المظاهر التداولية للسخرية في مناظرة ترامب الرئاسية الثالثة مع كلنتون

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المديرية العامة لتربية بابل

Pragmatic Manifestations of Sarcasm in Trump's Third Presidential Debate with Clinton

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to pragmatically investigate sarcasm in some selected extracts taken from Trump's Third Presidential Debate with Clinton. It sets for itself the task of answering the following questions: What are the explicit forms of sarcasm as manifested by Trump in the debate? What are the pragmatic strategies that are used to convey sarcasm in the selected debate?. It is hypothesized that sarcasm is realized explicitly taking the forms: insult, flattery, curse, blame, and self-deprecating. Basic pragmatic strategies are utilized to convey it such as Speech Acts (SAs), impoliteness, and referencing. A number of sarcastic utterances in Trump's debate are fetched to be under scrutiny. The analysis verifies the set hypotheses. It is hopeful that this study is beneficial to those interested in pragmatics and political sciences.

Key words: Pragmatics, flattery, offense, sarcasm, explicit manifestation.

الخلاصة:

هذه الدراسة هي محاولة للتحقيق بشكل عملي في السخرية في بعض المقتطفات المختارة المأخوذة من مناظرة ترامب الرئاسية الثالثة مع كلينتون. إنها تحدد لنفسها مهمة الإجابة على الأسئلة: ما هي الأشكال الصريحة للسخرية كما تتجلى في المناظرة من قبل ترامب؟ ما هي الاستراتيجيات التداولية المستخدمة للتعبير عن السخرية في المناظرة المختارة؟ تفترض الدراسة أن السخرية تتحقق صراحة بأشكالها: الإهانة ، الإطراء ، اللعنات، التهديد ، والانتقاص من الذات. يتم استخدام الاستراتيجيات التداولية الأساسية لنقلها مثل افعال الكلام عدم الأدب ، والمراجع. من المتوقع أن يخضع عدد من التصريحات الساخرة في مناظرة ترامب للتدقيق. من المؤمل أن تكون هذه الدراسة مفيدة للمهتمين بالتداولية والعلوم السياسية.

الكلمات الدالة: التداولية ، الإطراء ، الإساءة ، السخرية ، التظاهر الصريح.

1. Introduction

Sarcasm is considered an offensive form of communication. It is used by politicians as a defense and attack mechanism. Since it is believed it causes harm and offense to its target by poking fun upon him, it is not expected to be actualized explicitly in discourse. In this vein, the current study sets itself the task of investigating the explicit forms of sarcasm as expressed by Trump and the pragmatic strategies employed by him to issue his sarcastic ideas and beliefs. To achieve the aims of the study, the relevant literature is reviewed and a model is developed to analyze the data and come up with certain conclusions.

2. Sarcasm

Despite its frequent occurrence in everyday speech and conversation, the notion of sarcasm seems difficult to be defined. This is due to the fact that sarcasm "is not a discrete logical or linguistic phenomenon" (Brown, 1980:111). Besides, it has fuzzy boundaries and escapes clear-cut linguistic definitions (Attardo, 2001: 171), and it is a folk notion associated with different meanings (Attardo, 2013: 40). So, it is difficult to be grasped by both scientists and lay language users (Dynel, 2016: 69).

Etymologically, the English word 'sarcasm' can be traced back to the Greek word *sarkasmos* which is derived from the verb *sarkazein*. *Sarkazein* means "to bite the lips with rage" which is developed later into the sense "to speak bitterly, sneer." (Pawlak, 2006: 1). Sarcasm, as Rockwell (2006: 6) views, is "portrayed in most dictionary references as a negative behaviour; it is designed to wound, insult, or taunt. It is characterized as cutting and contemptuous." Thus, speakers who show a propensity towards using putdowns, trenchant criticism or malicious wit are perceived as being sarcastic (Dynel, 2018:139).

According to Haiman (1998:25-6), sarcasm is a kind of word play that relates to verbal aggression. It invokes an attitude of *I don't mean this* where a speaker has the intention of being ridiculous or expressing distaste for another person or perspective that *really does mean this*. The negativity and aggression of this attitude may be directed toward another speaker who is present or absent in the exchange, or it may be the case that the whole sarcastic speech refers to a conventional attitude about a person or object (ibid.: 25). Furthermore, from impoliteness perspective, sarcasm is clearly a form of impolite speech that is utilized with the intent of being perceived as offensive (Culpeper, 2005: 42). Its offensive nature is communicated through a polite or insincere utterance. Therefore, it is a type of mock politeness that employs politeness to communicate impoliteness (ibid.). That is why it is viewed as impoliteness that is off record (Bousfield,2010:213). Overall, sarcasm is often perceived as being as a rude or harsh form of criticism, and it should not be confused with irony since the latter has a face-saving function whereas the former has a face-threatening one (Barbe, 1995: 23).

Sarcasm has practical uses with political realm. It presents many benefits for those who employ it, such as increased memorability and creation of the self-image as a witty person, knowledgeable about the current events (knoblock, 2016: 11). It is also an

effective means of, first, mocking and offending the opponents by exposing their viewpoints as unworthy, and second, of strengthening in-group bonding through expressing the shared opinions (ibid.).

Politicians tend to express their negative sarcastic evaluations either explicitly (directly) or implicitly (indirectly). In the first case, the intention of causing harm and offense is associated with explicit linguistic forms whereas, in the second case, such an intention is conveyed implicitly. However, only the first is put under scrutiny whereas the second is out of the realm of this paper.

3. Explicit Sarcasm

Explicit sarcasm expresses negative attitudes or behaviour that are directed towards others so as to cause a hurt or an insult. It is usually overt and intentional. Sometimes, it comes unintentionally. It usually clearly specifies the target of its negative evaluation and it is associated with certain linguistic forms that mock and make fun of him/her. However, explicit sarcasm is an act of interpretation, and one needs to consider context to reach at the appropriate interpretation. It is represented by the following explicit forms: insult, flattery, curse, blame, and self-deprecating.

3.1 insult

Insult is one of the explicit forms of sarcasm. It is overtly indicated as it contains pejorative and hostile expressions which the speaker pretends not to be meant. A contrast is established between the speaker's intended meaning and the offensive meaning of his words (Haiman, 1998: 22). Such insults may express personal remarks regarding the personal and social shortcomings of another; a direct attack upon his social status or motivations (Lawson, 2008: 150). They serve unusually rich set of effects as they may upset, shock, amuse, or entertain. They represent an exercise of abusive power that goes beyond what is legitimate in one's group. Various mechanisms are exploited to perform this form of sarcasm such as calling one names, being over-familiar, explicitly mocking the other, and using derogatory terms and expressions (Technau, 2017: 100).

3.2 Flattery

The online Cambridge dictionary defines flattery as "The act of praising someone, often in a way that is not sincere, because you want something from them." It is commonly related to praising, which is defined as a speech act that attributes credit to the addressee for having some positively valued thing or characteristic (Holmes, 1988: 446). Flattery is an explicit form of sarcasm as the speaker is insincere in issuing praising. It "does something like mime an apparent compliment in order to mock it" (Eckert and Mcconnell-Ginet, 2003:154). It intends to insult and its positive evaluation seems to be laughable, absurdly off the mark (ibid.). It is seen to implicitly allude to social norms about being polite and saying nice things about others, as Pexman and Olineck (2002: 201) affirm. Thus, flattery is a positively polite act that enhances solidarity and intimacy among participants, but at the same time, it is perceived as a face-threatening act with an issue of power (Taavitsainen and Jucker, 2008: 15). It attacks positive face (Eckert and Mcconnell-Ginet, 2003:155). In order to get it,

however, flattery is based on the context in which the utterance occurs, as Capelli et al. (1990: 1825) show.

3.3 Curse

Wyre and Collins (1992: 683) admit the role of curse in eliciting sarcastic attitudes. Curse is defined as "the use of taboo language with the purpose of expressing the speaker's emotional state and communicating that information to listeners" (Jay and Janschewitz, 2008: 268). Taboo words in sarcastic discourse are used deliberately and intentionally to display impoliteness by manifesting aggression, power-building, and abuse (Dynel, 2012:25). They are intended to "expose, embarrass, ridicule, mock, calumniate, or humiliate one's opponent" (Woods, 2007:109). They are sarcastically used to entertain, delight, and amuse oneself (Jay, 2009:155). They are also used to attack the hearer's face and gain power.

3.4 Blame

Blame as an explicit form of sarcasm is proposed by Anolli et al. (2000, p. 275). It is defined as the act of expressing disapproval of something bad (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985, p. 191). It involves forming a private judgment on the *other's* conduct; or having an attitude of resentment, indignation, or contempt towards him because of his wrong-doing (Duff, 1991, p. 40). It is manifested through the communicative acts of criticizing, accusing, punishing, humiliating, reproaching, objecting, and complaining (Alasko, 2011, p. 22). These acts may be uttered about people who show various racial backgrounds, as Reyes (2011, p. 463) claims. As being framed sarcastically, they are easier to be ignored and not to be taken seriously; they are unrestrained resource for creating identities and relationships that combine humorous, provocative, and caustic elements (ibid., p. 470). However, blame is perceived as a face attacking act since it causes conflict and resentment among social groups in some contexts (Koroshinadze, 2015, p. 346).

3.5 Self-deprecating

Self-deprecating sarcasm is simply defined as laughing at oneself. Its function is determined after understanding the speaker's intention (Zajdman 1995: 337). In such a case, to laugh at oneself is nothing more, by rebound that laugh also at the others, the real responsible party of such a victimization (Priego-Valverde, 2002: 4). Self-deprecating is regarded as one of the explicit forms of sarcasm where the sarcasm is directed towards oneself, turning it into a victim (Berger, 2017:49). It occurs when an individual pokes fun at him or herself. It has positive effects of affirming his/her allegiance to the group and acceptance of the perceived behavioural norms (Ducharme, 1994:55). However, it may attack the hearer's negative face by implying ridicule indirectly. It conveys a genuine self-putdown.

4. Pragmatic Strategies

Speech acts (SAs), impoliteness, and reference, here, seem as the pragmatic strategies used to express sarcasm.

4.1 Speech Acts (SAs)

Central to Pragmatics is Speech Acts Theory. It is a tool to interpret the meaning and function of words in political discourse. A sarcastic person may resort to a certain SA when intended to convey his attitude and achieve his aims (Kim, 2016:318). The essence of Austin's (1962:101) theory is that saying is doing. Searle (1969: 54) introduces four felicity conditions which an illocution needs to satisfy for its successful execution: propositional, preparatory, sincerity and essential conditions. The basic kinds of meaningful utterances are classified depending on the notion of illocutionary point (Searle, 1979:3).

A classification of five macro categories of SAs is presented, in which each one comprises other sub-acts, differentiated from each other by their felicity conditions. These include: assertives (the speaker states what he believes to be the case like claiming), directives (the speaker makes an attempt to get hearers to do something such as ordering), commissives (the speaker commits himself to doing something as in threatening), expressives (the speaker expresses his attitudes about objects and facts of the world like praising) and declarations (the speaker does things in the world at the moment of the utterance solely by virtue of saying that he does as in declaring a war) (Vanderveken and Kubo, 2002:5). We adopt Searle's classification for the purpose of analysis.

4.2 Impoliteness

The theory of politeness is initially introduced and theorized by Brown and Levinson (1987). It is grounded in Goffman's (1967) concept of face. It refers to any behavior that tries to save the face of the addressee (Brown and Levinson, 1987:62). Impoliteness is built on this theory. It focuses on the strategies designed to attack face, thereby causing disharmony and conflict, as Culpepper et al. (2003:1545) defines. Culpeper (2005:38) expounds that impoliteness arises when the speaker commits face-attack intentionally or/and the hearer perceives behaviour as intentionally face-attacking, or by a combination of cases. It refers to linguistic behaviors that are assessed by the hearer as threatening his face or social identity, and "infringing the norms of appropriate behavior that prevail in particular contexts and among particular interlocutors, whether intentionally or not" (Holmes et al. 2008:196). It is not inherent in words and phrases but is a social practice (Mills, 2017: 45).

As stated by Culpeper (1996:356-8), there are five super strategies for performing a Face Threatening Act (FTA): **Bald on-record impoliteness**, **Positive impoliteness strategies**, **Negative impoliteness strategies**, **mock politeness**, and **off-record impoliteness**. They have a number of sub-strategies: negative (e.g., Frighten; Condescend, Scorn or Ridicule; Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect; Call the other name; etc.) and positive (e.g., Ignore, snub the other; Disassociate from the other; Use inappropriate identity markers; Seek disagreement; etc.). LoCastro

(2012:141) avers that speakers decide to perform a threatening act to face as they consider three variables: the social distance between the interlocutors; the power difference between them; and the weight of the imposition.

4.3 Reference

Reference is a notion which is central to pragmatics as it describes "one of the action a speaker in using language to mean something particular on a particular occasion" (Brown, 1995:62). Yule (1996:17) considers reference as an act in which a speaker employs linguistic formulas to help a listener recognize something. Such referring expressions can assume the forms of deixis, proper names, definite descriptions and demonstratives (Korta and Perry, 2011). According to Birner (2013:110), a referring expression designates a linguistic form used by the speaker in a way that helps the addressee to identify an entity in the world. According to Yule (2010:131), reference is based on inference. Inference refers to supplementary information resorted to by the hearer in order to establish a link between what is expressed and what is left implicit.

Deixis is "the study of deictic or indexical expressions in language" (Levinson, 2006:100). It can be typified: personal, spatial, temporal and social pronouns (ibid.:111). The use of these deictic elements are related to the distinctions made in social contexts between the interlocutors in terms of their power, their age, their gender, and their occupation. Such deictic uses may achieve different sarcastic purposes (Yule, 1996:101).

Different Strategies of referencing are utilized to convey offense and humiliation in sarcastic discourse; they generate different sarcastic attitudes and opinions. The distance among interlocutors may be realized in psychological terms and not simply in physical ones. The sarcastic speaker, for instance, may use *that* instead of *this* talking about something not far. This indicates his sarcastic contempt and condemnation (LoCastro, 2012:25).

5. The Analytical Framework

On the basis of the previous discussion, an analytical framework can be engineered to be the basic apparatus for the analysis. Figure (1) explains that explicit sarcasm in Trump's debate is manifested explicitly. As mentioned before, only the explicit instances of sarcasm are put under investigation. These are manifested pragmatically via speech acts, impoliteness strategies, and reference. Thus, the model of analysis is an eclectic one which has elaborated in terms of the review of literature in this study. This is schematized in Figure (1) below as follows:
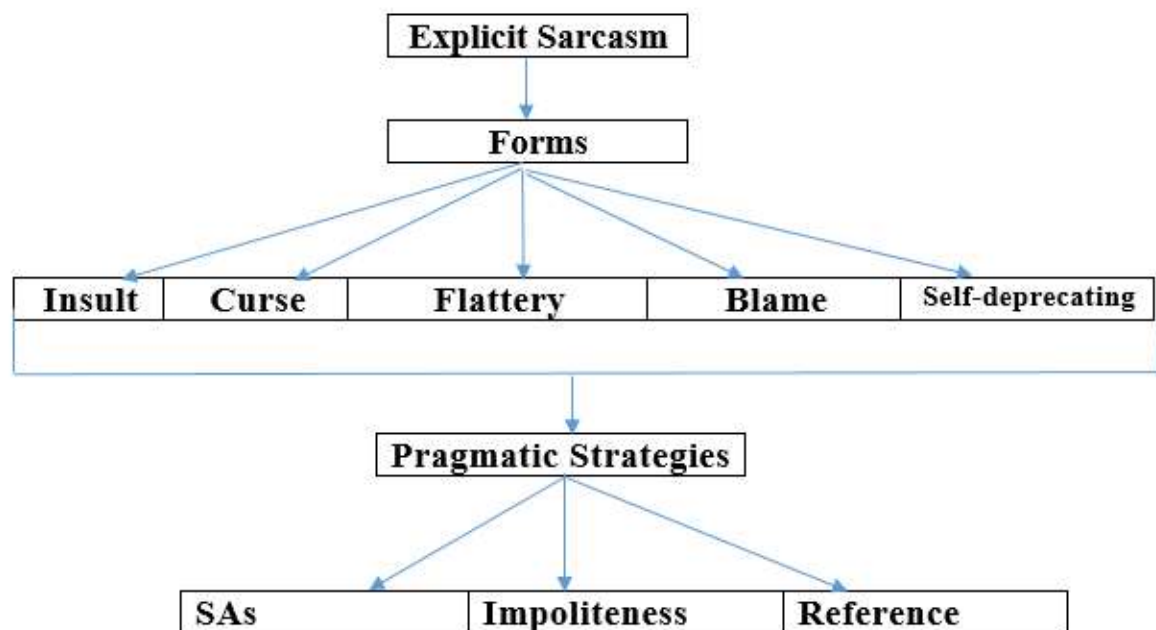
Figure 1. An analytical framework for pragmatic manifestations of explicit sarcasm

6. Data and Analysis

6.1 Data Description and Collection

This study looks for some extracts in Trump's third Presidential debate that bear sarcasm. The type of sarcasm is specified first then the utterances are scrutinized to decide what pragmatic strategy has been used by Trump to impart his sarcasm. Due to space restrictions, some extracts have been selected for the analysis. The extracts are analysed in terms of the model developed in the previous discussion and represented by Figure (1).

6.2 Data Analysis

The extracts, here, are qualitatively analysed as mentioned below:

Extract (1):

"We're going to secure the border. And once the border is secured, at a later date, we'll make a determination as to the rest. But we have some bad hombres here, and we're going to get them out."

In this utterance, Trump makes a reference to border and immigrants. While he is emphasizing the idea of building and securing the border, he directly refers to immigrants as *bad hombres* which means bad people, specifically Mexican immigrants. It is interpreted as sarcastic. It uses a quip or a witty remark to make points at the other's expense. It is an inappropriate way of addressing. The unsuitability of using this word in this context gives rise to sarcastic evaluation. This utterance shows an explicit sarcasm in the form of insult: *"But we have some bad hombres here."* Trump mocks Mexican immigrants as bad hombres. *Hombre* is a form of Mock Spanish, which is used by people to give their speech a colloquial tone and to evoke humour. The effect of this register is

based on the listener's awareness of its indexing a negative stereotype of Spanish speakers in the United States. It utilizes the negative evaluation of Mexican immigrants as criminals and not good people. It is expressed via the pragmatic manifestation of the expressive SA of vilifying: the speaker vilifies and negatively stereotypes those immigrants, and not all immigrants, as being bad people. It is exemplified as well by utilizing the referencing strategy of the proper noun (bad hombres). It also expresses negative impoliteness in the form of belittling the other when labelling Mexicans as bad people.

Extract (2):

Clinton: *Well, Chris, I am record as saying we need to put more money into Social Security Trust fund. That's part of my commitment to raise taxes on the wealthy. My Social Security payroll contribution will go up as will Donald's assuming he can't figure out how to get out of it, but what we want to do is --*

Trump: *"Such a nasty woman."*

In this utterance, Trump criticizes Clinton calling her a nasty woman. This act is sarcastic since he uses remarks which are truly abusive and disparaging, carrying no humour to be appreciated by the target. This remark is used to denigrate and foster a conflict with his opponent. This word is commonly used to describe things that are unpleasant to taste, smell, or feel. To describe her in such offended way, renders her to look ridiculous in public. Sarcasm is manifested explicitly taking the form of insult. The speaker uses a pejorative negative word which denotes evilness and wickedness. It is realized pragmatically by SA of criticizing. It is impolite. Calling a woman as 'nasty' is a pejorative act that is not suitable for women who like to be respected and appreciated especially in public.

Extract (3):

"And this is what's caused the Great Migration where she's taking in tens of thousands of Syrian refugees, who probably in many cases -- not probably, who are definitely in many cases, ISIS-aligned. And we now have them in our country. Wait til you see -- this is going to be the great Trojan horse. Wait til you see what happens in the coming years. Lots of luck, Hillary. Thanks a lot for doing a great job."

In this utterance, there is a sarcastic hidden challenge implied to the harmonious interpersonal relationship between the two candidates. He claims that American national identity is threatened by Clinton's administration letting Syrian refugees pour into this country. Thus, because of Clinton's misjudgment, America's national security is threatened. That is why he mocks her policies and activities. He expresses his concern and fear ironically by saying "**Lots of luck, Hillary. Thanks a lot for doing a great job**." Trump utters some sarcastic statements which are considered bold because they imply something contrary to what he actually means. Thus, it is realized explicitly in the form of flattery as he thanks her for her great job of protecting America sarcastically. It appears in the form of SA of blaming; he blames her for having taken decisions of letting Syrian refugees come into America. This off-record impoliteness that is realized by mock politeness. This strategy is triggered by pretending that the speaker uses a cultural

norm in thanking the hearer for the great job of permitting Syrian refuges to live in his country. In terms of reference, he actualizes the proper noun "Hillary" to refer to his target.

Extract (4):

Clinton: *Well Chris, let me respond to that because that's horrifying. You know, every time Donald thinks things aren't going in his direction, he claims whatever it is, is rigged against him. The FBI conducted a yearlong investigation into my e-mails. They concluded there was no case. He said the FBI was rigged.*

Trump: "*Should have gotten it.*"

In this utterance, Trump emphasizes that the FBI members have not conducted a real investigation into Clinton's e-mails. He claims that they have rigged against him. His act is interpreted as sarcastic. It is based on remarks that are used to criticize someone in a way that is amusing to others but annoying to the person criticized. It causes face damaging to the target by not showing value to his positive face as it expresses rejection and dislike. This is done with the purpose of teasing.

Sarcasm, here, is shown explicitly as the speaker utters a blame to the FBI members who has just rigged the results of the investigations regarding Clinton's e-mails. Two pragmatic strategies are used: SAs and impoliteness. Concerning SAs, expressive SA of reproaching is applied as he emphasizes that those members should obtain this severe treatment (calling them as riggers) as a kind of punishment for their bad deeds. Impoliteness is reflected by the use of negative impoliteness represented by the sub-strategy of emphasizing his relative power upon the other.

7. Conclusions

The study has come up with the following remarks:

1. In trump's debate, sarcasm has been seen as an explicit form of contempt in which derogatory expressions are used to imply ridicule or mockery. It is manifested explicitly through the forms of insult, flattery, and blame. Thus, the first hypothesis is partially verified because other explicit forms (curse and self-deprecating) are not used to manifest sarcasm explicitly in the context under study.

2. Trump reflects his sarcastic attitudes via the pragmatic strategies of speech acts, referencing, and impoliteness. This verifies the second hypothesis.

3. Sarcasm is an act of interpretation and when considering its explicit forms, one needs to appeal to the context in which they are utilized.

4. Trump's commitment to the use of explicit forms of sarcasm helps him achieve his goals in initiating an attack at Clinton's political short-sightedness so as to distort her image and weaken her popularity.

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