

## A Validity-Theoretic Approach to Interdiscursivity in Theresa May's 2019 Resignation Speech

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### Abstract

The present study seeks to propose Habermas's (1976, 1992, 1998, 2001) validity-theoretic approach as a method for conducting political interdiscursive analysis. The approach is predicated on the methodological correlation between the three validity claims of truth, truthfulness, and rightness, on the one hand, and the respective speech acts of constatives, expressives, and regulatives, on the other. The data used for analysis is the resignation speech delivered by the ex-Prime Minister of the UK, Theresa May, on 24 May 2019 in Downing Street, following her political failure to deliver Brexit. The study derives its significance from attempting to uncover the pragma-argumentatively motivated interdiscursive patterns in May's speech. In other words, the explanatory power of traditional interdiscursivity can be enhanced through integrating the pragma-argumentative component of validity-claim theory into the current form of political interdiscursive analysis. The study's main finding is that, with the presence of pragma-argumentative links, there are four rationally oriented interdiscursive relations in May's speech: (a) practical-aesthetic, (b) practical-theoretical, (c) theoretical-aesthetic, and (d) aesthetic-theoretical. Two crucial implications have emerged from this finding: (i) the dominant interdiscursive pattern in May's speech is the practical-aesthetic interdiscourse, where May justifies her validity claims to truthfulness through the normative context of what best serves the UK's political interests; (ii) both cases of theoretical-aesthetic and aesthetic-theoretical interdiscourses proved to have a dialectically interdiscursive meaning on the rational basis that two discourses are reciprocally justifying – and at some point, legitimating – each other.

**Keywords:** Brexit, interdiscursivity, Jürgen Habermas, resignation speech, speech acts, Theresa May, validity-theoretic approach

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## Introduction

Interdiscursive analysis has been methodologically established with Fairclough (1992) accentuating Foucault's two insights of (i) "the constitutive nature of discourse" and (ii) "the primacy of interdiscursivity and intertextuality." Taking Foucault's latter insight further into the realm of textually oriented discourse analysis, Fairclough concludes that any discursive practice both derives its definition from "its relations with others" and "draws upon others in complex ways" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 55). Probably this led Fairclough (1992) to view the concept of interdiscursivity as being extensional to that of "intertextuality," with the former described as being "the constitution of a text from a configuration of text types or discourse conventions" (p. 10); therefore, interdiscursivity can be described as being "constitutive intertextuality," and thus as being distinct from "manifest intertextuality," which represents "the heterogeneous constitution of texts out of specific other texts" (p. 85). Indeed, Fairclough's argument is understandable should one consider the complex history of intertextuality in both the linguistic and the literary theories of Saussure (1916/1959), Bakhtin (1981), and Kristeva (1986).

There is yet another different discourse-analysis approach to interdiscursivity, notably recognized in Reisigl and Wodak's (2001, 2009) Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) as an established form of critical discourse analysis (CDA). The DHA broaches interdiscursivity in view of the nature of *a discourse*:

A "discourse" about a specific topic can find its starting point within one field of action and proceed through another one. Discourses and discourse topics 'spread' to different fields and discourses. They cross between fields, overlap, refer to each other or are in some other way socio-functionally linked with each other. (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, pp. 36-37; 2009, p. 90)

The DHA seems to characterize a discourse with *topical aboutness*, whereby the principle of interdiscursivity can be governed by how topics belonging to different discourses (that fall in distinct fields of action) overlap in texts.

It is rather unfortunate that the above two discourse-analytic approaches have not properly demonstrated the potentially pragmatic and argumentative dimensions to interdiscursivity as a textual phenomenon. The same holds for the recently conducted research on interdiscursive analysis (see below). Indeed, integrating the pragmatic and argumentative dimensions of speech acts into interdiscursive analysis can be methodologically productive: adducing significant insights to the process of revealing the boundaries of overlapping discourses that are argumentatively employed by text producers, and thereby rhetorically serving the communicative functions intended through the validity-based illocutionary forces of the producers' utterances.

As shortly explained, Habermas (1992) demonstrates that each of the three communicative functions of representation, expression, and appeal are textually marked by three typical speech acts, respectively, constatives, expressives, and regulatives; these three speech acts potentially thematize three respective discourses, viz. theoretical, aesthetic, and practical. Given the fact that all textual practices are actions of communication, all three types of discourse are likely to emerge in any text wherein the producers utilize different speech acts for the sake of serving different

communicative functions, which would in turn be more liable to associate with a specific discourse – theoretically, aesthetically, or practically.

Thus, the present study hypothesizes that an ontologically rich model of interdiscursive analysis can be secured if Habermas's (1976, 1992, 1998, 2001) validity-theoretic approach is adopted towards undertaking this form of analysis; with this approach, interdiscursive analysis can be conceptualized as a form of rational argumentation where the validity claims of truth, truthfulness, and rightness prominently figure in relevant speech acts in the claim-reason validating process. Habermas's validity-theoretic approach to interdiscursivity is argued here to be capable of demonstrating how different discourses in one textual practice functionally intersect, to serve the overall communicative action, which brings together necessary aspects of communication, viz. topic, speaker/addresser, and recipient/addressee, as well as their corresponding functions of representation, expression, and appeal.

The data used for testing the preceding hypothesis is Theresa May's resignation speech, delivered on 24 May 2019 in Downing Street at the critical timing following her political failure to deliver Brexit. It was initially observed that, whereas the main topic of May's speech is her announcement to resign as the then Prime Minister of the UK and Leader of the Conservative Party, the many and various speech acts used by May have thematized different discourses with a rational basis of different validity claims; such validity claims have been brought in text with these speech acts; after all, then, as demonstrated below, the same discourses have become forms of argumentation linked through some of May's speech acts, which assume the pragmatic roles of reasons for validating other speech acts.

It can be said, then, that both the rationale for and the significance of current research derive from its potential for enriching traditional interdiscursive analysis (e.g., Fairclough, 1992, 2010; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, 2009) through integrating Habermas's validity-theoretic approach into such a form of analyzing political discourse. With this methodological integration, a political interdiscursive analysis is likely to benefit from the pragma-argumentative association between the three main language functions and their corresponding speech acts, whose chain of reasoning ideally appears in the interrelationship between different discourse types; hence validity-claim interdiscursivity.

Thus, the present study addresses one overarching research question: What are the pragma-argumentatively motivated interdiscursive patterns in Theresa May's 2019 resignation speech? For this question to be addressed, three sub-questions need to be answered: (1) What are the salient validity-bound speech acts produced by May in her speech? (2) How do such speech acts specify the different discourse types that May draws on in producing her speech? (3) Why are these speech-act-bound discourse types interconnected in the speech? Addressing all three sub-questions may well bridge the research gap encountered in the previous studies that have already undertaken different kinds of interdiscursive analysis – as presented in the coming section.

### Review of Literature

Research on interdiscursive analysis has become established with Fairclough (1992, 2003, 2010) developing the interdiscursivity principle (“constitutive intertextuality”) as part of the textually oriented form of discourse analysis. Inspired by Foucault (1970, 1972), Fairclough (1992)

suggested that “orders of discourse have primacy over particular types of discourse, and that the latter are constituted as configurations of diverse elements of order of discourse” (p. 124). Consequently, he defined interdiscursivity as “the constitution of a text from diverse discourses and genres” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 96).

By way of illustration, Fairclough (1992) has utilized the media discourse of *The Sun* to show that this discourse type has been constituted through a particular co-articulation of discourse types, which have been ordered by what Fairclough described as “a militarized discourse of criminality.” As Fairclough’s analysis demonstrated, such a discourse type in *The Sun*’s reports of news has been built around “the metaphor of criminals being ‘at war’ with society, and the society having to ‘mobilize its forces’ to fight them off” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 130).

Several studies have employed Fairclough’s method of interdiscursive analysis in examining different types of discourse. For example, Candlin and Maley (1997) examined texts that manifest interdiscursive relations between therapeutic and legal genres. Scollon (2002) undertook the methodological synergy of interdiscursive analysis and ethnography in a way that revealed how the news discourse and identity positions have been realized in the social context of family relations in Hong Kong. Additionally, the same form of interdiscursive discourse analysis was conducted by Bhatia (1995, 2004) on a variety of discourse types, e.g., news reporting and business advertising as well as public and bureaucratic communications.

Drawing on a discourse-historical approach (DHA), Reisigl and Wodak (2001) have proposed a different perspective to interdiscursivity as being “both the mutual relationships of discourses and the connection, intersecting or overlapping, of different discourses ‘within’ a particular heterogeneous linguistic product” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 37). Using an analytic strand of interdiscursivity, Reisigl and Wodak (2001) focused on the racist speech produced by Jörg Haider, the leader of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ). They concluded that the speech might be deemed “a hybrid mixture that contains both elements of an election speech and of an alehouse conversation” (p. 38).

Wu (2011) utilized Verschueren’s (1999) Linguistic Adaptation Theory (LAT) towards an interdiscursive analysis of data sets that bring together literary form and non-literary content. For instance, taken as a practical medium of interdiscursivity, a typical computer advertisement has been drawn from a newspaper published in China. Applying LAT to the advertisement has demonstrated the interdiscursive amalgamation of three essential components: (i) a unique feature consisting in locating a “beautiful and thought-provoking picture” at a salient position; (ii) the computer-specific verbal message below the picture, composed in a poetic form; and (iii) a photograph in the computer and its icon in the same advertisement. All three components have shown “the mixing of verbal message and visual art, and the blending of information and persuasion” (Wu, 2011, p. 96).

Focusing on the reproduction of three African National Congress (ANC) documents, Moloi and Bojabetseha (2014) attempted a critical discourse analysis of the intertextuality and interdiscursivity in the ANC’s 1999, 2004, and 2009 national election manifestos. The study demonstrated that the ANC texts include multiple texts and voices, involving the Reconstruction

and Development Programme, the Freedom Charter, and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The texts and voices have been proven to be reproduced and invoked at relevant places in the ANC texts, with a view to lending credence to the ANC and investing it with an authoritative voice.

Abdul Rahman, Habil, and Osman (2017) investigated the interdiscursivity functions underlying professional communication, focusing on fifteen incident reports drawn from an oil and gas company. Findings from the analysis of these incident reports suggested that such reports contained three main interdiscursive functions, viz. descriptive, informative, and instructional. More recently, drawing on the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) as a form of critical discourse analysis, Muwafiq, Sumarlam, and Kristina (2018) explored the question of how intertextuality and interdiscursivity in the comments of Facebook users are a source of discrimination and repression to others. These comments amounted to responses to news updates under the topic of "Paris Tragedy by Kompas.com on its fans page." The final analysis demonstrated how users' comments imported overlapping discourses on religion, terrorism, law, and Middle-East conflict.

Feng (2019), using a genre-analysis method, analyzed a corpus of universities' recruitment posts on WeChat in China. The study identified eight moves serving five different communicative functions. The corpus-data analysis demonstrated the WeChat recruitment posts to have had an "interdiscursive mix," with one, *inter alia*, function: the co-presence of both policy discourse and promotional discourse. Very recently, Rajandran (2020) undertook an interdiscursive analysis on "earnings videos" in different languages (English, French, and Spanish) from corporations in the global finance industry. The analysis revealed how the genres (interview and presentations), styles (formal and casual), and discourses (financial accounting) have been intertwined to create an "interdiscursive mix" whereby the discourses in earnings videos have been tailored for marketization.

Now, having reviewed the relevant literature applying the notion of traditional interdiscursivity, it is time to propound the current study's theoretical framework, which integrates the validity-theoretic approach into interdiscursive analysis, in the coming section.

### **A Validity-Theoretic Approach to Interdiscursivity**

Influenced by Bühler's (1934/2011) tripartite schema of communicative functions, Habermas (1976, 1992, 1998, 2001) developed his speech act theory. Therefore, before presenting Habermas's theory, it is worth elucidating Bühler's schema, which is predicated on the traditional communication model comprising three necessary elements: topic, sender, and recipient. For Bühler, language is an "Organon," or a medium that serves, simultaneously, three interrelated functions corresponding to the previous three elements, viz. representation, expression, and appeal, respectively. Thus, based on Bühler's Organon model, every act of communication, with its three necessary elements, is ideally supposed to involve three communicative functions: (i) with the topic of communication, the representational, referential, or descriptive function is highlighted; (ii) the sender or addresser is amenable to the expressive or emotive function of communication; and (iii) the recipient or addressee renders the appellative or conative function the explicit focus of communication.

Habermas (1976, 1992, 1998, 2001) has proposed a validity-theoretic interpretation of Bühler's functional schema, with the former stipulating that a successful utterance should satisfy three validity claims: (i) "it must count as true for the participants insofar as it represents something in the world," (ii) "it must count as truthful insofar as it expresses something intended by the speaker," and (iii) "it must count as right insofar as it conforms to socially recognized expectations" (Habermas, 1998, p. 49). This can obviously be recognized in Habermas's account of the three types of validity claims, which systematically correspond to the three components of communication and their relevant communicative functions. Thus, Habermas (1992) contends, the first dimension of validity is "truth conditions" (objective correctness or truth) in the "objective world," relating to the topic of communication and its corresponding representational function; the second dimension of validity is "subjective truthfulness" (subjective correctness) in the "subjective world," as corresponding to the speaker and the expressive function of communication; the third (validity) dimension is "normative rightness" (intersubjective correctness) in the "social world," concerning the addressee and the appellative function (Habermas, 1992, p. 75).

The validity-theoretical interpretation of Bühler's schema is intended by Habermas as "a way out of the difficulties of speech-act theory because it does justice to all three aspects of a *speaker* coming to an understanding with *another person* about *something*" (Habermas, 1992, p. 73). Consequently, Habermas has argued for a formal-pragmatic analysis of speech acts as a universal basis for explicating the nature of communicative action (Habermas, 1976, 1998). This is clear from Habermas's correlation of the three validity claims and their typical speech acts, which are argued to be "thematically linked with one validity claim"; or the validity claims of truth, authenticity, and rightness are typically thematized in different kinds of speech acts (or "three basic modes"): constative, expressive, and regulative, respectively (Habermas, 1992, p. 77).

Indeed, based on the foregoing correlation, Habermas (1998) intended his speech act theory to be a form of universal pragmatics that differs from other theories of meaning (e.g., Austin, 1962; Searle, 1976) in one essential respect: the meanings of linguistic expressions are relevant insofar as they are used in speech acts that "satisfy the validity claims of truth, truthfulness, and normative rightness," indicated above; further, to him, such a form of universal pragmatics is distinguished from "empirical pragmatics" (e.g., sociolinguistics), in that the meanings of linguistic expressions are determinable by "formal properties of speech situations in general, and not by particular situations of use" (Habermas, 1998, p. 52). Thus, Habermas views speech as having a systematic structure of its own, with speech acts as the elementary units of speech itself, precisely the same as language owes its structure to grammatical sentences as the elementary units of language itself.

Crucially, Habermas (2001) has offered a more detailed classification of the three primary speech acts of constatives, expressives, and regulatives. First, he explains the nature of constative speech acts as typically expressed in the meaning of "to assert," and thereby giving expression to the cognitive use of sentences; this type of speech acts is divided into two subclasses (p. 83): (a) "To assert" as "representing the assertoric use of propositions": "to describe, to report, to inform, to narrate, to illustrate, to note, to show, to explain, to predict, etc."; (b) "To assert" as denoting "the specific pragmatic meaning of the truth claim of propositions": "to affirm, to aver, to contend, to deny, to contest, to doubt." Second, Habermas (p. 83) highlights expressives as expressing the pragmatic meaning of "the speaker's self-presentation to an audience," with the speaker bringing

to expression his/her “intentions, attitudes, and experiences”; examples of expressive speech acts are “to know, to think, to believe, to hope, to fear, to like, to wish, to want, to decide, and so on” as well as other related verbal instances: “to reveal, to disclose, to betray, to confess, to express, to hide, to conceal, to pretend, to obscure,” and so on. Third, Habermas employs his term of “regulatives” to describe a special class of speech acts that expresses “the normative meaning of the interpersonal relations that are established”; examples of this class are legion: “to order, to demand, to request, to require, to remind, to forbid, to allow, to suggest, to refuse, to oppose, to commit oneself, to promise, to agree upon, to apologize, to forgive, to propose, to decline ... and so on” (Habermas, 2001, p. 83).

At this point, then, as demonstrated in Table 1, Habermas's (1998) speech act theory can be said to rest on a complex web of correlations that involves different parameters of (i) domain of reality (external nature, internal nature, society), (ii) modes of communication (cognitive, expressive, interactive), (iii) validity claims (truth, truthfulness, rightness), and (iv) general speech functions (representing facts, disclosing speaker's subjectivity, establishing legitimate interpersonal relations). Significantly, as Habermas (1992) argues, in order for these correlations to obtain, the speech acts of constatives, expressives, and regulatives need to have what he describes as “manners of referring” that are distinctive of three ontological worlds: respectively, the “objective world” of the communicated topic, the “subjective world (of the speaker),” and the “social world (of the speaker, the hearer, and other members)” (Habermas, 1992, pp. 75-76).

Table 1. *The complex web of correlations underlying Habermas's speech act theory*

Domains of reality	Modes of communication	Validity claims	General functions of speech
"The" world of external nature	Cognitive	Truth	Representation of facts
"My" world of internal nature	Expressive	Truthfulness	Disclosure of speaker's subjectivity
"Our" world of society	Interactive	Rightness	Establishment of legitimate interpersonal relations

Note 1. Adapted from Habermas (1998, p. 92)

According to Habermas, validity claims, which are thematized in their corresponding speech acts (constatives, expressives, and regulatives), thematize three discourse types. Alexander (1991) argues that, based on Habermas's theory of communicative action, the three validity claims are thematized by three respective discourses (p. 54): First, the discourse that thematizes the validity claim to objective truth is “theoretical,” with constative or assertive speech acts being dominantly used in a way that accentuates the representational function describing the topic of communication; second, the discourse that thematizes the validity claim to subjective truthfulness is “aesthetic,” with expressive speech acts dominating communication in a way that stresses the emotive function expressed by the speaker or addresser; third, the discourse that thematizes the validity claim to intersubjective rightness is “practical,” with regulative speech acts becoming the explicit focus of

communication in such a way that foregrounds the appellative function directed towards the recipient or addressee.

Perhaps, now, it has become clear that Habermas's tripartite validity-theoretic approach opens up the possibility of how the three different – albeit pragmatically reconcilable – types of discourse (theoretical, aesthetic, practical) can overlap through communication in a way that can explain speech-act-bound interdiscursivity. But, interestingly, it can be argued that this is possible because Habermas's approach is oriented towards argumentation and its discursive realization in different text types or genres. Of course, this is understandable from the point that the communicative actor is obliged to “provide reasons for the validity of the claims he raises with his utterances”; and this would, in turn, entail “demanding forms of argumentation,” which can be called “discourse” (Cooke, 1998, p. 4).

On this point, following Kopperschmidt (2000), Reisigl (2014, p. 73) maintains that all speech-act types can fulfill the argumentative function of “justifying or questioning validity claims that have become problematic or have been questioned”; and therefore, for example, through Habermas's distinction, “we can state that truth and normative rightness relate to argumentation in various theoretical and practical contexts of social life.” Thus, at an interdiscursive level, the practical discourse linguistically marked by regulative speech acts towards fulfilling the validity claim of normative rightness can argumentatively be utilized in justifying or questioning the theoretical discourse marked by constative speech acts towards the validity claim of objective correctness or truth; and so is the case with the aesthetic discourse that is linguistically marked by expressive speech acts towards the validity claim of (the speaker's) subjective correctness or authenticity.

## **Methodology**

This section discusses the data used for conducting a form of validity-theoretic interdiscursive analysis in terms of its textual and contextual details as well as the methodological procedure followed towards undertaking this form of analysis.

### ***Data***

The current study is dedicated to analysing a single set of data; that is, the resignation speech delivered by the ex-Prime Minister and Conservative Party Leader in the UK, Theresa May. The speech was given on Friday, 24 May 2019, in Downing Street. The speech's significance can be ascribed to May's seminal declaration that she would step down as the Conservative Party Leader on Friday, 7 June 2019, due to her failure to deliver Brexit. Speaking of the speech's political context, it can be said that May's failure to deliver Brexit has been the sole reason for announcing her official resignation, and thus for the production of the speech as a whole. Indeed, May's announcement followed immediately after she met with Graham Brady, the chair of the backbench Tory 1922 Committee; the committee was then intent on launching a second vote of no confidence in May's leadership in case she declined to resign.

### ***Procedure***

The methodological procedure followed in the present study proceeded at two stages. The first stage is mainly descriptive, and it has been concerned with the two phases of (i) identifying all



May's speech acts, with a particular focus on the three types of constatives, expressives, and regulatives, as well as (ii) describing the validity claims enacted by the illocutionary forces of such speech acts and demonstrating the different types of discourse thematizing these validity claims throughout the speech. The second stage is explanatory; it has focused on the potential interdiscursive meanings emerging from the interfaces holding between the three types of discourse, viz. theoretical, aesthetic, and practical.

### **A Validity-Theoretic Interdiscursive Analysis of Theresa May's 2019 Resignation Speech**

The present section applies Habermas's validity-theoretic approach to the interdiscursive analysis of Theresa May's 2019 resignation speech. May opens her speech with an expressive speech act of self-praise:

Extract 1:

*Ever since I first stepped through the door behind me as Prime Minister, I have striven to make the United Kingdom a country that works not just for a privileged few, but for everyone.*

As observed in Extract one, May gives full expression to a moment of self-praise, which is linguistically marked by her use of the first-person singular pronoun "I" that contextually refers to May as the Prime Minister of the UK. In this official capacity, she has initiated the commendable act of striving "to make the United Kingdom a country that works ... for everyone." At this initial point of the whole speech, the current speech act of May's self-praise renders her the centre of an aesthetic discourse that commits her to a validity claim of truthfulness, accentuating her expressive attitude towards the UK as working "not just for a privileged few," but for all. However, such an expressive act of self-praise lacks any validity conditions that prove May's claim to truthfulness; and these conditions are conspicuously absent from her following speech acts, which pragmatically stand as no reasons for her subjective claim; thus, May's speech at this point evinces no discursive redemption for her validity claim to truthfulness.

Following May's above argumentatively unredeemed aesthetic discourse is a different kind of discourse; that is, a theoretical discourse, which is thematized by her use of two consecutive constative speech acts in Extract two:

Extract 2:

*Back in 2016, we gave the British people a choice. Against all predictions, the British voted to leave the European Union.*

From the above extract, the first constative speech act is initiated with another official first-person pronoun, but this time it is the plural "we" as referring to both May and the rest of her ministerial cabinet. Thus, May has moved from the self-referential "I" dominating the aesthetic discourse in Extract one to the collective institutional "we" initiating the constative speech act's propositional content of giving the British people the choice of whether to leave the European Union; the same speech act has been followed by another constative speech act about the British voting "to leave the European Union." Both constative speech acts, then, commit May to the validity claim of two sequential propositions of truth: (i) The British government giving the British people the chance to choose in 2016 and (ii) the British making a choice in favour of leaving the

EU. Thus, the current theoretical discourse features May's objectivating attitude towards a political, objective world wherein the British people and the EU take centre stage.

In Extract three, leaving the theoretical discourse on the British people and the EU, May has shifted to two different discourse types, one is aesthetic and the other practical:

Extract 3:

*I feel as certain today as I did three years ago that in a democracy, if you give people a choice you have a duty to implement what they decide.*

The first aesthetic type of discourse is thematized by an expressive speech act of self-confidence that begins with the explicitly subjective expression "I feel ...". What matters in May's use of this expressive utterance is its illocutionary force concerning May's politically assertive attitude; this attitude has already prepared the audience for the following regulative speech act: "... in a democracy, if you give people a choice you have a duty to implement what they decide." Indeed, the current regulative speech act has been subtly embedded into a broader hypothetical frame of conditional *if*, where the expression "*have a duty*" semantically amounts to a deontic commitment to the normative rightness of implementing what the people have voted for or chosen. The generic second-person pronoun "you" in the second utterance is meant to denote any person in charge, officially held responsible for the moral act of fulfilling the democratic right of the people to choose what they think is politically appropriate for them and their country. But, contextually, that "you" purports to signify May and the Conservative Party she presides over. Perhaps, this practical type of discourse features May's interpersonal attitude towards both her Conservative Party and her political persona as a political leader of the same party.

Thus, it can be said that the latter practical discourse type is thematized by a regulative speech act that assumes the pragmatic role of a reason for May's former aesthetic discourse type of self-confidence: a leader who trusts her political vision. Eventually, May's emerging aesthetic-practical interdiscourse is argumentatively connected as speech acts that stand in a claim-reason relationship.

Moving to Extract four, one encounters a whole nexus of different discourses thematized by three main speech acts uttered by May:

Extract 4:

*I negotiated the terms of our exit and a new relationship with our closest neighbours that protects jobs, our security and our union. I have done everything I can to convince MPs to back that deal. Sadly, I have not been able to do so. I tried three times. I believe it was right to persevere, even when the odds against success seemed high.*

The extract above opens with a constative speech act, where May commits herself (as Prime Minister) to the truth claim of negotiating the terms of Britain's exit from the EU with MPs; such a claim has been justified by a compelling premise: "that protects jobs, our security and our union." The premise has argumentatively validated a theoretical discourse type that presents May's objectivating attitude towards an external world where Brexit, to May and her party, stands as a

solution to grave domestic problems in the UK. The second speech act is explicitly expressive in that the utterance is prefaced with the attitudinal adverb “Sadly,” which accentuates May’s truthfulness to the propositional content of her feelings of disappointment over the failure to convince the MPs of backing the Brexit deal; this speech act can be said to thematize an aesthetic discourse that reflects May’s expressive attitude towards an internal (subjective) world where May acknowledges that she has been at odds with her political opponents over the Brexit deal. Interesting about May’s expressive speech act and attitude is that they both emerge as a consequence of her constative speech act and objectivating attitude. Hence an argumentative link between the two speech acts, with May’s former claim of truth justifying her latter claim of truthfulness. Such a link can be argued to establish an interdiscursive meaning derived from the theoretical-aesthetic interdiscourse standing at this point in May’s speech.

The last speech act closing Extract four is implicitly regulative on the grounds that it is embedded in May’s expressive speech act, which begins with the personal formula “I believe ...”; but such a regulative speech act is linguistically marked with the embedded expression “it was right to persevere ...,” where an explicit realization of May’s claim to normative rightness is thematically stressed. At this point, May draws mainly on a practical discourse that justifies her validity claim to what seems to her morally correct, even in the face of unlikely success on her part. This practical type of discourse features May’s performative attitude towards an intersubjective world where May antagonizes her political opponents in a more or less morally normative context – what serves the UK’s interests best. Here, one may observe how May’s current practical discourse justifies her previous aesthetic discourse that has been thematized by May using the expressive speech act of grief over her failure to convince the MPs of backing the Brexit deal. The present argumentative link between the two types of discourse (aesthetic and practical) obtains as a result of May’s validity claims to truthfulness and rightness, respectively, with the latter offering a normative context for the former; and thereby morally justifying it.

The next extract (Extract five) is predicated on two different speech acts that thematize two different discourse types:

Extract 5:

*But it is now clear to me that it is in the best interest of the country for a new Prime Minister to lead that effort. So I am today announcing that I will resign as leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party on Friday, 7 June, so that a successor can be chosen.*

The first is the regulative speech act at the beginning of the extract: “But it is now clear to me that it is in the best interest of the country ... effort.” It is through her use of this speech act that May conforms to a validity claim of rightness, which is underlain by the normative context of what *ought to be* in the best interest of the country (the UK); this validity claim consists in May’s recommendation that a new Prime Minister should lead her efforts to fulfill the Brexit deal. Thus, with May’s current regulative speech act, this Brexit deal is enacted by a practical discourse whereby May’s performative attitude towards an intersubjective world, which combines May and her audience, is thematically focused.

Crucially, May's preceding regulative speech act stands pragmatically as a reason for the following expressive speech act, with May committing herself to a validity claim of truthfulness; that is, she intends to "resign as leader ... chosen." This is where an aesthetic type of discourse follows the earlier practical discourse on the necessity of the UK having new leadership. Indeed, it can be said that while the former practical discourse relates to a socio-political world that involves the normative context about what serves the UK best (that is, May's resignation and the choice of a successor), the latter aesthetic discourse appertains to the subjective world of May intending to resign. Thus, again, the argumentative link between the two types of speech act (regulative and expressive) and their rational basis of validity claims have created an interdiscursive meaning enabled by a practical-aesthetic interdiscourse.

In Extract six, there emerges a whole pattern of interdiscourse with a recurrent shift from the theoretical to the practical types of discourse:

Extract 6:

*I have agreed with the Party Chairman and with the Chairman of the 1922 Committee that the process for electing a new leader should begin in the following week. I have kept Her Majesty the Queen fully informed of my intentions, and I will continue to serve as her Prime Minister until the process has concluded.*

Extract six opens with a constative speech act whereby May informs the audience about her agreement with "the Party Chairman and with the Chairman of the 1922 Committee" over the timing of electing a new leader. With this communicative act, May commits herself to a validity claim of truth about the propositional content of her agreement. Yet, significantly, embedded in such a constative speech act is another regulative speech act: "... the process for electing a new leader should begin in the following week." Using the deontic-modality marker "should" renders May conformative to a validity claim of normative rightness, ought validity, or what is *being* officially right in the given context; and contextually, such a validity claim to rightness is predicated on the preceding validity claim of her objective truth. Interestingly at this meeting point, theoretical and practical discourse types are rationally interfaced; that is, May's validity claim to truth is justified by the what-should-be-done normative context as a continuation of the previous normative background of what ought to be in the political interest of the UK. This should shed light on the discursive continuity in May's resignation speech, which appears here reinforced by the theoretical-practical interdiscourse thematized by consecutive speech acts, constative and regulative, and their corresponding validity claims.

Continuing with Extract six, May proceeds with another interdiscursive pattern where the two theoretical and expressive types of discourse are interfaced. First, May utters a constative speech act whereby she notifies the audience about keeping Her Majesty the Queen fully informed of the former's intentions; thus, May commits herself to the truth of the proposition of this notification, and simultaneously thematizes a theoretical discourse on this important event, that is, the communicative channel held between her and the Queen. Second, following the previous constative speech act is May's expressive speech act whereby she voices her intention to "continue to serve as her Prime Minister until the process has concluded." Of course, this expressive speech act commits May to a validity claim of subjective truthfulness, with an aesthetic type of discourse on her intention.

Indeed, whereas there seems to be no manifestly argumentative link between the two speech acts, constative and expressive, the former constative speech act can be said to rationally reinforce the former expressive speech act: May's validity claim to the truth about her contact with the Queen does contribute to the sincerity of her validity claim to the truthfulness about her intention to continue to serve as Prime Minister till the process is completed; in other words, among the validity conditions for May's claim to truthfulness is the fact that she has already been in touch with the Queen. Thus, at this point, a theoretical-expressive interdiscourse may emerge on some rational grounds.

Towards the end of May's speech, a whole argumentative pattern of interdiscursive links appear. This spans over a series of speech acts in Extract seven:

Extract 7:

*But the unique privilege of this office is to use this platform to give a voice to the voiceless, to fight the burning injustices that still scar our society.*

*That is why I put proper funding for mental health at the heart of our N.H.S. long-term plan. It is why I am ending the postcode lottery for survivors of domestic abuse. It is why the Race Disparity Audit and gender pay reporting are shining a light on inequality, so it has nowhere to hide. And it is why I set up the independent public inquiry into the tragedy at Grenfell Tower ...*

This is the most extensive speech extract analyzed so far; it is initiated with an expressive speech act that commits May to an evaluation of the office of Prime Minister in the UK, as a "platform to give a voice to the voiceless, to fight the burning injustices that still scar our society." This kind of expressive speech thematizes an aesthetic discourse whereby May sets up her subjective world (her political vision) of the responsibilities and duties lying with her position as Prime Minister; and, crucially, it is through such an expressive act that she manifests her validity claim to truthfulness in the expression of these official responsibilities and duties.

May's expressive speech act, and thus aesthetic discourse, offers a rationale for the four consecutive constative speech acts that immediately follow: (a) "I put proper funding for ... plan," (b) "I am ending ... abuse," (c) "the Race Disparity Audit and gender ... hide," and (d) "I set up the independent public inquiry into the tragedy at Grenfell Tower." This creates a claim-reason aspect of argumentation that has been made linguistically explicit through the phrasal unit "That/It is why" repeated in Extract seven.

Interestingly, here, May prefaces all four constative speech acts with this phrasal unit of argumentation ("That/It is why") as an indicator of the pragmatic role of these acts; specifically, consequences justified by May's validity claim to the truthfulness of her expressive speech act and the aesthetic discourse on what the office of Prime Minister in the UK should *ideally* be. Notably, all four consequences are introduced as four propositional contents of the constative speech acts that thematize nearly the same theoretical discourse: the outcome of May's previous aesthetic discourse at the outset of Extract seven. Thus, the main aesthetic-theoretical interdiscourse emerges as a form of argumentation underlain by the truthfulness-truth validity claim co-thematized in the expressive-constative speech act structure in the extract.

**Conclusion: Findings and Implications**

Now, it can be said that Habermas's validity-theoretic approach to interdiscursive analysis has methodologically operated efficiently towards demarcating the boundaries of three types of discourse in Theresa May's 2019 resignation speech, namely, theoretical, aesthetic, and practical; and each type of discourse has been thematized by one typical speech act produced by May towards fulfilling certain communicative functions. The whole point can be captured at three levels of discourse types.

First, at the level of theoretical discourse, constative speech acts served the function of May representing certain political events, namely, (1) the British people being given a choice in 2016, (2) The British voting to leave the EU, (3) May negotiating the terms of Britain's exit from the EU with MPs, (4) May informing the audience about her agreement with the Party Chairman over the time of electing a new leader, (5) May notifying the audience about keeping the Queen fully informed of the former's intentions, etc. Second, at the level of aesthetic discourse, expressive speech acts served the function of May expressing her intentions, viz. (1) May praising herself for striving to make the UK a country that works for everyone, (2) May expressing her self-confidence as the then Prime Minister of the UK, (3) May grieving over her failure to convince the MPs of backing the Brexit deal, (4) May expressing her intention to resign as Leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party on 7 June, and (5) May evaluating the office of Prime Minister in the UK as a platform to give a voice to the voiceless. Third, at the level of practical discourse, regulative speech acts served the function of May interacting with the audience in several ways: (1) holding the government in a democracy responsible for implementing people's decision, (2) May being right to persevere in the face of the MPs rejecting the Brexit deal, (3) the appointment of a new Prime Minister as normatively serving the best interest of the UK, and (4) the necessity of beginning the process for electing a new leader in the following week (as May uttering this regulative speech act).

Such a corresponding relation between the classification of speech acts and the types of discourse has been established on the rational basis of argumentation, with three validity claims in operation: (i) objective truth as thematized in constative speech acts and represented in theoretical discourse, (ii) subjective truthfulness thematized in expressive speech acts and expressed in aesthetic discourse, and (iii) normative rightness thematized in regulative speech acts and interpersonally established in practical discourse. Thus, towards proving the hypothesis that Habermas's validity-theoretic approach can yield a more ontologically rich model of interdiscursive analysis, May's interdiscursive meanings have been traced through the different types of discourse on the communicative action of announcing her resignation as the UK Prime Minister and Leader of Conservative Party. By highlighting the argumentative links rationally relating the speech acts in May's speech and the discourses intersecting accordingly, May has been demonstrated to employ the three validity claims of truth, truthfulness, and rightness in specific forms of argumentation. Thus, it can be argued, as exhibited in Table 2, that in May's speech, interdiscursive meanings are inseparable from the argumentative process of claim validation as instantiated in the interrelated speech acts and their respective interdiscourses.

Table 2. *Interdiscursive relations in Theresa May's 2019 resignation speech*

Interdiscourse	Thematising speech acts	Interdiscursive meaning of claim validation
Practical-aesthetic	Regulative-expressive	The normative context of what is politically in the best interest of the UK justifies May's intentions about her (i) self-confidence as Prime minister, (ii) grief over the failure to convince the MPs of backing the Brexit deal, and (iii) decision to resign as leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party.
Practical-theoretical	Regulative-constative	The normative background of what is officially right justifies May's propositional content of informing the audience about her agreement with the Party Chairman and with the Chairman of the 1922 Committee.
Theoretical-aesthetic	Constative-expressive	May's expression of her intention to continue in office till the end of election process is rationally reinforced by the propositional-content truth of May notifying the audience about keeping the Queen fully informed of May's intentions.
Aesthetic-theoretical	Expressive-constative	May's expression of evaluating the office of Prime Minister in the UK justifies the truth of four aspects of propositional content: (i) proper funding for the N.H.S long-term plan, (ii) the post code lottery for survivors of domestic abuse, (iii) Race Disparity Audit and gender pay reporting, and (iv) the independent public inquiry into the tragedy at Grenfell Tower.

The current study has addressed the main research question raised in the introduction (and the sub-questions related to it) in a way that yielded the following main finding arising from the theoretic-validity interdiscursive analysis conducted earlier above: In May's 2019 resignation speech, there are four speech-act-bound interdiscursive relations: (a) practical-aesthetic interdiscourse, (b) practical-theoretical interdiscourse, (c) theoretical-aesthetic interdiscourse, and (d) aesthetic-theoretical interdiscourse. The preceding finding has had several significant implications in the interdiscursive analysis of May's speech. First, all four interdiscursive relations have come into textual being only on account of the existence of argumentative links whereby one discourse justifies another; thus, for example, as shown in the analysis, in May's speech, three raised validity claims (raised in expressive speech acts) to aspects of the truthfulness of her intentions have been justified by three regulative speech acts with relevant normative contexts, whereby a reasoning process for May's intentions obtained.

The second implication pertains to the dominant interdiscursive pattern appearing in May's speech, that is, the practical-aesthetic interdiscourse as employed three times in the whole speech. This interdiscursive pattern emerged from the rational basis whereupon May has recurrently used regulative speech acts as pragmatic reasons for her expressive speech acts. Perhaps this may be ascribed to the fact that generally regulative speech acts provide normative backgrounds and contexts against which the subjective intentions of speakers can be justified with societal ought-to-be norms at play. The third implication consists in the interdiscursive relation holding between the practical discourse thematized by May's regulative speech act of what is *being* officially right, on the one hand, and the theoretical discourse thematized by her constative speech act with the

propositional content of May informing the audience about her agreement with the Party Chairman over the time of electing a new leader, on the other hand. Notably, with the former regulative speech act embedded in the latter constative speech act, the practical type of discourse has been textually situated in the broader theoretical type of discourse, mainly for argumentatively supporting this kind of theoretical discourse.

The fourth, and last, implication deriving from the main finding of interdiscursive patterns in May's speech relates to the third and fourth cases of interdiscursivity, namely, theoretical-aesthetic and aesthetic-theoretical types of interdiscourse. Both cases of interdiscursivity indicate what may be called a *dialectical interdiscursive meaning*, which is argumentatively enabled, mainly by each of the two interdiscourses rationalizing the other. This may be explained against the observation that *virtually all the interdiscursive patterns heavily figuring in May's speech have been pragma-argumentatively motivated*. As shown in the interdiscursive analysis above, May has imparted the pragmatic role of *reason* to both constative and expressive speech acts in relation to each other; this aspect has strongly featured throughout the validity-theoretic analysis conducted on the speech.

One final point remains: prospects for further research on employing Habermas's validity-theoretic approach towards interdiscursive analysis. Indeed, applying the same approach to other different texts and genres may well prove interesting and revealing, particularly insofar as the potential for finding other or similar patterns of interdiscursivity is concerned. Perhaps, due to genre-specific variations, the approach might operate differently, and thereby bringing out new patterns of interdiscursive meanings.

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