in Diplomatic Economic Discourse

Hope is a fundamental theme that underpins the success of President Trump's 2025 speech. He repeatedly spoke of 'a brighter future', utilising this optimistic message to reinterpret past conflict as a path to economic development and mutual gain. Putting positive expectation at its centre, the speech sets the political rhetoric in terms of collective advancement, cooperation, and triumph. Highlighting the concept of collective progress, the tone invites local and international audiences to engage in collective action and long-term collaboration. In doing so, the speech not only engages the audience but also legitimates global intervention as mutually beneficial. The positive approach functions to abolish fear of international politics and portrays the U.S. as a consistent and forward-thinking leader. The outcome is that hope becomes an integrating force that advances collaboration and enables durable, resilient diplomatic relations.

Alliance-building is promoted in the speech through references to shared interests, goals, and a collective identity. The repeated use of inclusive pronouns such as 'we' and 'our' solidifies the notion of unity between the U.S. and its Middle Eastern partners. These pronouns act as linguistic tools that bridge social and cultural divides. Furthermore, words like 'joined in work' and 'related by bonds' make intangible diplomatic ties more understandable and humanised. Such imagery conveys a sense of enduring cohesion and inspires trust in the strength of the tie. The painstakingly selected words underscore that the tie rests on the pillars of long-lasting international cooperation: responsibility and respect.

Common values are fostered by emphasising shared goals, respect, and appreciation of culture. The address presents the U.S.–Middle East relationship as a strategic imperative and a morally correct, ethically justifiable alliance. By evoking feelings of 'mutual respect' for sovereignty and cultural identity, the address takes on an inclusive, balanced tone. The emphasis on shared goals—such as peace, prosperity, and stability—positions the alliance as a collective activity with lasting benefits. By appealing to right and wrong, the speech can evoke ethical and emotional reactions from its listeners, bringing all parties involved together. The fact that it emphasises shared values allow the speech to articulate a distinct moral vision, staying positive and positive thinking at all times.

4.4 Practical and Theoretical Implications

This study shows that political leaders' rhetoric can positively impact their diplomacy and their ability to forge long-term cooperative international relationships. Political leaders, when they speak to their constituencies in a positive and empowering tone, create narratives that resonate with diverse groups and foster unity, trust, and mutual respect. These narratives are vital for bridging political and cultural divides, and for employing them within diplomatic as well as wider

organisational and institutional realms. The present research highlights those policymakers, diplomats, and political communicator must employ these communication tactics when engaging with international publics. Constructive rhetoric can contribute towards more effective diplomatic interaction, ease tensions, and promote political and economic collaborations. Besides, positive language is not limited to formal diplomatic contexts—it also takes centre stage in speeches, negotiations, and public outreach programs (Brittain-Hale, 2023). In each of these contexts, a positive communication style shapes popular opinion, generates dialogue, and facilitates constructive cooperation, building successful, fruitful world alliances.

PDA is itself a developing field; however, this research's findings suggest it can be utilised as a powerful means of critical analysis of politically prominent speeches, including those delivered by controversial or polarising public leaders. PDA has previously been applied in educational, media, and workplace contexts to analyse how language can create empowerment, social unity, and hope. Applying PDA to examine an international diplomatic address extends the model's application to global communication. This research demonstrates that PDA is especially effective at unmasking how political rhetoric is used not only to deliver a message but also to form alliances, create consensus, and inspire. Seeing PDA utilised for this purpose shows political leaders' capacity to deploy language strategically to navigate global relations and resolve conflicts. Moreover, pursuing this study would lead to further research on exploring new applications of positive discourse in politics, thereby enlarging our understanding of how language affects global politics and diplomacy.

5. Conclusion

This study employed PDA to examine President Trump's speech during the Saudi-U.S. Investment Forum in Riyadh in 2025. Analysis identified three themes at the heart of political rhetoric: the declaration of hope and optimism, the emphasis on alliance-building, and the affirmation of shared values and mutual respect. Together, these motifs suggest that the speech was intended to reaffirm connections between Middle Eastern countries and the U.S. By employing inclusive language, metaphors of cooperation and solidarity, and the reaffirmation of common goals, President Trump sought to create a discourse that sidestepped political complexity. The speech advocated mutual understanding and engagement and served as a platform to inspire, reassure, legitimise, and strengthen bilateral relations. The results of the PDA reveal that language can be absolutely key in building political realities and facilitating diplomatic advances. PDA has the capacity to provide meaningful input into the language used by high-profile politicians, including the infamous, thereby contributing to the broader PDA arena. The debate illustrates how PDA can help bring to light constructive ways of communicating in areas typically understood as conflict- or polarisation-prone. Thus, the study reinforces critical discourse strategies by providing a more balanced view of political discourse that incorporates solidarity and common purpose. At a practical level, this study offers political communicators and policymakers a handbook on how to use optimistic, positive rhetoric to successfully promote international cooperation and diplomatic relations.

However, the study is not without constraints. It relies on a single speech, limiting the extent to which findings can be generalised, since speakers tend to adjust their rhetoric to audience, context, and purpose. Further, the study analyses only the speech text, without examining audience reactions or media interpretations. Future research should include a wider sample of political speeches from different regions and contexts, along with reception analysis, to better understand how positive political discourse is both produced and perceived. Comparative studies between positive and critical discourse approaches could also offer valuable insights into the range of rhetorical strategies currently used in global politics. In conclusion, this study shows that, even in high-stakes, politically sensitive settings, leaders still attempt to promote hope, unity, and cooperation through positive language. Such discourse plays an essential role in fostering diplomatic engagement and encouraging collaborative action among nations, highlighting the enduring power of constructive communication in international affairs.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Author Contribution

Hasan Faya Alalmay: The author was solely responsible for all aspects of the work and approved the final manuscript.

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Appendix

Full Transcript

A full transcript of Donald Trump's speech can be found at the following link: https://rollcall.com/factbase/trump/transcript/donald-trump-speech-saudi-investment-forum-riyadh-saudi-arabia-may-13-2025/