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Researcher. Hiba
Nadhim Jebur

Prof. Hashim Aliwy
Mohammed Al-
Husseini (Ph.D.)

Wasit University
College of Education
for Human Sciences

Email:

hiba0992@gmail.com

hilewi@uowasit.edu.iq

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A Pragmatic Analysis of Coronavirus Pandemic in Selected Iraqi Caricature Posters

A B S T R A C T

A caricature is a drawing. The artist who draws it is a creative person who tries to send messages in a sarcastic way. This study is dedicated to investigate pragmatically some selected Iraqi caricatures as one of the effective tools that have implied or hidden meanings. This study also tries to fill in the gap of the misunderstanding of the aims of the caricatures that have been taken from Iraqi newspapers. It also aims at identifying and explaining the elements of the pragmatic level of analysis for the selected coronavirus caricature posters. The researchers adopt Hymes' SPEAKING model (1974), Grice's Implicature theory (1975), and Yule's Presupposition theory (1996). The study uses a qualitative method in collecting and analysing data. The selected data that will be analysed are three caricatures. The study concludes how pragmatic aspects are important in revealing the meaning of the texts in caricature posters by using different theories of pragmatics.

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تحليل تداولي لوباء فيروس كورونا في ملصقات كاريكاتير عراقية مختارة

الباحثة: هبة ناظم جبر أ.د. هاشم عليوي محمد

جامعة واسط / كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية

المستخلص

الكاريكاتير هو رسم ، والفنان الذي يرسمه هو شخص مبدع يحاول إرسال رسالة (رسائل) بطريقة ساخرة. هذه الدراسة مخصصة للتحقيق في الرسوم الكاريكاتورية المختارة كأحد الأدوات الفعالة التي لها معاني ضمنية أو خفية. كما تحاول هذه الدراسة سد فجوة سوء فهم أهداف الرسوم الكاريكاتورية المأخوذة من الصحف العراقية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد وشرح عناصر المستوى الدلالي للتحليل لمشاركات كاريكاتورية مختارة لفيروس كورونا. يتبنى الباحثان نظرية هايمز للتحديث (1974)، نظرية جريس للتضمنين (1975)، ونظرية يول للافتراض المسبق (1996). تستخدم الدراسة المنهج النوعي في جمع البيانات وتحليلها. البيانات المختارة التي سيتم تحليلها هي ثلاث رسوم كاريكاتورية. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أهمية الجانب الدلالي في الكشف عن معنى النصوص في الرسوم الكاريكاتورية باستخدام نظريات دلالية مختلفة. الكلمات المفتاحية: فيروس كورونا، كاريكاتير، دراسة دلالية، نظريات: التحديث، التضمنين، والافتراض المسبق.

1. Introduction

The current study conducts a pragmatic analysis of some caricature posters about coronavirus pandemic. Pragmatics deals with how speakers use language in ways that cannot be predicted from linguistic knowledge alone (Aitchison, 1999, p.9). Pragmatics is “the study of invisible meaning or how we recognize what is meant even when it is not actually said or written” (Yule, 2010, p.128).

Marriam-Webster (2021) defined coronavirus as “any of a family (Coronaviridae) of large, single-stranded, RNA viruses that have a lipid envelope studded with club-shaped spike proteins”. It infects animals and humans, and includes the causative agents of blue comb, feline infectious peritonitis. This naming, ‘coronavirus’, is derived from Latin corona, meaning ‘crown or wreath’, itself a borrowing from Greek κορώνη korónē, ‘garland, wreath’.

Coronavirus disease (also called COVID-19) spreads around the world. It causes problems in the political and economic relations around the world. It changes the way social activities are carried out in communities such as religious ceremonies, sports competitions or other social activities that require a mass attendance at a ceremony (Roudgar, 2020, p.1). This disease threatens the nations’ life and changes people’s life and destroys many aspects of life.

A caricature is defined as “the exaggerated graphic representation, sometimes to the point of being grotesque or ludicrous, of the most characteristic feature of persons or things for the purposes of satire or ridicule” (Eaman, 2009, p.102-103). People may misunderstand the aims of such caricature posters, so the study intends to analyse such caricatures to interpret the intended meaning.

The existence of caricature has proved something of a nuisance to philosophers and psychologists bent on analysing pictorial representation. A portrait caricature clearly represents a certain layout of spatial form, a face-like layout with a nose so long, mouth so wide, and so forth (Perkins, 1975, p.1).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Pragmatics and Coronavirus

Kroeger (2019, p.4) clarified that “pragmatics is concerned with the aspects of meaning that depend on or derive from the way in which the words and sentences are used.” The origin of the word ‘pragmatics’ dates back to the work of the American semiotician and behaviourist Charles Morris (1938) and his distinction of the three parts of semiotics: syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics. He states that pragmatics is thought of as the relation of signs to those who interpret the signs, e.g., the users of the language.

Crystal (2003) stated that pragmatics is used for emphasising the role of the users of language, the choices they make, the constraints they encounter, and this reflects the idea of the misunderstanding of the caricature posters’ texts because people may not understand the implied meaning which is the aim of the writer. According to Mey (2001), pragmatics is the study of language use in context since its issue is normally noticed as complementary to the linguistics field. Levinson (1983) specifies the idea of context as an important fragment in understanding the significant idea of utterances. The present study aims mainly at identifying the hidden meaning of the caricature which is intended by the artist.

Coronavirus is a dangerous disease and to be protected from it, according to “World Health Organization” (2020), individuals must follow the following habits: washing hands, practicing good respiratory etiquette, avoid touching their faces, distancing themselves from an individual level, isolating at home or in a community facility if they are ill, and cooperating with physical restricting movement and distancing measures

According to Greenberg (2002), caricatures help to attract and reinforce meaning to what is happening around. Caricatures help the public to recognise and understand what they see and go through that which is contemporary to their situations in the world. Dourmont (2002) states that verbal and visual processes are additional facts that advertisers are highly conscious of and manipulate. They can be achieved individually and do not appear to fight with the same intellectual properties. Thus, this study attempts to find out the pragmatic aspects through analysing some of the caricature posters by using Hymes’ SPEAKING model, Grice’s Implicature theory, and Yule’s Presupposition theory.

2.1.1 Hymes’ SPEAKING Model

Context is a crucial factor in understanding and interpreting utterances and expressions. The most significant dimensions of context include the co-text (the surrounding utterances), “the immediate physical situation”, the broader situation (both social and power relations), and the shared knowledge between participants (Cruse, 2006, p.35).

Speech event is the unit of analysis when using the SPEAKING model. Hymes (1974, p.52) defines speech events as the “activities, or aspects of activities, that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech”. According to Jones (2012, p.81-82), the components of Hymes’ SPEAKING model are intended to provide a set of guidelines an analyst can use in attempting to determine what aspects of context are important and relevant from the perspective of participants, rather than an objective list of those elements of context that need to be taken into account by the analyst. The following are the components of speech events:

S – setting and scene relate to the date, time, and location of the speech, as well as any other physical conditions. Hymes includes the 'psychological context' or 'culture definition' of a scene in addition to the physical features of the location.

P – participants refer to people present in the conversation, as well as audiences, bystanders, or overhearers.

E – ends relate to the “purpose, goals, and outcomes of the event” that can be different from one participant and another.

A – act sequence refers to the structure of the conversation as it unfolds, e.g., the order of utterances and different behaviours.

K – key refers to “tone or mood of the speech event”. Key is significant because it offers an attitudinal context for speech acts, changing their meaning considerably in some cases (as with sarcasm).

I – instrumentalities relate to the message form ‘medium’ through which meaning is created, such as Speech, for example, can be spoken, whispered, shouted, sung, or written, and it can be amplified using microphones, transmitted via electronic media, or written down...

N – norms include two types: norms of interpretation and norms of interaction which means the “common sets of understandings that participants bring to events about what is appropriate behaviour and how different actions and utterances ought to be understood”. These norms may differ depending on the participants (for example, a waiter vs. a customer), and the ‘setting of norms’ is frequently an issue of power and ideology.

G – genre refers to the ‘type’ of speech event, such as a conversation, debate, or argument.

The researchers choose this theory as it adds more information about the time, place, aim, and the mood of the selected caricature posters.

2.1.2 Grecian Implicature

The word ‘implicature’ derives from the verb ‘to imply’ which its cognate ‘implication’. Originally ‘to imply’ means “to fold something into something else” (comes from the verb *plicare* ‘to fold’ which is from the Latin language) (Mey, 2001, p.45).

Herbert Paul Grice was the first to systematically research cases in which what a speaker says varies from what the expression used by the speaker means. The word ‘implicature’ was introduced by Grice. Implicature shows the fine line between speech spoken and the true meaning conveyed by a speaker in the sentences uttered. Grice proves that implications are created from childhood during the first steps of learning a language. In communication, it plays an important function. With its assistance, verbal efficiency is achieved and an individual communication style is established. Informal social ties are preserved without obvious lies. Actually, the term ‘implicature’ connects feelings and their representations with the traditional implications of conversation (Fedorovam & Salnikova, 2019, p.8).

An implicature is something the speaker suggests or implies with an utterance, even if it is not literally expressed. Implicatures support in communicating more proficiently than by explicitly saying we want to communicate (Davis, 2019).

Implicature can be acquired by interactions in conversation. The utterances of people are frequently understood by the hearer even when the speakers do not identify their goals directly since these utterances are based on certain principles. Thus, these principles reflect the idea of cooperative principle which is established by Grice that clarified the conversational implications and predicted them, and explained how they emerged and understood. A general Cooperative Theory and the four maxims specifying how to be cooperative were postulated by Grice (Fedorovam and Salnikova, 2019, p.8).

The cooperative principle is defined by Grice (1975, p.45) as “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged”. The cooperative principle includes four pragmatic maxims: The maxim of quantity: “say enough, but do not say too much”, the maxim of quality: “say only what you have reason to believe is true”, the maxim of relation: “say only what is relevant”, and the maxim of manner: “be brief, clear, and unambiguous” (Birner, 2013, p.42).

Each one of these maxims can be flouted as Grice (1975, p.41-58) presented: flouting the maxim of quantity happens when the speaker intentionally gives inadequate information or provides more information than is needed. Flouting the maxim of quality happens when the speaker intentionally says what is untrue or for which he lacks adequate evidence. Flouting the maxim of relation happens when the speaker makes a response or an observation which is clearly irrelevant to the talk exchange in which he is engaged. Flouting the maxim of manner happens when the speaker does not avoid obscurity and ambiguity.

Cutting (2002, p.76) states that “whenever a maxim is flouted, there must be an implicature to save the utterance from simply appearing to be a faulty contribution to a conversation”. And Bilmes (1986, p.27) states that implicature cannot be captured explicitly in semantic or syntactic rules, but it may be accounted for by ‘some conversational principle’.

2.1.2.1 Types of Implicature

There are two types of implicature: **conventional and conversational implicature**. Conventional implicatures are non-truth-conditional inferences that are not derived from superordinate pragmatic principles like the maxims, but are attached by convention to particular lexical items (Levinson, 1983, p.127). Conventional implicatures are tied to certain words such as the use of ‘but’ or ‘therefore’. For example, she is poor, but she is happy (Grice, 1989). Conversational implicature covers any meaning which is implied and conveyed not in a direct way but through using hints, and it is understood implicitly without ever being explicitly stated (Jaufillaili & Mahmud, 2019, p.164).

According to Kroeger (2019, p.139), conversational implicature suggests that inferences arise when there is a real violation of the shared default expectations about how conversations work and speakers are supposed to respect general rules of conversation; ‘the maxims of conversation’ (Grice, 1989). Mey states that a conversational implicature is ‘something which is implied in a conversation, something which is left implicit in actual language use’ (2001, p.45). For example, when someone says “it is cold” while the window of the room is open, it does not explicitly ask someone else sitting near the window to close it, but it is communicated implicitly by the speaker’s utterance in that specific context.

Conversational implicatures can be divided into two types: **particularized and generalized**. Particularized conversational implicature is derived from a particular context, rather than from the use of the words alone. This outcome from the relation maxim means that the speaker assumes the hearer will explore the relevance of what is said and get the intended meaning (Paltridge, 2006, p.70). An example is taken from Yule (1996, p.43):

Tom: Hello, coming to the wild party tonight?

Rick: My sisters are visiting.

Rick's response doesn't appear to follow to the relevance maxim. (A simple answer which is relevant would be 'Yes' or 'No'.) In order to make Rick's response relevant, Tom has to draw on some assumed knowledge that one college student in this setting expects another to have. Rick will be spending that evening with his sisters (therefore +> Rick not at the party). The symbol (+>) means implicates. While, generalized conversational implicature, according to Birner (2012, p.63), is generally attached to the form, and doesn't need to be computed new with each relevant utterance. Generalized conversational implicature is not slightly context-dependent. For example "war is war" can refer to different properties of war, or things expected to happen during war, depending on the situation in which it is uttered (Levinson, 1983).

There is another type for the generalized conversational implicature which is scalar implicatures. It is the selection of one value on a scale, for example: "< all, most, many, some, few > and < always, often, sometimes >". A speaker chooses the word from the scale that is the most informative and truthful in the circumstances while making an utterance, as in: I'm studying Grammar and I have finished most of the required exercises.

By selecting 'most', the speaker makes an implicature (+> not all) (Yule, 1996, p.41). The basis of scalar implicature is that, when any form in a scale is asserted, the negative of all forms higher on the scale is implicated. Scalar implicature means that there is no higher value applies, all other things being equal as in the example: "Most of the mothers were Victorian; in fact, they all were" implicates "not all the mothers were Victorian" (Birner, 2013, p.63).

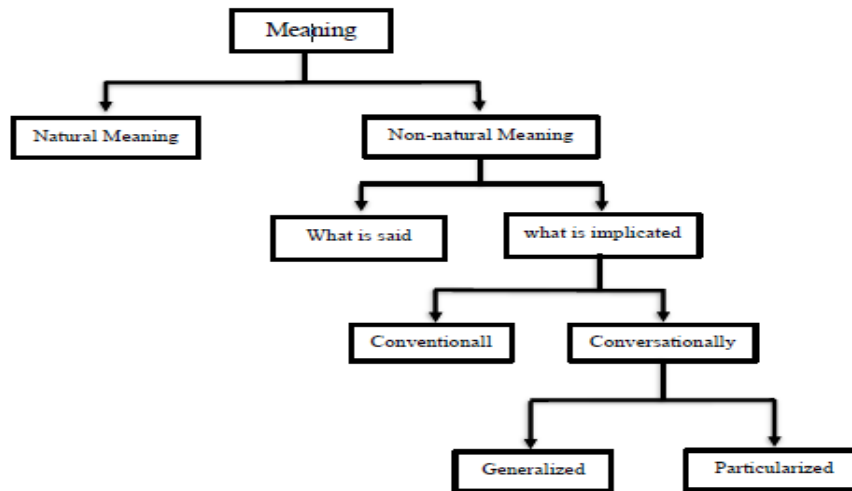
One significant characteristic of the scalar implication is that they normally cancel one of the scalar implications when speakers correct themselves on certain information. As in the following example:

Dana: I got some of the bags in China- um actually I think I got most of it there.

By using 'some', the speaker suggests 'not most', but then corrects herself by asserting 'most'. The following figure clarifies the Gricean model of meaning.

Figure 2. 1

The Gricean model of meaning from Birner (2013, p.73)



2.1.3 Presupposition

Yule (2010, p.293) defines presupposition as “an assumption by a speaker or writer about what is true or already known by the listener or reader”. For example, when somebody tells you, (your father is waiting in the garden), there is a clear presupposition that you have a father and he is waiting in the garden (p.133).

The presupposition of a sentence doesn't change when the opposite of sentence is given by negating. For example (Your father isn't waiting in the garden).

The same presupposition is given that you have a father. This characteristic is called ‘constancy under negation’ and it is defined by Yule (2010, p.133) as a property of an assumption statement that it remains true after the statement is negated.

According to (Yule, 1996, p.27-29), there are six types of presupposition, these types are considered as indicators of potential presupposition and potential presupposition is an assumption often connected with the usage of a significant number of language forms (words, phrases, structure). These types are:

1. Existential Presupposition

This type of presupposition assumes to be existed not only in the possessive construction but also in any definite noun phrase. e.g.,

Your sister's dress is beautiful (>> Your sister exists and that she has a beautiful skirt).

The symbol (>>) means ‘presupposes’.

2. Factive Presupposition

This type can be identified as a true and factive presupposition and it can be identified by various verbs like *realize, know, aware, be, regret, odd, and glad*. e.g.,

Elizabeth was not aware that Tom was ill. (>> Tom was ill).

3. Lexical Presupposition

Lexical presupposition is defined as the usage of one word and its asserted meaning is conventionally interpreted with the assumption that another (non-asserted) meaning is understood. This can be identified by using specific lexical presuppositions like: *again, start, and stop*, e.g.,

He stopped smoking. (>> He used to smoke and he stop smoking).

4. Structural Presupposition

This type is associated “with the use of certain sentence structures that have been analysed and assumed to be true”. For example, in English, the use of the WH question structure is traditionally interpreted with the assumption that the information following the WH- form is already known to be true. e.g.,

Where did he buy the car? (>> he bought the car).

5. Non-Factive Presupposition

This type is linked to a variety of verbs in English such as *dream, pretend, and imagine* and it is assumed not to be true. For examples:

She pretends to be happy. (>> She is not happy).

6. Counterfactual Presupposition

This kind of presupposition is not only wrong, but also the opposite of what is true, or contradictory to truth. For example, some conditional structures, known as counterfactual conditionals, assume that the information in the if-clause is not available at the time of utterances. e.g.,

If you had been my friend, you would have visited me. (>> you are not my friend).

3. Methodology

This study employs qualitative research in investigating the selected data. Qualitative research stresses “understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the human participants in natural settings. It does not begin with formal hypotheses, but it may result in hypotheses as the study unfolds” (Ary et al., 2010, p.22).

There are many reasons behind choosing qualitative research: qualitative research is inductive and directed in natural settings. Second, plans, logics, and purposes of sampling obviously differentiate qualitative from quantitative methods. In qualitative research, sample size does matter but not as in quantitative research where huge sample sizes are the drivers of many statistical analyses. Third, qualitative designs are flexible and can be changed to correspond to the dynamics of the evolving research process (Klenke, 2016, p.9-10).

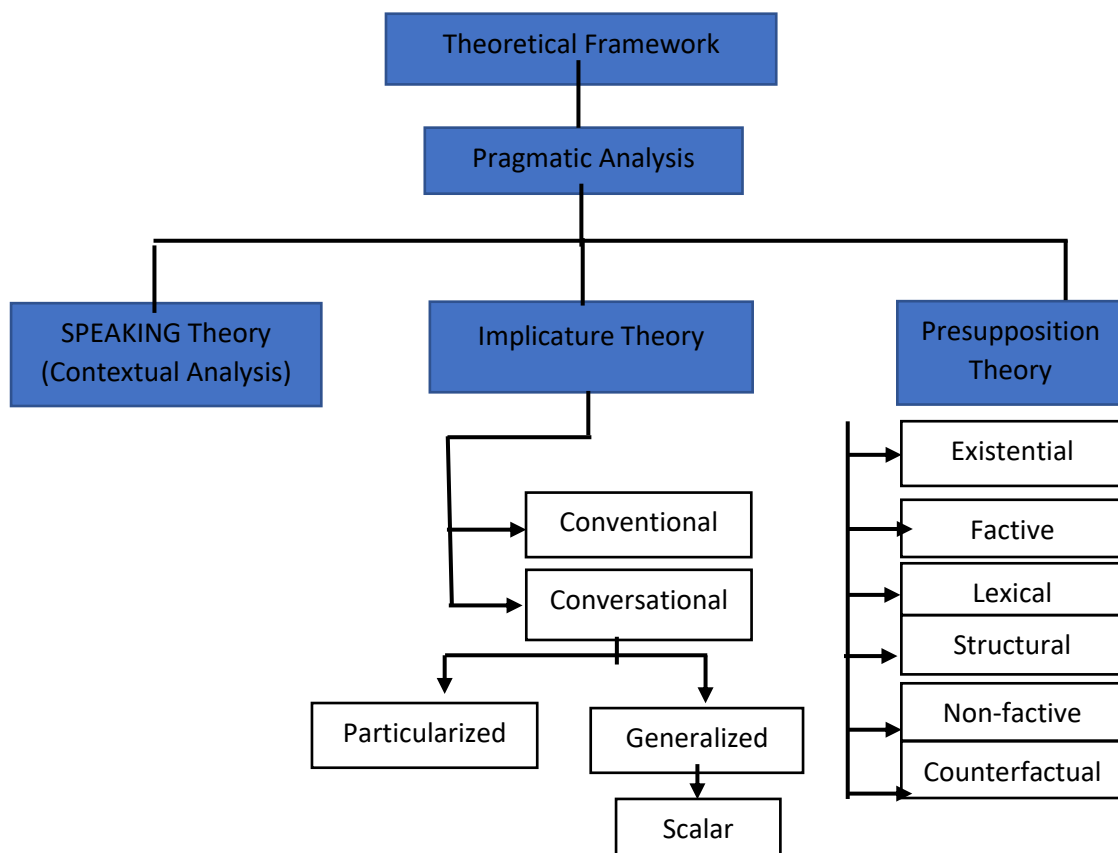
The researchers employ qualitative content analysis (henceforth QCA). The qualitative content analysis goes beyond counting words to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings (Weber, 1990). According to Hsieh & Shannon (2005, p.1278), research using QCA focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text.

There are two types of content analysis: a conceptual and relational. Conceptual and relational content analysis and they both follow similar steps initially, but the aims and outcomes of each are different. The conceptual analysis on the other hand focuses on the number of times a concept occurs in a set of data and it generally focuses on explicit data while relational content analysis, on the other hand, takes a more holistic view by focusing more on implicit data in terms of context, surrounding words and relationships. It assesses the relationships between different concepts, how they are connected, and the context in which they appear (Crosley, 2021). The researchers choose the relational content analysis in the collecting and analysing data.

In this study, caricature posters are studied pragmatically by using Hymes' SPEAKING model, Grice's Implicature theory and Yule's Presupposition theory. The researchers choose three caricature posters after translating it; the researchers analyse it based on the adapted model as in the following framework.

Figure 3.1

The Proposed Theoretical Framework [adapted from Hymes' SPEAKING model (1974), Grice's Implicature theory (1975), and Yule's Presupposition theory (1996)].



4. Data Analysis

Analysis of Extract (1)

Figure 4.1



Note: This caricature is drawn by Al Fahdawy, A. on April 27, 2020 from Al-Dustur Newspaper <https://addustor.com>

The Translated Text

The Man Says: shhhhh, be aware and do not say I have COVID_19 symptoms.

The other man says: See, it is a disease not a crime.

4.1.1 Contextual Analysis

The setting of this caricature is in an unknown place, it is posted in the 'Al-Adustur' newspaper on April 27, 2020. The participants are two men. It is about two men who are having a conversation about coronavirus. The ends or goal of this caricature is to show the petrification and intellectual rigidity that some people have which make them think that having a disease is a shameful thing that must be hidden while the second person shows a correct view that the disease does not necessitate social aversion to the patient.

4.1.2 Pragmatic Analysis

Obviously, there is a conversation between two people, it can be identified as a particularized conversational implicature since this type depends on specific context and there is a flout in relevance maxim by stating something irrelevant. This maxim bases on making the contribution relevant. Hereby, the reply of the man 'it is a disease not a crime' is irrelevant to the first man's ask 'shhhhh, be aware and do not say I have COVID_19 symptoms'

The artist uses factive presupposition twice. The first one is by using 'be aware' which presupposes the fact that the man has COVID_19 symptoms. The second one is by using the verb 'be' which presupposes the fact of the real existence of this disease.

Analysis of Extract (2)

Figure 4.2



Note: This caricature is drawn by Al Fahdawy, A. on March 15, 2021 from Edraaq Newspaper <https://edraakiq.com/>

The Translated Text

The Man Says: Abu Hamody, why do not you wear your mask?

Abu Hamody Says: Are you kidding, I have it in my pocket.

4.2.1 Contextual Analysis

The setting of this caricature is in an unknown place, it is posted in the 'Edraaq' newspaper on July 10, 2021. The participants are three; two men who are talking about the importance of wearing a mask in the time of the pandemic and the third participant is coronavirus. The ends of this caricature is to shed light on those people who are careless about prevention and the goal of adding the personality of the virus is to express the strange behaviour of the man who puts his mask in his pocket.

4.2.2 Pragmatic Analysis

The idea of this conversation is implied by using a particularized conversational implicature because there is a flout in the maxim of relevance. This maxim bases on making the contribution relevant. Hereby, the reply of Abu Hamody 'Are you kidding, I have it in my pocket' as he supposes to give reason why he is not wearing mask.

The artist uses structural presupposition by using wh-structure which presupposes the truth that the man does not wear a mask.

Analysis of Extract (3)

Figure 4.3



Note: This caricature is drawn by Al Fahdawy, A. on July 10, 2021 from Edraaq Newspaper <https://edraaq.com/>

The Translated Text

The Little angel boy says to the man: Take the vaccine.

The Coronavirus says: Do not take it in order for me to kill you.

4.3.1 Contextual Analysis

The setting of this caricature is an unknown place, it is about a man who is confused between taking or not taking the vaccine. It is posted in the 'Edraaq' newspaper on July 10, 2021. The participants are three: a man, a little angel boy, and coronavirus. The ends of this caricature is to shed light on the role of vaccine to get rid of the pandemic and how people are reluctant to take the vaccine.

4.3.2 Pragmatic Analysis

The type of implicature in this text is a particularised conversational implicature. Here, the artist flouts the maxim of manner. The meaning is ambiguous because the artist states that there is a coronavirus who does not want people to take vaccine in order to infect them and kill them. The presupposition type is existential which presupposes the existence of coronavirus and the vaccine.

5. Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the current study, it is found that the selected texts from the caricature posters reflect the idea of the coronavirus pandemic and the problems that people face. This paper makes a pragmatic analysis of the Iraqi caricature posters of the coronavirus pandemic after translating the Arabic texts into English ones under the framework of Hymes' SPEAKING model (1974)', Grice's Implicature theory (1975), and Yule's Presupposition theory (1996).

After the analysis, the following findings can be drawn: first, by using Hymes' model of SPEAKING, the researchers find more information about the time, place, aim, and the mood of the selected caricature posters. For the Implicature theory, the artist uses a conversational implicature many times especially a particularised one. Second, for the Presupposition theory, the artist used many types in order to send his ideas to educate people about this disease and aware them from its danger. The researchers conclude that the pragmatic aspects are important in revealing the meaning of the texts in caricature posters.

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