JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

A Compendium of Dangerous Speech: A Case of X Discourse of Zimbabwean Political Actors

Peter Junior Tshetu,[1*] Heike Tappe[2]
Linguistics Department, Faculty of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 4091, South Africa.

*) Corresponding Author
Email: peterjuniortshetu@gmail.com, tappe@ukzn.ac.za

DOI: 10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695

Submission Track:
Received: 12-03-2026
Final Revision: 19-06-2026
Available Online: 01-07-2026

Copyright © 2026 Authors

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Abstract
This study investigates dangerous speech on X (formerly Twitter) within Zimbabwe's polarized and volatile digital political landscape, where recurring electoral tensions, historical grievances, and online political contestation shape discursive practices with potentially harmful societal consequences. Addressing a significant gap in scholarship on Zimbabwe, the study compiles, defines, and critically analyzes forms of dangerous speech produced by eight key political actors together with their followers representing diverse segments of the country's political ecosystem. Grounded in a descriptive qualitative methodology, the research employs Susan Benesch's Dangerous Speech Framework (DSF) as its principal analytical lens, while extending its explanatory reach through linguistic structuralism, critical discourse analysis, and the Integrated Model for Monitoring and Prevention (IMMP). Through syntagmatic and associative meaning analysis, the study examines how dangerous meanings emerge not only from explicit lexical choices, but also from historical memory, contextual cues, political timing, and digital affordances specific to X. Findings reveal two dominant categories of dangerous speech namely Moderately Dangerous and Extremely Dangerous expressions, with the latter encompassing historically loaded terms, militant slogans, and mobilising hashtags that intensify hostility

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

and create conditions conducive to radicalisation over time. The study demonstrates that the dangerousness of speech is profoundly context-dependent and cannot be adequately interpreted outside local cultural, historical, and political realities. In refining the DSF's treatment of political climate, temporality, and platform dynamics, the research advances the framework's applicability to contemporary online environments and contributes to broader debates on monitoring, interpreting, and preventing dangerous speech in fragile democracies.
Keywords: *Dangerous speech; Political actors; Violence; X; Hate speech*

INTRODUCTION

Post-independence Zimbabwe has been persistently characterized by entrenched political violence and gross human rights violations, a pattern that reveals the deep-rooted violent tendencies within the country's political culture.

The nation's body politic has witnessed violence remaining a persistent feature in political circles, often resurfacing with renewed intensity during electoral cycles. From the turn of the millennium, elections have been hotly contested and marred by intimidation, torture, and widespread human rights abuses (Chidhawu, 2024, p. 129). The ruling party's relentless pursuit of political dominance over the past four and a half decades has entrenched a culture of fear and repression, as it continually resorts to coercive tactics to weaken the opposition and preserve its hegemony (Chidhawu, 2024, p. 131). Thus, the trajectory of Zimbabwean politics reflects a grim continuity where violence is not an episodic aberration, but an enduring strategy of governance woven into the very fabric of the nation's political identity.

In such a context, where offline structures of fear, repression, and impunity remain deeply entrenched, conscientizing citizens about the dangers of hateful and inflammatory speech becomes an important mitigating strategy. As the South African Human Rights Commission (2020) observes, efforts to raise awareness of dangerous and hateful speech remain relevant, as they help challenge the normalisation of violence, promote critical engagement, and reduce the conditions that enable the perpetuation of repression in either offline or online political discourse.

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

The digitalization of politics in Zimbabwe has reshaped public debate, giving social media platforms such as *X* a central role in shaping socio-political narratives. The posts and comments section of these platforms facilitates expressive speech acts among users (Hambali, Risdianto & Rahma, 2024, p. 54). However, this space has also become a fertile ground for dangerous speech, which is language that primes audiences for collective violence. Benesch (2014) argues that dangerous speech does not merely incite violence directly but conditions audiences to view violence as acceptable or necessary. This type of messaging reflects more than just growing political division or the ease of expressing cruelty online; it also serves as an early warning sign of real-world violence, including extreme acts such as genocide.

Acknowledging the presence of this violence, Mwananyanda (2022) states that Zimbabwean political actors must immediately end the culture of politically motivated violence by refraining from issuing inflammatory statements that may incite violence. Political actors are defined as individuals who have obtained at least some measure of political power and/or authority in a particular society who engage in activities that can have significant influence on decisions, policies, media coverage, and outcomes associated with a given conflict (Wolfsfeld, 2015, p. 1). Zimbabwe's volatile political history and polarized media environment amplify the impact of political actors' online rhetoric. This study thus explores how dangerous speech emerges in *X* exchanges among Zimbabwean political figures, identifying patterns of expression that hold potential for social harm.

Understanding dangerous speech: When words become weapons

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (2014), dangerous speech is communication that facilitates collective violence by conditioning audiences to tolerate or participate in such acts. It includes both overt incitement and the subtle normalization of antagonism. *The Dangerous Speech Project* (2025) defines dangerous speech as any form of expression, either spoken, written, or visual, that increases the risk that its audience will condone or commit violence against another group. This type of speech is not limited to overt calls for violence; rather, it operates through psychological

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

and social mechanisms that gradually reshape perceptions, emotions, and moral boundaries within a community. Susan Benesch, who coined the term and founded the *Dangerous Speech Project*, notes that such speech often precedes outbreaks of mass violence and tends to follow recognizable rhetorical patterns, or hallmarks, across different societies and historical moments (Hrant Dink Foundation, 2025).

Dangerous speech often develops in stages. It usually starts with subtle suggestions that a target group is untrustworthy, inferior, or a threat. This is often done through metaphors that dehumanize them, such as describing them as insects, viruses, or pollutants that need to be removed (Hrant Dink Foundation, 2025). This kind of language reduces empathy and makes violence seem acceptable or even justified. Another common feature is "accusation in a mirror," where speakers claim that the targeted group plans to harm others, making violence appear like self-defense (Hrant Dink Foundation, 2025). When these ideas are repeated and spread by influential figures or media, they create a mindset in which aggression is seen as necessary and justified.

Identifying dangerous speech requires looking at the context, not just the words or common features. Its impact depends on who is speaking, who is listening, how widely the message spreads, and the social or political environment. For example, a statement that seems harmless in a peaceful setting can become harmful in a tense, divided situation. The Dangerous Speech Project (2025) highlights that, because of this complexity, speech must be carefully assessed to determine its potential to lead to violence in a specific society.

While dangerous speech and hate speech often overlap, they are not synonymous. Hate speech generally seeks to demean, insult, or degrade individuals or groups based on identity markers such as race, ethnicity, gender, or religion (Dangerous Speech Project, 2025). Its harm is often direct and personal; it wounds dignity, perpetuates stigma, and reinforces social exclusion. Dangerous speech, on the other hand, inflicts its most devastating harm indirectly by persuading audiences to view another group as a legitimate target of aggression (Dangerous Speech Project, 2025). It can, but does not always, contain hatred; it frequently operates through fear, convincing people that their survival depends

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

on the elimination or suppression of the "other." Thus, while hate speech offends, dangerous speech mobilizes. The former degrades; the latter incites. Together, they form a spectrum of harmful expression, with dangerous speech representing the point at which words become precursors to collective violence.

The weaponization of political discourse and its violent consequences in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, inflammatory statements by politicians and public figures have often led to violence, causing deaths and injuries, especially during election periods. Figures such as Jacob Ngarivhume, leader of the Transform Zimbabwe (TZ) party, Hopewell Chin'ono, an award-winning journalist, and Promise Mkwananzi, a political activist and Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) spokesperson, are among those who have been charged with inciting violence through what was considered dangerous speech (Agence France-Presse, 2020). Their cases show how language is seen as contributing to violence, even when no direct threats are made.

In Zimbabwe, political language operates as a subtle yet powerful tool used to attack opponents by portraying them as enemies and embedding hostility within public consciousness. Such discourse is cultivating an environment where aggression is normalized, and violence appears justified as an act of political preservation. Political actors thus occupy a precarious dual role as opinion leaders who shape national dialogue and as potential catalysts for social unrest whose words are transforming discontent into collective hostility. Through their linguistic authority, they convert speech into an instrument of persuasion, division, and moral justification for harm. Ultimately, Zimbabwe's experience shows how powerful speech is when used irresponsibly, as it can start and fuel violence.

Review of related studies

Benesch (2014) in *Countering Dangerous Speech: New Ideas for Genocide Prevention,* proposed a conceptual shift from the broad and often legally ambiguous notion of "hate speech" to the more analytically precise concept of "dangerous speech." Importantly, the DSF does not claim that speech causes violence in a direct or deterministic manner. As

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

Sambuli and Awori (2014, p. 39) observe, establishing a causal link between dangerous speech acts and physical violence is almost impossible because violence emerges from a complex interaction of factors. Rather than seeking to prove causation, the DSF functions as a risk assessment tool that evaluates whether particular speech acts possess characteristics that may increase the likelihood of collective violence.

By examining the interaction between the speaker, audience, social context, content of the message, and dissemination mechanisms, the framework distinguishes speech that may prime or facilitate violence from speech that merely reflects heightened political contestation or hostility. Consequently, the compendium proposed in this study is not intended to equate political incivility with imminent violence; instead, it seeks to identify recurring linguistic and contextual patterns that, when assessed collectively through the DSF, may signal elevated risks of mobilisation toward violence. Furthermore, political actors and their supporters remain legally and morally accountable where violent acts are committed in response to incitement or dangerous speech, even when a direct causal chain cannot be conclusively demonstrated (Sambuli & Awori, 2014, p. 29).

Online dangerous speech is a symptom of the much more complex offline socializations and perceptions that precede online interaction (Sambuli & Awori, 2014, p. 30). Research on dangerous speech within digital contexts has gained growing attention in recent years, particularly as online communication increasingly intersects with political tensions and social divisions. In Kenya, the Umati Project emerged from concerns that mobile and digital technologies contributed to the 2007/08 post-election violence (Sambuli & Awori, 2014, p. 27). Guided by Benesch's Dangerous Speech Framework, the project systematically examined online dangerous speech before the 2013 elections to understand the types of online expression most harmful to Kenyan society, develop a replicable model for tracking dangerous speech in other countries, and explore non-punitive, citizen-centered strategies for mitigating online incitement (Sambuli & Awori, 2014, p. 28).

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

The study revealed that coded language and historical references often intensified ethnic tensions and contributed to the escalation of conflict. It further established that ethnicity remains a dominant lens through which political, economic, and social issues are interpreted by the Kenyan public, and that discriminatory speech online predominantly occurs along ethnic lines. Importantly, the findings confirmed that the DSF is adaptable and can be redesigned for use in diverse contexts, while also demonstrating that self-regulation mechanisms such as ridiculing hateful narratives, flooding digital spaces with counter-messages, and employing humor or satire are effective tools in reducing the impact of dangerous speech online (Sambuli & Awori, 2014, p. 30).

Benesch (2014, p. 8) shifts the focus from punitive measures, such as censorship and criminalization of dangerous speech, towards preventive and non-restrictive responses to such discourse. She argues that effective mitigation lies in strengthening audience resilience through the development of critical thinking and empathy, enabling individuals to recognize and resist dangerous rhetoric. This preventative approach includes the use of educational media to "inoculate" the public against harmful narratives, as well as the strategic deployment of counter-speech from credible and diverse voices to challenge and disrupt dangerous discourse.

Furthermore, Benesch highlights the importance of directly engaging with perpetrators, encouraging reflection and, where possible, retraction of harmful statements. Her work underscores the value of proactive, context-sensitive interventions that respond to the specific social and political conditions in which speech occurs. Importantly, she concludes that further empirical research and experimentation are necessary to determine the most effective strategies across different cultural and political environments.

Aligned with and extending this non-punitive approach, the present study develops a compendium of dangerous speech designed to conscientize the Zimbabwean digital community of political interactants about forms of discourse that carry the potential to

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

escalate into actual violence, thereby operationalising prevention through context-specific awareness and early identification.

Maynard and Benesch (2016) developed the Integrated Model for Monitoring and Prevention (IMMP) to identify and track forms of speech and related ideologies that may lead to mass violence or genocide. Their study brings together two important approaches: analyzing the context in which speech occurs and examining the content of the speech itself. By combining these approaches, the model provides a more complete system for early detection of dangerous speech. A key strength of the IMMP is its focus on both the social and political environments that allow harmful speech to emerge, and the specific language patterns and ideas that signal potential risks. The authors argue that this combined approach improves the ability to monitor dangerous rhetoric and also helps in designing effective prevention strategies. By identifying the types of speech and ideological messages most likely to lead to violence, the model supports more targeted and timely interventions. In line with this integrated logic, the current study adopts and applies these dual analytical approaches as complementary to the DSF, thereby strengthening the contextual depth of analysis and enhancing the capacity to identify how dangerous speech operates and gains impact within Zimbabwe's digital political environment.

Buerger and Benesch (2024) examine dangerous speech as a useful tool for predicting and preventing mass violence. Their study shows that dangerous speech cannot be identified by words alone but must be understood within its specific social and cultural context. They argue that recognizing such speech requires deep local knowledge and a clear understanding of how people interpret language in a given setting. The authors also highlight the value of monitoring how dangerous speech spreads online, especially on social media platforms, where patterns of increased intensity and circulation may signal rising tensions and the weakening of social barriers against violence. However, they caution that online data has limits, as not all groups have equal access to digital platforms, meaning that some voices and experiences remain excluded. For this reason, they stress the importance of engaging directly with local contexts to gain a more accurate and

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

complete understanding of how dangerous speech operates. Their emphasis on context strongly supports the need to examine dangerous speech within under-researched settings such as Zimbabwe, thereby justifying the focus of the current study.

Studies conducted in Ethiopia (2014) and Nigeria (2015) show that dangerous speech in digital spaces often reflects deeper social and political divisions that exist offline. These studies highlight that online hostility does not occur in isolation but is closely linked to local histories, political tensions, and patterns of conflict within each country. They further demonstrate that digital platforms allow such speech to spread across borders, making it transnational in nature while still being shaped by specific local contexts. In both cases, the findings reveal that online incitement tends to mirror existing divisions, reinforcing mistrust and hostility among groups. Despite the growth of this body of research, there remains limited scholarly attention on Zimbabwe. This gap is significant given Zimbabwe's complex political communication environment, marked by strong political contestation, historical tensions, and recurring violence during election periods. As a result, there is a clear need for focused research that examines how dangerous speech operates within this specific context.

This research, therefore, seeks to fill that gap by cataloguing Zimbabwe-specific instances of dangerous speech and situating them within Benesch's Dangerous Speech Framework. Importantly, the study advances existing scholarship by demonstrating that combining the DSF with IMMP analytical approaches is both practical and effective. This integrated approach strengthens the analysis by linking language use to its broader social and political context, allowing for a deeper understanding of how dangerous speech develops and spreads. In this way, the study contributes to theory by showing that the DSF can be expanded and enriched through complementary analytical models, particularly in complex digital political environments.

To compile, define, and critically analyze forms of dangerous speech that are harmful to Zimbabwean society, focusing on the X discourse of key political actors, while also

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

contributing theoretically to the refinement and contextual application of dangerous speech frameworks within polarized digital political environments

Academically, the study makes an original contribution by extending Susan Benesch's DSF into a context that remains underexplored in existing scholarship. While previous applications of the DSF have largely focused on East and West African contexts, this research extends the framework's application to a Southern African context.

In particular, the incorporation of syntagmatic and associative meaning analysis offers a methodological advancement that strengthens the DSF's applicability to contemporary, online communicative environments.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, the study serves an important practical and civic function. By compiling and classifying Zimbabwe-specific instances of dangerous speech, it provides a contextually grounded compendium that enhances awareness of harmful online communication practices. This is particularly significant in an era where platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) play a central role in shaping political discourse. The study encourages more responsible participation in digital political engagement by highlighting how certain forms of language, though often normalized, may carry the potential to result in violence. In doing so, it contributes to broader efforts aimed at fostering ethical communication and conflict prevention.

Importantly, by naming and critically analysing potentially dangerous expressions within their specific socio-cultural and political contexts, the study provides stakeholders, including researchers, policymakers, and civil society actors, with tools to better identify and respond to harmful rhetoric before it escalates into real-world violence. As such, the research not only advances scholarly discourse but also supports proactive interventions that seek to mitigate the risks associated with digitally mediated political communication.

The theoretical foundation of this study is Susan Benesch's (2014) *Dangerous Speech Framework* (DSF), regarded by Sambuli and Awori (2014, p. 28) as a practical identification method of dangerous speech. It rests on two main ideas. The first idea is that the level of danger in speech can be assessed using five key factors: the speaker, the

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

audience, the content of the speech, the historical and social context, and the means through which the speech is spread. The second idea is that certain recurring rhetorical patterns can act as warning signs or indicators of dangerous speech.

According to Susan Benesch (2014), the degree of dangerousness in speech is contingent upon the interaction of five key factors, each of which contributes to the overall potential for harm. The first factor is the speaker, who possesses significant authority or influence over an audience that is predisposed to respond to their message. The second factor is the audience, especially when it is characterized by pre-existing fear, resentment, or hostility that can be mobilized or intensified. The third factor concerns the content of the speech, which becomes dangerous when it is interpreted as a direct or indirect call to violence. The fourth factor is the social and historical context, within which underlying tensions, unresolved conflicts, or histories of violence may create conditions conducive to the acceptance or enactment of harmful messages. The fifth factor is the mode of dissemination, referring to the communication channel through which the message is transmitted, particularly when it is widely accessible, trusted, or influential. The convergence of these five factors at heightened levels significantly increases the likelihood that speech may incite, justify, or facilitate violence, thereby underscoring the context-dependent nature of dangerous speech.

The DSF specifies that warning signs or indicators of dangerous speech often manifest through specific recurring discursive patterns that signal the potential for harm. One such indicator is the use of dehumanizing language, where the target group is referred to as animals, insects, or vermin, thereby stripping them of their humanity and making acts of violence appear more acceptable or justified. Another key indicator involves framing the target group as an existential threat to the safety or survival of the audience, a strategy commonly described as "accusation in a mirror," as outlined by Alison Des Forges (2012), in which the speaker attributes violent intentions to the target group that mirror those they seek to incite, thus presenting aggression as a form of self-defense. The DSF states that dangerous speech may also be identified through claims that the target group is

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

responsible for corrupting, dishonoring, or weakening the moral or cultural integrity of the in-group, thereby positioning them as a contaminating force. In addition, dangerous speech manifests through portraying the target group as outsiders or foreigners who do not belong within the community, implicitly legitimizing their exclusion, marginalization, or even expulsion. Collectively, these patterns function to construct and reinforce divisions between "us" and "them," creating discursive conditions that can facilitate hostility and, in extreme cases, justify violence.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in linguistic structuralism, focusing on the analysis of eight X accounts that represent diverse segments of Zimbabwe's political ecosystem. The selected accounts are not random individuals but highly influential political actors drawn from diverse ideological and institutional backgrounds within Zimbabwe's political landscape. This diversity ensures that the sample captures a wide spectrum of political discourse rather than a narrow or homogeneous viewpoint. Moreover, the substantial followership of these accounts, ranging from tens of thousands to over a million, positions them as central nodes in Zimbabwe's digital public sphere. Their platforms function not merely as personal communication channels but as discursive hubs where political narratives are produced, contested, amplified, and interpreted by large and heterogeneous audiences. In this sense, the high follower counts enhance the sample's adequacy by reflecting aggregated public engagement, where replies, reposts, and interactions often include contributions from ordinary citizens, supporters, critics, and observers. Thus, while the accounts themselves are elite, the comment sections serve as entry points into broader public sentiment, partially mitigating the absence of direct grassroots sampling.

Furthermore, although the study analyses a single post from each account and does not undertake longitudinal tracking of audience interpretation, offline mobilization, or behavioral outcomes, its objective is not to establish causal claims regarding violence or to predict future acts of harm. Rather, the selected posts function as strategically situated

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

discursive events that are examined through the DSF to assess the presence of recognized risk indicators associated with the potential for collective violence. Consequently, classifications such as "extremely dangerous" are understood as analytical assessments of risk based on the convergence of contextual and linguistic factors identified by the DSF, rather than definitive predictions of violent outcomes.

To minimize the possibility of misclassification or the politicized weaponization of findings, the study relies on a transparent, theoretically grounded framework, applies uniform analytical criteria across all sampled accounts irrespective of political affiliation, and interprets findings within the broader socio-political affiliation, and interprets findings within the broader socio-political and historical context of Zimbabwe rather than based on isolated offensive or provocative expressions alone.

The selected accounts include those of Nelson Chamisa (@nelsonchamisa), the leader of the main opposition party, who has approximately 1.4 million followers, and Emmerson Mnangagwa (@edmnangagwa), the President of Zimbabwe, with around 1.1 million followers. The sample also includes Jonathan Moyo (@ProfJNMoyo), a former ZANU-PF cabinet minister with a following of about 1 million, as well as 263Chat (@263chat), a prominent Zimbabwean online media outlet with over 625,600 followers. In addition, the study examines the account of Evan Mawarire (@PastorEvanLive), a political activist and leader of the #ThisFlag movement, who has approximately 348,800 followers, alongside Hopewell Chin'ono (@daddyhope), a well-known political journalist with about 855,500 followers. The dataset further includes Doug Coltart (@DougColtart), an attorney affiliated with Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, who has around 246,600 followers, and George Charamba (@Jamwanda2), the presidential spokesperson, whose account has approximately 76,800 followers. Collectively, these accounts provide a broad and representative cross-section of political leadership, activism, journalism, and institutional communication within Zimbabwe's digital public sphere.

Importantly, the inclusion of both state and non-state actors does not imply an assumption of equivalent political power or an erasure of Zimbabwe's well-documented

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

historical and institutional asymmetries. Rather, the DSF is applied as a common analytical tool to examine how potentially dangerous narratives are constructed, disseminated, and received across different political locations while remaining attentive to the differential capacities of speakers.

In assessing dangerousness, the analysis explicitly considers the social standing and influence of the speaker, a core component of the DSF. Speech by ruling party elites and opposition actors is not treated as functionally identical but instead examines how varying degrees of political authority shape the potential impact of particular utterances. Furthermore, the analysis extends beyond the original posts themselves to include the comments, replies, reposts, and interactions generated by followers and other users. This enables us to examine not only elite discourse but also the ways in which audiences interpret, amplify, contest, normalise, or intensify political messages, thereby providing a richer understanding of the communicative dynamics through which dangerous speech may circulate within Zimbabwe's online political environment. One politically significant post and its associated comment thread from each account were selected for analysis.

ANALYTICAL METHODS

This study employed the Dangerous Speech Framework (2014) as its guiding theoretical model. The framework's five variables provided a structured and theoretically validated basis for identifying, categorising, and interpreting instances of dangerous speech. Its prior application in comparable studies such as that of Sambuli and Awori (2014) strengthens construct validity, ensuring that the analysis is anchored in an established and credible conceptualisation of harmful discourse.

A structuralist linguistic approach, grounded in the syntagmatic and associative dimensions of language (Al Umma, 2015), was applied to uncover patterns that confer dangerousness. By systematically analysing how meaning is produced through linguistic structure and association, the study enhances analytical validity, moving beyond surface interpretation to reveal underlying rhetorical mechanisms. The use of clearly defined linguistic categories supports reliability, as it enables consistent identification of recurring

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

patterns across the dataset. This approach was further strengthened by integrating the IMMP framework, which incorporates contextual and content-based analysis. This triangulation of methods improves both validity (through contextual depth) and reliability (through cross-verification of findings).

Data collection followed a systematic manual process of identifying, compiling, and categorising instances of dangerous speech from X. Although interpretive, this process was guided by predefined criteria derived from the theoretical frameworks, thereby enhancing procedural reliability. Desktop analysis was essential for contextual interpretation, ensuring ecological validity, as statements were analysed within their real sociopolitical environments rather than in isolation.

To strengthen data validity, the study included not only primary posts but also associated comments and author responses. This comprehensive approach captures the full interactional context, allowing for a more accurate assessment of how discourse is produced, received, and amplified. All data were screen-captured and converted into Microsoft Word format to create a stable and auditable dataset, enhancing dependability. Verbatim transcription preserved original language, spelling, and structure, ensuring authenticity and reducing interpretive distortion.

All instances of dangerous speech were translated into English to enable cross-comparative analysis. To maintain translation validity, care was taken to preserve semantic and pragmatic meaning. The data were then systematically organised into three categories, namely offensive, moderately dangerous, and extremely dangerous speech, based on clearly defined criteria. This categorisation framework enhances reliability by ensuring consistent classification, while alignment with benchmarks from the Umati Project strengthens external validity through methodological consistency with prior research.

The identification of dangerous speech focused on interactions within conversational threads on X. Analysing posts in relation to replies and reposts improves contextual validity, as it captures how meaning evolves through interaction.

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

In this section, a detailed analysis of the data is presented. Given the article's word limit, it is not feasible to include the analysis of the entire compendium. Therefore, examples that demonstrate our analytical approach are presented and effectively represent the broader dataset. It is important to note that the full compendium from which our analysis is drawn comprises multiple posts addressing diverse political issues and therefore extends beyond the single example discussed below.

Example 1:

@ProfJNMoyo

Eddie Cross claims Mnangagwa played a minor role in the #Gukurahundi atrocities; but here is Emmerson in April 1983 getting off a helicopter in a blue t/shirt carrying a sceptre, at a MatNorth rally where he personally paraded alleged dissidents before they were disappeared!

In determining whether the statement above qualifies to be considered as dangerous speech, we first analyze it using the DSF as exemplified in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Analysis of Example 1

The speaker (A compelling and influential source)	A former cabinet minister from the ruling party, who was expelled from the party and is now living in exile. He is deemed to have the privilege to confidential information about the operations of the state. He commands a following of one million.
Audience	Zimbabweans who oppose President Mnangagwa and his ruling ZANU-PF party, the victims of Gukurahundi, and their sympathizers.
Content (Does the message make people more ready to commit or condone violence?)	A discussion of Gukurahundi, which is an atrocious operation carried out by the Zimbabwean National Army in 1987, were suspected that twenty thousand anti-government elements among the Ndebele community were identified and exterminated. The issue

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

	remains unresolved and evokes tribal wars.
The social-historical context of the speech (Analysis carried out with knowledge of socio-political conditions)	The discourse of Gukurahundi has caused deep social divisions, a lack of reconciliation, and generational trauma in Zimbabwe. The use of dehumanizing language to label victims' licenses violence and inflames discussions (Gusha, 2019).
The medium for disseminating the speech	*X* users are 12.67% of the 17.04 million Zimbabweans as of 15 October 2025 (StatsCounter, 2025).

Table 1 demonstrates that the five variables identified by Benesch (2014) as determinants for assessing the degree of dangerousness in speech are adequately satisfied, although the presence of all five is not a strict requirement. To further delineate the dangerous elements embedded within Professor Jonathan Moyo's post, a syntagmatic analysis is employed. As Namaziandost et al. (2018, p. 23) explain, syntagmatic relations refer to the semantic connections among words that co-occur within the same sentence or textual structure. These relations illuminate how linguistic elements are deliberately combined and sequenced to generate meaning, thereby exposing the underlying architecture through which danger in speech is constructed and conveyed in a given context. Benesch et al. (2018, p. 10) approve the significance of the syntagmatic approach when they state that the way in which any message is understood, like its effect on the audience, depends not only on its words but on how it is communicated.

In the post, the deliberate coupling of the terms Gukurahundi and Mnangagwa is a calculated linguistic act loaded with political and emotional weight meant to express or promote hatred towards the person of Mnangagwa and all he stands for. Gukurahundi represents one of Zimbabwe's most painful and divisive historical events which is an atrocity widely attributed to President Mnangagwa, who has consistently denied any involvement in it (Ntali, 2019). By intentionally invoking

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

these two names within the same sentence and reinforcing the association with evidence suggesting Mnangagwa's complicity, the author of the post activates a powerful semiotic link that frames Gukurahundi as a symbol of blame and retribution.

The impact of this association is further intensified through emotionally charged terms such as "atrocities," "dissidents," and "disappeared," which revive traumatic memories of violence and deepen historical divisions between Ndebele and Shona communities. Consequently, the term Gukurahundi becomes a vehicle of dangerous speech, one that not only endangers Mnangagwa's personal and political standing but also exposes all those associated with him to potential hostility or acts of vengeance. Although Benesch et al. (2018, p. 6) note that speech targeting individuals typically falls outside the purview of dangerous speech, they acknowledge that when an individual embodies a broader group identity, targeting that person can function as a form of dangerous speech against the group they represent.

Applying the associative approach to identify the elements of dangerous speech, focus is placed on the specific lexical choices employed by Professor Jonathan Moyo in his post. As Namaziandost et al. (2018, p. 23) explain, associative meaning encompasses the emotional and mental connections that a word evokes beyond its literal sense. Within this analytical frame, the terms Gukurahundi and Dissidents acquire significance not merely as descriptive labels but as words charged with historical and emotional resonance. In the Zimbabwean context, each of these terms is deeply intertwined with memories of violence, repression, and political conflict. Their deliberate use in the same communicative act activates these associations, constructing a network of meanings that collectively signal blame and hostility. Through this associative linkage, the language of the post functions as dangerous speech, mobilizing emotive and historical connotations that can inflame

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

tensions and potentially incite animosity toward Mnangagwa and those aligned with him.

Using the approach outlined above, the researcher developed the following compendium, guided by the dangerous speech categories described in the methodology. The extremely dangerous speech category is deliberately presented in fuller detail, while the remaining categories are summarized more generally. This structure is intentional as providing exhaustive detail for every category would result in an unnecessarily long, repetitive, and less engaging compendium. By highlighting the most critical category in depth and offering concise definitions for the others, clarity is ensured, maintaining reader engagement, and avoiding redundancy while still conveying the full analytical value of the dataset.

Category Three—Extremely Dangerous Speech:

a) *Pasi na*… (Down with)

Definition**:** It is a Shona phrase that translates to "down with." The expression is used to show strong opposition toward a person, group, or idea, often implying that the targeted individual should be removed from power or that the object of opposition should be eliminated or destroyed.

Why it is Dangerous Speech:

The phrase is historically linked to politically motivated violence and, in some cases, extermination. According to Hove (2013), during the Zimbabwean liberation war of the 1970s, being targeted by slogans beginning with "Pasi na…" or "Down with…" almost certainly meant death. Since that period, the expression has continued to carry grave and threatening implications for those it is directed toward.

b) Gukurahundist

Definition**:** Is a noun derived from the word Gukurahundi which is a Shona term that refers to "the early rain which washes away the chaff before spring rains".

Why it is dangerous speech:

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

It has a particular reference to an operation carried out by the Zimbabwean National Army Fifth Brigade between 1983 and 1987, where suspected anti-government elements among the Ndebele community were identified and exterminated. Gukurahundi saw more than twenty thousand Ndebele-speaking civilians perishing, and until now, the genocides are blamed on the Shona people in general and in particular, on the ZANU-PF government, which is mostly Shona (Doran, 2017). Therefore, the mentioning of the term or any of its derivations opens the wound for the victims as well as for the alleged perpetrators.

c) #Hatichada #Hatichatya

Definition: These are Shona rallying terms that mean, "We have had enough, we are not afraid". Why is it dangerous speech: These terms were used as hashtags on social media by Evan Mawarire, a Zimbabwean political activist who posted a video rant in 2016 on Facebook about Zimbabwe's economic and political struggles. In the video, he employed the hashtags to urge Zimbabweans to be brave and confront the government. His calls received widespread publicity and appeared effective as thousands of Zimbabweans took heed (Pellot, 2016). As a result, a protest movement was born with a lot of Zimbabweans joining Mawarire in posting on Facebook their frustrations about Zimbabwe's economy towards the ZANU-PF government, which has led the country since independence and is known for its intolerance of dissent (Amnesty International, 2007). The terms are still being used as rallying calls by anyone who wants to incite people to be brave and confront the government of ZANU-PF.

Category Two—Moderately Dangerous Speech:

Table 2. List of moderately dangerous speech and their general definitions

Baboon, Rats, Hyenas, Maggots	Derogatory terms that reduce people to animals or insects that need to be exterminated.
Homosexual, Gay, Prostitutes	Terms so much unwanted as Zimbabwe criminalizes same sex relationships as well as prostitution. Labelling one as such would result in violent consequences.

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

Swina, Ndeks	Terms used to ridicule people based on their tribe. Such labelling has seen many violent clashes.
Blood suckers, juntas, dictators, murderers	Derogatory terms used by the opposition to refer to the ruling party and its supporters.
Clowns, puppets	Derogatory terms used by the ruling party to refer to all opposition party members.
Shona, Ndebele	Terms that divide people along tribal lines, resulting in clashes.

It is important to note that the compendium includes forms of speech that have not been directly linked to physical violence but still operate in ways that align with established understandings of dangerous speech. In this study, such speech is understood as dangerous insofar as it normalizes hostility, legitimizes antagonism toward targeted groups, and generates intense verbal aggression in online spaces, thereby cultivating psychological and social conditions under which violence may become increasingly thinkable, acceptable, or justifiable, even in the absence of immediate physical harm. The analysis of discourse on the Zimbabwean X sphere shows that only two categories of dangerous speech are present: Moderately Dangerous (Category Two) and Extremely Dangerous (Category Three). The dataset contains no examples of Category One, which typically includes low-impact, mildly offensive statements with little potential to cause harm. The data instead shows that users consistently produce more serious forms of speech. These fall into two clear patterns. First, Category Three includes highly charged, mobilising expressions with strong historical and political meaning, such as *Pasi na…*, *Gukurahundist*, and rallying hashtags like #Hatichada and #Hatichatya. Second, Category Two includes dehumanising, tribal, and stigmatizing labels that normalise hostility and intensify tensions between groups. The absence of Category One demonstrates that political actors in this digital space rarely engage in harmless or mildly offensive communication. Instead, they move directly toward forms of

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

expression that carry a clear potential to escalate political, ethnic, and social conflict, both online and offline.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to compile, define, and critically analyse forms of dangerous speech harmful to Zimbabwean society through an examination of X discourse produced by key political actors, while simultaneously contributing to the refinement and contextual application of DSF within polarised digital political environments. The findings demonstrate a clear alignment with this objective, confirming that the application of Susan Benesch's DSF within Zimbabwe's socio-political context not only remains analytically relevant but also requires contextual expansion to fully capture the dynamics of digitally mediated political communication.

In advancing knowledge, the study makes a significant theoretical contribution by extending the DSF into a Southern African context that has remained largely underexplored in existing scholarship. This geographical expansion is complemented by methodological innovation, particularly through the incorporation of syntagmatic and associative meaning analysis, which enhances the framework's capacity to interpret layered meanings embedded in historically and politically charged discourse. Furthermore, the integration of the DSF with the IMMP demonstrates that dangerous speech analysis can be strengthened through complementary analytical approaches, especially in complex and rapidly evolving digital environments.

The findings reveal that political discourse on X rarely operates at the level of mere insult; rather, it frequently draws on historically embedded expressions that revive unresolved tensions and construct adversarial group identities. While such discourse is not always directly linked to immediate acts of physical violence, its cumulative effect is substantial, as it intensifies social divisions, reinforces group-based hostility, and creates conditions conducive to radicalisation over time.

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

These insights emphasise the fundamentally context-dependent nature of dangerous speech, highlighting the necessity of grounding analysis in local socio-political realities.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, the study serves an important practical and civic function. By compiling and classifying Zimbabwe-specific instances of dangerous speech, it offers a contextually grounded compendium that can support researchers, policymakers, and civil society actors in identifying and responding to harmful rhetoric. The findings further highlight the urgent need for strengthened civic education and context-sensitive moderation strategies, recognising that digital platforms such as X are not neutral spaces but dynamic arenas in which political tensions are performed, amplified, and at times reignited. In this regard, the research contributes to broader efforts aimed at preventing the escalation of harmful discourse into real-world conflict and fostering more ethical forms of digital political engagement.

Future research may build on this work by applying the refined framework to other African contexts to test its broader regional applicability, as well as through longitudinal studies that examine the relationship between identified categories of dangerous speech and patterns of offline violence over time. Further extensions could explore how these dynamics manifest across other digital platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok, or through cross-cultural comparative analyses that assess the transferability of the framework beyond African contexts. Additionally, the development of real-time monitoring systems based on the study's compendium presents a promising avenue for early warning and intervention.

Efforts to monitor and regulate dangerous speech do carry the risk of overreach, particularly in politically polarized environments where the line between harmful rhetoric and legitimate dissent can be blurred. However, this study suggests that such risks can be mitigated through context-sensitive, evidence-based frameworks that distinguish clearly between incitement to harm and

protected forms of expression such as satire, critique, and opposition discourse. In the Zimbabwean context, the balance lies not in broad censorship but in targeted intervention guided by frameworks like the Dangerous Speech Framework, which emphasize speaker influence, audience vulnerability, and the likelihood of real-world harm. By prioritizing transparency, accountability, and civic education alongside moderation, Zimbabwe can protect freedom of expression while still addressing speech that meaningfully contributes to violence, exclusion, or social destabilization.

Ultimately, this study advances both scholarly and practical understandings of dangerous speech by demonstrating that its power lies not only in explicit incitement but in its capacity to subtly shape perceptions, reinforce divisions, and normalise hostility within fragile democratic contexts. In doing so, it reinforces the importance of contextually grounded, theoretically robust, and methodologically innovative approaches to analysing and mitigating the risks associated with digital political communication.

AI Declaration

The authors declare that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools were used only as assistive instruments during the preparation of this manuscript. Specifically, ChatGPT was used to support language clarity, grammar, and formatting. The AI tool did not generate, fabricate, or manipulate research data, analysis, interpretations, or references. All AI-generated outputs were carefully reviewed, verified, and edited by the authors, who take full responsibility for the content of the manuscript. This use of AI complies with the Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement of the ***Journal of Pragmatics Research.***

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

REFERENCES

Agence France-Presse. (2020, July 22). Zimbabwe journalist in court charged for inciting violence. AFP News. https://barrons.com/news/zimbabwe-journalist-in-court-charged-for-inciting-violence-01595427306

Al Umma, K.Z. (2015). Ferdinand De Saussure: Structuralism and His Role in Modern Linguistics. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/235573338.pdf

Amnesty International. (2007). Zimbabwe: Human rights in crisis: Shadow report to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. In Amnesty International https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr46/016/2007/en/

Amnesty International. (2025). UK: X's design and policy choices created fertile ground for inflammatory, racist narratives targeting Muslims and migrants following the Southport attack. In Amnesty International. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/08/xs-design-and-policies/#:~:text=Social%20media%20platform%20X%2C%20formerly%20Twitter%2C%20played%20a&text=X%20and%20other%20platforms%20for%20inciting%20violence%20or%20spreading%20malicious%20falsehoods

Benesch, S. (2014). Countering Dangerous Speech: New Ideas for Genocide Prevention. In United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20140212-benesch-countering-dangerous-speech.pdf

Benesch, S., Glavinic, T., Manion, S., & Buerger, C. (2018). Dangerous Speech: A practical guide. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330684579_Dangerous_Speech_A_Practical_Guide

Buerger, C., & Benesch, S. (2024). Dangerous speech as an atrocity early warning indicator: Measuring changing conflict dynamics. *Genocide Studies & Prevention: An International Journal 18(1)*, 84-95.

Chidhawu, T. (2024). A turning point for transitional justice? Political violence in Zimbabwe and transformative justice as a way forward. *Law, Democracy & Development 28*, 129-150.

Dangerous Speech Project. (2025). What is dangerous speech?. https://www.dangerousspeech.org/

Doran, S. (2017, November 27). Mnangagwa and the Gukurahundi – Fact and Fiction. In Daily Maverick. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-11-27-op-ed-mnangagwa-and-the-gukurahundi-fact-and-fiction/

Forges, A. (2012). Leave none to tell the story, supra note 3. *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal 89(3)*.

Gusha, I. (2019). Memories of Gukurahundi Massacre and the challenge of reconciliation. *Studia Historae Ecclesiasticae 45(1),* 1-14.

Hambali, A.J., Risdianto, F., & Rahma, S.S. (2024). Rethinking expressive speech act realization in the comments section on the YouTube channel. *Journal of Pragmatics Research 06 (1),* 53-73.

Hlatshwayo, M. (2023). South Africa enters the second wave of xenophobic violence: The rise of anti-immigrant organizations in South Africa. *Politikon 50(1)*, 1-17.

Hove, C. (2013, January 4). Zimbabwe's War of Empty Slogans. In Mail & Guardian. https://mg.co.za/article/2013-01-04-00-zimbabwes-war-of-empty-slogans

Hrant Dink Foundation. (2025, nd). Dangerous speech/Hate speech and Plurality in Media. In Asulis- Discourse, dialogue, democracy laboratory. https://hrantdink.org/en/asulis/activities/projects/435-dangerous-speech-hate-speech-and-plurality-in-media

Maynard, J.L., & Benesch, S. (2016). Dangerous speech and dangerous ideology: An integrated model for monitoring and prevention. *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 9(3), 70-95.

Morapeli, S., & Kazembe, S. (2024). PUTSOUTHAFRICANSFIRST: Exploring how hashtag activism on Black Twitter promotes xenophobia. *Communitas 29*, 158-175.

Mwananyanda, M. (2022, February 28). Zimbabwe: Investigative Violence on Political Opposition Supporters. In Amnesty International. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/02/zimbabwe-investigate-violence-on-political-opposition/

Namaziandost, E., Shafiee, S., & Rassoyar, H. (2018). Paradigmatic relations & syntagmatic relations: Are they useful in learning grammatical structures?, *Journal of Applied Linguistics & Language Research 5(5)*, 20-34.

Ntali, E. (2019, June 5). Gukurahundi: Can the Man Accused of Opening the Wounds Heal Them? In Media Centre Zimbabwe. https://www.zimsentinel.org/gukurahundi-can-the-man-accused-of-opening-the-wounds-heal-them/

Onslow, S. (2011). Zimbabwe and Political Transition. *The London School of Economics and Political Science,* 1-15.

Pellot, B. (2016, July 22). How #ThisFlag pastor Evan Mawarire used Facebook to shut down Zimbabwe. https://www.christiancentury.org/print/pdf/node/21543

Sambuli, N., & Awori, K. (2014). The Umati Project: Monitoring Dangerous Speech in Kenya. https://gisf.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2257-EISF-2014-Monitoring-Online-Dangerous-Speech-in-Kenya.pdf

South African Human Rights Commission (2020). Hate Speech Information Sheet. https://www.sahrc.org.za/home/21/files/Hate%20Speech%20Information%20Sheet-%20print%20ready-.pdf

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 2 (2026), pp. 668-695
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i2.668-695
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

StatsCounter. (2025). Social media stats in Zimbabwe- September 2025. In StatsCounter. https://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all/zimbabwe

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. (2014). Countering Dangerous Speech, Protecting Free Speech: Practical Strategies to Prevent Genocide. https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20150512-sudikoff-report.pdf

Wolfsfeld, G. (2015). INFOCORE Definitions: Political Actors. In the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya. http://www.infocore.eu/results/definitions/