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Investigating Pragma-rhetorical Strategies Utilized by American Commencement Speakers to Motivate Graduates for Managing Future Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract --- Motivating emotions is a critical factor in empowering students to manage the troubles they might face. Educational organizations pay great efforts to employ all the available means that can motivate their students for better learning from early stages until universities or institutes levels. The administrations of some universities and institutes, especially in the United States of America, do not stop there and pay more attention on motivating their students at the graduation parties on how to manage future businesses and challenges. This study explores how commencement speakers utilize success stories pragma-rhetorically to motivate the graduates to behave wisely to take future decisions. It investigates the pragmaticrhetorical strategies in the motivational storytelling that is delivered within commencement speeches at American universities and institutes. It aims to recognize and analyze these strategies that commencement speakers employ as strategic strategies in presenting their stories to achieve their motivational purposes. More specifically, it explores how speech acts, rhetorical tropes, conversational implicatures, and rhetorical appeals are used and distributed in the storytelling discourse. To this end, the researchers selected ten commencement speeches delivered by American commencement speaker. The findings have revealed that commencement speakers resort to various pragmatic and rhetorical strategies to convey the motivational message and advice they intend to deliver to the graduates within the stories they embed in their commencement speeches. Furthermore, the findings also reveal that the original

professions of the commencement speakers play a role in focusing on particular pragma-rhetorical strategies.

Keywords---commencement speakers, future challenges, motivation, storytelling, pragma-rhetorical strategies.

Introduction

Humans make use of storytelling to transmit and convey information and experiences among each other from ancient times. Storytelling is generally defined as a descriptive representation of thoughts, values, experiences and lessons of those who have experienced them to those who have not (the audience) to elicit emotions and thoughts which are hoped to be converted into future actions on the part of the audience themselves (Labov, 1972; Ricoeur, 1983; Feldman et al., 2004; Ganz, 2011). It describes a series of actions conducted by particular persons (real or imaginary) to initiate a change or to react to a change, calling others for new thoughts and/ or actions on their own (Ricoeur, 1983). It focuses on emotional access to the experiences and values of people. Therefore, as a management tool, storytelling can be used to motivate the target audiences with adequate confidence to make decisions when facing uncertain conditions in their daily lives (Ganz, 2011). As motivation along with dedication forms the most important factor that human resources management rely on to improve workplace productivity Leonova et al. (2021); Ayedee et al. (2021), such type of storytelling can be found in various communicative activities, and one of which is commencement speeches (Abbott, 2020; Bex & Bench-Capon, 2017).

A commencement speech is intended to address a particular audience at a particular time and location. Condit (1985), states that commencement speakers are expected to fulfil two major goals in their speeches: the first is to praise and appreciate the graduates' achievement and the second is to widen the graduates' visions regarding the challenges they might encounter in their future. To fulfil the second goal, commencement speakers often resort to defining the meanings of their own experiences and those of others in the light of the challenges that might appear to the graduates in their new station of life (ibid). By showing up personal affairs and sharing feelings, storytellers invite the graduates to view protagonists of stories as ordinary people who have achieved success through hard work and intelligent thinking. This communication tool increases the audience's confidence in their ability to reach the desired goals (Gault, 2008). It gives them hints that they can succeed when following paths similar to those the protagonists have followed. The audience are encouraged to join the commencement speakers in looking at these events, evaluating them and responding to them in their social life (Boje, 2014; Chatman, 1978).

As storytellers' ultimate goal is to convince the audience that their point is valid and clear Kuypers (2009), they employ various pragma-rhetorical strategies that may support their positions and enhance their messages. Therefore, this study is motivated to investigate the stories that commencement speakers embed within the speeches they deliver in the graduation ceremonies at American universities. Although some studies have paid some attention to some commencement

speeches, none of them has focused on the pragma-rhetorical nature of storytelling discourse in such public speeches. This current study aims to bridge this gap by finding answers to the following questions:

- What kinds of speech acts are recurrently employed by commencement speakers in their motivational storytelling?
- What figures of speech are highly exploited by commencement speakers in their motivational storytelling?
- What conversational maxims are mostly flouted by commencement speakers in their motivational storytelling?
- What rhetorical appeals do commencement speakers utilise in their motivational storytelling?
- Do the commencement speakers of different occupation differ in employing each of pragma-rhetorical strategies?

Literature Review

Motivation & discourse

Motivation is defined as a positive force that helps humans to make progress in their lives. The origin of the word motivation comes from the Latin word movere (to move) (Schunk et al., 2012). The basic concept of motivation is embodied in everyday practices as something that guides us to move on, regardless of the difficulties we may confront while completing particular tasks. According to Ryan & Deci (2000), there are two main types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Whereas the former relates to conducting actions in response to external pressures, the latter refers to behaviors that are guided by our individual rewards. The intrinsic motivators are further classified, by Malone (1987), intrapersonal (curiosity, challenge, control and fantasy) and interpersonal (competition, recognition, and cooperation).

Edward (2004), adds that the extrinsic motivating factors can either undermine or reinforce the intrinsic ones. In other words, the quality and/or the type of social environments and contextual factors play a significant role in increasing or decreasing the intensity of the intrinsic motivators. Edward (ibid.) finds that the intrinsic motivation improves when people are exposed to more options or opportunities, appreciated, or encouraged to take the risk to find their own ways. The social and contextual environment that storytelling entails makes Rowe et al. (2007), among many others to view storytelling as "a promising vehicle for promoting motivation" (Meurer, 2002; Mukhroji, 2020).

A motivational discourse is one that encourages the audience to do something. It may be simply changing the way they do, look at, or feel about something (Ellison & Gilden, 2017). It provides information and instruction about how to accomplish a particular task. It is similar to a persuasive policy speech as persuasion speeches are designed to convince others to change a value, attitude, or behavior. Moreover, the motivational speeches induce or stir up the audience's emotions and inspire them to achieve that change (Livingston, 2010). Thus, not all persuasion speeches are motivational because some of them may include only facts (ibid).

According to Dutton & Ragins (2017), the best motivational speakers should relate to their audience with compelling stories with a considerable account to explain them to the audience. Ellison & Gilden (2017), add that motivational speakers need to be passionate about their subjects because they have usually experienced what they are talking about or have made positive changes in their lives that brought about favorable results. They call others to experience the same great results from making a change. In other words, they encouraged their audience to become better in some way (Harandi, 2015; Daskalovska et al., 2012).

The storytelling structure

Labov (1972), divides the structure of storytelling discourse into six stages: abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda. While in the abstract, the storytellers give a short description of the story theme, they inform the audience about the time, place of the story plus the character(s) and the background of the story in the orientation stage. After that, the complex moments of the story are presented in the complication stage, covering all the series of actions and events of the plot before the resolution stage in which the storytellers declare the ultimate result of these events. In the evaluation stage, the storytellers are enabled to state either explicitly or implicitly their viewpoints and interpretations towards the events and actions of the story. Finally, storytellers may end their stories with an extra part called "coda" to return with the audience to the point at which the storytelling is launched (Kuhl, 1984; Tsou et al., 2006).

Labov (ibid.: 370) suggests a set of questions to identify each of the above-mentioned stages in the discourse. The abstract stage is identified by answering the question: "what was the story about?". Orientation can be ascertained through the questions: "who were involved in the story?" when? and where? The complicating action can be elicited through the question: "then what happened?". Evaluation answers the question: "So what?". Coda marks the end of the storytelling discourse (Rodden, 2008; Tindale, 2017; Tracy & Robles, 2013).

A pragma-rhetorical approach to storytelling

Although rhetoric and pragmatics share a wide range of similarities in their orientation, they differ in the area of coverage in language use. Whereas pragmatics is interested in discovering the motives and intentions behind using specific linguistic strategies by language users in their conversational contributions, rhetoric focuses on the reasons that instigate humans to use those strategies in the first place (Leech, 1983). According to Larrazabal & Korta (2002), pragmatics and rhetoric complete each other to give a comprehensive view of the ways in which language can be used; the former is concerned with communicative intentions and the latter with persuasive intentions of language use (Moezzi et al., 2017; Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003).

Ilie (2021), adds that combining the two disciplines in one approach provides researchers with the ability to combine "microlinguistically-oriented pragmatic approaches with macrolinguistically- oriented rhetorical approaches" to better deal with nuanced and multi-sided complexities of language use. Through such kind of analysis, the rhetorical analysis is obtained in a highly systematic way,

while the pragmatic aspects of language become more focused and activity-based when they are interpreted in a rhetorical perspective (ibid: 88). Thus, this study investigates the storytelling discourse in commencement speeches by integrating a pragmatic analysis of contextual experiences from the perspective of speech act theory and conversational implicature with a rhetorical analysis from the perspective of rhetorical appeals and figures of speech (Levinson, 1983; McQuarrie & Mick, 1996).

Speech acts

It is widely acknowledged that the linguistic frame of Speech Act Theory is first prepared by Austin (1975), and then completed by Searle (1969). According to Austin (1975), when someone utters an utterance, s/he performs three types of acts simultaneously: locutionary (what is uttered by a speaker), illocutionary (what is meant by a speaker), and perlocutionary (what is understood by a hearer). The illocutionary act has the force of the utterance since it is concerned with what we intend to say in a particular context (ibid: 99). With reference to the direction of the influence between the words and the world Searle (1976), presents a list of five basic categories of speech acts (henceforth SAs): representatives, expressives, directives, commissives, and declarations that might be used directly or indirectly to achieve what we intend through our linguistic contributions (See Table 1 below). Each of these categories encompasses a set of sub-acts (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985).

Table 1
The classification of speech acts

	Categories	D:	irection of fit		S = Speaker; X = Situation
(i)	Representatives	Make world	words fit	the	S believes X
(ii)	Directives	Make words	the world	fit	S wants X
(iii)	Commissives	Make words	the world	fit	S intends X
(iv)	Expressives	Make world	words fit	the	S feels X
(v)	Declarations	Words world	change	the	S causes X

Performing any of these acts involves fulfilling a set of typical rules or what Searle (1969), refers to as "constitutive rules": propositional content, preparatory condition, sincerity condition, and essential condition. The propositional content condition is related to the purpose behind uttering a particular SA. The preparatory conditions describe the actual requirements for performing the SA. The sincerity condition is concerned with the honest will of performing the SA. Finally, the essential condition identifies the resultant act as intended by the speaker and realised by the addressee (s) (Boonkit, 2010; Brown, 2002).

Conversational maxims

Grice (1975), assumes that people are co-operative in nature when communicating with each other. He (ibid: 47) introduces his Cooperative Principle (henceforth CP) that defines how language is utilised to maintain full effectiveness and usefulness in communication. The CP can be implemented through adopting four Conversational Maxims (henceforth CMs):

- The Maxim of Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true
 - Do not say what you believe to be false.
 - Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- The Maxim of Quantity:
 - Make your contribution as informative as is required.
 - Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- The Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.
- The Maxim of Manner: Be perspicuous,
 - Avoid obscurity of expression.
 - Avoid ambiguity.
 - Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
 - Be orderly.

Each of these maxims represents one dimension of communication and defines what is required from speakers to achieve communicative cooperation. Thus, participants are expected to follow this principle along with its four maxims, but in case they fail to comply with any of these maxims, they generate additional meanings (conversational implicatures) to their addressee (s) (Grice 1975). Outlines five possibilities in which speakers do not follow the CMs: flouting, violating, infringing, opting out, and suspending. This study focuses only on flouting the conversational maxims (henceforth FCMs) as it is expected to be highly exploited in the data under scrutiny (Huang, 2006). Thomas (ibid: 65) clearly states that speakers flouts CMs, not to deceive or manipulate their addressees, but to motivate them to explore an additional meaning (s). There are various ways to flout CMs (Cutting, 2005). Ariyanti et al. (2020), explicate that flouting a CM means going against its command "in order to achieve certain end, which understood by the listener" (Denning, 2005; Gabriel, 2000).

Figures of speech

According to Willis (1973), figures of speech (henceforth FoSs) are words or phrases are intended to indicate meanings different than they literally suggest. Khodabadeh (2007), states that such devices are commonly employed consciously in in public speeches "to create an effect". Martens et al. (2013), see that storytellers may enrich their storytelling with a number of FoSs to maximise the effectiveness of their messages as they force their audience to link such use of language to the context of their situation. The more the audience is involved in generating the intended meanings, the greater the effect of these messages is. Fredal (2020), adds that the existence of FoSs in storytelling function as facilitating strategies to ensure that the audience receive the story correctly. Thus, commencement speakers, in delivering their motivational storytelling, rely

on FoSs to create a context of acceptance to the conclusions and lessons they present at the end of the story (Twigg, 2007; Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

In the literature of rhetoric, various frameworks of FoSs have been suggested, but this study will adopt Grundy's (2008), framework as it is rhetorical and directly related to FCMs. Grundy's (ibid) framework consists of six types of FoSs: tautology, metaphor, overstatement, understatement, rhetorical question, and irony (Susanty et al., 2021; Werdistira & Purnama, 2020).

Rhetorical appeals

Speakers usually resort to embody the discourse they present with rhetorical appeals (henceforth RAs) to refer to themselves (ethos), the audience's emotional state (pathos), or related evidence (logos) (Ganz, 2011; Quijano & Bulusan, 2020). This idea of using RAs in argumentative and persuasive discourse can be traced back to Aristotle's rhetoric (Rapp, 2010; Luo, 2020). Ganz (2011), adds that three RAs are the essential argumentative components that storytellers rely on in presenting persuasive and motivational stories.

Methodology

Data collection

This study is motivated to investigate the motivational stories presented by various commencement speakers within commencement speeches given at American universities from 2010 and 2019. More particularly, the researchers selected ten commencement speeches given by ten commencement speakers, each two commencement speakers come from a particular occupation, namely business, justice, acting, politics, and journalism (See Appendix I). The selected speeches are available in both written and oral forms, but we based our analysis on the oral form for two main reasons. The first is because the written forms of some speeches are found not identical with the oral ones. The second is that we wanted to make full use of the actual context of each storytelling in the analysis.

The model of analysis

To achieve the aims of this study, an eclectic model (see Figure 1 below) has been developed consisting of Searle (1969). SAs, Grice (1975), CMs, Grundy (2008), rhetorical RAs.

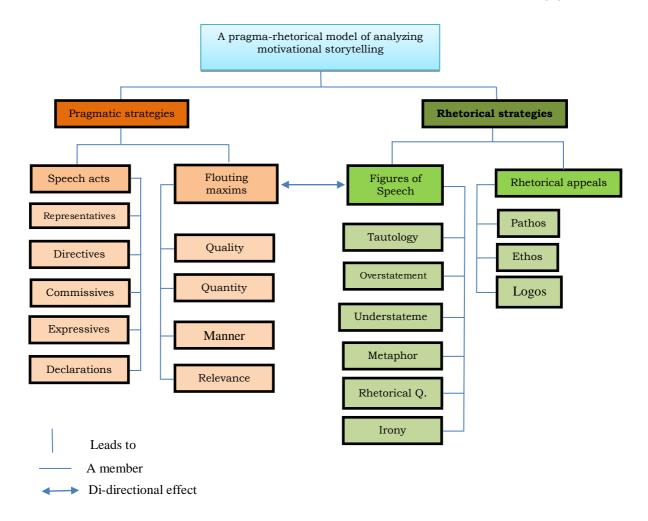


Figure 1. The model of the analysis

Data analysis

The researchers extracted one storytelling of each of the ten selected commencement speeches in accordance with Labov (1972), framework of storytelling structure. For the purpose of clarity, we used the numbers (1-10) to refer to each storytelling discourse and the letters (a-z) to mark every single utterance within each storytelling discourse. After delimiting the structure of each storytelling, the researchers analyzed them in terms of pragmatic and rhetoric strategies, basing on the elected model developed above (See Figure 1).

Results and Discussion

This section is concerned with the results and discussion of the selected data in accordance with the elected model stated above. We also included in this section a statistical analysis to these results.

Overall analysis

The overall analysis of the pragma-rhetorical structure of motivational storytelling in American commencement speeches shows that the most frequent pragma-rhetorical strategy used by the commencement speakers is the strategy of SAs which records the percentage of (38.48%) among other strategies, as shown in (Table 2) below. The recurrent use of this strategy by commencement speakers in delivering the motivational storytelling proves its performative nature in conveying the meanings intended by commencement speakers. The RAs come the second frequent strategy with a percentage of (23.31%). This expresses the general goal of the commencement speakers which to motivate the emotions of the graduates. These findings are graphically represented in Figure (2) below.

Table 2 Overall analysis of pragma-rhetorical strategies

Pragma-	Business leaders		Justices		Actors		Politicians		Journalists		Total	
rhetorical Strategies	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
SAs	49	34.51	52	34.90	47	40.87	66	44.00	65	38.46	279	38.48
FCMs	37	26.05	36	24.16	20	17.39	30	20.00	38	22.49	161	22.21
FoSs	23	16.20	25	16.78	19	16.52	21	14.00	28	16.56	116	16.00
RAs	33	23.24	36	24.16	29	25.22	33	22.00	38	22.49	169	23.31
Total	142	100.00	149	100.00	115	100.00	150	100.00	169	100.00	725	100.00

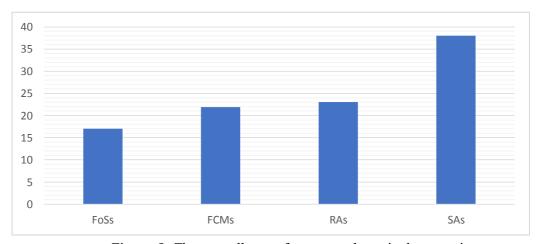


Figure 2. The overall use of pragma-rhetorical strategies

Speech acts

The results in (Table 3) below shows that the representative SAs receive the most frequent employment with a percentage of (70.61%) among other SAs that commencement speakers use to deliver their motivational storytelling. Such reliance on this type of speech comes from its importance for the commencement speakers in conveying their past experiences to the graduates and stating and asserting what they believe to be true. The directive SAs come in the second rank in terms of frequent occurrence to record a percentage of (17.20%). Such frequent use distribution of the directive SAs belongs to their role in presenting straightforward advice to motivate the graduates to perform particular actions. Other categories of SAs which are commissive, expressive, and declaration are used with the respective percentages of (2.15%), (9.68%), and (0.36%).

Table 3 Overall analysis of categories of speech acts

Speech acts	Business leaders		Justices		Actors		Politicians		Journalists		Total	
•	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	\mathbf{F}	%
Representative	38	77.55	46	88.46	34	72.34	44	66.67	35	53.85	197	70.61
Directive	7	14.29	5	9.62	9	19.15	9	13.64	18	27.69	48	17.20
Commissive	3	6.12	1	1.92	0	0.00	1	1.51	1	1.54	6	2.15
Expressive	1	2.04	0	0.00	4	8.51	12	18.18	10	15.38	27	9.68
Declaration	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.54	1	0.36
Total	49	100.00	52	100.00	47	100.00	66	100.00	65	100.00	279	100.00

The detailed results in (Table 2) above show that all commencement speakers rely heavily on the representative and directive SAs as the first and second strategies of SAs except politician commencement speakers who draw on expressive SAs after representatives. The examples (1-17) below explicate how the commencement speakers utilise each of these types of SAs while delivering their motivational storytelling.

Representatives

• "They come to the civil servant asked by her boss to ignore the rules, or the voter whose frustration begins degenerating into rancid cynicism" (8/1).

In (1), Florentino employs the SA of asserting to propose that protecting and preserving public rules is not exclusive to people in higher positions; instead, anyone can do that regardless of his or her position.

• "It's going to show that the Constitution is no simple contract, not because it uses a certain amount of open-ended language that a contract draftsman would try to avoid, but because its language grants and guarantees many good things, and good things that compete with each other and can never all be realized, all together, all the time". (1/c).

In (2), Souter uses the SA of stating to put forward that the events he's going to tell in particular are related to the American Constitution. These utterances read as a commitment to the truth of an actual state of affairs that are known to even to many of the graduates.

• "Then, one day, he called me over to his house and told me that it wasn't going to be that way" (9/i).

Cook implements the SA of reporting in (3) by making an assertion about the past with reference to the time of storytelling. He informs the graduates that Steve Jobs had called him to his home to inform him that he could not continue leading Apple. The use of "one day" and past tense carry the meaning that these events had happened in the past with reference to the point of Tim's storytelling.

• "But let me tell you that trust is perpetually vulnerable to the tyrannical tendencies of monarchs, mobs, and majorities" (5/d).

In (4), Bloomberg employs the SA of criticizing to condemn the bad practices that some dominated individuals or groups have regarding tolerance and freedom.

• "They have steep hills yet to climb. (aa)But they will climb them because they have a reason to hope, and they are making the very best of it" (6/z).

As Patrick reports his educational support to the school kids who become empowered with the required knowledge and the skills that will help them to overcome their poverty, he uses the SA of predicting in (5) to indicate the virtuous performance that those students are expected to achieve in their future.

• "We have had daunting challenges over the last 100 years: a depression, two world wars, a Cold War, 9/11, and global economic crisis" (3/b).

In (6), Zakaria uses the SA of boasting to express his pride that humans have managed to overcome a lot of tough challenges in the recent years. Such boasting is not expressive because it is about a public stratification not a personal one.

• "We forget our successes" (3/e).

In (7), Zakaria uses t the SA of lamenting to show that humans usually do not remember their achievements or do not appreciate the value of their abilities when facing challenges.

Directives

• "Give yourself time to mourn what you think you may have lost but then here's the key" (4/qq).

In (8), Winfrey uses the SA of advising to motivate the graduates to continue their hard work even if they fail at some point because all failure can do is change the directions of their mission.

• "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" (10/t).

In (9), Cook exploits the 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.

• "It is up to us to guard it fiercely and to ensure that equality under the law means equality under the law for everyone" (5/x).

In (10), Bloomberg deploys the SA of encouraging to ask the graduates to protect the public values and principles to ensure that everybody in the society receives equal treatment. He believes that the graduates have the qualities that enable them to take part in protecting the public value and this is clear in his initial phrase "it's up to you".

Commissives

• "The lesson I want to share with you today is one I learned in my very first job out of college working on a leprosy treatment program in India" (9/b).

Sandberg uses the SA of offering in (11) as she committed herself to share with MIT graduates one of the lessons she had learned in her life. More specifically, she wants to share with them her experience in Indian with leprosy patients.

• "I shall walk decisively" (4/hh)

In (12), Winfrey uses the SA of pledging to commit herself to follow the advice provided to her by Professor Nagy.

Expressives

• "The great judge was Mr. Justice Black, the first of the New Deal justices, whom Justice Cardozo described as having one of the most brilliant legal minds he had ever met with" (1/n)

In (13), Souter uses the SA of praising to express his admiration for Justice Black 's personality.

• "I'm especially proud of the performance of Massachusetts students during my tenure as governor" (6/a).

Patrick uses the SA of boasting in (14) to show off his efforts, as a governor, that made the pupils achieve outstanding performance.

• "There's a lot of trouble out there, MIT. But there's a lot of beauty, too. I hope you see both" (7/x).

Damon uses the SA of hoping in (15) to express his desire that the graduates will experience the beautiful aspects as well as the horrible ones in their lives because these multi-dimensional aspects will teach them a lot about the challenges of life.

• "And it was all because I wanted to do it by the time I got to speak to you all so thank you so much" (4/dd).

Winfrey uses the SA of thanking in (16) to appreciate and thank the graduates of Harvard for being a source of motivation for her new decision.

Declarations

• "So, I'm here today to tell you I have turned that network around!" (4/cc)

In (17), Winfrey uses the SA of declaring to inform the graduates that she turned her show at the moment of storytelling.

Flouting conversational maxims

As the commencement speakers use FCMs to express their messages indirectly without intending to deceive or mislead the graduates, they, as (Table 3) below reveals, focus of flouting QlM and QnM with the percentages (52.80%) and (36.65%), respectively. In this regard, the recurrent exploitation of QlM is attributed to the commencement speakers' attempts to explain and overstating particular values or principles mentioned in the stories and are related to the graduates' lives and future careers. Flouting QnM is also utilised to explain the events and values of the stories in different ways to ensure that the graduates perceive the commencement speakers' intended meaning. Hence, such floutings serve the primary purpose of the motivational storytelling, creating a sense of understanding and motivation on the part of the graduates.

Table 4
Overall analysis of flouting conversational maxims

CMs	Business leaders		Justices		Actors		Politicians		Jou	ırnalists	Total		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
QlM	22	59.46	15	41.67	9	45.00	17	56.67	22	57.90	85	52.8	
QnM	7	18.92	21	58.33	7	35.00	10	33.33	14	36.84	59	36.65	
RM	1	2.70	0	0.00	1	5.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	1.24	
MM	7	18.92	0	0.00	3	15.00	3	10.00	2	5.26	15	9.31	
Total	37	100.00	36	100.00	20	100.00	30	100.00	38	100.00	161	100.00	

Furthermore, the details in Table (4) explicate that the commencement speakers appeal to FCMs to explain and widen the graduates' understanding of their motivational storytellings. For all the commencement speakers, QlM and QnM receive the highest precentage of flouting, recepectively, except justices who flout QnM more than QlM. The following examples (18-21) show clearly how the commencement speakers flout each of the CMs in their storytelling.

Flouting QlM

• "The time was one of high passion, and the claim made by the United States was the most extreme claim known to the constitutional doctrines of freedom to speak and publish" (1/i).

In (18), Souter flouts QlM when he overstates the level of this case as "the most extreme" one among all other cases that have been raised to limit the freedom of speaking and publishing in America.

Flouting QnM

• "Fear is cheap. Fear is easy. Fear gets attention. Fear is spread as fast as gossip and is just as glamorous, juicy and profitable" (2/a-d).

Tom Hanks flouts QnM by repeating of the word "fear" in (19) to emphasise the unfavourable existence of fear in society.

Flouting RM

• "You'll waste precious time trying to rewire your every thought, and, in the meantime, you won't be fooling anybody" (10/y).

RM is flouted by Tim Cook in inserting the irrelevant clause "you won't be fooling anybody" which seems out of context as he was referring to his prediction of timewasting.

Flouting MM

• "They, and children like them everywhere, are the reason your idealism matters" (6/bb).

Patrick flouts MM in (21) through employing the ambiguous term "idealism" which is used to signify a variety of views. He does not specify which views he means or urge the graduates to concentrate on.

Figures of speech

Concerning the FoSs, (Table 4) below demonstrates that overstatement and metaphor are the most exploited FoSs by the commencement speakers with the percentages of (36.21%) and (34.48%), respectively. The employment of the overstatement over other FoSs comes from its role in maximising the descriptions and interpretation of the stories' events and, then, the motivational effect on the graduates. The use of metaphor as a second tool after overstatement in attaching additional meaning to the commencement speakes' words is actually used as an economic and motivational tool of communication.

Total

FoSs	Business leaders		Justices		Actors		Politicians		Journalists		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Tautology	2	8.33	10	40.00	6	31.58	3	14.29	4	13.79	25	21.55
Overstatement	11	45.83	6	24.00	6	31.58	12	57.14	7	24.13	42	36.21
Understatement	1	4.17	1	4.00	0	0.00	1	4.76	2	6.90	5	4.31
Metaphor	10	41.67	6	24.00	5	36.84	5	23.81	14	48.28	40	34.48
Rhetorical Q.	0	0.00	2	8.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	3.45	3	2.59
Irony	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	3.45	1	0.86

Table 5
Overall analysis of figures of speech

The results in Table (5) also show that the employment of FoSs varies according to the professions of the commencement speakers. Whereas business leaders and politicians rely on overstatement as the most frequent FoS, journalists and actors draw on metaphor as their first FoS. As for JuCSs, tautology is employed more than other FoSs. The employment of each of these FoSs is explained in the examples (22-27) below.

23 100.00 25 100.00 17 100.00 21 100.00 28 100.00 116 100.00

Tautology

• "Your construction of that is well-known, and I certainly respect it, you say that no law means no law, and that should be obvious" (1/x).

In (22), Souter employs the tautological expression "no law means no law" to emphasise the judge response to the appeal of government' lawyer to re-interpret the constitutional article in his own terms.

Overstatement

• "And it is that union of values that the terrorists who attacked us on September 11 2001, and on April 15 2013, found most threatening" (8/t).

In (23), Michael Bloomberg uses overstatement in describing the terrorists' attacks as the most threatening to the American people.

Understatement

• "In a democracy, no leader's as important as the civic architecture he or she swears to protect and support" (8/a").

In (24), Florentino understates the role of leadership comparing it with the public service to indirectly urging them to avoid preferring the personal interest over the service they do.

Metaphor

• "If fear is cultivated it will become stronger; if faith is cultivated it will achieve mastery" (2/o).

In (25), Tom Hanks employs the word "cultivated" as a metaphor to imply the vigorous influence fear and faith have on people.

Rhetorical questions

• "Should the choice and its explanation be called illegitimate law making?" (1/rr).

Souter uses rhetorical question in (26) to assume that the graduates agree with him that courts' decisions regarding the contrasted rights in the constitution are essential to maintain peace in society.

Irony

• "I mean really, USA Today? (n) Now that's the nice newspaper!" (4/m).

In (27), Winfrey uses the ironical statement "that's the nice newspaper!" to criticise the "US Today" newspaper for describing her new show badly.

Rhetorical appeals

With reference to RAs, the results in (Table 5) shows that the commencement speakers rely on pathos as the main RA in delivering their motivational storytellings with a percentage of (40.24%) among other RAs. The overuse of pathos is attributed to the central purpose of embedding motivational storytelling within the commencement speeches, which is engaging the graduates' emotions when the commencement speakers present their motivational and moral lessons. In addition to pathos, commencement speakers also use ethos with a percentage of (31.95%) to be the second frequent RA because the commencement speakers tend to refer to themselves and their actions and thoughts as motivational models of success.

Table 6 Overall analysis of rhetorical appeals

	Βι	ısiness										
RAs	leaders		Justices		Actors		Politicians		Journalists		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Pathos	14	42.43	11	30.56	14	48.28	11	33.33	18	47.37	68	40.24
Ethos	10	30.30	9	25.00	7	24.14	16	48.49	12	31.58	54	31.95
Logos	6	18.18	13	36.11	4	13.79	6	18.18	8	21.05	37	21.89
Mixed	3	9.09	3	8.33	4	13.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	10	5.92
Total	33	100.00	36	100.00	29	100.00	33	100.00	38	100.00	169	100.00

In terms of professions, (Table 6) highlights that the commencement speakers utilise them variously to convince the graduates of their points. As business leaders, actors, and journalists rely on pathos and ethos as their first and second RAs, respectively. Politicians, on the other hand, concentrate on using ethos more than pathos. For justices, logos receives the most frequent use and then it is followed by pathos. The examples (28-32) below illustrates the use of the appeals in the motivational storytelling by the commencement speakers.

Pathos

• "They knew that they had to erase the stigma before they could erase the disease, so they wrote plays and songs in local languages and went around the local community, encouraging people to come forward without fear" (9/h).

In (28), Sandberg uses pathos by the employment of the expressions "erase the disease", "fear", and "encouraging" to motivate the emotions of the graduates for what local community leaders had done to help the leprosy patients.

Ethos

• "You won't be ready. (d) That brings me to my last bit of advice" (10/c).

Ethos is found in (29) as Cook considers himself a reliable source of experience and knowledge. He clearly asserts that they will not be ready to meet the moment of death and introduces his offer to give them a relevant piece of advice.

Logos

• "What was the big idea: that no child's destiny should be defined by her zip code of birth?" (6/t).

Logos is found in (30) as Patrick expresses a logical statement that everyone would expect every child to receive sufficient learning opportunities.

Mixed appeal

• You might do that by engaging with democracy, volunteering for a campaign that inspires you as I once did (8/d).

In (31), Florentino resorts to mix pathos with ethos by employing the words "engaging", "volunteering", and "inspire" to arouse the graduates' feelings to participate in the public activities that he, as a person of knowledge and experience, has done before.

• "You see some tough things out there. (b) But you also see life-changing joy. (c) and it all changes you" (7/a-c).

Damon merges logos with pathos in (32). As he states logical facts regarding the existence of sad and happy moments in life, he employs the words "tough" and

"joy", respectively, to engage the graduates' feelings and emotions and prepare them emotionally for the upcoming events and lessons of this story.

Conclusion

By skillfully blending pragmatic and rhetoric strategies, American commencement speakers managed to reveal their persuasive and communicative intentions to motivating their audience. From the findings of the study, we can conclude that representative and directive SAs are the most suitable categories utilized by commencement speakers in their motivational storytelling. Furthermore, relying heavily on particular FoSs to flout conversational maxims served as powerful means to extend the meanings of the motivational messages. The detailed descriptions showed that commencement speakers employ the pathos as the primary RA to add an emotional dimension in motivating the graduates' emotions and feelings towards (un) preferable thoughts and actions expected to be faced by the new graduates. That is, the graduates were drawn to step outside their own realities and to experience those of others. The diversity in the background of the commencement speakers has no significant effect on utilising a particular pragma-rhetorical strategy over another (Luo, 2020; Quijano & Bulusan, 2020).

The results of this study may contribute to the fields of pragmatics, rhetoric, and education. In pragmatics, it attempts to contribute to the field of pragmatics as it shed the light of the relation between the pragmatic theories and motivational storytelling. In rhetoric, it focuses on the pervasive tools that can be used by commencement speakers to motivate, inspire, and influence their audience. In the field of education, it is hoped to be of value for those who are interested in understanding pragmatic and rhetorical strategies. As universities and schools in many parts of the world, including Asia, give the task of commencement speech to one of their teachers or students, it is strongly recommended that both teachers and students become acquainted with the pragma-rhetorical structure of motivational storytelling in commencement speeches to express and understand the motivational messages more clearly. Moreover, students are recommended to employ these strategies when sharing their past experiences with other colleagues to reinforce the impact of their messages.

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