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Commissives as the Type of Preemptive Leadership Practice: The Case of the Israeli PM Tweets on the Israel-Hamas War

Abstract. The presentation explores the pragmatic characteristics of the speech acts content facilitated by tweets generated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, particularly the function of commissives as preemptive leadership practice in the face of imminent danger. These tweeting practices promote ways of dealing with the war crisis and map the future potentialities, which are an assumed part of future reality. The study is based on the manually compiled dataset of 141 examples of commissives (including promises and threats) collected between 7 October and 20 December 2023. This article analyses commissive illocutionary acts as indicators of collective involvement by readily adopting the “we” orientation. It specifically investigates the patterned correlations among three referential devices of personal deixis and two speech act variables using the Pearson correlation coefficient. A strong positive correlation between the speech act of promises and the “we” pronoun parameter could be found. Even stronger positive correlation between the promise and the “3rd person” pronoun variable was found. Moreover, there were significant but relatively weak positive correlations between 3rd person use and threat. The study investigates the occurrence and the potential effects of these variables in the prefiguring of the future in various ways.

Keywords: Benjamin Netanyahu; Hamas; Israel; anthropological pragmatics; commissives; leadership.

1. Introduction

This study aims to explore the speech act approach to account for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's leadership practices and to account for new realities created in his tweets during the initial stages of the Israel-Hamas war in 2023. The central idea of this work primarily revolves around the analysis of tweets as units of analysis that contain illocutions, understood in the Austinian sense of performing speaker's intentions under certain conditions. The study, developed from two broader scholarly fields- anthropological pragmatics and speech acts theory- demonstrates both the macro and micro examination of preemptive discourse practice and its patterns. On the level of an individual, the analysis of the concept of promising entails the study of acts that place oneself under an obligation to do the promised thing (Searle, 1979, p. 179). By studying the contexts within which PM Netanyahu formulated promises, it is of interest to see how these obligations function as future performatives, as projecting actions having not only the foreseeing/ foreseeable potential but also the one that facilitates the preemptive intervention as the type of leadership practice (see, e.g. Strukowska, 2023, p. 16). In this respect, promises examined in this study are the specific linguistic realisations employed by the PM to pursue the goal of mitigating the threats and insecurities caused by the acts of Hamas terror. Contextual factors such as these may act as means of balancing power and building the society's sense of security through projecting "what may happen next".

The projecting potential in anthropological pragmatics is strongly anchored in the study of speech acts as highly contextualised forms of creating reality. This is largely due to the fact that anthropological pragmatics is committed to the study of the context of use and cultural meaning in language as communicative practice (Hoye, 2006, p. 945; Nassenstein & Völkel, 2022, p. 12). Such a definition could be reformulated as the study of language use anchored in culture to highlight the ways in which human interaction as performance is both shaped by and shapes the functions of social interaction. This contextualised cultural environment can be explained with the culture-specific acts (speech acts) at the ethnopragmatic level (Duranti, 2001, p. 269). Therefore, a systematic overview of promises as situational, systematic, regular and functional elements of language, which form patterns of meaning, provides a system of rules governing the linguistic communication within the Israeli culture. But not only that, such an overview, examines the instances of prefiguring the future in specific ways in the sense

of “how the future will be” and foregrounds some possibilities the future could take. Taking this perspective gives insight into the ideational function of Netanyahu’s texts as context-determined means of “constructing the reality” (Fairclough, 1993). Such a view assumes a preemptive type of leadership practice that hinges on conventional illocutionary acts of Netanyahu’s promises. Therefore, the present study represents a case of normalisation of the reality through the convention-based effects that rely on social and individual agreement dictated by the norms governing it (Sbisa, 2023, p. 1).

Given the central role of speech acts as communicative practice, it is important to recognise that such practice heavily relies on the human cognition of those who take part in the communication process. As such, the relevance-theoretic pragmatic framework also gives us insight into the type of external factors and internal representations that are relevant, i.e. evoke positive cognitive effects in the processing of new information derived from promises (Sperber & Wilson, [1986] 1995, p. 48). My claim is that Netanyahu’s language behaviour serves particular leader-based goals that stem from maximising the relevance of the information communicated, serving as a stimulus to achieve cognitive effects. There is, thus, a point in teasing out relevant information types because they transform and improve the cultural representation of the world. Such guarantee of information relevance given by Netanyahu a change of beliefs, at a low processing cost. I postulate that Netanyahu’s promises strengthen cognitive effects, which are strategies for creating more grounded attitudes, beliefs and norms in the form of ideologies.

The chief purpose of this speech act contribution is to show how they serve as legitimate tools that deal with projecting a potential action through a preemptive response. The underlying idea here is that the generated PM promises are *prima facie* factors to account for a preemptive strategy in the face of *imminent threats* (Dunmire, 2011, p. 2), specifically the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023. The local character of the Hamas attack accounts for specific threat discourse and its communicative functions, which become evidenced at the micro level of a leader’s status and his intentions combined with the macro scope that accounts for the representational character of certain future potentialities, i.e. the “perlocutionary sequel” (Austin, 1975, p. 118). In a most general and practical sense, the act of promising, being a “commissive” speech act, is undertaking a commitment made by a speaker to perform a given action in the future (Searle, 1979). Therefore, I shall also argue that, due to the fundamental accounts of the role of

intention in determining the meaning, the preemptive potential of promises stands to gain from investigations at their functional interface. Since functions, including the function of promises, are intentionality-relative (Marsili, 2016, p. 307; Searle, 2010, p. 59), the systematic account of PM's tweeting promises would be of practical significance in that it could serve as finding the regularities in use, which also stem from the cognitive dimension of the PM anchored in the social dimension of a wider context. The identification of promises as intentions with the projecting potential allows the creation of facts that are the already-existing representations of PM's preemptive response, and therefore, his leadership practices are the ones that ultimately create catalytic conditions for reacting to imminent threats.

Drawing on the promises as evidence of the speaker's intentions, this study also investigates another aspect worth investigating, i.e. the moral point of view. From such a perspective, the commitment to performing the promise is always of a moral kind of practice. Following David Hume, "every new promise imposes a new obligation of morality on the person who promises" (Hume, [1888] 1965, p. 524), and "[i]t is morally wrong for the promisor not to do what was promised" (Gilbert, 2004, p. 86). Furthermore, whatever is promised always needs to conform to the principle of the truthfulness of every linguistic behaviour (Wilson & Sperber, 2012, p. 47). Importantly, they can be relative only to particular contextual parameters, e.g. personal deixis variables as indexical (referential) expressions which are discernible in the fundamentals of every interaction (Levinson, 1983, p. 45). Therefore, taking this approach, the functional account of promises and their force is contingent to the grammatical categories of person used by Netanyahu viewed as orientation features that relate to culture-specific forms of interaction. I believe that the social aspect of the person deixis makes reference to participant-roles that are an approximation to a covert person element and its relation to the surrounding text. It is informative to consider person deixis as the means of encoding the reference to persons mentioned and their role in the projecting force of promises. Here, the categories of person deixis under study are the personal pronouns of first, second and third person as the source of generating the force of promising.

When defining promises in the context of true moral obligations and commitments, it is imperative to address one last but not least important element in this puzzle, namely, the felicity conditions of performing such acts effectively. On the one hand, there exists the preparatory condition of every

promise that while promising the event, it will have a beneficiary effect (see, e.g. Strukowska, 2024). On the other hand, the sincerity condition highlights that the speaker genuinely intends to do something in the future. So, it seems that promising generates moral commitment that intrinsically works to the benefit of the hearer, since it “predicts” the needs that are to be fulfilled and that it will have a future character, therefore, of a certain degree of uncertainty that will happen. A pending question is then whether the promising as a linguistic practice of creating a certain type of the reality is an intra-discourse element of the promiser or an inter-dependent act dynamically recreated in the process of mapping the needs of a society and its “readiness” to acknowledge the delivered promises. And I may add, what if the moral force of promissive commitments expresses the vile and ruthless type of behaviour? What if the promisee’s acts offer a moral ambiguity that questions the ethics and normativity of cultural norms? This is the case of PM Netanyahu’s promises, which seek “mighty vengeance” (Netanyahu, 7 October 2023 Twitter post) despite any moral order.

In this paper, I will focus on the promises made by the Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu to provide an understanding of how the operation of promissive commitments and morals can serve as “preemptive leadership” and reactive response to Hamas’ barbaric actions. By openly promising specific acts, Netanyahu creates a matrix of possible futures which build a particular order of reality.

2. How to do promising – the ‘atomistic’ view

In pragmatics, the study of promising as a rule-governed form of behaviour, has had a long history, starting with the work of John Austin (1975), followed by John Searle (1979). Both pragmaticians presented promises as having a certain intention while making a claim (Austin, 1975, p. 10), thereby creating in the promisee a reason to believe that the promise will become effectively realised. By observing the rules for performing the speech act of promising, Austin (1962; 1970) specified the conditions that need to be met for this speech act to successfully take place, the so-called “felicity conditions”. In that sense, promises are rule-governed forms of conventional behaviour driven by certain constitutive rules that create or define new forms of performance (Searle, 1979, p. 33). These rules are presented in the follow-

ing table (Table 1), providing a clear framework for the proper performance of such communicative acts.

Table 1. The features of an illocutionary act of assertive type

Propositional content:	The speaker predicates a future act A.
Preparatory condition:	The speaker must have the intention or commitment to undertake a future course of action as stated in the promise.
Sincerity condition:	Apart from the genuine intention to do the promised act, the speaker needs to be reliable and trustworthy.
Essential condition:	It is the undertaking of an obligation to perform a certain act.

For any utterance to function felicitously as an intentional promise, it is imperative that the preparatory, sincerity and essential conditions are met. In the interpretation of promises, the audience must acknowledge that the fulfilment of the promise may not be inherently obvious. Additionally, the promised action should align with the hearer's desires, interests or preferences for it to be considered meaningful. As evident in the foundational aspects of speech act theory, the cognitive environment of the speakers and their shared knowledge plays a crucial role in shaping the construct of a promise. As such, promising in a language is a matter of acting according to constitutive rules, typically having the form of "X counts as Y in context C". Thus, for example, such and such sentence under certain circumstances counts as the making of a promise (Searle, 1979, p. 4). Therefore, we have been dealing with the contextual coordinates that enable mutual recognition of the of an intention by a speaker and hearer.

The main idea behind this article is that the analysis of the type of illocutions and the constitutive rules governed by Netanyahu's promises not only creates reasons to perform the act of promising but also demonstrates the ways to produce some perlocutionary effect upon attitudes, feelings and thoughts of those involved in the reception process. The sameness of the interpretation of the given act between the speaker and the hearer can be strengthened by certain linguistic forms that communicate "intent". In the case of declarative sentences, it will be to inform, when using future tense mood, we perform commissives, or by means of the imperative form, we can get the hearer to do something, thereby conveying directives. This partly explains the nature and possibilities of promises. As long as the speaker specifies his purpose in communicating promises in a clear-cut meaning-form

alignment, the hearer's function is to specify the justification of communicating (Lanigan, 1977, p. 69) that rests on his own consciousness.

3. Promising as preemptive practice – the contingency perspective

This paper investigates how performing the speech act of promising plays a crucial role in creating pre-emptive discursive practices as the type of leadership performance that deals with obligating oneself to do something in the future as a reaction to an imminent threat. In methodological terms, this means presenting PM's propositions that stem from the highly context-based factors rather than from the choice of the individual driven by his own self-interests. Adopting the perspective of the situative context that determines the function of promises based on the necessary information that it provides, it is of use to interpret the "force", i.e. the actional component of promises (Fairclough, 1993, p. 82), which always remains in close relation to context. Therefore, the promissive meaning relies on the important function of context, here the speech event of the Hamas attack, which guides the meaning of promising pre-emptive action. Engaging in such practice always entails taking into consideration morality which "[i]s not shaped by the social norms alone but also by broader belief systems or ideologies" (Wodak et al., 2021, p. 375) and is rather constructed *in situ*, i.e. from a situation to a situation, rather than become fixed and predictable (Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997). As such, promises are social facts that sustain moral order and are a driving force of human action.

Furthermore, they may also act as "social pressures" which do not allow to withdraw from them due to the social demands and expectations. This may involve taking the forms of social control, i.e. "[t]he imposition of one person's or group's will on others – inducing members of society (the ones under the 'political control' of the dominant person or group) to do what the 'leadership' wants them to do" (Eller, 2016 [2009], p. 170). In this way, the PM, who is the agent of social control (Eller, 2016 [2009], p. 170), has the power to instil social norms which become externalised, achieve the regulatory function and appear as a belief system. This is by far the most common type of political process that leads to an enculturation, reconstructed and reinvented through linguistic acts. Any of these acts, depending on their function, become institutional facts generated by institutions, e.g. governmental, sport, economic, etc. (Searle, 2020, p. 91). The powers of the PM's

promises are created based on the institution which he represents and which is linguistically and non-linguistically constituted and maintained. These institutional powers always become normative; they achieve the status of right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, superior and inferior. They are also an occasion to take action and may become a manifesto of the oppressed, the discriminated, or the deprived. From this, it can be extrapolated that political actors and their institutions create the trajectories of how the future will come true, what structure it will form, and what system of cultural values will create the social and political programme. Specifically, in the context of Hamas' attack on Israel, PM's promises give rise to preemptive storytelling that maps out the ideology of the future and provides the strategic plan for the actual future military intervention. By presenting promises as potentialities, the PM legitimises "preemptive" military action (Dunmire, 2011, p. 62). Based on this rationale, I will focus on the categories of promises distinguished in PM Netanyahu's Twitter posts and look for the representations that project certain "realities".

4. Methodology: data and analysis

In responding to the Hamas attack of October 2023, Prime Minister Netanyahu has sent numerous comments and posts to inform the public about the ongoing attack and to express his stance on the attack. While stance is considered a public "[a]ct of evaluation owned by a social actor" (du Bois, 2007, p. 173), that reflects the way interlocutors position themselves during interactions. Therefore, the use of a personal deixis variables as grammatical categories of a person enables the speaker to construct a subjective stance and demonstrate features that are the projecting force of his promises. They can also evidence participant-roles that are related to the speaker's attitudes and identities. In other words, person deixis markers not only reflect the attributes and the intentions of a speaker but, most importantly, provide a framework for unpacking the relationship between the speaker's intentions and the type of reasoning based on what Netanyahu actually promises to do for his nation.

This research also examines the moral/ethical perspective when he creates an obligation to perform action. By revising Netanyahu's promises as pre-emptive action, it is noteworthy to consider the moral normativity of his speech act. The moral considerations highlight the logical structure between

the nation, the citizens and the leaders of the nation. It follows logically that those in power who represent an authoritative style of leadership will impose obligations and require obedience to his orders, regardless of the character of the orders, i.e. moral or immoral. The very meaning of promising would then be anchored in the evaluative statement. The moral significance of promises puts light on the type of legitimisation strategy used in planning of potential military intervention.

The analysis follows three stages: identification of contextual cues, interpretation and evaluation. This analytical frame marks PM Netanyahu and his promises as the leader who makes certain obligations to perform actions for the nation to legitimise his military action in the certain socio-cultural context of war. Therefore, another task is to consider the scope and the type of pragmemes that are the interpretation of speech acts bound by the actual situation and linguistic conventions. Hence, the analysed pragmemes hold significant importance in distinguishing established preemptive patterns.

As a first step, the corpus of statements in the form of tweets was created. It encompasses the timeframe of the first three months following the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023. It constitutes PM Netanyahu's promises, which purport to suggest a type of preemptive practice in the face of threats. They carry a potential to project and build certain future potentialities, which are made present in Netanyahu's discursive promises. The data in the study were culled manually from Twitter between 7 October 2023 and 15 December 2023. The choice of the timeframe was influenced by the outbreak of war, as this period was marked by heightened tensions and significant political and military developments. Analysing Prime Minister Netanyahu's promises allowed for capturing the immediate response of the leader, whose responsibility was to project specific future scenarios. Furthermore, the speech acts of promises were collected by the author, mainly based on the future tense marking, which is a typical temporal marker of a promise (e.g., Anggraeni & Hardjanto, 2021, p. 72; Laval & Bernicot, 1999, p. 179). As a result of this manual search, a dataset of 141 speech acts of promises was gathered. The posts were easily accessible to the public and could be obtained without the need for signing in, thus not requiring permissions or informed consent from the individuals who posted them, as stated in AOIR internet research ethics (<https://aoir.org/ethics/>).

In order to tease out the emerging pragmatic patterns, I decided to employ a preliminary frequency word count, and then a keyword analysis; a filtering method rooted in the concordance-informed discourse analysis to

show the strongest occurrence of words, including the patterns of meaning, use and attitudes (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008, p. 6). This preliminary analysis stage helps reveal statistically significant lexical terms which are approached objectively and fulfill certain statics-related criteria rather than focus on semantic/pragmatic subjectively assessed content.

The keyword analysis demonstrated that lexical items with the highest value of keyness (the degree of recurrence) were *will*, and *we*, in the analysed corpus with a very high keyness score (at 710) and (at 423), with frequency ($f=123$) and ($f=101$), respectively. The third and fourth keywords in the list are “Israel” and “Hamas”. They occurred ($f=23$) times and ($f=18$) times in the Twitter corpus, with keyness values (178) and (177), respectively. However, while keywords offer valuable insights, the analysis would lack practical application without looking into the particular usage contexts of the highlighted lexical elements. Thus, it becomes essential to explore context-specific relationships by specifying clusters which contain the extracted keywords. An examination of these word clusters reveals a notable pattern of the two-word cluster pattern “*we will*”, occurring with the frequency of ($f=84$) (see Table 2).

Table 2. The frequency of words in the corpus

AntConc

File Edit Settings Help

Target Corpus

Name: my_corpus

Files: 1

Tokens: 1527

data twitter.docx

Reference Corpus

Name: AmE06

Files: 500

Tokens: 1017879

AmE06_A01.txt

AmE06_A02.txt

AmE06_A03.txt

AmE06_A04.txt

AmE06_A05.txt

AmE06_A06.txt

AmE06_A07.txt

	KWIC	Plot	File View	Cluster	N-Gram	Collocate	Word	Keyword	Wordcloud
Keyword Types 46/417 Keyword Tokens 535/1527 Page Size 100 hits 1 to 46 of 46 hits									
	Type	Rank	Freq_Tar	Freq_Ref	Range_Tar	Range_Ref	Keyness (Likelihood)	Keyness (Effect)	
1	will	1	123	1723	1	394	710.897	0.073	
2	we	2	101	3244	1	423	423.722	0.041	
3	israel	3	23	107	1	24	178.492	0.028	
4	hamas	4	17	15	1	5	177.123	0.022	
5	win	5	15	84	1	53	111.292	0.018	
6	continue	6	15	103	1	79	105.678	0.018	
7	victory	7	12	52	1	35	94.567	0.015	
8	hostages	8	8	5	1	4	86.792	0.010	
9	together	9	16	279	1	185	84.737	0.018	
10	our	10	23	1353	1	312	69.695	0.016	
11	gaza	11	6	4	1	3	64.619	0.008	
12	eliminate	12	6	11	1	11	56.026	0.008	
13	fight	13	9	102	1	72	54.952	0.011	
14	war	14	14	637	1	154	48.923	0.013	
15	restore	15	5	27	1	19	37.396	0.006	

Search Query ☒ Words ☐ Case ☐ Regex Min. Freq 1 Min. Range 1

Since the above features prove to be robust in the research corpus, my aim is to establish the degree, strength and directionality of these relationships. Therefore, I have adopted another key method of analysis, the statistical procedure based on the linear correlation popularised by Pearson (1896), in order to evaluate the directional association between the analysed variables, i.e. person deixis markers and commissive speech acts in the form of promises and threats. I employ correlational analysis to identify the leadership style of the Prime Minister and to map the associations between the dominant variables.

With a focus of unpacking dominant speech act patterns of Netanyahu preemptive leadership practices, I can identify two salient trends in the corpora, as detailed in the section that follows. The discussion therein is centred on the use of commissives along with personal deixis markers to figure out how the Israeli PM employed them to create the preemptive type of response.

5. Findings

Table 3 presents data on five variables that have been singled out in the analysis based on their high frequency. The table indicated three types of correlations that appear to be statistically significant. As two of them are the most predominant, I analyse them respectively. They include the parameter of 3rd person plural, 1st person plural, and the speech act of promising.

Table 3. Correlations between the five dominant variables

	Variable1	I	we	3rd person	promise	threat
Variable1	1,000000	#####	#####	#####	0,003758	#####
I	#####	1,000000	0,164883	0,256687	0,300362	0,173906
we	#####	0,164883	1,000000	0,211956	0,539829	0,241694
3rd person	#####	0,256687	0,211956	1,000000	0,698828	0,368559
promise	0,003758	0,300362	0,539829	0,698828	1,000000	0,125775
threat	#####	0,173906	0,241694	0,368559	0,125775	1,000000

5.1. 3rd person singular and a speech act of a promise (−0.69)

The findings section consists of the thematic frames established and derived from PM Netanyahu's tweets, notably the ones which provide relatively strong correlations with the variables under study. In the current study, the first group of results examines the negative correlation of 3rd person singular and a speech act of a promise (−0.69). Table 4 presents us with a detailed distribution of the speech act of promising in the three thematic categories:

Table 4. Thematic categories of promise using 3rd person singular

A thematic frame	Data
(a) The Nation (Israel)-collectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Israel will win this war</i> – <i>Israel will prevail</i> – <i>Israel will fight until this battle is won</i> – <i>Israel will continue to eliminate Hamas</i> – <i>Israel will do everything</i> – <i>Israel will stand against the forces</i>
(b) Victory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>This will be a victory of good over evil, of light over darkness, of life over death</i> – <i>There will be a victory here</i>
(c) The Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Gaza will no longer constitute a threat to Israel</i> – <i>Gaza will never again threaten the citizens of Israel</i> – <i>No threat will come from Gaza again</i>

Table 4 presents us with certain mental representations of Netanyahu's discursive practices, which do not merely present what is going on, but notably evaluate the reality and make certain projections of the future. The study demonstrates that the most frequently used pattern is the "collectivisation" of Israel. This could signal the agreement of the nation for certain actions to be performed, e.g. to continue to fight. The function is to form a collective that may pave the way for a cumulative generation of shared ideas, beliefs and intentions regarding the war. In this case, Israel becomes an aggregate of individuals who internalise and accept these representations.

The "Victory" frame is the second most frequently used concept in the study, which explicitly manifests the success of the Israeli military interventions. On a wider national level, Netanyahu creates an obligation that certain sociopolitical conditions will be met, and as a result of that, the victory will be secured. The commitment to lead Israel to a victory is also linked to the determination of the enemy, i.e. "Gaza". This type of practice involves shift-

ing the focus on the oppressive outgroup and its hostile behaviour. By doing so, he informs the society of the in-group/out-group environment, which naturally creates the self/the other camp that triggers threat and uncertainty. However, these binary oppositions play a crucial role in Netanyahu's rhetoric; they point to the "agentivity" (Strukowska, 2024, p. 3) of the Israeli leader who maintains his position of leaders and an active defender of "home" entities (i.e. Israel and its citizens). This practice shows the orientation towards legitimising Netanyahu's preventive measures by presenting antagonistic and morally wrong entities while, at the same time, highlighting his active contribution to the strategic process of winning the war.

5.2. First person plural and a speech act of a promise (−0.53)

Having examined 3rd person singular and a speech act of a promise, this section further explores a correlation with promising, drawing specific attention to the 1st person plural "we". Results show a moderately strong negative correlation between the analysed variables. Netanyahu often formulated his promises using the collective personal pronoun "we". Table 5 below shows how the promises are used.

Table 5. Thematic categories of promises using 1st person plural

A thematic frame	Data
(a) Victory (the state "be", but more often action verbs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>We will be victorious</i> – <i>We will win (it)</i> – <i>We will advance and win</i> – <i>We will triumph</i> – <i>We will complete the work</i> – <i>We will continue until victory</i> – <i>We will quickly bring the absolute victory over the forces of evil</i>
(b) Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>We will end this war stronger than ever</i> – <i>We will emerge stronger, better prepared and more united</i> – <i>We will be able to build and expand, and make this area prosperous and safe</i> – <i>We will rebuild the cities/We will build, and we will continue to build, here and all throughout the Land of Israel/ We will rebuild and expand the communities, and we will add more communities</i> – <i>They will flourish and prosper for generations</i> – <i>We will restore security to the State of Israel/to the residents of both the south and the north</i>

A thematic frame	Data
(c) Shared leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>We will (continue to) work together</i> – <i>We will continue to work with you</i> – <i>We will achieve all our goals</i> – <i>We will do so with God's help and the help of our heroic soldiers</i> – <i>Together we will fight and with God's help</i> – <i>Together we will win</i>
(d) Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>We will not relent in this sacred task</i> – <i>We will do so with God's help and the help of our heroic soldiers</i> – <i>Together we will fight and with God's help</i> – <i>We will continue our just war</i>
(e) Territoriality (movement forward) and Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>We will fight on land, at sea, and in the air</i> – <i>We will advance and win</i> – <i>We will simply continue until we defeat them/we will continue to work together/ We will continue until victory/the Government will continue to be involved/We will continue until the end</i> – <i>We will fight and not retreat</i> – <i>We will act</i> – <i>We will bring back our hostages</i>

The results of the data show that the use of the pronoun “we” occurs in 65% of the cases, followed by 30% of the use of 3rd person pronoun. It indicates that the undertaking of the obligation by Netanyahu through the collective pronoun “we” that may have some crucial implications for the collective acceptance of his propositions. Upon a closer statistical examination, it is found that the pronoun “we” and the speech act of promising exhibit a relatively strong positive correlation of (0,53). The presence of association patterns between the two variables shows the existence of certain preemptive strategies used by PM Netanyahu.

Many instances of the collective “we” in the data reside in the collective bound to concepts that they expect others to accept and follow. By definition, promising is the creation of obligation. Therefore, they are treated objectively as a reason for pre-emptive action that derives from the fact the speaker has created an intention-based and plan-dependent course of action. In his commissive act, Netanyahu binds his will in the future by creating commitments performed in the present. On the whole, Netanyahu is prone to strengthen his pragmatic force of promising through the *collective intentionality* viewed as the ability to cooperate with each other by the collective

agreement (Searle, 2010, p. 61). Given the Searlan perspective of speech acts anchored in the intentions of the speaker rather than the cooperative and collective aspects of communication, this study takes into account the collaborative aspect of performing speech acts. From such a point of view, Netanyahu's promises are collective actions that integrate the individual and the societal types of interactions, which serve some discursive purposes.

6. Discussion

This article aimed to analyse how Prime Minister Netanyahu uses commissives to map future potentialities, which are assumed aspects of a future reality. My findings build on what has already been established about the relationship between promises and their projecting potential (Dunmire, 2011). Specifically, promises are framed as possibilities through which the Prime Minister legitimises preemptive military action (Dunmire, 2011, p. 62). The analysis demonstrates that Netanyahu's use of promises functions as a distinct aspect of his preemptive leadership strategy in the context of imminent threats.

The conclusions drawn from this study highlight how Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's use of commissive speech acts, particularly promises, plays a central role in his preemptive leadership strategy during the Israel-Hamas war, as conveyed through his tweets. The findings demonstrate that his rhetorical choices – specifically the use of the third-person singular and the collective pronoun “we” – are not merely communicative acts but discursive tools that shape national identity, foster collective responsibility and establish future commitments on both an individual and societal level.

The negative correlation between the third-person singular and the act of promising (-0.63), as revealed in the study, suggests that Netanyahu frequently projects his leadership role onto the nation rather than limiting it to personal commitments. This rhetorical strategy allows him to distance himself personally while positioning himself as the voice of the collective Israeli people. By framing the nation's actions as collective endeavours, his promises go beyond personal commitments and assume the weight of national obligation. The frequent use of third-person singular language in Netanyahu's discourse underscores his ability to evaluate the ongoing conflict while simultaneously projecting future actions that are presented as inevitable or necessary for the security and survival of Israel. This rhetorical de-

vice also reinforces Netanyahu's role as a leader with the foresight to protect Israel from external threats, particularly in the context of ongoing military operations.

One of the most significant themes emerging from the analysis is the "collectivisation" of Israel, where Netanyahu frames the conflict as a collective effort, aligning the entire nation with his political and military objectives. This collectivisation serves not only to unify the nation but also to foster broad-based public support for continued military actions. By presenting the fight as a shared, collective endeavour, Netanyahu strengthens the perception of national unity and mutual responsibility, particularly in moments of crisis. The strategic use of this collective frame, as demonstrated in his commissive speech acts, functions to rally public support and justify ongoing military intervention, aligning the nation's future with the promised outcomes of military victory.

The study also identifies the "victory" frame as a dominant rhetorical tool in Netanyahu's discourse. This frame, frequently linked with the promise of future success, functions as a key element in Netanyahu's leadership strategy. By committing to military victories and the attainment of sociopolitical conditions favourable to Israel, Netanyahu positions himself not only as the commander of the nation but also as the guarantor of its future success. The promises he makes regarding military victory are not merely statements of intent; they serve as binding commitments, reinforcing the legitimacy of his leadership and his preemptive strategies. The victory frame also ties directly to the enemy, most often "Gaza", and draws clear distinctions between the Israeli in-group and the hostile out-group. In doing so, Netanyahu cultivates a sense of national unity against a common enemy, reinforcing the binary oppositions that underpin his rhetorical stance and help legitimise military action.

Additionally, the study's examination of the first-person plural "we" in Netanyahu's tweets reveals another layer of preemptive leadership practice. The use of "we" in 65% of cases reflects a strategic shift from individual responsibility to collective agency. The relatively strong positive correlation (0.53) between the collective pronoun and the speech act of promising suggests that Netanyahu's promises are framed as collective commitments intended to bind not just himself but the entire Israeli nation to future actions. This shift in agency allows Netanyahu to diffuse responsibility for decisions and outcomes across the broader societal collective, creating a sense of shared duty and accountability. By framing his promises in the collec-

tive “we”, Netanyahu strengthens the impact of his commissive speech acts, making them not just personal guarantees but collective mandates that reflect the will of the people and their acceptance of his strategic vision.

This collective intentionality, as noted in the study, aligns with John Searle’s theory of speech acts, where promises inherently create obligations. In Netanyahu’s case, the collective framing of promises not only reflects his leadership but also creates a discursive environment in which the entire Israeli society is engaged in the fulfillment of those promises. His commissive acts are designed to create future-oriented commitments that bind the will of the people to the actions of the present, thus fostering a form of collective intentionality that strengthens national cohesion and political unity during the war.

In conclusion, the study sheds light on Netanyahu’s preemptive leadership through the lens of commissive speech acts. His use of promises, particularly through the third-person singular and collective “we”, reveals a deliberate rhetorical strategy designed to legitimise military actions, foster national unity and secure public buy-in for his leadership during a time of conflict. Netanyahu’s promises function not just as personal commitments but as collective actions that bind the Israeli public to his strategic vision, framing the nation’s future in terms of shared responsibility and collective success. This approach not only reinforces his role as a decisive and visionary leader but also provides a discursive framework for legitimising preemptive measures in the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict.

7. Conclusions

The present detailed study demonstrated that promises, being a core element of PM Netanyahu’s preemptive leadership strategy, serve as tools to project and legitimise future military actions.

His rhetorical use of third-person singular and the collective pronoun “we” reflects his ability to position the Israeli nation as both subject and agent in the ongoing conflict, thus constructing a collective identity that aligns with his leadership vision. The high frequency of third-person singular use indicates that it is his marked political behaviour when communicating the decision process and national interest. He constructs a collective agency, binding not only himself but the Israeli public to his commitments. The study demonstrates that Netanyahu’s promises, particularly framed

in the collective “we”, serve as commissive acts that shape collective intentionality and foster societal cooperation in pursuit of military and political goals. This approach strengthens public buy-in for his leadership, legitimises preemptive actions and reinforces national solidarity in the face of external threats.

Combining insights from anthropological pragmatics, the speech act theory and leadership studies, this study furthers our understanding of promising in contexts of imminent threat and conflict. Therefore, this study addresses a significant gap in the knowledge surrounding the role of commissives as rhetorical tools and mechanisms through which leaders like Netanyahu construct collective futures and secure public agreement for military strategies. This approach fills a gap in understanding how leaders use language to map out potential realities and bind their nations to strategic visions during periods of conflict, offering a new lens through which to analyse political leadership and discourse in crisis situations.

The data show the co-occurrence of promises with some specific linguistic conceptualisations using “victory” as the leitmotif and a thematic frame, which work together to maximise the promising force in creating a future reality. This rhetorical strategy helps to foster alignment between his leadership and the nation, which is a useful tool for politicians. The main contribution of the strategy lies in demonstrating the important role of collective agency, binding not only Netanyahu’s promises but the Israeli public to his commitments. This study does not comprise a comprehensive account of all possible ways in which Netanyahu’s promises can be used as a type of preemptive leadership practice. Nor does it highlight all ways in which commissive speech acts are realised in his tweets during the Israel-Hamas conflict, which still is in progress. Additionally, the study relies solely on the most frequently used speech acts. Thus, it may overlook other leadership styles of Netanyahu in different geopolitical environments. To further examine the role of commissives as preemptive leadership practices during the Israel-Hamas conflict, more data should be examined. What is more, the study does not give insights into the responses that Netanyahu’s tweets elicit; therefore, it does not reveal how they resonate with the general public.

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