

The Study of Sarcasm in Political Discourse

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دراسة ألتهمك في الخطاب السياسي

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مديرية تربية ذي قار

الأستاذ الدكتورة زينب كاظم عكاب

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Abstract:

Sarcasm is a complicated linguistic phenomenon especially in written language because changing the tone of speech makes sarcasm more apparent. Sarcasm often refers to a specific, recognizable individual and it implies criticism. Incongruity is the main characteristic that sarcastic speech contains in addition to opposition and negativity. Everyday interaction usually includes sarcasm, which affects the nature of nearly every exchange. As a result, sarcasm offers a chance for in-depth linguistic research. In this study, the researcher sets the following aims: showing which types of speech acts are used more than other types in the political contexts; shedding a light on the social functions that sarcasm serves in the political texts; and knowing the linguistic mechanisms which are employed in the political texts to reflect sarcasm. Accordingly, some hypotheses are put which are as follows: expressives are used more than other types of speech acts in the political texts; social control is the main function that sarcasm serves

الملخص:

التهكم (sarcasm) ظاهرة لغوية معقدة خاصة في اللغة المكتوبة. اما في الكلام، فإن تغيير نبرة الكلام يجعل التهكم أكثر وضوحاً. وغالباً ما يشير التهكم إلى شخص محدد ومعروف وتتطوي على النقد. التناقض هو السمة الرئيسية التي يحتويها الخطاب التهكمي بالإضافة إلى المعارضة والسلبية. وعادةً ما يتضمن التفاعل اليومي التهكم التي يؤثر على طبيعة كل تبادل تقريباً. وهدفت الدراسة الحالية الى: بيان أكثر أنواع أفعال الكلام (speech acts) المستخدمة في النصوص السياسية وإلقاء الضوء على الوظائف الاجتماعية التي يؤديها التهكم في النصوص السياسية ومعرفة الآليات اللغوية المستخدمة في النصوص السياسية للتعبير عن التهكم. وعليه فقد افترضت الدراسة ان أكثر انواع أفعال الكلام المستخدمة في النصوص السياسية هي التعبيرية (expressives) وان السيطرة الاجتماعية (social control) هي الوظيفة الرئيسية التي يؤديها التهكم في النصوص السياسية وان الاستعارة (metaphor) هي أكثر آلية لغوية مستخدمة في النصوص السياسية للتعبير عن التهكم. وقد يستخدم الباحث نموذجاً توليفياً مكون من نظرية أفعال الكلام لسيرل وفاندرفنك (١٩٨٥) ووظائف دخيرم للتهكم (١٩٩٤) وآليات تاباكارو اللغوية للتهكم. ولقد توصلت الدراسة الى ان استخدام أفعال الكلام التوكيدية (assertives) أكثر من الأنواع الأخرى وان العدوان الفكاهي (humorous aggression) هو وظيفة شائعة جداً للتهكم في النصوص السياسية المستخدمة وان الآلية اللغوية الأكثر استخداماً للتعبير عن التهكم هي الاستعارة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ألتهم، الخطاب السياسي،
أفعال الكلام، الوظائف، الأليات.

in the political texts; and metaphor is used frequently in political texts as a mechanism to reflect sarcasm.

The researcher adopts an eclectic model which consists of three theories: Searle and Vanderveken's Speech Acts Theory (1985); Ducharme's Functions of Sarcasm (1994); and Tabacaru's Linguistic Mechanisms of Sarcasm. The analysis of the chosen political texts shows the following conclusions: assertive speech acts are used more than other types of speech acts; humorous aggression is a very common function of sarcasm in the employed political texts; and the most utilized linguistic mechanism to express sarcasm is metaphor.

Key Words: sarcasm, political discourse, speech acts, functions, mechanisms.

1. Introduction

Sarcasm is an indirect way to hurt the listener. It is mainly expressed positively and involves opposition and negativity. Sarcasm is closely connected to irony; in fact, many linguists see it as a subtype of irony and commonly refer to it as verbal irony, even though it may be expressed nonverbally. In this study, the researcher tries to answer the following questions: what type of speech acts that are used frequently by the sarcasts in the political text? What are the social functions that sarcasm serves in the political texts? What are the linguistic mechanisms that are employed to reflect the sarcastic message? Accordingly, the researcher

aims to show the speech acts that are frequently used in the sarcastic texts, to shed light on the social functions that sarcasm serves in political texts, and to see the linguistic mechanisms that the sarcasts employ to convey their sarcastic intentions. The following hypotheses are set in this study: expressives are used more than other types of speech acts in the political texts; the social control is the main function that sarcasm serves in the political texts; and metaphor is used frequently in the political text as a mechanism to reflect sarcasm. The analysis of the data shows the following findings: the first and the second hypotheses are refuted while the third one is verified.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Sarcasm

A clear and an accurate definition of sarcasm has not yet been agreed upon. Traditionally, sarcasm refers to the idea of opposition which means that the original thought is presented opposite (Kashikar & Ramteke, 2019, p.1). Sarcasm is used when the target of the utterance is an individual (Filik et al., 2016, p. 1). Similarly, Barbe (1995, p.29) affirmed that "sarcasm has a place under the heading irony". Nilsen and Nilsen (2018, p.304) defined Sarcasm as a type of ridicule or mockery that tends to be painful, contemptuous, and cruel. It is often characterized as destructive. Baragona and Rambo (2018, pp.1-3) stated that there are four points that explain the nature of sarcasm: the first point is that the speaker means and says the opposite of what apparently claimed to be said. Sarcastic utterances convey a metamessage. The second point is that the true meaning of the utterance must be derisory. It is intentionally used as a means of verbal aggression, which is a key aspect of sarcasm. Third, there must be incongruity between the words and the message. Finally, elements of the context have something to do with the interpretation of the sarcastic utterances. They can reinforce the perception of sarcasm. The view of opposition is supported by Haiman (1998, p.9-10), stating that the speaker clearly intends (and expresses) the reverse of what she or he apparently appears to be saying. , in this point, Camp affirmed that

sarcasm refers to negative judgment rather than opposition. In addition to be sarcastic, speech must be direct and insincere (Camp, 2011, pp.8-19). According to Attardo (2000, p.795), "sarcasm is an overtly aggressive type of irony with clearer markers/ cues and a clear target". There are two elements concerning sarcasm: implied negative meaning and existence of a target (Joshi et al., 2018, p.v).

2.2 Functions of Sarcasm

There are five social functions that sarcasm serves: "social control, declaration of allegiance, establishing social solidarity and social distance, venting frustration, and humorous aggression". The function of the social control means that sarcasm is used in interactions between people of different social ranks, such as between students and teachers or between children and their parents. Additionally, people with a very limited influence sometimes employ sarcasm to criticize the actions of those who are powerful. Declaration of allegiance refers to the fact that sarcastic remarks can be self-oriented, implying that the speaker supports a specific group and agrees with the established norms of the behaviour. This function contains self-oriented sarcasm. So, the speaker is both the sarcast and the target of sarcastic speech at the same time. The speaker divides himself into two parts: one part is loyal to the group's ideals, and the other part violates and criticizes these ideals. Establishing social solidarity and social distance means that sarcasm is frequently employed in the continuous conversations among members of a group to express their connection with those who do not belong to the group or those who are not regarded as deserving of membership in the group. Sarcasm serves as venting frustration tool when sarcasm is sometimes expressed as a reaction to things or circumstances that violate someone's or a group's conventional norms. Using humour while expressing a critical point is an effective way to be witty. So, although sarcasm may be made without humour, Ducharme argues that the two can be combined to make what he calls "humorous aggression," "humorous derision," or "jocular aggression." (Ducharme, 1994, pp.56-57 and Dews et al., 1995, p.298-299).

2.3 Linguistic Mechanisms of Expressing Sarcasm

Tabacaru (2019, p.126) presented a classification of the many linguistic mechanisms that are employed to generate a sarcastic meaning. This classification is important for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and a distinct separation from irony. It shows productivity in sarcasm since these processes rely on a variety of language patterns and propose an incongruous meaning when used to create a playful impact on listeners. In addition, this classification emphasizes the importance of the common ground between the interlocutors. These linguistic mechanisms are antithesis, repetitive statements, explicitation, metonymy, metaphor, shift of focus, reasoning, and rhetorical questions.

3. Methodology of the Study

Sarcasm is a sub type of verbal irony with specific intention to hurt. The present study is limited to the pragmatic analysis of five political texts which are taken from The Week Magazine. Each text is taken from a certain issue.

Sarcasm is one of the most difficult and problematic phenomena in English, and this research aims to shed light on it by illuminating its many facets, including the speech acts used to express it, the conversational implicature of sarcasm, the exploitation of politeness to appear polite when using sarcasm, the social functions of sarcasm, and its 4 linguistic mechanisms. It may be advantageous for researchers whose primary goals are related to pragmatic studies. Since sarcasm has such a strong social component, it might also be useful in providing theoretical context to researchers who specialize in sociolinguistic studies.

In this study, the researcher adopts an eclectic model which consists of three theories to analyze a group of political texts. The first theory is Speech Acts of Searle and Vanderveken (1985). There are simply five illocutionary processes, which corresponds to the five basic categories of language. Statements of fact correspond to assertives, requests for action

correspond to directives, promises to take action correspond to commissives, commitments to alter the world correspond to declaratives, and emotional and mental states or attitudes and sentiments are all forms of communication which correspond to expressives (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985, p. 52; Hidayat, 2016, p.5-6 and Mufiah and Rahman, 2019, p.127-128). The second theory is Ducharme's Functions of Sarcasm (1994). Sarcasm is mainly serves social functions because it is viewed as a social form, regardless of its intended meaning. The third theory is Tabacaru's linguistic Mechanisms of Sarcasm (2019).

3.1 The Data and Data Sources

The Data of the study are five political texts which are taken from "The Week" magazine. "The Week" is a weekly news magazine. It has several editions: Indian edition, United States edition, United Kingdom edition, Australian edition, and The Week Junior which is a children's edition. In this study, the researcher employs United States edition and United Kingdom edition.

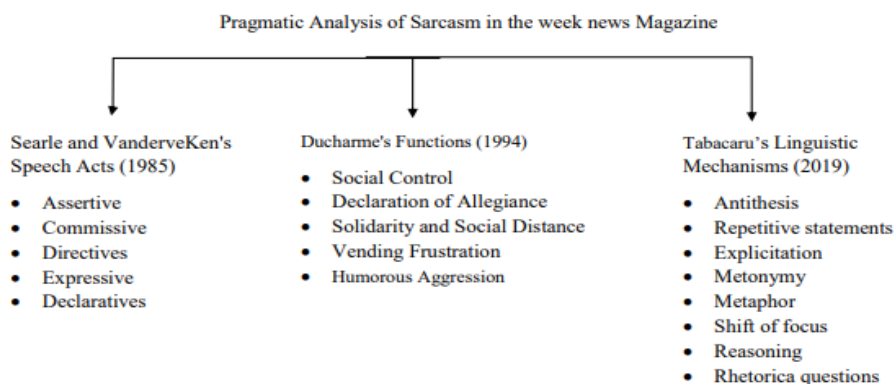


Figure of the Adopted Model

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Text No. (1)

4.1.1 Background

On September 2021, there were street festivities in Spain, particularly in Barcelona. Bikes and cars were burned, 34 individuals suffered

injuries, and 22 people were imprisoned in large open drinking events. Over the weekend, large-scale street celebrations in Barcelona degenerated into violence, resulting in hundreds of arrests and injuries. The annual La Mercè festival in Barcelona, which took place during a weekend in Catalonia, was taking place at the same time as the public drinking events. Nearly 40,000 people, most of whom were in their 20s, attended the biggest event, which occurred on Saturday. Red lines were crossed, and what started out as an issue of disorderly conduct and widespread use of the public road on the first night [Friday] became one of criminality, destruction, and vandalism.

Carles Puigdemont was the prime suspect in these events and the instigator of violence in the country. He was accused of inciting young people to commit acts of violence in Spain. Puigdemont was a Catalan politician and journalist from Spain. He served as President of Catalonia from 2016 to 2017 and as a member of the European Parliament in 2019.

4.1.2 Speech Acts

Eduardo Goligorsky, a Spanish columnist, uses an assertive speech act of saying which is a direct speech act when he says: "The violent street parties held in Barcelona and other cities in recent weeks aren't political events". He just conveys a fact about the events of violence and chaos that were happening in Barcelona, describing them as violent street parties. Then, the writer uses an assertive speech act of accusing when he accuses Carles Puigdemont, the Catalan president, of violent events in Spain. That is, when the writer says: "but they can still be traced to one particular politician: Carles Puigdemont." Based on Carles' history as a political opponent of the Spanish government, the writer made his charge. Another assertive speech act of stating is used when the writer says that Carles Puigdemont is wanted: "Wanted in Spain on charges of rebellion and sedition". Then the writer accuses the Catalan president of being an example for the bad young people: "plays an active role as a model for misguided young people". In this way he also uses an assertive speech act of accusing. The writer of the article mentioned past events and facts about the Catalanian president when he says: "Puigdemont fled

to Belgium in 2017." By doing so, the writer uses an assertive speech act of informing. Then, a declarative speech act of declaration is used: "after illegally declaring his region to be an independent republic". After that, he uses an assertive speech act of informing when he talks about Puigdemont's political position "since 2019 has served as a member of the European Parliament". These events have happened and the writer just conveys them to empower his criticism for this leader. Then he uses negative vocabularies for his aim (criticism) like fled and illegal which is an expressive speech act.

The writer uses another type of speech act which is a directive speech act of warning. It is an indirect speech act. He indirectly warned the Spanish government of a possible or coming risk, dilemma, or other bad thing: "The ongoing failure to extradite him to Spain shows Catalan youth that a traitor to his homeland can violate the law and break the peace and go unpunished". The author intended to emphasize the idea that the traitor must be arrested and punished. The alternative might spark unrest and violence as people start to believe the traitors can do what they want without a consequence. Then an assertive speech act of affirming is used when the writer says: "They have learned this lesson well."

Beginning a sentence by "Over the past month" refers to using the writer an assertive speech act which is indirect speech act of informing. He narrates events happened at a certain time by explaining that after 18 months of pandemic lockdowns, many people were permitted to celebrate on the streets and beaches, and during the last month, many of these celebrations turned into riots. The writer verified reports of nationwide rioting and acts of destruction committed by warring groups. That was by saying: "Vandals have set trash cans ablaze and destroyed public property, and some 40 people have been wounded, many in knife fights between rival gangs." After that, the author uses an assertive speech act of criticism when he criticizes the Catalan president's supporters and describes them as "ideology-free and liquor-soaked" and they were not separatists since they have no ideology at all. Then the writer uses an assertive speech act of accusing. He accused the president

of feeding the vandals' "apolitical barbarism" by encouraging them to use violence. Another assertive speech act of criticism is used when the writer says: "Lawlessness is now the norm". Last but not least, the writer uses an indirect assertive speech act of criticizing when he says: "What a great role model!" The writer indirectly criticizes the Catalan president by using exclamation.

4.1.3 Functions of Sarcasm

Venting frustration is the only function which exists in this text:

Venting Frustration

This text is filled with critical remarks that are directed towards the president and those who support him. The author addresses the recent political events that have taken place in the nation, including how the president of Catalonia is a major contributor to the violent street celebrations. Because of his tainted history, he is unsuitable to be president; in fact, in 2017, he fled to Belgium to avoid being arrested. In this text, the writer expresses his displeasure about violence parties and chaos that occur in Barcelona and he accuses the Catalan president of the incitement of Spanish youth to violence and riots in the country. Sarcasm, here, is not limited to face-to-face situations. The sarcasm does not criticize the Catalan president directly or in face-to-face interaction. In addition, sarcasm is employed in this text as a reaction to instances where group norms are violated. So, in this way, sarcasm is used to vent Frustration.

4.1.4 Mechanisms of Expressing Sarcasm

There are four mechanisms in this text to express sarcasm. They are the following:

a. Antithesis

This text contains a pragmatic contradiction: the author describes the Catalan president as a good example for his followers, despite the fact that he discusses the negative aspects of the Catalan president and the events of chaos and sabotage that occur as a result of his leadership.

b. Explicitation

The writer makes his critical comments by stating the obvious that is after his accusing the Catalan president, Carles Puigdemont. The writer mentions the president's bad deeds so as to justify his accusing by explicitation that is "Wanted in Spain on charges of rebellion and sedition, the leader of Catalonia's separatist movement "plays an active role as a model for misguided young people." Puigdemont fled to Belgium in 2017 after illegally declaring his region to be an independent republic." What is mentioned by the writer is an indication that the Catalan president is the one who incited the Spanish youth to use chaos and violence.

c. Reasoning

The writer uses deductive thinking to predict a conclusion based on the real event which is that the Spanish government fails to arrest the Catalan president which in return will lead to show "Catalan youth that a traitor to his homeland can violate the law and break the peace and go unpunished."

d. Metaphor

The writer uses three metaphorical expressions. The first is "apolitical barbarism" to refer indirectly to Catalan president supporters' violence parties and riots by encouraging them to block roads. The second is "lawlessness" to indicate the normal situation in Spain. The third one is when the writer sarcastically refers to the Catalan president as "a great role model."

4.2 Text No. (2)

4.2.1 Background

This text is written by Yu Meng, who is a Chinese columnist in Global Times. Three domestic cats that were diagnosed positive with COVID-19 were put to death by local government officials in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, in northeast China. This act generated criticism. Naturally, some Western users on social media sites like Twitter and American media sources seized the opportunity to criticize China. They denounced the choice as an act of brutality against life and the outcome of China's panic regarding COVID-19. So, in reaction to criticism from the West

over China's health interventions to control the Corona pandemic, Yu Meng wrote this piece of news.

4.2.2 Speech Acts

After it was shown that cats can transmit the Corona virus, Yu Meng criticized American society's attitude towards the Chinese killing of cats during the pandemic. By saying "How dare..." the writer uses expressive speech act of protesting which is an indirect speech act. It is framed to express anger or outrage in response to the offensive criticism of Americans to Chinese government. An assertive speech act is used when "Westerners criticize China for euthanizing pet cats that test positive for the coronavirus". It is a direct speech act of saying. The writer also uses an assertive speech act of claiming which is a direct speech act when he tells the readers that the American "claimed that China was overreacting and fearmongering—to which we can only say, "Are you serious?" The writer sarcastically expresses skepticism about the seriousness of the American reaction to China's health efforts to counter Corona. He uses an expressive speech act. When the Chinese began euthanizing pets, social networking users in the United States criticized the decision as cruel, accusing the Chinese of acting irrationally and instilling unfounded fear. When the writer informs the readers that Corona killed more Americans than the 1918 flu pandemic, he is using an assertive speech act of informing. The writer's point in bringing this up is that the United States has no right to criticize China for its health precautionary measures, which include the killing of cats. The writer attributed this loss in life to the lax approach of the United States to testing and quarantining. He criticized United States using an assertive speech act of criticizing which is indirect speech act. An assertive speech act is used when the writer mentions a fact which is "But the vast majority of Chinese—including the pet owner in question—understand that such measures are necessary to keep the disease under control and to protect both human and animal life." The author defends the Chinese government's slaughter of cats by claiming that pet owners themselves are aware of the situation. Criticizing the Chinese for doing so is completely inappropriate from the standpoint of the United States. Another assertive speech act is employed

that is when it is asserted that not only Chinese euthanize pets but also other countries: "And this isn't a uniquely Chinese policy: domestic cats and dogs in other countries, and even a tiger in a Swedish zoo, have been euthanized after testing positive." It is an indirect assertive speech act. When the writer says: "China has been a global leader in controlling the pandemic", he uses an assertive speech act of informing. The author talks about a truth which is how China is one of the first countries to try to get rid of the Corona virus. Finally, the writer says: "In the U.S., meanwhile, an animal's life seems to hold greater value than any human's". As cats are known to carry the deadly Corona virus, the author criticizes the American mentality for expressing outrage at the Chinese for killing cats as a preventative step. In his final comment, the writer uses an assertive speech act of criticizing which is an indirect speech act because he expresses his criticism indirectly.

4.2.3 Functions of Sarcasm

Three functions of sarcasm exist in this text:

a. Solidarity and Social Distance

When saying: "How dare Westerners criticize China for euthanizing pet cats that test positive for the coronavirus", the writer affirms solidarity by directing comments at Americans to defend his country.

b. Venting Frustration

The author asks "Are you serious?", intending to express his rage. Since the insulted are not specific people in this text and the use of sarcasm is not restricted to face-to-face contacts (the criticism is done by the users of the social media), sarcasm serves here as an outlet for anger or venting frustration. It is also employed in reactions to occurrences or objects that violate an individual's or a group's conventional principles. This text is written as a reaction to the criticism of Americans to the Chinese principles in protecting its people health.

c. Humorous Aggression

The writer humorously attacks the Americans by saying: "In the U.S., meanwhile, an animal's life seems to hold greater value than any human's."

4.2.4 Mechanisms of Expressing Sarcasm

The author of this text employs four mechanisms to convey the sarcastic meaning he wants to convey.

a. Rhetorical Questions

The mechanism of rhetorical questions is used twice in this text. The first one when the writer says: "How dare Westerners criticize China for euthanizing pet cats that test positive for the coronavirus." In this rhetorical question, the writer does not seek an answer, rather he wants to express that Americans' criticism is unacceptable and intolerable. The second one is when the writer uses a rhetorical question "Are you serious?" to criticize American's way of thinking about what China does to save its people life.

b. Shift of Focus

The writer shifts his point of talking from Corona virus to flu of 1918 when addressing the American society to produce a sarcastic meaning which is that Americans are not allowed to criticize Chinese government because the death rates from the Corona virus in America during the period of medical and technological innovation are greater than those in 1918, a period when there was no such medical and technological progress.

c. Metaphor

Metaphor is used twice in this text. First, when the writer says that Americans criticize the decision of euthanizing pet cats as: "an act of cruelty". Second, when the writer uses metaphor to make a comparison between China and America in terms of their healthcare systems and efforts to suppress the Corona virus by saying: "China has been a global leader in controlling the pandemic." In the U.S., meanwhile, an animal's life seems to hold greater value than any human's." He refers to China as a global leader.

d. Explicitation

The writer uses explicitation when he says: "And this isn't a uniquely Chinese policy: domestic cats and dogs in other countries, and even a tiger in a Swedish zoo, have been euthanized after testing positive". He

states the obvious when mentioning that not only China euthanizes pets but also there are many countries follow this policy to control Corona virus. Yu Meng, also, uses explicitation in his criticism or expresses his ideas sarcastically. When he said "In the U.S., meanwhile, an animal's life seems to hold greater value than any human's", the writer here is stating the obvious. He does not mention strange ideas or views and he exaggerates the situation of American care systems. By putting it in this way, the author shows how little they care about the safety of their people.

4.3 Text No. (3)

4.3.1 Background

A tension dominated the political relationships between the United States and Latin Americans. Following Trump's election as the president of the United States, tensions grew as he made irrational judgments against Latin America and its citizens, particularly immigrants from that region. One of these judgments was to build a wall to separate the United States from Latin America to prevent immigrants from entering the country.

The Latino community was not very fond of Donald Trump's presidency. A Pew Research Center found that under Trump's administration, the percentage of people in those nations who said they had little trust in US President Barack Obama to act responsibly in international affairs increased from 42% to 77% in Trump's era. Brazilians' trust in the current US administration was also at an all-time low, falling from 69% in 2013 to 28% in 2020 despite Jair Bolsonaro's administration's praise for Trump's leadership.

The absence of Trump's foreign policy towards the area was the easiest way to understand why there was little confidence in him in Latin America. With the building of a wall on the US-Mexico border, Trump employed an extraordinarily inflammatory language against immigrants from Latin America even during the election race. A large percentage of Latin Americans (83%) were strongly against the suggestion.

4.3.2 Speech Acts

An assertive speech act of saying is used by the writers of this text which is a direct speech act when they say: "U.S. President Donald Trump has achieved the impossible: uniting Latin Americans," by reading this sentence, the reader thinks that Donald Trump did a positive extraordinary deed and no one could achieve what Trump achieved. They describe it as "impossible". This deed or the impossible mission is "uniting Latin Americans." The writers are sarcastic in their comment in this sentence. This is understood from the sentences that follow their comment "achieved the impossible." Then the writers reveal the attitude of the Latin community which is that the Latin people can't stand Trump when saying "Large majorities of voters surveyed across the region can't stand him." In this sentence, they use an expressive speech act of disapproving to express Latin people's innermost thoughts and emotions. The writers use another expressive speech act which is of protesting. It is an indirect speech act that is used when the writers say: "They take offense at Trump's interventionist stance, his supremacist character, his warmongering language, his anti-immigration policies—not to mention his obvious animosity toward Latin Americans in general and Mexicans in particular." The writer wants to express the protest of Latinos against Trump and his policies, for example, his interference in the internal affairs of their country, his war encouraging language, his anti-immigrant policies, in addition to his clear hostility to Latin Americans in general and Mexicans in particular. Trump's acts are, therefore, perceived by Latin Americans as being offensive to them. After that the writers use an assertive speech act of stating. They state a fact as it is when they tell the readers that "This disdain for Trump holds true not merely in countries currently led by the Left, such as Mexico and Argentina, but also in those with governments that tilt Right, such as Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil." The authors attempt to show Trump's unpopularity throughout Latin America by asserting that, despite being an extreme right-winger; the right opposes him politically as much as the left. Then the writers use an assertive speech act when they say: "This causes a dilemma for conservative governments that need “to reconcile their high degree of dependence on the current U.S. president” with the

antipathy toward him felt by the majority of voters." The type of this assertive speech act is of prediction since the writers predict a future outcome of the Latin Americans dissatisfaction with Trump's political position towards Latin people. The writers use a commissive speech act of refusal twice. The first one is when they say: "As the people reject Trump, while the second one is "they also repudiate Trumpism, with its "matrix of reactionary values" and its disastrous approach to governance." After that, an assertive speech act of criticizing is used: "His administration's utter inability to contain the coronavirus is a warning to the region," the writers assert Trump's failure in putting coronavirus under control. Then they use a declarative speech act by saying: "a failure that is turning Latin Americans away from conservatism and toward progressivism". Due to Trump's incompetence in containing Corona, Latin Americans change from conservatism to progressivism. The writers conclude the text by three directive speech acts. The first one when they direct conservatives to ask themselves: "Conservative leaders must now ask themselves." The second directive speech act is when they urge conservatives to answer the following question: Do they really want to be seen as Trump clones?" They want conservatives to define their political stance and decide whether they want to be Trump's copy and thus be disliked. The third directive speech act is when conservatives are asked "Or should they move A leftward, as their citizens wish?"

4.3.3 Functions of Sarcasm

Sarcasm serves two functions in this text:

a. Humorous Aggression

Sarcasm is used as a humorous kind of aggression since the writers are addressing a well-known aspect of Latin Americans' political position, namely that they share a common hatred and dissatisfaction with Trump. That is when they comment as follows: "U.S. President Donald Trump has achieved the impossible: uniting Latin Americans." All of the sentences after this comment demonstrate this function. Latin people are totally united, which is a common aspect, but there is a sort of

opposition in their unity. They are united in their negative sentiments toward Trump.

b. Solidarity and Social Distance

At the end of the text, two questions are posed by the writers. These questions are: "Do they really want to be seen as Trump clones? Or should they move a leftward, as their citizens wish?" These questions reflect solidarity and social distance since they are clear invitations by the writers in which they want conservatives not to be Trump's copies and to be just like what Latin people wish.

4.3.4 Mechanisms of Expressing Sarcasm

There are four linguistic mechanisms in this text. They are:

a. Antithesis

There is an obvious contradiction in the text. When the writers tell the readers that "Trump achieved the impossible: uniting Latin Americans", the first thing that the reader can imagine is a positive achievement but the sentences which follow this comment reveal a negative sense because they criticize Donald Trump and his administration. Latin people unite in their hostile toward Trump which is a negative achievement.

b. Reasoning

Reasoning is used twice in this text. First, on the basis of a hypothesis, which is that Trump is not accepted in Latin America, the authors predict a conclusion by using deductive thinking. This conclusion is "This causes a dilemma for conservative governments that need to reconcile their high degree of dependence on the current U.S. president with the antipathy toward him felt by the majority of voters." Second, when the writers predict a conclusion: "turning Latin Americans away from conservatism and toward progressivism." They depend on a hypothesis, which is Trump's failure to control the coronavirus in the region.

c. Metaphor

The writers employ metaphor to convey their disgust with Trump's cruel tendencies by saying: "matrix of reactionary values".

d. Rhetorical Questions

The linguistic mechanism of the rhetorical questions is used twice in this text. The first one when the authors sarcastically ask the conservative

leaders if they like to be a copy of Trump after all criticisms that are oriented to him: "Do they really want to be seen as Trump clones?" This question does not need any answer because the consequences of being Trump's clones will be very bad. The second rhetorical question is "should they move A leftward, as their citizens wish?"

4.4 Text No. (4)

4.4.1 Background

When Boris Johnson lost the July–September 2022 campaign for the Conservative Leadership of the party, Liz Truss was elected as the country's next Prime Minister on September 6, 2022. She was the United Kingdom's fourth Conservative Prime Minister in six years. After only six weeks in her job, she was forced to resign to make room for a fifth Conservative Prime Minister. The fact that Liz Truss held the position of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom for the shortest period of time made her the most prominent politician in the British history. Truss' short administration, which lasted only 50 days, was a good demonstration of the failure of her tenure. Britain experienced many economic crises under the rule of Truss.

Truss produced the political and economic chaos just after seven days as a Prime Minister, equating that time to the "shelf-life of a lettuce". She was dubbed the "Iceberg Lady," in contrast to the "Iron Lady," (the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher). Andrew Palmer, executive editor of The Economist, made the lettuce contrast.

A live stream of an iceberg lettuce and a framed image of Truss were started by the Daily Star video team, asking the viewers if Truss would be able to survive more than the lettuce. A set of gummy eyes, a golden wig, artificial hands and feet, and eyeglasses were all placed on the lettuce as the video went on. The Daily Star also published an article on October 18, 2022, with the heading "Lettuce Liz on Leaf Support".

On October 20, Truss made her resignation known before the lettuce started to wilt, becoming the UK's prime minister with the shortest tenure. The Daily Star announced the lettuce's "win" while the British national anthem played; the photo of Truss on the table was turned face down, and a fake gold crown was put on the lettuce. The lettuce was

showing indications of discoloration but had not yet completely rotted, according to an editorial in The Atlantic, and it was still suitable for a salad. The night following Truss' resignation, a picture of the lettuce was shown into the Palace of Westminster, and the next day, a tweet from the Daily Star said that the lettuce had reached parliament.

4.4.2 Speech Acts

An assertive speech act is used by Polly Toynbee, the writer of this text. It is a direct speech act of saying. That is when she says: "Liz Truss, the former prime minister who tanked our economy last fall, would like you to know it was not her fault". The writer intends to make the point that Liz is not the only reason for the catastrophic political and economic circumstances that exist in Britain during her leadership; rather, they are already worsening. Another assertive speech act of informing is employed when the writer informs the reader that "Truss wasn't in office long—she was famously outlasted by a lettuce". Her short reign serves as proof that the nation has already collapsed. Then, an assertive speech act of criticizing is used by the writer which is: "but she still managed to do vast damage in her 49 days as prime minister". The author criticizes the Prime Minister Liz Truss for bringing significant damage to the country despite the fact that her tenure is very short. In fact, he does not entirely absolve Liz of the responsibility for the bad situation of the country.

After that, a declarative speech act of declining when the writer says: "Just hours after her government presented its budget last September, the pound plummeted". Here, the writer mentions how the exchange rate of the pound fell just after hours of Truss' winning. The writer gives an evidence that Liz is also involved in the terrible circumstances of Britain.

An assertive speech act of stating is used when the writer says: "Bond markets went into shock, and the Bank of England had to launch a \$65 billion bailout". In this way, she gives two more evidences for Liz's involvement in the bad situation of UK. Both of these comments are facts and the writer just conveys what happens. When saying: "Britain is still paying a “moron premium” for Trussonomics today, in the form of higher borrowing costs," the writer uses an assertive speech act of affirming to affirm the nation's severe economic losses. In the following

sentence: "Truss now claims the chaos should be blamed on Treasury officials who failed to prepare her, Conservative lawmakers who didn't back her, and a deep state full of left-wing economists", the writer uses three assertive speech acts of claiming. She claims that the chaos is not her fault alone, Treasury officials are also responsible. She claims that Conservative lawmakers did not back her; in addition to the left-wing economists that fill the state are also responsible for the political and economic crisis in the United Kingdom. When saying: "If this buck-passing were limited to Truss alone, we could simply laugh at her and move on", the writer uses an assertive speech act of hypothesizing since she just hypothesizes a situation.

The writer uses an expressive speech act of complaining when she adds: "Unfortunately, her hallucinations are rampant across her party." The author complains about the spread of Truss' ideas in the party to which she belongs. Another expressive speech act of protesting is used by saying: "Tory MPs are nodding along and saying yes, Truss had the right idea in slashing services for the poor and cutting taxes on the wealthy". The author protests against the Tory's justifications for Liz's government and the chaos it creates.

An assertive speech act of criticizing is employed when the writer criticizes the Conservatives by saying: "The party is concussed but undeterred". Last but not least, the writer uses a declarative speech act when she declares that there is another disaster looms if the party does not deter. That is when the author says: "they'll lead us straight to another catastrophe."

4.4.3 Functions of Sarcasm

In this text, there are two functions for sarcasm:

a. Social Control

In this text, the criticism is produced by an individual with a less social position (the writer) to an individual who has more authority (the prime minister). So, in such a context, sarcasm serves as a social control tool. The writer, as a citizen, monitors those in the government and tries to make the position better. Sarcasm, in this case, achieves no more than

conveying anger and creating a momentary disruption in the political and social peace.

b. Humorous Aggression

The expression of "outlasted by a lettuce" is a very popular sarcastic comment in the UK. Sarcasm acts as a humorous aggression tactic when the sarcafter utilizes a famous statement to make fun of a specific individual.

4.4.4 Mechanisms of Expressing Sarcasm

Metaphor and reasoning are the only linguistic mechanisms that are employed in this text.

a. Metaphor

In this text, metaphor is used twice as a linguistic device to convey sarcasm. The first is when the author makes a mocking analogy between lettuce and Liz Truss, the fourth Conservative Prime Minister of the United Kingdom by saying: "outlasted by a lettuce." They are compared in terms of their short span of outlasting. After being in office for a while, this analogy becomes fairly widespread throughout the UK. The second one is when the writer names Truss' agenda as (hallucinations) in: "her hallucinations are rampant across her party."

b. Reasoning

Reasoning or deductive thinking is employed three times in this text. First, when the writer ironically and indirectly hypothesizes that if the catastrophic situation in UK is not Truss' fault, then why do many political and economic disasters happen just after few hours of Truss' taking office? That is when the writer mentions several events in UK: "she still managed to do vast damage in her 49 days as prime minister. Just hours after her government presented its budget last September, the pound plummeted. Bond markets went into shock, and the Bank of England had to launch a \$65 billion bailout. Britain is still paying a "moron premium" for Trussonomics today, in the form of higher borrowing costs." Second, when the writer says: "If this buck-passing were limited to Truss alone, we could simply laugh at her and move on", in this remark, the writer ironically hypothesis that Liz Truss is the only politician who is blamed for the terrible situation and the conclusion is a

simple matter which causes for laughter. Third, in the following comment: "The party is concussed but undeterred and they'll lead us straight to another catastrophe," if the conservative party continues to govern the country, the author predicts another disaster.

4.5 Text No. (5)

4.5.1 Background

The world's energy crisis of 2021–2023 started following the spread of the COVID-19 virus in 2021, resulting in much of the world experiencing shortages and higher costs in the fuel, oil, and power industries. The crisis was initiated by a number of different economic causes, such as a quick post-pandemic improving economy that exceeded energy supplies, and it grew into a broad worldwide energy crisis with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Natural gas prices reached all-time highs, and as a result, power prices rose in several areas. Oil prices reached their highest point since 2008.

The attack on Ukraine by Russia worsened the world energy crisis. Once the economies of the world started to heal from the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for oil started to rise. But Moscow's choice of invading its neighbour forced governments to look for supplies abroad, raising the possibility of a serious supply shortage. Governments and communities might quickly reduce the demand for oil by taking practical measures.

In order to deal with the national effects of gasoline price hikes, President Joe Biden wanted Americans to vent their outrage on Vladimir Putin. The difficulties of fuel hyperinflation brought on by Russia's war on Ukraine and corresponding international sanctions had been dubbed the "Putin price hike" by Biden and his government. In a tweet, Biden stated, "I'm going to do everything I can to minimize Putin's price hike here at home".

The West, particularly the United States, Australia, Western Europe, New Zealand, and Canada, experienced a severe fuel crisis and rising prices during the 1970s. The Yom Kippur War and the Iranian Revolution, which led to pauses in Middle Eastern oil supplies,

respectively, caused the two biggest crises of this time period: the 1973 oil crisis and the 1979 energy crisis.

4.5.2 Speech Acts

The writer of this text, Kate Aronoff, uses an assertive speech act when she says how Biden works hard to mitigate the consequences of the global fuel crisis on America. That is when she says: "For months now, President Biden has been struggling to come up with a coherent response to the problem of high petrol prices." It is a direct speech act of saying. Actually, she indirectly criticizes the President Biden for not taking serious actions to control the global fuel crisis. He just blames and accuses. In the following sentence: "He has blamed —Putin's price hike; accused the oil industry of profiteering; called in vain for Congress to enact a three-month pause in the gas tax," there is more than one speech act. The writer uses an assertive speech act of blaming which is a direct speech act. President Biden blames Putin for rising petrol costs. Then in the same sentence, there is another assertive speech act of accusing. That is when President Biden accuses the oil industry of profiteering. After that, the writer uses a declarative speech act when she says that President Biden (called in vain for Congress ...). Here, Biden tries to change the economic situation in the country after the global crisis by imposing a three-month temporary ban on the petrol tax. Another assertive speech act of criticizing is employed: "But the White House has been notably reticent to discuss a simpler, greener way of addressing the issue: reducing demand for fuel." In this sentence, the writer criticizes the American policy in facing the global fuel crisis, namely, that the American government is cautious to discuss a more straightforward, environmentally friendly solution: lowering the demand for petroleum.

Then the writer uses a directive speech act of advising. That is when she says: "Rather than calling for a gas tax holiday, why not introduce a fare holiday for buses and trains?" In this comment, the writer advises the government to take some actions as a solution for the crisis, which is to introduce a holiday for buses and trains instead of calling for a gas tax holiday. Then, by saying: "Why not expedite the building of more public-

transport infrastructure," she also advises the government to take another action for the crisis, which is to speed up the construction of more public transportation systems. The writer in this comment also uses a directive speech act of advising. After that, two more directive speech acts of advising are employed: "encourage more working from home and car pooling; or lower the national speed limit?" She advises the government to encourage more working from home in addition to reducing the speed limit.

When the writer says: "The problem is that —decades of folk wisdom in the Democratic party holds that any talk of reducing fuel use is political suicide," she uses an assertive speech act of criticizing. Here, the writer informs the readers that there is a fact that the Democratic Party (Biden's party) believes that reducing fuel use is not a good idea and is equivalent to political suicide. Hence, according to Democratic Party members, they are willing to use any strategy to help minimize the consequences of the global crisis, except limiting the fuel usage.

Then the writer unexpectedly mentions another politician and hence employs an assertive speech act of stating. That is when she says: "Jimmy Carter's greatest political gaffe, supposedly, was telling Americans, in the winter of 1977, to put on a sweater." In this comment, the writer sarcastically mentions Jimmy Carter's political gaffe. Unexpectedly, the author compares Biden to Carter by mentioning Carter's greatest political gaffe (In 1977's energy crisis in the U.S., Carter promoted energy saving by using solar heating panels and wearing sweaters). Thus, she blames Biden for failing to come up with creative and practical measures that aid in limiting the effects of the global fuel crisis. The two were relying on Americans to handle the problem. Biden's response to the fuel crisis is remarkably similar to Carter's. By saying: "Carter's speech was popular at the time; it was the subsequent recession that did for him," the writer uses an assertive speech act of stating. She mentions a fact, which is that Carter's speech was popular, and an event, which is the recession at Carter's time.

The writer uses a directive speech act of advising when she says: "Biden should go all-out to reduce fuel demand, even if that does

infuriate fossil-fuel executives." If Biden wants to avoid severe consequences, he needs to take all reasonable steps to reduce fuel consumption, even if it enrages fossil fuel companies.

The text ends with an assertive speech act of stating: "The good news is they already hate him and there's probably not much he can do about that." The writer conveys a fact which is that fossil-fuel executives hate the president Biden. The writer wants President Biden to disregard the fact that he will enrage executives of fossil fuel companies since they already hate him.

4.5.3 Functions of Sarcasm

There are three functions that sarcasm serves in this text, which are as follows:

a. Social Control

When the writer says: "For months now, President Biden has been struggling to come up with a coherent response to the problem of high petrol prices," she criticizes Biden's strategies in controlling the global fuel crisis. She uses the word "struggle" sarcastically since he does not take serious actions like reducing fuel demand. In this way, the writer, who has less authority, criticizes the person who has the upper authority in the country (the president). Accordingly, sarcasm serves social control function by which people try to change something in the society.

b. Venting Frustration

The writer vents her frustration against Biden's policy of providing a three-month tax holiday. In the text, she vents her frustration through giving certain advices to minimize the consequences of the crisis. These are the following: "Rather than calling for a gas tax —holiday, why not introduce a fare holiday for buses and trains? Why not expedite the building of more public-transport infrastructure; encourage more working from home and car pooling; or lower the national speed limit?" All of these ways can help reduce fuel demand, which in turn prevents the oil supply from running out.

c. Humorous Aggression

The writer mentions Carter's policy in 1970's US crisis when he suggests wearing a sweater in the winter so as to reduce the fuel consumption. By mentioning such a thing, the writer wants to prove how superficial Biden's measures are to conserve fuel. The writer likens giving a three-month tax holiday to wearing a sweater in winter to ridicule Biden's measures. That is when she says: "Jimmy Carter's greatest political gaffe, supposedly, was telling Americans, in the winter of 1977, to put on a sweater."

4.5.4 Mechanisms of Expressing Sarcasm

The author of this text employs the following four mechanisms to convey sarcasm:

a. Antithesis

The writer uses antithesis twice in this text. First, when she implicitly expresses a contradiction. She mentions that "President Biden has been struggling to come up with a coherent response to the problem of high petrol prices." But, after that she says: "He has blamed —Putin's price hike; accused the oil industry of profiteering". Generally speaking, struggling means to face difficulties and hardness while blaming and accusing do not involve any difficulties. In fact, Biden does nothing but blaming and accusing, which means that he does not struggle to end the global fuel crisis and its effect on America. Biden blames Putin for the high prices of oil in addition to accusing industries of profiteering and he requests a three months tax holiday. That is when she says: He has blamed —Putin's price hike; accused the oil industry of profiteering; called in vain for Congress to enact a three-month pause in the gas tax" All of these procedures have nothing to do with struggling. The only effective way to end this crisis is to reduce demand for the fuel. Second, when the writer says: "The good news is they already hate him and there's probably not much he can do about that". Here, there is a clear contradiction between "good news" and "hate him".

b. Explication

The writer criticizes the White House for being "reticent" to give simpler, environmentally friendly methods which is reducing fuel usage. The writer expresses his point of view by: "But the White House has

been notably reticent to discuss a simpler, greener way of addressing the issue: reducing demand for fuel." The writer, then, explains her point and makes it clear when she mentions the ways by which reducing the fuel demand can be fulfilled. These ways, in her words, are: "Rather than calling for a gas tax —holiday, why not introduce a fare holiday for buses and trains? Why not expedite the building of more public-transport infrastructure; encourage more working from home and car pooling; or lower the national speed limit?"

c. Metaphor

The mechanism of metaphor is used three times in this text. The first one when the writer mockingly refers to Biden's procedure to control the crisis as "struggling". The second one is when the writer criticizes the Democratic Party in their refusing to reduce the fuel use. That is when she says: "The problem is that —decades of folk wisdom in the Democratic party holds that any talk of reducing fuel use is political suicide." In this remark, the metaphoric expression "political suicide" refers to the procedure of reducing the fuel demand. The third metaphoric expression is when the writer says: "But this is a myth." The writer makes a comparison between Biden and Carter according to their differences and similarities but then she indirectly negates such a common ground between the two and refers to it as a "myth."

d. Shift of Focus

From the very beginning of the text, the writer keeps focusing on Biden and his policies to minimize the effect of the global fuel crisis, but then the writer shifts her focus to mention another president and another crisis. When she says: "Jimmy Carter's greatest political gaffe, supposedly, was telling Americans, in the winter of 1977, to put on a sweater." She mentions Carter to emphasize the similarities between the two presidents and to make fun of the president Biden. They follow almost the same procedures to deal with crises. Both of them are Democrats, both of them depend on the American people, and they do not provide any improvement in dealing with the crises.

Overall Analysis of the Texts

Types of Analytical Model	Subtypes	Frequencies	Total
Speech Acts	Assertives	36	52
	Directives	3	
	Commissives	2	
	Declaratives	4	
	Expressives	7	
Functions of Sarcasm	Social Control	2	10
	Declaration of Allegiance	0	
	Solidarity and Social Distance	2	
	Vending Frustration	2	
	Humorous Aggression	4	
Mechanisms of Sarcasm	Antithesis	2	25
	Repetitive Statements	0	
	Explicitation	4	
	Metonymy	0	
	Metaphor	9	
	Shift of Focus	1	
	Reasoning	5	
	Rhetorical Questions	4	

5. Conclusions

The researcher arrives at certain conclusions. They are theoretical and practical conclusions.

5.1 Theoretical Conclusions

- 1- Sarcasm is confused with other terms especially with irony. Irony is closely related to sarcasm to the extent that most scholars regard sarcasm as a subtype of irony.
- 2- Sarcasm is employed to offend or harm a specific listener in a blatant way.
- 3- There is always a hidden metamessage behind the kind words of the sarcastic speaker.
- 4- There should be a specific victim or issue that the sarcastic comments are directed at.
- 5- The nature of the relationship between the communicators is an important factor in expressing sarcasm.
- 6- Sarcasm is a challenging phenomenon, especially in written language since sarcasm is mainly conveyed phonologically.

5.2 Practical Conclusions

- 1- All the types of speech acts can be employed to express a sarcastic message.
- 2- Assertive speech acts are the most frequent type that is used to convey the sarcastic message. The speakers use different subtypes of this type, which are of stating, informing, criticising, and many other types by which the sarcasm makes his or her sarcastic comments. This refutes the first hypothesis of the study which is "expressives are used more than other types of speech acts" since assertive speech acts are used more than other types. It is used thirty six times while expressive speech acts are used seven times.
- 3- Commissives are the less used type of speech acts because of the nature of the commissive speech act, which refers to promises and commitments to take a certain action, which means that the speaker should be honest in his or her promises while sarcasm mainly involves dishonesty.
- 4- Humorous aggression is a common function for sarcasm in the political texts. The writers of the political texts frequently attack politicians humorously because they often have a lower social status than politicians. It is used four times. This refutes the second hypothesis which is "social control is the main function that sarcasm serves in the political contexts".
- 5- Sarcasm does not serve as a declaration of the allegiance tool in the political texts.
- 6- There are some linguistic mechanisms that are utilized to express sarcasm. The writers of the political texts use metaphor more frequently than other mechanisms. It is used nine times. This supports the third hypothesis of the study.
- 7- No metonymy and no repetitive statements exist in the political texts.

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Appendix

Text No. (1) Best columns: Europe - Spain - Separatists have led our youth astray. By: Eduardo Goligorsky (15/ October/ 2021- p.14)

The violent street parties held in Barcelona and other cities in recent weeks aren't political events, said Eduardo Goligorsky, but they can still be traced to one particular politician: Carles Puigdemont. Wanted in Spain on charges of rebellion and sedition, the leader of Catalonia's separatist movement "plays an active role as a model for misguided young people." Puigdemont fled to Belgium in 2017 after illegally declaring his region to be an independent republic, and since 2019 has served as a member of the European Parliament. The ongoing failure to extradite him to Spain shows Catalan youth "that a traitor to his homeland can violate the law and break the peace and go unpunished." They have learned this lesson well. Over the past month, numerous street and beach parties—finally allowed after 18 months of pandemic lockdowns—have degenerated into riots. Vandals have set trash cans ablaze and destroyed public property, and some 40 people have been wounded, many in knife fights between rival gangs. These young hedonists aren't separatists: They are "devoid of ideology and saturated with liquor." But Puigdemont fed their "apolitical barbarism" by encouraging road blocks, occupations, and attacks on federal police stations during the illegal 2017 independence referendum in Catalonia. Lawlessness is now the norm. "What a great role model!"

Text No. (2) Best columns: International – China- Kill a cat to save many humans. By: Yu Meng (15/October/ 2021 p.15)

How dare Westerners criticize China for euthanizing pet cats that test positive for the coronavirus, said Yu Meng. After three house cats owned by a Covid patient in Heilongjiang province were put down last week, Americans on social media "blasted the `decision as an act of cruelty."

They claimed that China was overreacting and “fearmongering”—to which we can only say, “Are you serious?” More than 700,000 Americans have died so far of Covid-19, surpassing the toll of the devastating 1918 flu pandemic. This appalling loss of life stems from the U.S.’s lax approach to testing and quarantining, and it means Americans “are in no position to preach to China about how to treat life.” True, a few Chinese social media users also protested the decision to euthanize the cats. But the vast majority of Chinese—including the pet owner in question—understand that such measures are necessary to keep the disease under control and to protect both human and animal life. And this isn’t a uniquely Chinese policy: domestic cats and dogs in other countries, and even a tiger in a Swedish zoo, have been euthanized after testing positive. China has been a global leader in controlling the pandemic. In the U.S., meanwhile, an animal’s life seems to hold greater value than any human’s.

Text No. (3) "How Trump boosts the Left in Latin America" By: Alfredo Serrano Mancilla and Silvina Romano (August 28, 2020, p. 17)

U.S. President Donald Trump has achieved the impossible: uniting Latin Americans, said Alfredo Serrano Mancilla and Silvina Romano. Large majorities of voters surveyed across the region can’t stand him. And it’s quite personal. They take offense at Trump’s “interventionist stance, his supremacist character, his warmongering language, his anti-immigration policies”—not to mention his obvious animosity toward Latin Americans in general and Mexicans in particular. This disdain for Trump holds true not merely in countries currently led by the Left, such as Mexico and Argentina, but also in those with governments that tilt Right, such as Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil. This causes a dilemma for conservative governments that need “to reconcile their high degree of dependence on the current U.S. president” with the antipathy toward him felt by the majority of voters. As the people reject Trump, they also repudiate Trumpism, with its “matrix of reactionary values” and its disastrous approach to governance. His administration’s utter inability to contain the coronavirus is a warning to the region, a failure that is turning

Latin Americans away from conservatism and “toward progressivism.” Conservative leaders must now ask themselves: Do they really want to be seen as Trump clones? Or should they move A leftward, “as their citizens wish”?

Text No. (4) Truss begs for her victims’ sympathy by Polly Toynbee (February 24, 2023, p.14)

Liz Truss, the former prime minister who tanked our economy last fall, would like you to know it was not her fault, said Polly Toynbee. Truss wasn’t in office long—she was famously “outlasted by a lettuce”—but she still managed to do vast damage in her 49 days as prime minister. Just hours after her government presented its budget last September, the pound plummeted. Bond markets went into shock, and the Bank of England had to launch a \$65 billion bailout. Britain is still paying a “moron premium” for Trussonomics today, in the form of higher borrowing costs. But in a whiny, self-justifying article in The Sunday Telegraph, Truss now claims the chaos should be blamed on Treasury officials who failed to prepare her, Conservative lawmakers who didn’t back her, and a deep state full of “left-wing economists.” If this buck-passing were limited to Truss alone, we could simply laugh at her and move on. Unfortunately, “her hallucinations are rampant across her party.” Tory MPs are nodding along and saying yes, Truss had the right idea in slashing services for the poor and cutting taxes on the wealthy; she just needed more time. The party is “concussed but undeterred”—and they’ll lead us straight to another catastrophe.

Text No. (5) Reducing fuel use is not such a crazy idea by Kate Aronoff (2022/7/9) British.

For months now, President Biden has been struggling to come up with a coherent response to the problem of high petrol prices, says Kate Aronoff. He has blamed —Putin’s price hike; accused the oil industry of profiteering; called in vain for Congress to enact a three-month pause in the gas tax. But the White House has been notably reticent to discuss a simpler, greener way of addressing the issue: reducing demand for fuel.

Rather than calling for a gas tax —holiday, why not introduce a fare holiday for buses and trains? Why not expedite the building of more public-transport infrastructure; encourage more working from home and car pooling; or lower the national speed limit? The problem is that —decades of folk wisdom in the Democratic party holds that any talk of reducing fuel use is political suicide. Jimmy Carter’s greatest political gaffe, supposedly, was telling Americans, in the winter of 1977, to put on a sweater. But this is a myth. Carter’s speech was —popular at the time; it was the subsequent recession that did for him. Biden should go all-out to reduce fuel demand, even if that does infuriate fossil-fuel executives. —The good news is they already hate him and there’s probably not much he can do about that.