A Pragmatic Representation of Racist Sarcasm in Trump's Announcement Speech

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التمظهر التداولي للسخرية العنصرية في خطاب اعلان ترامب

ابتهال عبد العزيز يوسف
المديرية العامة لتربية محافظة بابل

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Abstract:

This study is an attempt to pragmatically reveal how sarcasm is used by D. Trump to express and represent racism as an ideology in discourse. Trump's Announcement Speech is purposefully chosen as the data of the current study because it is believed that issues related to racism are revealed through this speech. In other words, the study analyzes the pragmatic strategies used by President D. Trump in some excerpts taken from his speech where the expression of racism by the use of sarcasm is expected.

Key Words: pragmatics, sarcasm, racism, impoliteness, ideology

ملخّص:

هذه الدراسة هي محاولة للكشف بشكل عملي عن كيفية استخدام السخرية من قبل ترامب للتعبير عن العنصرية وتمثيلها كإيديولوجيا في الخطاب. تم اختيار خطاب إعلان ترامب عن قصد على أنه بيانات الدراسة الحالية لأنه يعتقد أن القضايا المتعلقة بالعنصرية يتم الكشف عنها من خلال هذا الخطاب. بعبارة أخرى، تحلل الدراسة الاستراتيجيات التداولية التي استخدمها الرئيس ترامب في بعض المقاطع المأخوذة من خطابه حيث من المتوقع توافر التعبير عن العنصرية باستخدام السخرية.

الكلمات الدالة: التداولية، السخرية، العنصرية، الوقاحة، الإيديولوجيا

1. Introduction

Americans are known of showing a tendency to ridicule, mock, denigrate people for their ethnicity. Billig (2001, p. 267) suggests that there are integral links between racial hatred and dehumanizing, violent sarcasm. In this case, sarcasm is studied to establish a context where the essential principles of racism are expressed, like, for example, black people are not part of 'decent' society; black people are animals; and black people are biologically inferior to whites (Howitt and Owusu-Bempah, 2005, p. 51). So, sarcasm is related to the notion of racism; it can be used as a tool to measure the aggressiveness towards race. To achieve the aim 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

The task of giving an accurate definition of the term 'sarcasm' is not easy as it overlaps with the term 'irony.' Some scholars use these terms interchangeably (Attardo, et al., 2003, p. 243). Some try to put a partial distinction between the two terms. For instance, Haiman (1998, p. 20) puts two distinctions between the two: "First, situations may be ironic, but only people can be sarcastic. Second, people may be unintentionally ironic, but sarcasm requires intention." Another important distinction is that irony is considered to be subtle and veiled, whereas sarcasm strives to be maximally overt and forceful (Attardo, 2000, p. 795). Sarcasm tends to mordant and aggressive. It is characterized by being "cutting and contemptuous" (Rockwell, 2006, p. 6). Etymologically, 'sarcasm' comes from Greek sarkazein, "to tear flesh."

Sarcasm is best understood as a ridicule that is directed at a specific victim (Lee and Katz, 1998, p. 1). This ridicule may also be directed at a group or an ideology. Sarcasm appears in a critique that targets others depending on their race, sex, nationality, and religion (Hutcheon, 1995, p. 49). This means it is a nasty, mean-spirited criticism, used to enhance the

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negativity expressed as it communicates disgust to relational partners wherein it has an aim to demean the target; it is critical and specifies the addressee in the argument (Averbeck, 2013, p. 49; Colston, 2017, p. 236). It breaks cultural and moral taboos. It is socially corrosive. Sarcastic criticism is offensive because it hinges on such notions as race, nation, religion, and physical appearance.

Sarcastic criticism has an important social function. It is used to affirm their solidarity among in-group members by directing comments at out-group individuals (Ducharme, 1994, p. 55). In other words, as Attardo (2002, p. 120) claims, sarcasm has two opposed purposes: an inclusive and an exclusive one: it builds in-group solidarity through shared play; as well as it expresses a negative judgment about someone or excludes them. Thus, it can distance speakers from listeners, and it may also bond them.

In political discourse, the one who employs sarcastic critique gets benefit from "the freedom that comes from playing at conversation, tossing out statements that can be taken in a variety of ways" (Cross, 1998, p. 132). Thus, he can avoid any sanctions that follow from stating directly what he thinks. From this perspective, the sarcastic speaker takes non-committal attitude towards what he says, and in case that he is accused of being hostile, he can retreat from what he sarcastically implies (Attardo, 2002, p. 122).

3. Racism

The notion of racism is basically related to that of race. Wren (2001, p. 142) holds that race designates a "pseudo-scientific division of all humans into distinct categories based on skin colour." It is based on "inherent inferiority of particular racial groups" (ibid.). To Goldberg (2002, p. 118), race is "a social or cultural significance assigned to or assumed in physical or biological markers of human beings," including the markers of cultural attributes, habits, and behaviours.

Essed (1991, p. 39) conceives racism as an ideology where a complex systemic process of domination is exercised by one group over

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ISSN Print 1994 – 8999
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another so as to sustain a relationship of power. For Omi and Winant (1994, p. 55), racism "signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies." They think of it "as an element of social structure rather than as an irregularity within it" (ibid.). Garner (2009, p. 11) sees racism as encompassing the elements of hierarchical power relationships between people and discriminatory actions; it is an ideology about racial differences.

Racism may also refer to the notion of **cultural racism** as most scholars see New Racism to be based on cultural discrimination, not biological one (Hill, 2008, p. 11). Cultural racism discriminates depending on cultural difference, implying that "culture can also function like a nature" (Balibar 1991, p. 22). It follows the rhetoric that "minorities have developed cultural characteristics that in some way place them at a disadvantage. In more extreme forms, this view holds that groups are culturally inferior" (Farley,1995, p. 133).

Nationalist's ideologies are also central to the discourse of racism. The concept of nation forms a key part of European nationalist ideologies during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Anderson (1983, p. 6, 111) describes the nation as a culturally grounded, imagined political community where all the members will never know or meet their fellow-members. Yet, they are united in one state to preserve the common interests they share. They, as Miles (1993, p. 208) shows, come together as a particular territorially bound population to develop a sense of belonging of a nation state. This implies that we must find others who are culturally different and who do not share the common interests, and, thus, it conveniently legitimates that they should be excluded (Wren, 2001, p. 144). Others do not have the rights like the original citizens and they are construed as a threat to the national-cultural uniqueness and integrity. Thus, they are often presented with terms as foreigners, aliens, bogus, strangers and illegal (Buk-Berge, 2007, p. 184).

Two manifestations of racism can be scrutinized: overt and covert (Teo, 2000, p. 8). The overt is exemplified by the use of racial slurs, epithets or jokes. The word nigger is a slur that stigmatizes an African

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American person in American society. The covert form is disguised in subtleness and it can be resolved via the pragmatic aspects.

4. Pragmatic Issues

Speech acts (SAs), impoliteness, reference, and implicature in addition to their strategies are chosen as the pragmatic phenomena to understand how sarcasm is used for conveying racism.

4.1 Speech Acts (SAs)

Being engaged in an everyday communicative encounter involves using various speech acts. Speech acts are tools that a sarcastic speaker may resort to when intended to convey his sarcastic attitudes and to achieve certain ends (Kim, 2016, p. 318). The underlying assumption of Austin's (1962, p. 101) Speech Act theory is that speakers use language to perform some actions (speech acts). Searle (1969, p. 54) introduces four felicity conditions which an illocution needs to satisfy for its successful execution: propositional, preparatory, sincerity and essential conditions. 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: representatives (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, p. 5).

Sarcasm utilizes different SAs. Face-threatening acts are issued when sarcastic speakers ridicule, vilify, mock, pose a threat, berate, denigrate, or belittle a person due to beliefs, race, or religion, and so forth (Littman and Mey, 1991, p. 147). One needs to notice that an utterance is not sarcastic per se unless we identify other social and cultural factors to classify it as such (Katz et al., 2004, p. 186).

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4.2 Impoliteness

Impoliteness is known as an ideology which can be manifested in discourse via language (Culpeper, 2011, p. 15-6). It is built on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness. It is interested in explaining the manner in which the verbal transaction is done and it is built on the concept of 'face' proposed by Goffman (1967) (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 62). Impoliteness focuses on the strategies designed to attack face, thereby causing disharmony and conflict, as Culpepper et al. (2003, p. 1545) defines. Culpeper (2005, p. 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 is not inherent in words and phrases but is a social practice. Thus, evaluating utterances as impolite is not an individual act, but an act embedded within an awareness of social norms and the moral order (Mills, 2017, p. 45).

Culpepper's (1996, p. 356-8) schematizes his primary model of impoliteness with the following strategies: (a) **Bald on-record impoliteness** where the face threat is performed directly, (b) **Positive impoliteness strategies** are designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants, (c) **Negative impoliteness strategies** are designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants, (d) **mock politeness**: the threatening of face is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are insincere so that they remain surface realisations, and (e) **off-record impoliteness** where the face-threatening is performed by means of an implicature in a way that one attributable intention outweighs any others. LoCastro (2012, p. 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 describes "one of the action a speaker in using language to mean something particular on a particular occasion" (Brown, 1995, p.

62). It involves the relationship between linguistic expressions and the things, ideas, entities, state and people that such expressions designate (Strauss and Feiz, 2014, p. 101). It accommodates deixis, proper names, definite descriptions and demonstratives (Korta and Perry, 2011). Deixis is "the study of deictic or indexical expressions in language" (Levinson, 2006, p. 100). It can be typified: personal (you, me), spatial (here, there), temporal (now, then) and social (Mr., his highness) pronouns (ibid., p. 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, p. 10-11).

Wodak (2009, p. 319) affirm that referential strategies and nomination serve an ideological role in reporting a pattern that portrays the self positively and the other negatively. Different Strategies of referencing are utilized to convey offense and humiliation in sarcastic discourse; they generate different racist 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, p. 25).

4.4 Implicature

Grice (1975, p. 45) introduces the Cooperative Principle to suggest that in any conversation, participants are assumed to cooperate with each other. To do this, they try to adhere to four maxims: quantity, quality, relevance and manner. When these maxims are flouted, language figurative use is the result, and the speaker is seen as uncooperative. For instance, metaphors are the result of flouting quality or manner maxims; hyperboles and understatements flout quantity maxim; and rhetorical questions come from quality maxim flouting (Grice, 1989, p. 34). Thus, these tropes are understood as conversational implicatures since they are seen as violations of the aforementioned maxims and their interpretation is required additional cognitive effort. (Gibbs, 1993, p. 254-5). Implicature

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comes about when something is not explicitly said, but "projects that some upshot has been left unsaid" (Haugh, 2015, p. 1).

The term implicature is derived from the verb to imply, as is its cognate implication. What is implied is folded in, and has to be unfolded for the sake of understanding (Mey, 2001, p. 45). It is seen as a form of social action, as well as a reference to what a speaker implies, suggests, indicates and hints (Haugh, 2015, p. 314). It is distinguished into conventional and conversational. It is the second one that is related to express sarcasm since in the process of interpreting sarcastic utterances, it takes into consideration the available background information and contextual factors (Dynel, 2016, p. 231).

5. The Model of Analysis

The model of analysis developed by this paper is based on the pragmatic issues discussed in the previous sections. The analytical framework is basically divided into four basic components: SAs, reference, impoliteness and maxim breaching. This last strategy yields implicature. These pragmatic phenomena are utilized as strategies. SAs invite the macro acts of Searle's (1979) categorization into the scene. Reference, following Korta and Perry (2011), is concerned with the deictic expressions, definite descriptions and proper nouns. Conversational implicature yields some tropes like metaphor, hyperbole or the like (Grice, 1975). It is worthy to mention that all the examples are first analysed to show how sarcasm is used to express racist issues and opinions. Then the pragmatic structure of these racist sarcastic examples are analysed. Thus, the eclectic model of analysis is engineered in Figure 1 as follows:
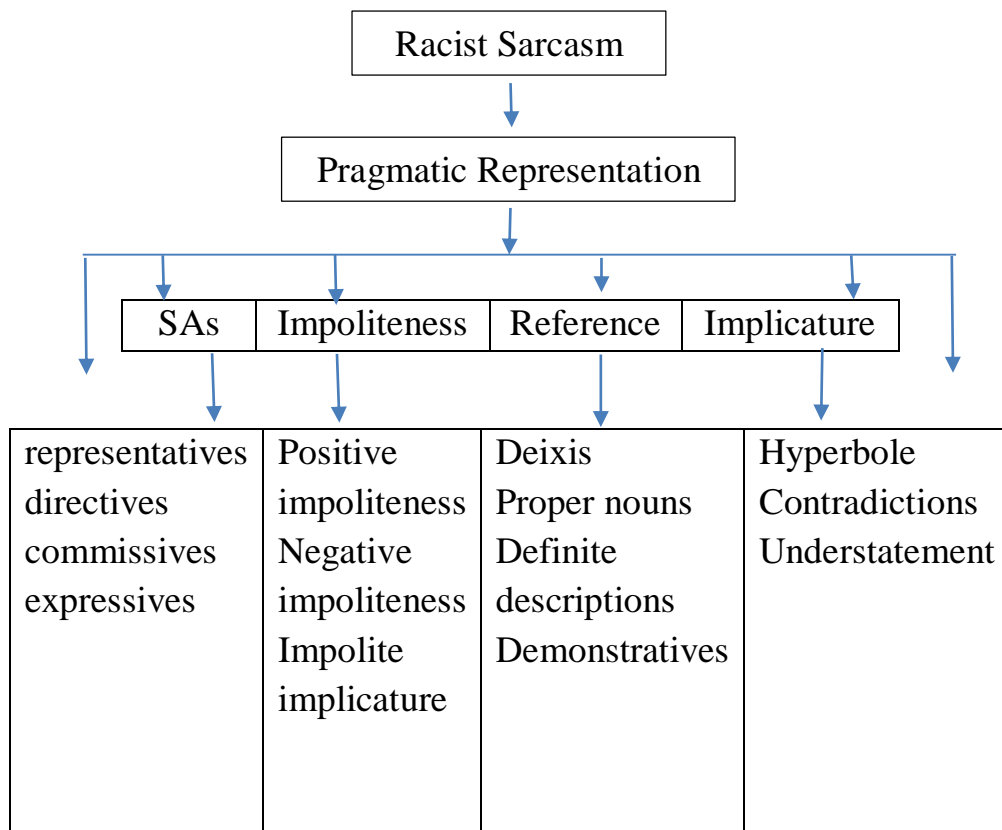
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│  Pragmatic Representation   │
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SAs	Impoliteness	Reference	Implicature
representatives directives commissives expressives	Positive impoliteness Negative impoliteness Impolite implicature	Deixis Proper nouns Definite descriptions Demonstratives	Hyperbole Contradictions Understatement

Figure 1. An analytical framework for pragmatic representation of racist sarcasm

6. Data and Analysis

6.1 Data Collection and Description

The data under scrutiny are extracts taken from a transcribed D. Trump's Presidential announcement speech in 2015 (Web Source 1). The choice of this debate is due to the fact that it represents an American context. It is expected to target issues where racism seems to be, like those of American foreign policy and domestic issues. Four excerpts, where instances of racist sarcasm manifest themselves, are selected. The unit of analysis is the utterance.

6.2 Analysis

<u>Excerpt 1</u>

"When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. <u>And some, I assume, are good people.</u>"

Trump's racism against immigrants (the Mexicans) manifests itself clearly via his words. The image coincides with the positive-us/negative-them dichotomy. Those different Others (immigrants) are not welcomed by Trump because they pose a serious problem for America as they are real criminals who bring problems with them. He uses sarcasm to enhance his racism when he says "And some, I assume, are good people." This act is sarcastic. It is a ridicule in which laudatory expressions are used to imply condemnation and contempt. It implies insincerity since he first portrays them as criminals, then he says some of them are good. It is realized pragmatically by implicature: he implicates that all those people are criminals, drug traffickers, and rapists. He uses (understatement) when saying "some" to implicate his sarcastic evaluation. He issues direct SA of asserting as he asserts that some immigrants are good. Indirectly, he accuses them of being criminals. This act attacks the hearer's negative face as he ridicules them by saying contradictory things against them. It shows negative impoliteness. Referencing to the Mexicans, using the definite description "good people", clarifies this racist sarcastic ideology.

<u>Excerpt 2</u>

"<u>I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I'll build them very inexpensively, I will build a great, great wall on our southern border. And I will have Mexico pay for that wall</u>."

Trump promises that he will build great walls along the border between America and Mexico. He hints to his superior status over those weak immigrants emphasizing the negative- them/ positive-us dichotomy.

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He views himself as a superior (alluding to racism) to exaggerate his promise of building walls that are used to stop immigrants from coming into America. They are conceived as inferior and helpless in American society. His sarcasm is manifested by the absurdity of his promise that he "will have Mexico pay for that wall." It is hilarious exaggeration for how Mexico will pay for the wall which is built against its will. Mexico always argues against building such walls. His sarcasm is manifested by the commissive SA of promising, although this promise can be but a lie. He uses proper noun (Mexico) as a referencing strategy. It is negative impoliteness as he is condescending upon them. This sarcasm shows insinuations; it alludes to the prototypical belief America is the superior nation that make other nations submit to its decisions without arguing.

Excerpt 3

"I will stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons. <u>And we won't be using a man like Secretary Kerry that has absolutely no concept of negotiation, who's making a horrible and laughable deal, who's just being tapped along as they make weapons right now, and then goes into a bicycle race at 72 years old, and falls and breaks his leg. I won't be doing that. And I promise I will never be in a bicycle race. That I can tell you</u>."

While he speaks about his plans of preventing Iran from getting nuclear weapons, he makes fun of Secretary Kerry and his failed plans in dealing with Iran. This is racist sarcasm as it shows a ridicule that is based on national racist issues (Iran and its nuclear power). The racist ideology of Trump appears when he issues the SA of mocking. He mocks Kerry by saying instead of looking for solutions related to the Iranian threat, he is interested in riding bicycles. He intends to criticize him indirectly. He accuses him of indifference of the threat this country faces because of Iranian nuclear power. He criticizes his policies and political visions. This reflects implicature represented by the strategy of showing contradictions. It is also impolite since it shows the belief that Kerry is an incompetent politician and he knows nothing about political matters; he is ineffective in everything, even in riding bicycles. This is impolite implicature. He also

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alludes to the fact he will never behave like him as he does not like riding bicycles. This implies that he sees himself as better and superior than him due to his racism. He belittles him using the referring strategy of proper nouns (a man like Secretary Kerry).

Expert 4

Right now, think of this: We owe China $1.3 trillion. We owe Japan more than that. So they come in, they take our jobs, they take our money, and then they loan us back the money, and we pay them in interest, and then the dollar goes up so their deal's even better.

"How stupid are our leaders? How stupid are these politicians to allow this to happen? How stupid are they?"

Trump's racism appears in the criticism he is directed at American leaders because of their failure in dealing with issues that are seen to impose a threat on American economy. It is racist because their failure relates to dealing with other countries represented by China and Japan. It is sarcastic as it shows the intentional use of taunting remark to challenge the other. He portrays the leaders as stupid ones because they don't realize how the other nations try to deceive them financially; they exploit the American leaders' stupidity to achieve their benefits. He focuses on such stupidity by depicting how cunning the other nations are. There is a sense of mockery in this image. This racist sarcasm is manifested explicitly through SA of insulting. Trump insults those leaders calling them stupid. It is positive impoliteness since it attacks the hearer's positive. The leaders want to be respected by the others. Referencing, the use of proper noun (our leaders), is utilized to convey sarcasm.

Table 1 below demonstrates a summery for the analyses of the four instances scrutinized above.

Table 1. Summery for the sample analysis

Ex	SAs	Impoliteness	Reference	Implicature
1.	Asserting accusing	Negative impoliteness (Ridicule)	Definite description	Conversational implicature (understatement)
2.	promising	Negative impoliteness (condescending)	Proper nouns	Conversational implicature (hyperbole)
3.	mocking	Impolite implicature	Proper nouns	Conversational implicature (contradictions)
4.	insulting	Positive impoliteness	Proper nouns	

7. Conclusions

According to the above analysis, the following conclusions are derived:

1. It is clearly stated that Trump uses sarcasm to express his racist concerns and ideas. It is manifested explicitly and implicitly.

2. Trump makes use of various pragmatic strategies including the speech acts of insulting, mocking, promising, and vilifying; pragmatic reference; generating implicature though tropes; and different impoliteness strategies.

3. To probe into critical issues and how they are implemented via language, one needs to activate pragmatic theories in analyzing and understanding them. This is because it highlights the social functioning of language and reveals how such issues may affect harmony in society.

4. Doing such analysis also requires background knowledge of contexts, history, culture, cognition, societies among others.

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Adab Al-Kufa Journal
No. 55 / P3
Shaban 1444 / March / 2023

ISSN Print 1994 – 8999
ISSN Online 2664-469X

مجلّة آداب الكوفة
العدد : ٥٥ /ج٣
شعبان ١٤٤٤ هـ / آذار ٢٠٢٣ م