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A Pragmatic Analysis of Speech Acts in Motivational Storytelling Directed to Graduates of American Universities

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Abstract

Storytelling is a strategy that people resort to since early times for wide range of purposes. One of these purposes is to motivate others towards particular actions or ideas. This study concerns itself with investigating the pragmatic use of speech acts in storytelling discourse directed to motivate American graduates. More specifically, it deals with storytelling embedded within commencement speeches delivered at American universities by successful icons. The current study has been set to fulfil three aims. First, it aims at identifying the most dominant speech acts in each stage of storytelling. Secondly, determining the most dominant category of speech acts in the storytelling discourse. Then, finding the most frequent SAs within each category of SAs. To this end, the researchers ten storytelling discourses embedded within commencement speeches delivered by American commencement speakers at American universities in 2010 and 2019 to represent five professions of commencement speakers. The findings reveal that the dominant speech acts at each stage of storytelling varies. It also shows that the representatives and directives are the most dominant categories of speech acts in the storytelling discourse in the data under scrutiny. The SA of asserting and the SA of advising are shown to be the most frequent SAs within the categories of representatives and directives, respectively.

Keywords: Pragmatics, speech acts, motivation, storytelling, commencement speeches, American Graduates.

دراسة تداولية للأفعال الكلامية المستخدمة في رواية القصص التحفيزية الموجّهة لخريجي الجامعات الأمريكية

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المستخلص

يعد السرد القصصي أحد الاستراتيجيات التي يلجأ إليها الناس منذ العصور المبكرة ولأغراض متنوعة. أحد هذه الأغراض هو تحفيز الآخرين تجاه أفعال أو أفكار معينة. تهتم هذه الدراسة بالتحقيق في الاستخدام التداولي لأفعال الكلام في السرد القصصي الموجه لتحفيز الخريجين الأمريكيين. وبشكل أكثر تحديدًا، تتعامل مع السرد القصصي المتضمن في خطابات التخرج التي ألقاها شخصيات ناجحة في الجامعات الأمريكية. تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى تحقيق ثلاثة أهداف: أولاً: تهدف إلى تحديد أفعال الكلام الأكثر شيوعًا في كل مرحلة من مراحل السرد القصصي. ثانيًا: تحديد فئات أفعال الكلام الأكثر شيوعًا في النصوص المختارة. بعد ذلك، تهدف الى تحديد أفعال الكلام الأكثر استخداما ضمن تلك الفئات. ولتحقيق هذه الغاية، تم اختيار عشرة نصوص من السرد القصصي والمتضمنة مع خطابات التخرج من متحدثين أمريكيين في الجامعات الأمريكية بين عامي 2010 و2019 لتمثيل خمس مهن من المتحدثين. تكشف

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النتائج أن فعل الكلام السائد في كل مرحلة من مراحل سرد القصص يختلف وحسب وظائف المراحل، وأن أفعال الكلام التمثيلية والتوجيهية هي أكثر أفعال الكلام السائدة على مستوى الفئات والتأكيد والاستشارة ضمن تلك الفئات.

الكلمات الدالة: البراغماتية، أفعال الكلام، التحفيز، السرد القصصي، خطابات التخرج، الخريجون الأمريكيين

Introduction

Storytelling is viewed as an activity that people use to understand themselves and their worlds in a better way [1, p. 127]. This definition concentrates on a constructive function of storytelling, viewing it as an "identity-formative" process to both the teller and the audience. In sharing stories, people have to depict who they were and who they are and maintain a clear and optimistic identity of whom they wish to become [2,p.277]. According to Kalantzis [3,p.173], when telling or listening to a story, people "enter a psycho-social transaction of power" which, in turn, establishes their identities.

Revealing the interactive nature of storytelling, Langellier and Peterson [4,p.2] and Ellis and Brewster [5,p25] define it as a collaborative process in which a teller interacts lively with active audience. It is an act that aims to share experiences (story) in a telling event (situation) by a speaking person (storyteller) with other persons (audience) [6,p. 153;156]. The interactive nature of storytelling can be found in daily conversations or interviews as well as in formal and institutional settings [7,p.23]. One of these settings is commencement ceremonies at American universities, where successful icons are invited to share their successful experiences with the graduates to motivate them towards particular actions or thoughts. Thus, the commencement speakers (henceforth CSs) utilise particular speech acts (henceforth SAs) when delivering their experiences in the form of storytelling. Therefore, this study is settled to find answers to the following questions:

1- What are the most dominant SAs in each storytelling stage provided by the CSs to motivate the graduates?
2- What are the most dominate categories of SAs in the whole discourse of storytelling to motivate the graduates?
3- What are the most dominate SAs within each category?

The Structure of Storytelling

To achieve the aims, any storytelling discourse needs to be structured systematically so that the audience can receive its intended message correctly and clearly. Although the earliest attempt to define this structure can be attributed to Aristotle [8, p. 67], Labov and Waletzky [9] and Labov [10] are considered are the first, among contemporary scholars, who have presented a detailed framework to the structure of storytelling. The structure of storytelling comprises six stages (a) abstract, (b) orientation, (c) complication, (d) evaluation, (e) resolution, and (f) coda [10,p.363 ff]. The following sub-sections are devoted to explaining each of these stages.

A. Abstract:

In the abstract, storytellers present a short description of what will follow [10, p. 363]. More specifically, it consists of one or more initial clauses to answer the question: what is the following story about? [10,p.370].

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The function of the abstract is to inform the audience that there will be a story to be told by that person about a particular issue to get their attention to the events and aims of the story [11,p.638]. Klapproth [1,p.94] indicates that, despite its importance in delivering a well-formed storytelling discourse, the abstract is sometimes optionally left, especially if the audience knows the purpose of the event they attend.

B. Orientation:

The orientation offers details about the time, location, persons and circumstance of the story. In short, it answers the questions about "who, when, what, where?" about the story [10,p.370]. Typically, this stage is usually placed initially along with the abstract, but it can also be placed within the complicating action [10,p.364-65]. The placement of orientation depends on the storyteller's assessment of the audience's need for such information [11, p.638]. In other words, this kind of information is requested to identify the characters of a story and their actions in terms of place and time [1,p.95].

C. Complicating Action:

Complicating action represents the major stage in the structure of storytelling discourse as it includes the main events of the story [9,p.32]. It simply answers the question "what happened" in this story [10,p.370]. That is, it tells the audience what challenges the story's characters have faced, the available choices, and what actions are taken by them to overcome these challenges until reaching the climax of the story. Accordingly, the audience's tension and suspension are increased at this stage [11, p. 638] because it comprises "the most reportable event" of the story [10,p.28].

D. Resolution

Resolution is the final outcome of a story serving as the terminating device for the complicating action [10,p.363]. Johnstone [11,p.638] acknowledges that the resolution leads to decreasing the audience's tension that is created at the complicating action. According to Klapporth [1,p.96], this stage completes the complicating action. As the latter answers the question like "then what happened?", the former answers the question like "what happened in the end?".

E. Evaluation:

Evaluation is defined as all "the means" a storyteller employs to state the point of a story [10,p.366]. In other words, it tells the audience the purpose behind telling the story in the first place and how it is relevant to them [10,p.370]. However, the storyteller has various ways through which they can deliver their evaluations of the events to their audiences. Firstly, a storyteller may choose to stop their telling and turn to the audience to *externally* express their opinions regarding the events and actions of the story. In this case, the whole story is told to function as a framework to the external evaluation.

Secondly, evaluation may be *embedded* with the storytelling discourse without an external stop during the telling process. In other words, storytellers can declare their evaluation on the story by quoting their own personal opinions as they address themselves or other persons in the story or outside the story but not the audience or quoting/ reporting those of others. The last possibility the storytellers might use to express their evaluation is through embedding their views *internally* within the

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complication action [10,p.371-73]. Without presenting the evaluation to the audience, storytellers leave them with only a mass of environmental information [1,p.97].

F. Coda:

Coda as an "additional element" that some storytellers might end their stories with [9,p.39]. Codas are described as bridging devices that are utilised to fill the gap between the time of the story and the time of storytelling [10, p.365]. They bring back the storyteller and the audience to the moment of speaking and mark that what follows is not related to the story they have been discussing.

The pragmatics of Storytelling

Pragmatics deals with how the meanings of utterances are adjusted concerning the context in which they occur, including the time, place, purpose of the event, and the relationships between speakers and their interlocutors [12,p.22]. Pragmatics concentrates on the variables that regulate the human selection and use of particular linguistic structures and the expected impact they achieve on the part of their interlocutors in terms of thinking and behaviour [13,p.90]. In other words, a pragmatic analysis explores the linguistic uses that are based on the communicative intentions of speakers plus the strategies used by listeners to assess those intentions.

Storytelling is a kind of performance in which the told discourse is not only words and symbols but also actions [4,p.2]. Understanding the purpose of a particular storytelling can be easily done if one attends its performance. By far the most influencing characteristic of storytelling as a performance is the identity of the participants (teller and audience) as it serves to develop a shared experience between them. A storyteller always has a message to be grasped by his or her audience who are expected to associate the events of the story with related experiences they might have been involved in [14,p.18].

Speech Acts

Within the sphere of storytelling, the audience are invited to explore and evaluate the moral, social and political issues that are regarded as important to the audience and or the speaker. In the storytelling discourse, storytellers perform a number of SAs to accomplish their aims [15,p.229]. The speech act theory proposes that people can produce actions with their words through a simultaneous creation of three acts, namely locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary [17,p.108]. The first act is only associated with producing the linguistic elements of an utterance. The second act is concerned with the action or the function that a speaker plans to perform in saying an utterance either directly or indirectly. The third act is the expected effect on the addressee (s) as a reaction to the speaker's utterance [17,p.108].

According to Searle [17,p.10-13], there are five basic categories of SAs: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Each of these categories encompasses a set of SAs which can be distinguished with reference to four felicity conditions (henceforth FCs): propositional content (henceforth PCC), preparatory condition (henceforth PC), sincerity condition (henceforth SC), and essential condition (henceforth EC).

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PCC is related to the purpose behind uttering a SA. PCC describes the actual requirements for performing the SA. SC is concerned with the honest will of performing the SA. EC identifies the resultant act as uttering an utterance counts as an act intended by the speaker and realised by the addressee (s). This study utlises Searle's [17] classification as it encompasses SAs that are more likely to be found in the data under scrutiny. The following sub-sections shed the light on basic categories of SAs and their members that are prevailing in the data under analysis.

Representative Speech Acts

Speakers use representative SAs (henceforth Rep SAs) to dedicate themselves to the truth of the expressed assertions by making their words match the world [18,p.106]. While delivering their motivational storytelling, CSs utilise a number of Rep SAs to tell their stories and explain related facts and values. By using this type of SAs, CSs commit themselves to the truth of the events they tell and the explanations they show as reliable and primary sources of information.

Rep SA of Asserting

Asserting means saying something by someone who wants to say what s/he believes to be true [19,p.51]. The Rep SA of asserting is intended to be used by someone whose role is to present a valid point [20, p.222]. CSs who are invited to deliver commencement speeches at universities are highly expected to present valid points basing on their experiences to explain the world to the graduates and motivate them to face it[1].

Rep SA of Stating

The Rep SA of stating is similar to the Rep SA of asserting but it does not require a particular stance to be taken by the speaker regarding a state of affairs [21, p.183]. CSs might exploit this type of SA to highlight particular concepts, ideas, or values they think the graduates need to focus on.

Rep SA of Reporting

The SA of reporting implies stating events or actions occurred prior to the moment of reporting [21,p.187]. It reports something occurred before the moment of reporting. CSs use this type of SA in their motivational storytelling to convey the experiences they intend to share with the graduates[2].

Rep SA of Boasting

The term "boasting" refers to the act of expressing satisfaction with an accomplishment, meeting a task, or achieving something [22,p.291]. As a SA, boasting has two functions: representative and expressive. The former shows the speaker's stratification or pride in achieving or overcoming a general issue whereas the latter indicates the satisfaction of ones' own achievement [21,p.191-2][3].

Directive Speech Acts

Speakers can utilise directive SAs (henceforth Dir SAs) to get their hearers do something. In uttering a Dir SA, the speaker attempts to persuade the listener to make a commitment to something in the future [18,p.107]. CSs exploit Dir SAs to present their

[1] For the FCs of the Rep SA of asserting and stating, , see Searle (1969: 66).
[2] For the FCs of the Rep SA of reporting, see (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985: 187).
[3] For the FCs of the SA of boasting, see Searle and Vanderveken (1985: 191-2).

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instructions, suggestions, encouragement, and advice to exercise their advisory and motivational roles. In other words, they use Dir SAs to motivate the graduates to commit themselves to conduct particular actions in the future.

Dir SA of Advising

Speakers use the Dir SA of advising to ask their hearers to commit themselves to do things, that speakers believe, are essential or necessary to hearers [23,p.67]. CSs might employ such SAs in their motivational storytelling to present what they think the graduates must do to reach the success they wish[4].

Dir SA of Warning

Speakers can use the Dir SA of warning to persuade their hearer (s) that (doing) something is not good for them [21,p.203]. Such SAs might be utilised by CSs in their motivational storytelling to warn the graduates of doing particular actions which are unsuccessful or wasting their time[5].

Dir SA of Encouraging

The Dir SA of encouraging can be utilised when a speaker notices valuable thing his hearer (s) has but they might not aware of that ownership [24, p. 19]. In this sense, the speaker's role is to make observations that might enable their hearer (s) to gain their confidence (ibid.). In delivering their motivational storytelling, CSs are expected to remind the graduates of their qualifications to urge them to face and overcome expected challenges.

Commissive Speech Acts

Commissive SAs (henceforth Com SAs) commit their speakers to do particular actions in future. Speakers use them to show their own intentions and desires to do something which might benefit their hearer (s) [18, p.106]. It is expected that CSs resort to the Com SA of offering in their motivational storytelling.

Com SA of offering

The SAs of offering can be used to provide a state of affairs by a speaker to a hearer (s) who may accept or reject it [21, p.195-96]. In other words, a person commits himself to do a particular course of action if their addressee (s) accept that. Generally speaking, CSs present their offers to the graduates to share their experiences or provide them with advice on the assumption that the graduates will not reject such offers[6].

Expressive Speech Acts

Expressive SAs (henceforth Exp SAs) display the psychological stance of their speakers to towards a particular state of affairs [18,p.106]. In presenting their motivational storytelling, CSs might use Exp SAs to express their psychological attitudes towards the events of their stories or towards the graduates' achievements compared with those in the story.

Exp SA of Praising

Praising is used to assert the goodness of a particular state of affairs or its relation to someone or something [21,p.191]. In this regard, speakers use the SA of praising to

[4] For the FCs of the Dir SA of advising, see Searle (1969: 67).
[5] For the FCs of the Dir SA of warning, see Searle (1969: 67).
[6] For the FCs of the Com SA of offering, see Searle and Vanderveken (1985: 196).

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express their approval by committing themselves to presuppose that the things being praised are good. CSs might employ the SA of praising in their motivational storytelling to express their admiration or approbation of a particular state of affairs they think it is good[7].

Data Collection

To fulfil the aims of this study, the researchers have selected ten commencement speeches delivered by American CSs at American universities from 2010 to 2019. The selection procedure takes into account the diversity of the CSs' occupations. More precisely, each pair of speeches is selected to represent a particular occupation the CSs hold: business, justice, acting, politics, and journalism (See Appendix I). Thus, one storytelling is extracted per commencement speech to ensure valid comparison. The speeches are taken from YouTube channels of American universities (See Appendix I). To ensure economy and clarity, the researchers designate the initials BCSs., JuCSs., PCSs., ACSs., and JoCS. to refer to the following occupations of the CSs from business, justice, politics, acting, and journalism, respectively.

Model of Analysis

Storytelling is extracted from commencement speeches following Labov's [10] framework which consists of six stages. Then, the employment of SAs by CSs is investigated and counted in each stage of the extracted storytelling and in total. The SAs are analysed in accordance with Searle [17] and Searle and Vanderveken [21. Figure (1) below shows the model analysis.

[7] For the FCs of the Com SA of praising, see (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985: 191)

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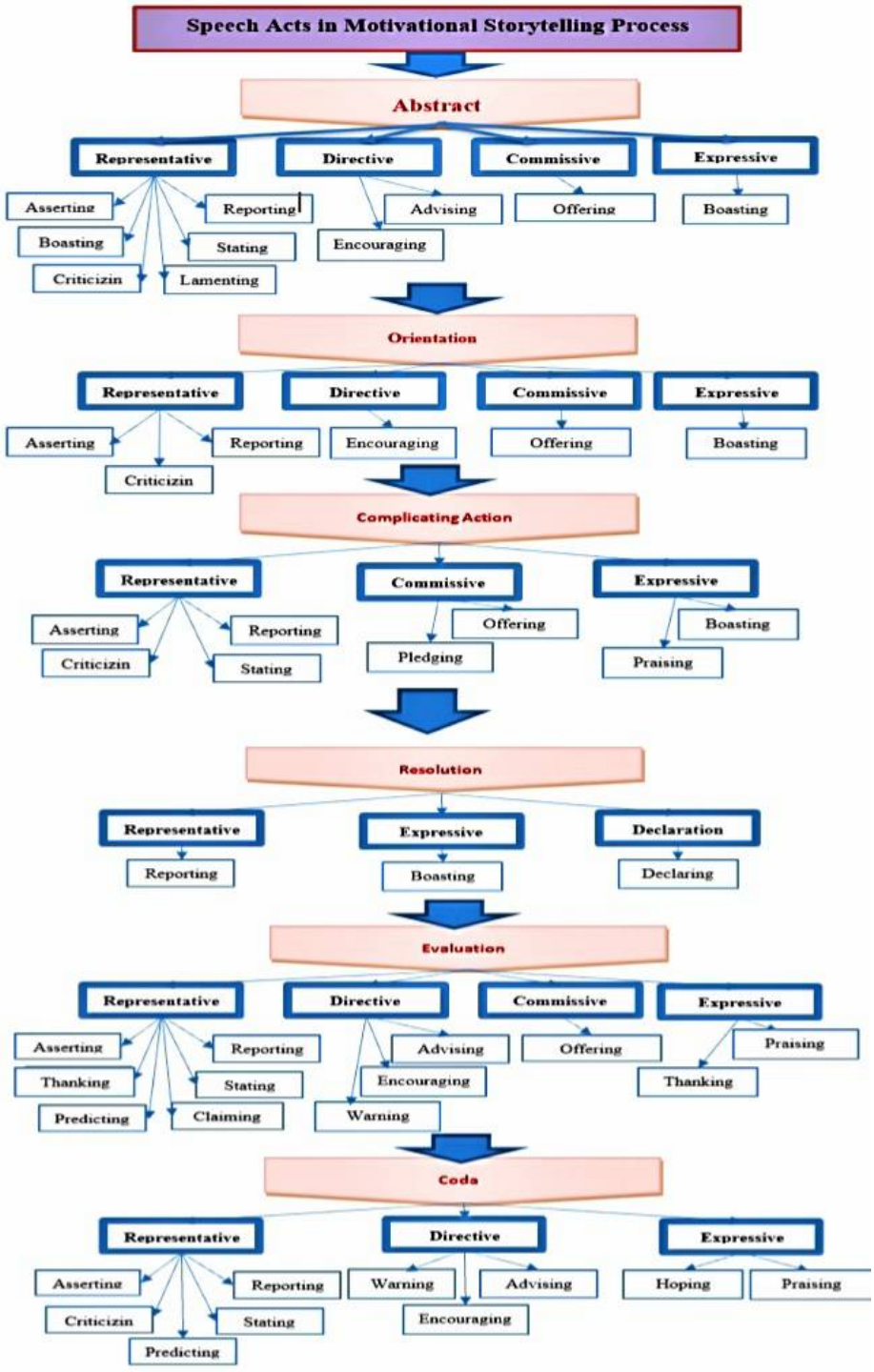

Figure (1): The Model of Analysis

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Data analysis

First, a sample of motivational storytelling will be analysed and interpreted to provide context for the analysis, and then the entire findings of analysed data analysis will be presented and supported with graphs and tables. The following is an analysis of a storytelling discourse extracted from a commencement speech (See Appendix I) delivered by the American business leader Tim Cook at Stanford University in 2019.

A. Abstract

> (a) Graduates, being a builder is about believing that you cannot possibly be the greatest cause on this Earth, because you aren't built to last. (b) It's about making peace with the fact that you won't be here for the end of the story. (c) You won't be ready. (d) That brings me to my last bit of advice.

Tim Cook begins his storytelling by a series of the Rep SA of asserting in (a), (b), and (c) to explain to the graduates that to be successful does not require them to be *"the greatest cause on this Earth"*. He provides a reason that no one of them will last forever in this life, and no one will be ready when his or her life comes to an end. As such, these utterances constitute an undertaking regarding a particular state of affairs. In (d), he uses the Com SA of offering to inform the graduates of his intention to present them with a *"bit of advice"* that introduces his story. As a man of experience who is invited to advise the graduates, Tim Cook believes that he can carry out this mission assuming that the graduates are willing to allow him to do so.

B. Orientation

> (e) Fourteen years ago, Steve stood on this stage and told your predecessors: "Your time is limited, (f) so don't waste it living someone else's life."

The speech act strategy is realized, in this sub-stage, by employing three types of speech acts. Tim Cook uses the Rep SA reporting in (e) to report a particular incident that happened in the past, when his friend, Steve Jobs, stood in the same place before and advised another group of graduates. He uses the adverbial phrase *"Fourteen years ago"* and the past tense *"stood"* to indicate that these events took place in the past with respect to the storytelling time. Utterance (e) can also be regarded as a Rep SA of stating in referring to the fact that history repeats itself and that such events recurrently happen to all people. In (f), he exploits Steve's words to present a Dir SA of advising to urge the graduates to use their time wisely.

C. Complicating Action

> (g)When Steve got sick, I had hardwired my thinking to the belief that he would get better. (h) I not only thought he would hold on, I was convinced, down to my core, that he'd still be guiding Apple long after I, myself, was gone. (i) Then, one day, he called me over to his house and told me that it wasn't going to be that way. (j) Even then, I was convinced he would stay on as chairman. (k)That he'd step back from the day to day but always be there as a sounding board. (l) But there was no reason to believe that. (m) I never should have thought it. (n)The facts were all there.

The Rep SA of reporting has been explicitly issued in utterances (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), (m), and (n). In these utterances, Tim Cook reports that the health condition of his friend and co-worker, Steve Jobs, had gone worse suddenly. Thus, Tim Cook implements the

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Rep SA style of reporting here by making an assertion about the past with reference to the time of storytelling. He informs the graduates that he was surprised by that change, especially when Steve Jobs had called him to his home to inform him that he could not continue leading Apple. The use of *"one day"* in utterance (i) and past tense in the other utterances carry the meaning that these events and thoughts happened in the past with reference to the point of Tim's storytelling. Utterance (i) may also be interpreted as a Rep SA of stating in reference to the fact that history repeats itself and that such occurrences occur to all people on a regular basis.

D. Resolution

(o) And when he was gone, truly gone, I learned the real, visceral difference between preparation and readiness.

The strategy of the Rep SA of reporting is continued in (o) as Tim Cook reports the moment Steve Jobs had gone forever as well as the lesson he has learned after that moment. The past tense of the verbs marked clearly that these moments took place in the past with regard to the moment of storytelling.

E. Evaluation

(p) It was the loneliest I've ever felt in my life. (q) By an order of magnitude, It was one of those moments where you can be surrounded by people, yet you don't really see, hear or even feel them. (r) But I could sense their expectations. (s) When the dust settled, all I knew was that I was going to have to be the best version of myself that I could be. (t) I knew that if you got out of bed every morning and set your watch by what other people expect or demand, it'll drive you crazy. (u) So what was true then is true now. (v) Don't waste your time living someone else's life. (w) Don't try to emulate the people who came before you to the exclusion of everything else, contorting into a shape that doesn't fit. (x) It takes too much mental effort – effort that should be dedicated to creating and building. (y) You'll waste precious time trying to rewire your every thought, and, in the meantime, you won't be fooling anybody.

The speech act strategies are realised in using five speech acts in this sub-stage: reporting, warning, advising, and predicting. Tim Cook employs the Rep SA of reporting in (p), (q), (r), and (s) to depict to the graduates his feeling and his emotional state after Steve Jobs' death to evaluate those critical events. He asserts that he was so astonished to the extent that he could not feel the presence of those who were around him. He reports that what happened at those moments made him think seriously of being *"the best version"* of himself. In (t), Tim Cook exploits the Dir SA of warning to ask the graduates to pay more attention to their time and live their life in the future, by the way they like, not by the way others demand or expect them to do. In this way, Tim Cook warns the graduates that pushing themselves to meet the demands of others will result in damaging their lives. In (u), Tim cook relies on the Rep SA of asserting to assert that what happened to Steve Jobs could happen to anyone. His utterance counts as an undertaking to assert a general and actual state of affairs in human life.

Then, Tim Cook uses the Dir SA of advising in (v) and (w) as he urges the graduates to exploit their future time wisely and effectively. He advises them to enjoy their time and avoid wasting it to meet the demands of others or to emulate others. As

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such, these utterances read as future acts that will benefit the graduates. Furthermore, he employs the Dir SA of warning in (x) to warn the graduates that mimic mimicking or mimicking or competing with those who had started before them because that will only consume their thinking and time, which must be directed to building their owns businesses. The Rep SA of predicting is issued in (y) to assert to the graduates that they will waste some of their valuable time on such trivial things and that will hurt no one except themselves. As such, Tim Cook is convinced and has evidence that this will occur to the graduates in the future, basing on his experience.

F. Coda

(z) Graduates, the fact is, when your time comes, and it will, you'll never be ready.

In this sub-stage, the pragmatic strategy of speech act is realized by the Rep SA of stating and the Rep SA of predicting. Tim Cook asserts an actual state of affairs that the graduates will experience death at the end of their lives like all other human beings. At the same time, he predicts that they will "*never be ready*" when the calls come to an end their times, urging them to exploit every minute wisely and effectively before reaching that moment. Again, he believes that this will occur to them and has learned adequate evidence to predict that.

Results and Discussion.

This section is concerned with the results and discussion of the whole data of analysis. To achieve the first aim, each stage of the extracted storytelling discourse is analysed in term or SAs.

A. Abstract

As Table (1) shows, the statistical analysis reveals that are Rep SA of asserting and stating are the most SAs used by CSs in this stage of storytelling with the percentages of (31.82%) and (22.73%), respectively. In terms of occupations, BCSs belong to Rep SA of asserting percentage a percentage of (60.00 %) among other SAs. Other SAs used by BCSs are the Rep SA of stating and Com SA of offering, which receives a percentage of (20.00%) for each. On the other hand, it shows that JuCSs use Rep and Com SAs. The Rep SAs are realised in the SA of asserting and SA of stating that are used equally amounting to (42.86%). The Com SAs is actualised in the SA of offering with a precentage of (14.28 %). The results also show that the SAs that ACSs employ the Rep SA of asserting, the Rep SA of stating and the Dir SA of encouraging with the percentages of (55.56%), (33.33), and (11.11%). This elevated use of Rep SA of asserting mirrors the role of CSs to inform the graduates in this sub-stage about the values and concepts that they want to assert in their motivational storytelling.

In relation to PCSs, the analysis indicates that they rely heavily on the Com SA of boasting a percentage of (60 %). The high use of this Com SA can be attributed to the goals of CSs in the whole speech, which is to make their personal success as a mechanism to inspire the graduates. The power of other SAs used by PCSs in this sub-stage is distributed over Rep SA of asserting, Dir SA of advising, and Com SA of offering equally with a percentage of (10%). For JoCSs, the Rep SA of reporting, Rep SA of stating, Rep SA of boasting share the highest frequent SAs with an amount of (23.08%). This asserts the nature of motivational storytelling as CSs hints to successful things that happened in the past for their nations as an attempt to motivate the graduates

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to exploit their sources efficiently. Then, the Rep SA asserting comes with a percentage of (15.38%) to assert what the speakers believe to be true. JoCSs also use other types of SAs: the Rep SA of Lamenting and the Dir SA of encouraging are both used the least, with a percentage of (7.69%).

Table (1): Speech Acts in the Abstract

Speech Act Strategies		BCSs		JuCSs		ACSs		PCSs		JoCSs		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Rep	Asserting	3	60.00	3	42.86	5	55.56	1	10.00	2	15.38	14	31.82
	Reporting	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	23.08	3	6.82
	Stating	1	20.00	3	42.86	3	33.33	0	0.00	3	23.08	10	22.73
	Criticizing	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	10.00	0	0.00	1	2.27
	Boasting	0	0.00	0	0.00		0.00	0	0.00	3	23.08	3	6.82
	Lamenting	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	7.69	1	2.27
Dir	Advising	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	10.00	0	0.00	1	2.27
	Encouraging	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	11.11	0	0.00	1	7.69	2	4.55
Com	Offering	1	20.00	1	14.28	0	0.00	1	10.00	0	0.00	3	6.82
Exp	Boasting	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	6	60.00	0	0.00	6	13.63
Total		5	100	7	100	9	100	10	100	13	100	44	100.00

B. Orientation

Table (2) below indicates that the most dominate SAs in the orientation stage are the Rep SA of reporting and the Com SA of offering with the percentage of (38.88%) and (16.66%), respectively. The second dominate SA is shared by the Rep SA of asserting and the Rep SA of stating with the percentage of (12.50%). Speaking of the occupations of the CSs, the statistical analysis also shows that BCSs use four SAs in this sub-stage: the Rep SA of reporting, the Rep SA of stating, the Dir SA of advising, and the Com SA of offering with an equal percentage of (25%). JuCSs, on the other hand, employ the Com SA of offering more than other SAs in this stage with a percentage of (40.00%). This expresses the importance for CSs to attach motivational sense to the inventive information of the story. The analysis also unveils that ACSs rely only on the Rep SA of reporting in this sub-stage. For PCSs, orientation is formed via four Rep SAs, namely asserting, reporting, stating, and criticising with an equal percentage of (25%). The results also signify that JoCSs employ two types of speech acts. They use the Rep SA of reporting with the Com SA of boasting with an equal percentage of (50%), Appealing to such these SAs in this sub-stage implies JoCSs' tendency to connect themselves even with the environmental information of the story to spark the graduates' curiosity to achievements that they have done in these particular circumstances. Table (2) below authenticates the above information.

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Table (2): Speech Acts in Orientation

SAs		BCSs		JuCSs		ACSs		PCSs		JoCSs		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Rep	Asserting	0	0.00	1	20.00	0	0.00	1	25.00	0	0.00	2	**11.11**
	Reporting	1	25.00	1	20.00	3	100.00	1	25.00	1	50.00	7	**38.88**
	Stating	1	25.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	25.00	0	0.00	2	**11.11**
	Criticising	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	25.00	0	0.00	1	**5.56**
Dir	Advising	1	25.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	**5.56**
	Encouraging	0	0.00	1	20.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	**5.56**
Com	Offering	1	25.00	2	40.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	**16.66**
	Boasting	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	50.00	1	**5.56**
Total		4	100.00	5	100.00	3	100.00	4	100.00	2	100	18	100.00

C. Complicating Action

The results in Table (3) point out that CSs, in the complicating action stage, rely mostly on the Rep SA of reporting and the Rep SA of asserting with the percentages of (75.61%) and (14.63%). In terms of professions, ACSs are shown to draw on Rep SA of reporting with a percentage of (100.00%). Similarly, BCSs, PCSs, JoCSs, and JuCSs also rely heavily on Rep SA of reporting in this sub-stage with the percentages of (85.71%), (76.47%), (68.42%), and (57.90%). This high percentage of occurrence for the Rep SA of reporting mirrors the dramatic nature of the complicating action sub-stage which is mainly related with reporting events happened in the past.

Table (3): Speech Acts in Complicating Action

SAs		BCSs		JuCSs		ACSs		PCSs		JoCSs		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Rep	Asserting	0	0.00	7	36.84	0	0.00	3	17.65	2	10.53	12	14.63
	Reporting	12	85.72	11	57.90	13	100.00	13	76.47	13	68.42	62	75.61
	Stating	1	7.14	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	5.88	0	0.00	2	2.44
	Criticising	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	5.26	1	1.22
Com	Pledging	1	7.14	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.22
Exp	Praising	0	0.00	1	5.26	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	10.53	3	3.66
	Boasting	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	5.26	1	1.22
Total		14	100	19	100	13	100	17	100	19	100	82	100.00

D. Resolution

Regarding the SAs, the statistical analysis manifests that CSs in the resolution stage rely on the Rep SA of reporting with the highest percentage of (87.50%) to mark the final event(s) of their stories, as shown in Table (18) below. More particularly, all CSs utilises

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the Rep SA of reporting in this stage except JoCSs who resort to the Exp SA of boasting and Dec SA of declaring with an equal percentage of (6.25%) in addition to their dominated use of Rep SA of reporting amounting to (87.50%).

Table (4): Speech Acts in Resolution

SAs		BCSs		JuCSs		ACSs		PCSs		JoCSs		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Rep	Reporting	3	100.00	2	100.00	2	100.00	3	100.00	4	66.66	14	87.50
Exp	Boasting	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	16.67	1	6.25
Dec	Declaring	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	16.67	1	6.25
Total		3	100.00	2	100.00	2	100.00	3	100.00	6	100.00	16	100.00

E. Evaluation

The results in Table (5) reveal that the most dominate SAs in the evaluation stage are the Dir SA of advising and the Rep SA of asserting with the percentages (22.64%) and (16.04%), respectively. Strictly speaking, the statistical analysis demonstrates that BCSs use the Rep SA of reporting and Dir SA of advising as the most efficient types of SAs in this sub-stage since they percentage the highest percentages with (33.33%) and (20.00%), respectively, among other SAs. The high use of Rep SA of reporting in this sub-stage reflect the BCSs' interest in evaluating the story indirectly via reporting their reactions or others' regarding the event of the story to embed their views or opinions. The use of the Dir SA of advising in such high percentage explains obviously the role of BCSs in this motivational storytelling to motivate the graduates by advising them to do what they think is the best to do. As regards other SAs, the Rep SA of stating and the Dir SA of warning receive the second-rank in occurrence with an equal percentage of (13.33%) which also reflects the motivational and the advisory of CSs and general and BCSs, in particular, to shed the light of particular values and to warn the graduates against performing what they consider distractive habits or policies. As a final point, Rep SA of predicting and Dir SA of encouraging come then with an equal percentage of (6.67%) to motivate the graduates and increase their self-confidence in their capabilities to face the uncertainties.

Pertaining to JuCSs, the statistical analysis shows that they employ a mixture of SAs to present their Evaluation to the stories they tell. The Rep SA of stating represents the highest employed type of SAs in this sub-stage with a percentage of (40.00%) among other SAs, this use of Rep SA of asserting mirrors its utilisation in stating particular facts related to the story in order to put forward their messages as true and serious. The second highest rank for SAs in this sub-stage is shared by three types of SAs, namely Rep SA of asserting, Rep SA of reporting, and Dir SA of advising with an equal percentage of (20.00%) as a second strategy in presenting their opinions and advising the graduates towards particular points.

Other CSs extend their use to other types of SAs. ACSs, for example, employs eight types of SAs. The first is the Rep SA of asserting since it come with the percentage (26.67%) among other SAs. Such concentration on this type of SAs implies its role in instilling a particular state of affairs related to the graduates with regard to the theme of

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the stories they deliver. Secondly, they resort to the Rep SA of reporting, Dir SA of advising, and Dir SA of warning equally with the percentage of (13.33%) to advise and warn the graduates directly and indirectly. The third rank is shared by the Rep SA of claiming, Exp SA of praising, and Exp SA of boasting with an equal percentage of (6.67%). ACSs tend to their pride of the outcome of their stories as a motivational strategy to engage the graduates' emotions.

In a similar tendency, PCSs utilise nine types of SAs to express their evaluations of the stories they tell. More particularly, they use the Rep SA of asserting with a percentage of (25.81%) to represent the highest frequent SA in this sub-stage. Regarding other SAs, the Rep SA of criticising is ranked as the second one that is frequently used with the percentage of (12.90%) which also reflects the advisory role to show their dissatisfaction regarding particular issues in their society in a disapproving way. Then, six SAs are used equally by PCSs in this sub-stage, namely the Rep SA of reporting, the Rep SA of stating, the Dir SA of advising, the Dir SA of encouraging, the Exp SA of praising, and the Exp SA of boasting with a percentage of (9.68%). Such balanced manipulation of SAs in evaluating their stories emulates the highly planned strategy that PCSs follow in motivating the graduates. The last SA is Rep SA of predicting which is used with a percentage of (3.23%) to enhance the graduates' confidence in their current qualifications to perform what they plan to.

The statistical analysis demonstrates that JoCSs are the most CSs who employ SAs in performing this sub-stage; they use ten SAs. Their tendency to provide their critical advice to the graduates is realised in their use of the Dir SA of advising with a percentage of (48%) to be the highest SA in use over the other nine SAs. The second and third rank of frequent occurrence is represented in using the Exp SA of praising and the Rep SA of criticising with an equal percentage of (12.00%) to express their dissatisfaction of particular tendencies the graduates do and praising others. Finally, they adopt a multidimensional strategy to motivate the graduates by equalising the employment of seven SAs in this sub-stage. As such, they use the Rep SA of reporting, the Rep SA of stating, the Rep SA of predicting, the Dir SA of encouraging, the Com SA of offering, the Exp SA of boasting, and the Exp SA of thanking all with a percentage of (4.00%). These findings are clearly stated in Table (23) below.

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Table (5): Speech Acts in Evaluation

SAs		BCSs		JuCSs		ACSs		PCSs		JoCSs		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Rep	Asserting	1	6.67	4	20.00	4	26.67	8	25.80	0	0.00	17	16.04
	Reporting	5	33.33	4	20.00	2	13.33	3	9.68	1	4.00	15	14.15
	Stating	2	13.33	8	40.00	0	0.00	3	9.68	1	4.00	14	13.21
	Criticizing	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	12.90	3	12.00	7	6.6
	Predicting	1	6.67	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	3.22	1	4.00	3	2.83
	Claiming	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	6.67	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.94
Dir	Advising	3	20.00	4	20.00	2	13.33	3	9.68	12	48.00	24	22.64
	Warning	2	13.33	0	0.00	2	13.33	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	3.78
	Encouraging	1	6.67	0	0.00	2	13.33	3	9.68	1	4.00	7	6.61
Com	Offering	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	1	0.94
Exp	Praising	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	6.67	3	9.68	3	12.00	7	6.6
	Boasting	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	6.67	3	9.68	1	4.00	5	4.72
	Thanking	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	1	0.94
Total		15	100.00	20	100.00	15	100.00	31	100.00	25	100.00	106	100.00

F. Coda

The results in Table (6) explicate that the Dir SA of encouraging and the Rep SA of asserting are the most common SAs in the coda stage with the percentage of (30.00%) and (20.00%), respectively. Regarding the occupations of the CSs, the analysis shows that BCSs call upon three types of SAs with an equal frequency of use in this final stage. Strictly speaking, they use the Rep SA of stating, the Rep SA of predicting, and Exp SA of praising with the percentage of (33.33%) to maximise the motivational power of the graduates by referring to particular states of affair, praising them for their current achievements, or predicting a better outcome for their future performance as a final strategy of motivation. JoCSs, on the other hand, are shown to rely only on the Dir SA of encouraging to end their storytelling. That is, they try to draw the graduates' attention to qualifications and opportunities they have at hand, multiplying with their capacities to achieve great success.

JuCSs rely heavily on the Rep SA of asserting with a percentage of (75.00%) over the Rep SA of stating, which receives a percentage of (25.00%). This implies the neutral manner of motivation that JuCS uses to bring known facts into the light and show his personal stance towards them. ACS (Matt Damon) distributes the use of SAs in this sub-stage among three types of SAs, the Dir SA of advising and Dir SA of warning, and the Exp SA of hoping with an equal percentage of occurrence (33.33%) as a three-dimensional mechanism to remind the graduates of what is good, what is bad, and what is hoped from them to perform in the future. As for PCS (Michael Bloomberg), he equalises his strategy of ending the motivational storytelling between the Rep SA of asserting and the Rep SA of criticising. Criticising is also employed here in addition to asserting with the hope of motivating the graduates to take corrective actions towards the criticised issues. Table (29) below authenticates these findings in detail.

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Table (6): Speech Act in Coda

SAs		BCSs		JuCSs		ACSs		PCSs		JoCSs		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Rep	Asserting	0	0.00	3	75.00	0	0.00	1	25.00	0	0.00	4	20.00
	Stating	2	50.00	1	25.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	15.00
	Criticizing	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	25.00	0	0.00	1	5.00
	Predicting	1	25.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	5.00
Dir	Advising	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	25.00	1	25.00	0	0.00	2	10.00
	Warning	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	25.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	5.00
	Encouraging	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	25.00	1	25.00	4	100.00	6	30.00
Exp	Praising	1	25.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	5.00
	Hoping	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	25.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	5.00
Total		4	100.00	4	100.00	4	100.00	4	100.00	4	100.00	20	100.00

Overall Statistical Analysis

Reaching the second aim of this study, an overall statistical analysis has been conducted to the data of analysis. The results indicate that the category of Rep SAs receives the highest percentage that amounts to (70.61%) among other categories of SAs that CSs use to deliver their motivational storytelling. Such reliance on this type of SAs comes from its importance for the CSs in conveying their past experiences to the graduates and stating and asserting what they believe to be true. The Dir SAs comes in the second rank in terms of frequent occurrence to percentage a percentage of (17.20%). Such a dominant distribution of Dir SAs belongs to their role in presenting straightforward advice to motivate the graduates to perform particular actions. Other categories of SAs which are Com, Exp, and Dec are used with the percentages (2.15%), (9.68%), and (0.36%). These findings are illuminated in Figure (2) below

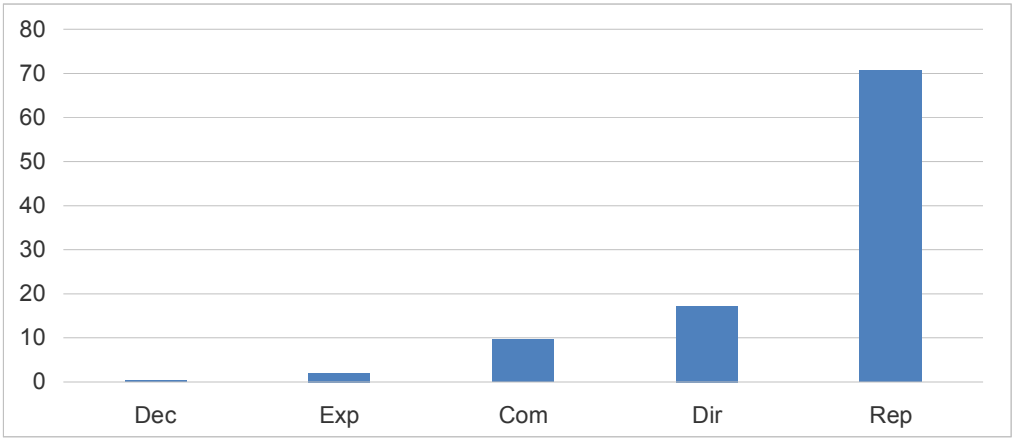

Figure (2): The Overall Use of Speech Acts in Motivational Storytelling of Commencement Speeches

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The results in Table (7) show that the SA of reporting and the SA of asserting receive the most frequent use among other members of the category of Rep SAs with the percentages of (53.80%) and (21.32%), respectively. As for the category Dir SAs, the SAs of advising and encouraging are used with the highest of percentages (60.42%) and (29.17%), respectively. The abundant use of the Rep SA of reporting is because the main stage of the motivational storytelling is about conveying past experiences happened in the past to the CSs themselves or to other persons the CSs know with the purpose of concluding motiviational lessons to the gradutes. The use of the Rep SA of asserting is attributed to the fact that the CSs try to assert true values and principles related to the story they tell especially when referring to the current situations of the graduates.

As regards for using the Dir SA of advising as the most frequent one among other Dir SAs is directly relatable to the major role of commencement speeches in general and motivational storytelling in particular which is to direct the graduates towards doing particular actions the CSs s they are essential for the graduates. In relation to the Dir SA of encouraging, it is also connected to the role of the CSs in such events, but with an attempt to draw the attention of the graduates to their own resources of success that are available to and around them.

Table (7): Overall Analysis of Speech Acts in Motivational Storytelling of American Commencement Speeches

Speech Acts		F	%
Rep	Reporting	106	53.80
	Asserting	42	21.32
	Stating	30	15.23
	Criticizing	10	5.08
	Boasting	3	1.52
	Claiming	2	1.02
	Predicting	4	2.03
Total		197	100.00
Dir	Advising	29	60.42
	Warning	5	10.41
	Encouraging	14	29.17
Total		48	100.00
Com	Offering	5	83.33
	Pledging	1	16.67
Total		6	100.00
	Praising	11	40.74

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Exp	Boasting	14	51.86
	Lamenting	0	0.00
	Hoping	1	3.70
	Thanking	1	3.70
Total		27	100.00
Dec	Declaring	1	100.00
Total		279	

Speech Acts among Commencement Speakers

To fulfill the third aim of this study, a statistical comparison is conducted regarding the use of the SAs employment among BCSs, JUCSs, ACSs, PCSs, and JoCSs. Table (8) below indicates that all CSs under study utilise the Rep SAs as their first strategy to perform their actions when presenting the motivational storytelling. After the Rep SAs, the Dir SAs are appealed to as the second SA strategy by CSs except for PCSs who give their second priority in terms of SAs to the Exp SAs which are used by other CSs as well except JuCSs. Furthermore, CSs, other than ACSs, appeal to the Com SAs to express their feelings towards the events of their stories or the graduates themselves. Regarding the Dec SAs appear only once by JoCSs.

Table (8): Statistical Comparison among CSs in Terms of SAs

SAs	BCSs		JuCSs		ACSs		PCSs		JoCSs	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Rep	38	77.55	46	88.46	34	72.34	44	66.67	35	53.85
Dir	7	14.29	5	9.62	9	19.15	9	13.64	18	27.69
Com	3	6.12	1	1.92	0	0.00	1	1.51	1	1.54
Exp	1	2.04	0	0.00	4	8.51	12	18.18	10	15.38
Dec	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.54
Total	49	100.00	52	100.00	47	100.00	66	100.00	65	100.00

Conclusions

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that the CSs rely on few SAs to present their motivational storytelling. These SAs are distributed over the six stage of storytelling in accrodnace with the goal or function of each stage. The whole discourse of storytelling seems to base heavily on two categories of SAs: the Rep SAs and the Dir SAs are the the main tools that enable CSs to deliver their storytelling. The former is mainly realised by the SAs of reporting, asserting, and stating to convey to their past experiences to the graduates and comment on these experiences regarding the current situations at which the commencement is held. The latter is characterised by the SAs of advising, encouraging, and warning where the CSs can direct the motivations they create towards particular actions and thoughts on the part of the graduates.

As graduates are exposed to these experiences, they are invited to view them regarding their own lives and conditions. By employing particular SAs that motivate the

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graduates to face challenges successfully, CSs make this possible. The CSs begin their storytelling to state or assert particular facts and values before reporting their experiences. Then, in the light of their statement and assertions, they advise, warn, or encourage the graduates.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There are no conflicts of interest

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Appendix (I): The selected Speeches

Year	University/ Institute	Speakers' Names	Hyperlinks
2010	Harvard University	David H. Souter	https://youtu.be/eCxaDwOCXD8
2011	Yale University	Tom Hanks	https://youtu.be/baIlinqoExQ
2012	Harvard University	Fareed Zakaria	https://youtu.be/CD6CW4fPQfs
2013	Harvard University	Oprah Winfrey	https://youtu.be/GMWFieBGR7c
2014	Harvard University	Michael Bloomberg	https://youtu.be/Zhfn2zgFFJ8
2015	Harvard University	Deval Patrick	https://youtu.be/-flgIKTSIas
2016	MIT - Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Matt Damon	https://youtu.be/DFNgoZ5-qAM
2017	Stanford university	Mariano Florentina	https://youtu.be/BP2ItX1XxOM
2018	MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Sheryl Sandberg	https://youtu.be/8w1d1TWxwec
2019	Stanford University	Tim Cook	https://youtu.be/2C2VJwGBRRw

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