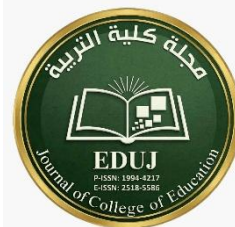




ISSN: 1994-4217 (Print) 2518-5586(online)

Journal of College of Education

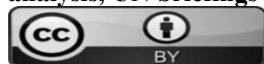
Available online at: <https://eduj.uowasit.edu.iq>

Prof. Enas Naji Kadim
(PhD)
Center for Strategic
Studies – Wasit
University

Sarah Mohammed
Jassim
University of
Wasit/College of
Education for
Humanities
Email:
inasnaji@uowasit.edu.iq
srt20232024.sam@uowasit.edu.iq

Keywords:

Diplomatic discourse,
Pragma-rhetorical
analysis, UN briefings



Article info

Article history:

Received 10. Sep.2025

Accepted 2. Oct. 2025

Published 10. May. 2026



A Pragmatic Analysis of Plasschaert's 'Briefings on Iraq

A B S T R A C T

The research examines the pragmatic elements in diplomatic discourse by analyzing two UN Security Council briefings delivered by SRSG Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert about Iraq in 2024. The extensive study of diplomatic discourse has not addressed how pragmatic strategies operate in UN briefings about sensitive geopolitical situations specifically concerning Iraq. This study investigates diplomatic language operations throughout pragmatic which enables diplomats to fulfill their defined objectives while upholding international relations standards. The research employs Searle's (1969) Speech Act Theory and Grice's (1975) Theory of Implicature to analyze two February 6 and May 16, 2024 UN briefings through a qualitative methodology. The analysis shows how skilled representatives and directives work with conventional and conversational implicature to handle delicate matters without open confrontation. The research shows how UN briefings employ diplomatic discourse to handle multiple audiences while upholding institutional standards which enhances the knowledge of advanced linguistic methods in diplomatic communication at high levels.

© 2026 EDUJ, College of Education for Human Science, Wasit University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31185/eduj.Vol63.Iss1.5273>

تحليل تداولي لإحاطات بلاسخت حول العراق

سارة محمد جاسم

أ.د. إيناس ناجي كاظم

جامعة واسط / كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية

مركز الدراسات الاستراتيجية - جامعة واسط

الملخص

يتناول البحث العناصر البراغماتية في الخطاب الدبلوماسي من خلال تحليل إحاطتين لمجلس الأمن التابع للأمم المتحدة قدمتهما الممثلة الخاصة للأمين العام جانين هينيس- بلاسخت حول العراق في عام ٢٠٢٤. لم تتطرق الدراسات

المستفيضة للخطاب الدبلوماسي إلى كيفية عمل الاستراتيجيات البراغماتية في إحاطات الأمم المتحدة حول الأوضاع الجيوسياسية الحساسة المتعلقة بالعراق على وجه التحديد. تبحث هذه الدراسة في عمليات اللغة الدبلوماسية عبر الأبعاد البراغماتية التي تمكن الدبلوماسيين من تحقيق أهدافهم المحددة مع الحفاظ على معايير العلاقات الدولية. يستعمل البحث نظرية أفعال الكلام لسيرل (1969) ونظرية الاستلزام لغرايس (1975) لتحليل إحاطتي الأمم المتحدة في 6 فبراير و 16 مايو 2024 من خلال منهجية نوعية. يظهر التحليل كيف يعمل الممثلون المهرة والتوجيهات مع الاستلزام التقليدي والمحادثاتي للتعامل مع المسائل الحساسة دون مواجهة مفتوحة. يوضح البحث كيف توظف إحاطات الأمم المتحدة الخطاب الدبلوماسي للتعامل مع جماهير متعددة مع الحفاظ على المعايير المؤسسية مما يعزز معرفة الأساليب اللغوية المتقدمة في التواصل الدبلوماسي على المستويات العليا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الخطاب الدبلوماسي ، التحليل التداولي - البلاغي ، إحاطات الأمم المتحدة.

1. Introduction

The investigation of diplomatic discourse has become essential for linguistic studies when analyzing international relations together with conflict resolution practices. International understanding and policy decisions heavily depend on language within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) briefings according to Hoffman & Hawkins (2022). The briefings on Iraq led by Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) represent outstanding diplomatic discourse requiring thorough linguistic examination (Matthews, 2023).

Harimurti (1993 as cited in Kadim, 2025, p. 565) asserted that "language is a system of arbitrary sound symbols utilized by a social group." These symbols facilitate cooperation, message transmission, and mutual recognition. This definition highlights that language functions not only as a communication tool but also as a means of establishing a collective identity and managing complex interactions, a notion that is particularly relevant in global organizations such as the United Nations.

The diplomatic discourse which functions within international organizations including the UN relies on intricate patterns of strategic communication and meaning creation. The pragmatic elements of this discourse demonstrate language usage that fulfills specific diplomatic goals without violating international standards or diplomatic relations (Wilson & Drake, 2023).

The current lack of comprehension exists regarding the pragmatic strategies used by diplomatic discourse during UN briefings about sensitive geopolitical situations such as Iraq. Prior research has studied diplomatic discourse through multiple angles but scholars still lack a comprehensive understanding of the pragmatic devices utilized by the UN during Iraq briefings especially when Plasschaert delivered them. The strategic position of Iraq makes this communication gap stand out more prominently since international actors heavily participate in its complex political matters.

The research analyzes Plasschaert's Iraq briefing through pragmatic methods to determine diplomatic language operations at pragmatic level. The research analyzes the

pragmatic techniques used in the briefing by investigating their impact on diplomatic outcomes and their compliance with international diplomatic standards.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics' as a term is most commonly traced back to the 1930s work of the behaviourist and semiotician Charles Morris and his distinction between the three aspects of semiotics (Cumming,2010). Sebeok (1994 as cited in Kadhim ,2022), defined semiotics as “the antique doctrine of signs (5)”

Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics of how contextual meaning renders ourselves in the communication between human beings. Unlike other linguistic fields that study language structure or literal meaning, pragmatics studies meaning construction in light of the interaction between speakers and listeners as social, cultural and situational factors (Levinson, 2020). It includes key theoretical frameworks: Speech Act Theory and the Cooperative Principle, that help investigate how language accomplishes actions and goes about creating meaningful exchanges in actual world situations (Brown & Johnson, 2021).

Pragmatic analysis examines multiple linguistic elements starting with deixis followed by presupposition and ending with implicature according to Wilson (2022). Research of these elements together with politeness methods and face-saving conduct helps explain the way language operates as a means for human social interaction and meaning creation (Thompson & Roberts, 2021). Through specific language preferences speakers establish social connections in various settings of communication.

2.2 Political Discourse

The practice of political discourse combines complex linguistic and communicative approaches which get deployed in political situations. The authors Wilson and Drake (2023) describe political discourse as an instrument which influences public opinion and guides decision-making while building social realities through strategic language elements. The specialized communication system functions across different levels including institutional and social aspects and cultural elements to perform persuasion and legitimization functions and exercise political power (Thompson, 2022).

2.4.1 Briefings as Political Discourse

"An important aspect in a diplomatic negotiation is represented by the language or by the strategic means of communicative interactions"(D'Acquisto, 2017, p. 9).So the crucial diplomatic communication instrument is Briefings . According to Martinez (2023), these briefings serve particular institutional purposes in the UN and other similar organizations because of their official conveyance style and well-defined framework. Briefings adhere to organisational regulations and are structured as persuasive as well informative materials that conduct diplomatic interactions by combining explicit and implicit message meanings (Roberts & Chen 2022).

UN briefings operate under unique institutional demands that require specialists to handle complex international interactions while simultaneously speaking with a variety of stakeholders. Anderson (2023) emphasizes the importance of well-crafted briefings in communicating with diverse audiences, ensuring credibility in addition to flexibility, while also serving various diplomatic and political purposes.

3. Methodology

The research design uses qualitative methods to analyze two UN security briefings presented by Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert regarding Iraq. This analysis utilizes Searle's Speech Act Theory as well as Grice's Implicature to study diplomatic language functions at pragmatic level.

3.1 Research Design

The research employs a qualitative method as described by Creswell and Poth (2018) where "an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem" (p. 37) takes place. Qualitative research provides deep analysis of text-based data which makes it an optimal method for studying the detailed pragmatic elements in diplomatic communication.

3.2 Data of the Research

The research relies on official briefings given by Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert to the UN Security Council on February 6, 2024 and May 16, 2024 which were obtained from ReliefWeb which serves as the official information platform of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The briefings present a total of 4000 words across multiple subject areas which include Iraq's regional security situation alongside political transformations and economic and social aspects. This analysis studies four essential passages from both briefings where the February briefing evaluates Iraq's regional stability and military operations alongside reform needs and future prospects while the May briefing evaluates Iraq's current state and institutional obstacles and power dynamics and security situation. The texts demonstrate why pragmatic analysis is important because they show how diplomatic language needs to perform three functions at once: informing while persuading and preserving international relations while respecting diplomatic rules.

3.3 The Models of the Study

This research uses two theoretical models that support a complete analysis of pragma-rhetorical elements in diplomatic discourse. Through the usage of Searle's (1969) Speech Act Theory and Grice's (1975) Theory of Implicature this study assesses the process of meaning construction within diplomatic contexts. The briefings contain different speech acts such as directives and representatives and commissives and expressives and declarations according to Speech Act Theory while Grice's Implicature framework evaluates both conventional and conversational implications in diplomatic discourse.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert's Briefing on Iraq's Regional Stability and Domestic Development

The 9543rd meeting of the UN Security Council hosted SRSG Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing on February 6, 2024. The briefing analyzed Iraq's security issues as they relate to regional conflicts. The Iraqi government works to prevent involvement in regional conflicts as it fights against both domestic and international threats according to Hennis-Plasschaert. Multiple important developments were examined during the briefing regarding electoral progress and economic reforms and environmental initiatives. The briefing marked a special occasion because it was predicted to be her last before she reflected on her five-year term as the head of mission. The presentation maintained a mixture between discussing serious security threats alongside showing positive advancements in Iraqi government reforms.

Extract. 1

"Now to be clear: Iraq's Government's efforts are focused on avoiding a domestic (and regional) spillover. Still, continued attacks have become a harsh reality. And, these attacks originate from within and outside of the country's borders. Attacks which, if they were to continue, stand to undo Iraq's hard-won stability."

The majority of this extract consists of representative speech acts through which Hennis-Plasschaert presents facts about Iraq's present state. The phrase "Now to be clear" serves as a directive speech act which demands readers to focus on the following declaration. The declaration regarding "Iraq's Government's efforts" functions as a powerful representative statement to confirm the government's present activities. The description of "continued attacks" alongside their origins functions as representative speech acts to explain the present security conditions. The final statement regarding attacks that could destroy stability contains both representative and commissive aspects by describing potential future conditions while promising to protect stability.

The extract contains different varieties of implicature. Through the use of "Still" the writer creates a conventional implicature that shows Iraq's attempts stand in contrast to actual attack occurrences. The phrase "domestic (and regional) spillover" contains a specific conversational implication about regional expansion of the situation while avoiding direct threat statements. The statement about security threats from both internal and external sources creates a scalar implicature which suggests growing security risks. Through conversational implicature the phrase "hard-won stability" reveals that Iraq achieved substantial progress through major efforts which now faces potential loss.

Extract. 2

"I have said it numerous times in the past and will say it again: messaging by strikes only serves to heighten tensions, to kill or injure people and to destroy property. A case in point was the attack on 28 January, which killed and injured US service members. This was seen again, with the retaliatory strikes on 2 February."

The text starts with speech acts which create multiple performative functions that interlock with each other. The opening declaration unites an expressive declaration ("I have said it numerous times") with a commissive promise ("will say it again") to prove both historical steadiness and upcoming dedication. The core statement uses representative acts to explain strike consequences yet an underlying directive act suggests violence should stop without issuing direct orders which is typical in diplomatic discourse.

The extract communicates additional meanings through various implicatures which extend beyond its literal content. Through "only serves to" the text delivers a strong conventional implicature which demonstrates that violent methods are useless while hinting at alternative solutions. The phrase "A case in point" establishes a particularized conversational implicature through specific examples to show broader patterns even though it does not explicitly connect them. When the author mentions "retaliatory strikes" he creates a generalized conversational implicature which demonstrates how violence creates a continuous cycle thus revealing military actions as counterproductive.

Extract. 3

"Meanwhile, Turkish military operations in the North also continue. Just because these attacks have become the new "normal" does not mean that they do not seriously compound the risk of new arenas of violence being opened. Now, when talking about the incendiary potential of retaliatory strikes, we would like to welcome the recent launch of dialogue."

The text demonstrates an advanced combination of speech functions which fulfill diplomatic objectives. The foundation of this text consists of representative acts which detail present military operations alongside their effects. The discussion of "new normal" combines representative and directive elements to push for reconsidering established patterns. The concluding statement implements an expressive act to initiate dialogue by transitioning from critical to constructive engagement which demonstrates diplomatic discourse.

Implicature reveals various hidden meanings which exist beyond what appears in the written text. The contrast marker "Meanwhile" functions as a conventional implicature to indicate a separate yet related issue compared to previous topics. The expression "new normal" functions as a specific conversational implication that criticizes how people accept military operations that avoid direct combat. The author uses a scalar implicature to move from "continue" to "compound" to "incendiary potential" which generates rising danger perceptions while preserving diplomatic caution.

Extract. 4

"One thing is for sure: the need for sustainable progress, for real reform, for better living standards will not decline. Iraq's population grows every year, driving even more demand for

jobs, housing, water and other essential services. While many of the plans on the Government's books hold the key to meeting these needs."

The extract establishes its foundation through representative speech acts which demonstrate absolute confidence about Iraq's expanding requirements. From the beginning the sentence declares "One thing is for sure" to establish fundamental truth about upcoming points. The statements about population growth and demands use representative acts while simultaneously establishing implicit commissive acts to show sustained commitment to resolving these issues.

Various complex forms of implicature emerge throughout the entire text. The word "while" functions as a conventional implicature to present a distinction between planning and executing strategies in the final part of the text. The organizer of "jobs, housing, water" maintains a scalar implicature system by emphasizing basic requirements although it does not detail their priority level. The expression "hold the key" creates a specific meaning during conversation which indicates that useful solutions exist yet fail to produce results because of insufficient action.

4.2 SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert's Farewell Briefing: Iraq's Progress and Future Prospects

Hennis-Plasschaert delivered her final address as head of the UN Security Council at the 9628th session on May 16th 2024. His message carried both reflection about Iraq's advancement and focus on ongoing difficulties that remained. She presented a comprehensive assessment of Iraq's present condition by discussing its successful aspects alongside its active problems which included corruption and factionalism and security concerns. The briefing held special importance because it evaluated Iraq's development since her appointment while discussing both regional stability and domestic political developments.

Extract. 1

"True, past decades of turmoil still impact the present. And yes, the challenges are manifold, with state institutions still fragile. But we do believe it is high time to judge the country on progress made, and to turn the page on the darker images of Iraq's past."

This extract demonstrates a strategic diplomatic message through its speech acts. The opening section of the speech features representative statements that recognize historical difficulties and current obstacles. The speech moves from representative acts to a more assertive commissive statement which leads into a directive act that asks listeners to view Iraq differently. The diplomatic communication reaches an advanced level through its methodical shift from recognition to active promotion.

Multiple levels of implicature function to expand the meaning within the extract. The conventional implication arises from the opposing indicators "True" and "But" as they establish a conscious conflict between previous difficulties and upcoming prospects. The expression "still fragile" uses a specific conversational implicature to show progress together with the recognition of continuing susceptibility. The sentence changes from "past decades" all the way to "present" and culminating in "high time" thereby establishing a temporal structure dedicated to highlighting vital perspective shifts.

Extract. 2

"Corruption, factionalism, impunity, undue interference and armed actors operating outside state control – while the Government is tackling these scourges, they still represent major hurdles to be overcome. The same goes for feelings of marginalization and exclusion, which are spreading in and among certain components."

The extract starts its speech act analysis by presenting representative acts that detail governance challenges through a series of powerful statements. The speech continues with a mixed commissive-representative act which acknowledges governmental work while suggesting future dedication. The statement "still represent major hurdles" serves to both describe existing obstacles and indirectly instruct for additional work to be done. The underlying expressive message expresses worries about being left out and excluded from society.

The extract reveals advanced levels of implied meanings through its implicature analysis. The expression "while" functions as conventional implicature to establish a distinction between official government initiatives and ongoing difficulties. The expression "spreading in and among certain components" uses a specific conversational implicature to mention particular community tensions indirectly. The word "scourges" creates an overall conversational implication regarding the seriousness of these problems and "still" indicates ongoing conditions that may evolve in the future.

Extract. 3

"Power grabs or punitive policies may benefit one segment of society or community in the short-term. But, in the end, everyone loses. This is particularly true in a country with conflict in living memory."

The speech act structure used in this extract demonstrates purposeful diplomatic communication. The speech begins with hypothetical cases of power misuse before delivering the direct statement "everyone loses" and ending with specific representative acts that connect the warning to Iraq's situation. Through its logical sequence the warning delivers a compelling warning without using direct condemnation or orders.

Through implicature analysis one can discover various hidden meanings. Through the use of "But" as a contrast marker the text creates a conventional implicature that contrasts immediate benefits against enduring consequences. Through the expression "power grabs" the speaker creates a specific conversational implication which points to particular political actions without specifying who performs them. The generalized conversational implicature in "conflict in living memory" prompts listeners to establish connections between past historical experiences and current decision-making.

Extract. 4

"Through these efforts, I am glad to say that, currently, a more stable security environment prevails in Iraq. Nonetheless, given the country's complex landscape of armed actors

operating outside state control, as well as intense regional pressures, the situation remains flammable."

The text displays a well-planned arrangement of speech functions. The statement starts with an emotional expression ("I am glad to say") followed by a descriptive representative act about security improvements. The positive evaluation moves to another descriptive segment about ongoing security issues before suggesting through indirect commands that monitoring must continue. The purposeful shift between positive and cautious statements defines diplomatic communication.

The text contains multiple sophisticated meanings that become evident through implicature. Through the contrast marker "Nonetheless" the text establishes a conventional implicature which shows how progress meets ongoing difficulties. When the text says that reshaping from existing state structures happens "outside state control powers" it provides specific diplomatic nuances to describe non-state actors in an indirect way. The sequence of terms "stable" to "complex" to "flammable" creates a scalar implicature which demonstrates rising danger levels without losing diplomatic composure.

5. Conclusions

The pragmatic analysis of Security Council briefings delivered by SRSB Hennis-Plasschaert reveals how language interactions function in diplomatic high-level international discussions. The evaluation shows how diplomatic speech uses representatives and directives as strategic speech acts to deliver messages while preserving diplomatic norms. Through conventional and conversational implicature the speaker delivers complex messages about sensitive matters without confronting issues directly. The research describes the precise methods by which UN diplomatic forums handle their dual objective of working with multiple stakeholders alongside maintaining official contractual rules. This research explores pragmatic capabilities in diplomatic discourse which succeed in accomplishing simultaneous communication goals that involve both information dissemination and warning. The research addresses a crucial void in our knowledge about the language techniques used by the United Nations during sensitive geopolitical briefings about Iraq.

References

- Anderson, J. (2023). Modern approaches to diplomatic discourse analysis. *International Journal of Political Communication*, 15(3), 145-162.
- Brown, P., & Johnson, R. (2021). Modern perspectives in pragmatic analysis. *Journal of Linguistics*, 42(2), 78-95.
- Cummings, L. (2010). *The Routledge pragmatics encyclopedia*. Taylor & Francis.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics: Speech acts* (Vol. 3, pp. 41-58). Academic Press.
- Hoffman, M., & Hawkins, R. (2022). Language and power in UN Security Council debates. *International Relations Quarterly*, 45(2), 223-241.
- Kadim, E. N., & Abbas, A. H. (2022). Signs Are Sometimes More Humane Than Some People: A Semiotic-Discourse Analysis of Selected COVID-19 Cartoons and Posters. *Journal of Global Scientific Research*, 7(9), 2022-2633.
- Kadim, E. N. (2025). A Textual Analysis of New York Times' Ideology About Houthi Attacks in the Red Sea. *International Journal of Humanities and Educational Research*, 7(2), 563-574. <https://doi.org/10.47832/2757-5403.31.34>
- Levinson, S. C. (2020). Understanding pragmatics in communication. *Linguistics Journal*, 55(3), 167-184.
- Martinez, E. (2023). The role of briefings in diplomatic discourse. *International Communication Review*, 18(2), 89-106.
- Matthews, R. (2023). Analyzing UN diplomatic discourse. *Journal of International Communication*, 18(4), 345-362.
- Roberts, M., & Chen, L. (2022). Pragma-linguistic features in diplomatic briefings. *Journal of Political Communication*, 40(3), 278-295.
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, R. (2022). Power dynamics in political discourse. *Political Communication Journal*, 31(2), 178-195.
- Wilson, J. (2022). Aspects of pragmatic analysis. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 15(2), 112-129.
- Wilson, M., & Drake, T. (2023). Understanding political discourse. *Political Discourse Analysis*, 25(4), 334-351.