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**Asst. Prof. Samara Ahmed
(MA)**

Tikrit University\College of Education
for Humanities

Hiyam Yousif Mahmoud

Tikrit University\College of Education
for Humanities

* Corresponding author: E-mail :
Hiyamalyousif@g-mail.com

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A Pragmatic Study of Indirect Warning in Boris Johnson's Speeches on COVID 19

A B S T R A C T

This study investigates how the prime minister of the United Kingdom employs language to express indirect warning in his speeches in order to warn his citizens to avoid corona virus infections. It aims to detect the act of warning embedded in his rhetoric through linguistic manipulation, and its impact on the audience so, the study aims the following. Therefore, it hypothesizes the following:

- 1-The speech act of warning is constructed by the declarative sentences more than the other forms in Johnson's speeches.
- 2- Felicity Conditions are perfectly applied on the selected speeches.
- 3-Indirect warning is more currently occurred than direct one.
- 4-The hint strategy is more frequently occurred in the selected data than the conditional one as an indirect warning strategy.

Speech Act Theory deals with the meaning of language use which is stated in terms of how the speaker manipulates the utterance to make the hearers infer the intended meaning. So, the data analysis will be dealt pragmatically. Therefore, the study will try to answer the following questions:

- 1-Indirect warning has certain basic strategies to deal with. So, the study will concentrate on these strategies.
- 2-Does indirect Speech Act be more frequently used than direct one?
- 3-which strategy is more frequently used in expressing the indirect warning?

The study arrives at these conclusions: (1) All the hypotheses have been approved, (2) He never uses the questioning strategy as indirect one in the whole speeches, (3) He employs the indirect speech act of warning more than the direct one in order to force the audience to infer his intended meanings when he delivers his speeches, and (4) The speech act of warning in Johnson's speeches is used to direct people either to do beneficial action or avoid doing bad actions.

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دراسة تداولية حول التحذير الالامباشر لخطابات بورس جونسن بخصوص كوفيد ١٩

ا.م. د سماره محمد احمد / كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية, جامعة تكريت

هيام يوسف محمود البياتي / كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية, جامعة تكريت

الخلاصة:

تحاول هذه الدراسة دراسة وتحليل خطابات رئيس وزراء المملكة المتحدة, بورس جونسن للكشف عن فعل الكلام التحذيري من خلال استخدام اللغة. تهدف الدراسة الى كشف فعل التحذير المضمن في خطابه من خلال التلاعب اللغوي, وتأثيره على الجمهور.

الدراسة الحالية هي فعل الكلام التحذيري في خطابات بوريس جونسون بخصوص كوفيد ١٩ للكشف عن كيفية استخدام اللغة كوسيلة للتحذير من خلال استخدام فعل الكلام التحذيري عندما يحذر شعبه بشكل ظاهري وضمني لتجنب الاصابة بفيروس كورونا. لذلك فإنها تقتض الاتي:

- ١- يبنى فعل الكلام التحذيري في الجمل الخبرية اكثر من الاشكال الاخرى في خطابات جونسون.
- ٢- يعتبر الفعل المؤثر لفعل الكلام التحذيري ضمنا اكثر من ظاهريا المعطيات التي تم تحليلها المعطيات التي تم اختيارها لهذه الدراسة هي خمسون خطابا لجونسون تخص فايروس كورونا للفترة من شهر اذار وحتى شهر كانون الثاني للعام ٢٠٢٠ التي تم تحليلها لغويا باستخدام طراز سيرل (١٩٦٩) استخدام فعل الكلام التحذيري غير المباشر اكثر من المباشر لكي يجبر الجمهور على فهم المعنى المراد عند الخطاب .

مفهوم علم التداوليه، المغزى من علم التداوليه، نظرية فعل الخطاب، مفهوم اللامباشر

1. Introduction

COVID 19 has kept the world occupied with increasing number of infections since its beginning on March 2020. It is considered as a pandemic which threatens the world. So, all the governments of the world work to reduce the number of the infected ones among people by applying many programs including giving instructions, advice, and warning to make them be more conscious about the virus's danger. One of these governments is the British one which is represented by its Prime Minister, Mr. Boris Johnson who has delivered many speeches in order to warn and urge his citizens to be aware of this pandemic.

2.The Notion of Pragmatics : Pragmatics is regarded as a fast –growing discipline that is identified by a huge output of research for many reasons that is: rising in the number of phenomena such as pragmatic markers, for example (well, anyhow), and vocatives to which they are considered linguistic features. There are also prosodic phenomena such as stress and intonation which are related to the function of utterance or other phenomena which are related to the

features of context, such as speaker's intention and power relations. The other factor that contributes in increasing –growing of pragmatics is the realization of requirement to a theory which goes behind the semantic deals with human communication. A theory which deals with language use expresses what the human beings intend to do on different levels (Archer et al,201:4).

Pragmatics is considered as one of the aspects of human language which has an important role in understanding the human language or the use of the language. It is difficult to understand human language without understanding how language is used through communication. It is described as a wave which expands from narrow discipline that concerns with formal side of speech to a wider field that concerns with functional side: form, context and meaning (Leech,1983:5). Pragmatics, according to Mey (1993:5), is "the study of language seen in relation to its users... It is the study of language as it is used by real people for their own purposes under their own constraints and opportunities".

3.The Significance of Pragmatics

Parker et al (2005:9) highlights series of facts to which pragmatics concerns with:

1-Pragmatics is concerned with objective facts such as the speaker's identity; the time and location of the statement.

2-It focuses on information, such as the speaker's objectives, the language he means to use, the meaning he intends to express, the people he intends to allude to, and the action he intends to do by saying anything.

3-It is concerned with facts regarding the speaker's and hearer's beliefs as well as the conversation they have and the topic of their talk.

4-It is interested in social facts which are significant to the social situations, such as promises, marriages, and ceremonies as well as the consequences that a person achieves when he says something.

4. The Speech Act Theory (SAT)

The purpose of using language is not only to describe or communicate ideas, people use language to perform an action through their utterances, for example; if you work in an institution and your manger utters: you are fired. This means that there is an action will be performed 'ending your employment', this leads to conclude that people produce the speech not only including grammatical constructions and words, but to do actions through the words (Yule, 1996: 47).

Crystal (2008: 446) ascertains that SAT is important in pragmatics because it allows researchers to investigate the relationship between the utterances, the actions of the addressee, and addresser in interpersonal communication, (i.e., describing how utterances relate to the context in which they are produced).

5. The Notion of Indirectness

Searle (1975: 76) states that the notion of "politeness" is the most prominent motivation for indirectness in requests and certain forms since it tends to become the conventionally polite ways of making indirect requests. ISA depends mutually on sharing background information both linguistically and non- linguistically with the rational powers and inference on the part of the hearer (ibid:60-61). Haverkate (1988: 59) ascertains that the important reason behind using ISA is a matter of politeness to reduce the elimination of the risk to encounter and protect face of interactive participants.

Searle (1975b: 59-82) proposes three main approaches to analyze ISA which are:

Firstly, each ISA has double IF, LF literal force is called secondary, while none literal is indirect which is called primary.

Secondly, investigating the utterance as ISA by its relevant with the existence of FCs or not.

-Pass the salt .

-Can you pass the salt?

Both of these examples above break the FC for a question and query preparatory condition for a request. Therefore, it can have the function of a request.

Thirdly, the context in which the utterance is uttered, i.e., sharing the same background of information with the speaker, exercising his\her powers of rationality, inference and having knowledge of certain general principles of cooperative conversation (Mey, 2009: 1005).

Gazdar (1981: 64) indicates two notes that should be taken into a count to prove that any utterance will be considered direct or indirect speech act as the following:

1-Explicit performatives have the force of performative verb in the matrix clause which is the direct speech act.

2-While the other major sentence –types in English have the forces traditionally associated with them, namely: ordering, questioning and stating.

Any sentence which does not have the force is related with the above two notes lead to be considered as indirect speech act.

English language has three types of sentences: declarative, imperative, and interrogative which are related to the three basic Ifs are recognized as: asserting\stating, requesting\ordering, and asking\questioning. In a language, if there is a direct relation between the sentence type and the IF, this will be called direct speech act, for example: (levinson, 1983: 263).

-Shut the door.

This sentence type is imperative which matches with ordering; there is a direct relation between the structure and function. It is direct speech act, but this type of sentence or direct speech of ordering is rarely used in English language to

show request. Black (2006: 19) asserts that there is an exception in using direct imperative in certain circumstances, such as: special friendship, in warlike, talking to children or in situation of imminent.

Holtgraves (1994: 1206) illustrates that through inference, the hearer or addressee tries to interpret the speech act literally , but if s\he fails in his attempt because of the literal meaning irrelevance ,the hearer looks for another interpretation which carries primary illocutionary force. Understanding the direct act is easily understood and do not need inference while the ability to interpret indirect act depends on having common knowledge to infer the intended meaning.

6. Searle's Speech Act of Warning

Searle (1965:173) defines speech act as "the function of the meaning of the sentence in the utterance in which it is acted". He (1979:16) focuses on the fact that there is a great reason to study SA because "all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts and SA is the minimal basic unit of linguistic communication". He (1969:12) concentrates on the idea that speaking a language is attracting a rule-governed form of behavior, and producing an utterance means that the speaker is performing illocutionary force. Performing any kind of the speech act, such as making statement, asking question, giving commands, and etc. are performed under the rules of language.

Warning is a speech act that try to get another person to do something“. This means that it is a directive speech act, as Searle classified it, in which the speaker tries to get the hearer to perform or refrain from performing an act prospectively. One cannot tell people to do something in the past. So, there may be the pronoun (you as an actor) whether that word is actually present in the utterance or not. The uttering of warning words counts as a change of state from non-information of bad future event to the effect that an action is not in the hearer's best interests (ibid: 67).

According to Searle (1973: 27), a sentence has two sides: firstly, function is as an indicating device. Secondly, a proposition is as an indicating element which detect "what illocutionary act the speaker is performing in the utterance and illocutionary force of the utterance", In addition, the performative verbs may be explicit or implicit, such as: word order, stress, intonation contour, punctuation and the mood of the verb.

Turki(2009) states that Searle identifies five categories ,they are (assertive ,directive, commissive, expressive and declarative)

7. Indirect Warning

Searle (1969:61) shows the connection between an utterance and its illocutionary force as a matter of linguistic convention since they are encoded in the mood of sentences:

- Interrogative expresses question.
- Declarative expresses assertion.
- Imperative expresses request/command.

Other illocutionary powers are also encoded phrases which are determined by the performative verb of warning, such as:

- I warn you that Anakin will turn to the dark side of the force.

On the other hand, He (1979: 31-34) clarifies that "In indirect speech acts, the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information. Both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer, help the addressee to interpret sentences through their literal meaning besides having another meaning in the context according to a set of felicity conditions. ISA is defined by Searle(1979:60) as "cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by ways of performing another" to be

an utterance in which one speech act is performed indirectly by performing another. For example:

-I promise to sack you if you don't finish the job by this weekend.

In this utterance, it seems that the literal meaning is indicated by the performative verb (promise), but the IFs which are described by this speech acts are either a warning or threat .

90 -I warn you that Anakin will turn to the dark side of the force.

As a member of directive illocutionary actions, Searle (1975:71) deals with the speech act that having more than one illocutionary force includes : command ,order, and etc. In order to make the listener stop doing an action, the speaker warns others about bad, risky or uncomfortable action.

He adds that warning speech acts are assigned to the category of assertive in the sense of binding the addressee to the reality of a world proposition .

He (ibid: 60) makes a distinction between direct and indirect speech act which depend on his notice that there is a wide contradiction between what the speakers intend and what an utterance means.

ISA consists of a sentence in which the speaker intends more than what he says, such as:

-The bull is in charging (ISD)

8. Strategies of Indirect Speech Acts

Indirect speech act has three strategies that the speaker resorts to so as to produce indirect warning. They are:

1-IF Conditional Strategy: Searle (1969: 67) mentions that the indirect warning is elicited by conditional statement which is known as hypothetical warning (if you don't do or do X, then Y will occur) and vice versa .

The conditional sentences include two parts :

1-the subordinate /dependent "if clause" and

2-the main clause (will clause) consists of expected result .

This type of instruction is a frequent one that is used to express warning
98 -If you go out without a mask, you will catch by the virus .

The purpose of using the hypothetical warning is to affect the action, attitude and belief of the listener (ibid).

2-Question Strategy: this type of strategy is used in a specific context when inferior people warn superior ones to maintain the unbalanced connections that exist between them. For example:

-Is it not time to offer our Japanese colleagues a copy of contract?

(Hernandez,2001:205).

3-Hint Strategy: The relevance maxim of cooperative principle, proposed by Grice and developed by supporters of relevance theory in conversational interaction, is used in warning hints.

9. Data Selection and Description

The data selected for this study have been taken from this website, <http://www.gov.uk/goverment/speeches> or <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news>, which contains the speeches of the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The number of the speeches that have been taken is about Corona Virus which is known as "COVID 19" which concern in how he uses the style of warning as a speech act in his language when he delivers his discourses in order to warn the people of his country to avoid the risk of COVID 19. Those speeches have influential roles in making the British people comprehend the risk of such pandemic. The speaker uses different types of speech acts, but the study investigates and focuses on the speech act of warning in particular. The purpose of this study is to investigate the illocutionary acts of warning depending on recognizing the speaker's intention which is essential for interpreting the meaning.

The study is based on certain criteria in selecting the data of analysis; the speeches of the Prime Minister are:

- 1-The speeches represent pure English language which is considered as the first spoken and understood language by most of the world population.
- 2-The selected data discusses the style of warning having great importance to the audience by giving warning instructions through speech act of warning to reduce the infections of the corona virus.
- 3-The units of analysis that have been taken include the speech act of warning.

10.The Model of the Study

The model adopted for this study is Searle's framework (1969). The purpose of this study is to investigate the illocutionary acts of warning depending on recognizing the speaker's intention which is essential for interpreting the meaning. Therefore, the selection of Searle 's model (1969) through his modification of speech act theory to identify how language of warning is produced in the speeches. The speaker's position is a prime minister who tries to get the audience to perform some act or refrain from performing an act prospectively. Even most of the texts represent benefits to the addressees. Accordingly, the use of Searle's model manifests the style of warning the speaker follows so as to meet the felicity conditions to make the language he uses indirectly effectual and achieves what discourse is about.

11.Data Analysis and Discussion

Text(1)

It's clear that coronavirus, COVID-19, continues and will continue to spread across the world and our country over the next few months. We've done what can be done to contain this disease and this has bought us valuable time. But it is now a global pandemic.

Discussion: The speech act of warning is expressed indirectly by declarative sentence in which the speaker's " the Prime Minster of UK Mr. Boris Johnson" declare showing the highest point of warning to be taken into account by people

(the public) to be careful in their everyday life .The hearer can infer that they are warned against doing bad action which leads to the increasing of infection ,and it is realized syntactically by using two types of constructions (model+ the infinitive) and using (to be+ adj), the most commonly used model is (will) which usually expresses the determination and intentions of the speaker to do something in the future. The implicit illocutionary force of warning in this speech. The speaker uses hints strategy by depending on the Maxim of Relation to make the hearer interprets the indirect illocution of warning.

1-The Propositional Content Condition: The Prime Minster of UK Boris Johnson expresses his proposition that corona virus is a dangerous disease which spreads quickly through the world and becomes a pandemic which threatens all the human beings.

2-The preparatory conditions: a-He believes that this virus spreads quickly but the risk of the situation (corona pandemic) is not in the hearers' interest. b- According to the text, he believes that the corona pandemic will become a global event.

3-The Sincerity Condition: He wants the audience to understand that this virus is dangerous and they must obey certain instructions in order to take their responsibility to avoid the infection .

4-The Essential Conditions: a- The situation of the corona virus makes people suffer too much, so that he wants the people of his country to obey his warnings. b-He intends to make them understand the event of corona virus will spread quickly and there is disastrous consequences.

Expansion of the Speech Act of Warning:

The speaker wants the audience to syntactically realize his warnings through the text: (I hereby warn you that COVID 19continues and will continue to spread across our country. It's now a global pandemic.

Table (1): Analysis of text (1)

Realization of the Speech Act of Warning					
Linguistic Realization			Form of Warning	Declarative	✓
Subject	First person			Positive Imperative	
	Second Person			Negative Imperative	
	Third Person	✓		Interrogative	
e	Active	✓	Type of Warning	Direct	
	Passive			Indirect	✓
			Type of Illocutionary Force	Explicit	
Syntactic forms of sentences	Simple verb Form			Implicit	✓
	To be form	✓			
	Model +infin.		Ind. Strategy	Conditional	
	Conditional- if			Hint	✓
	Other form			Questioning	

Text 2

The most dangerous period is not now but some weeks away depending on how fast the virus spread.

Discussion: The speech act of warning is expressed indirectly. Here, the speaker warns his people implicitly by using strong illocutionary force of

warning (the most dangerous period), in the first line, that will occur in the immediate future. He justifies such warning in terms of asserting an action by uttering the sentence (depending on how fast the virus spread) which shows that the virus spreads quickly, and it can be out of control. This is intended to be the most dangerous period. He uses the hint strategy by depending on the interpretation of indirect illocution which will heavily depends on the maxim of relation.

1-The propositional content Condition: The Prime Minister of the UK Boris Johnson expresses the proposition that corona virus becomes most dangerous when it spreads, and then it will be out of control.

2- The Preparatory conditions: a-He believes that the spread of the virus is not in the hearers' interest. b-Here, he mentions that it is not obvious for the public that the infection will occur in some weeks.

3- The Sincerity Condition: a-He knows that the future situation of the spread of corona virus is not in his people's interest. b-Here, he insinuates the spread of the virus in order to force the public to grasp this real warning since its spread depends on how people commit the instructions which prevent its spread.

4- The Essential Condition: a-The speaker says that the dangerous period is coming when he mentions it in (...not now but some weeks...) which is a signal for the next bad days. This is intended to let the audience think about if they do not obey the instructions given. b-He intends to make the audience understand the situation when the virus spreads, and insinuates of the bad consequences.

The Expansion of the Speech Act of Warning

Here, there is a hint for people to realize the consequences through "I hereby warn you that the most dangerous period is not now but some weeks away depending on how fast the virus spread".

Table(2): Analysis of Text (2)

Realization of the Speech Act of Warning					
Linguistic Realization			Form of Warning	Declarative	✓
Subject	First person			Positive Imperative	
	Second Person			Negative Imperative	
	Third Person	✓		Interrogative	
	Active	✓	Type Warning	Direct	
	Passive			Indirect	✓
			Type of Illocutionary Force	Explicit	
				Implicit	✓
Syntactic forms of sentences	Simple verb Form	✓	Ind. Strategy	Conditional	
	To be form			Hint	✓
	Model +infin.			Questioning	
	if Condition				
Other form					

Text(3)

And it's going to spread further and I must level with you, level with the British public, many more families are going to lose loved ones before their time.

Discussion: Warning is uttered indirectly by uttering a declarative sentence which issues the illocutionary force of warning implicitly in saying (...I must level with you...), in the first line, because it draws the attention of the hearers on such accurate point. the speaker wants them to understand the gravity of the

situation. Therefore, he uses a hint strategy in order to match what he says with what he means as indirect illocutionary force of warning which is related to the maximum of relation. It is considered as the strongest warning for the hearers when he mentions (...to lose loved ones...), in the second line, as he moves them from imagination to reality.

1-The propositional content condition: The speaker expresses the proposition that this pandemic will cause losing many unexpected members from the families in the future in saying (...lose loved ones before their time) because of such risky virus.

2-The Preparatory conditions: a-He tries to prepare the people of his country that something deadly is at the door in (...it's going to spread further... going to lose...) in which they may be careless about or it may not be in their interest. b-The public who don't want to lose their relatives or friends must obey the speaker's warnings.

3-The sincerity condition: He tries to be faithful with his people when he says (...I must level with you, level with the British public...) so as to tell them about such a risky virus.

4-The Essential Conditions: a-He intends in telling his people that there will be more dead, and they should be understood that many dear people will be lost when he mentions (...lose loved ones...), in the second sentence, which will inevitably because of this dangerous virus. b-He insinuates that they must grasp this warning since there are bad consequences.

Expansion of the speech act of warning

There is warning realized within the text that (I hereby warn you that many families are going to lose their loved ones before their time).

Table (3): Analysis of text (3)

Realization of the Speech Act of Warning
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Linguistic Realization			Form of Warning	Declarative	✓
	First person			Positive Imperative	
	Second Person			Negative Imperative	
	Third Person	✓		Interrogative	
	Active	✓	Type Warning	Direct	
	Passive			Indirect	✓
			Type of Illocutionary Force	Explicit	
Syntactic forms of sentences	Simple verb Form			Implicit	✓
	To be form	✓			
	Model +infin.		Ind. Strategy	Conditional	
	Condition if			Hint	✓
	Other forms			Questioning	

12. Conclusions

The study has come up with the following conclusions:

1-It is found that the British prime minister Boris Johnson uses the act of warning in declarative sentences to send out messages to his people. Hence, The hypothesis No. 1 which reads: *The speech act of warning is constructed by the declarative sentences more than the other forms in Johnson's speeches* is verified.

2-He applies the felicity conditions on his speeches so as to make them felicitous. So, the hypothesis No. 3 which is mentioned as: *the Felicity Conditions are perfectly applied on the selected speeches* is verified.

3-He insinuates in sending messages to make correspondence between what he says and what he means. Accordingly, the hypothesis No. 5 which is: *The hint strategy is the most frequently occurred in the selected data than the conditional one* is also verified.

4-He never uses the questioning strategy as indirect one in the whole speeches.

5-He employs the indirect speech act of warning more than the direct one in order to force the audience to infer his intended meanings when he delivers his speeches.

6-The speech act of warning in Johnson's speeches is used either to direct the audience to do beneficial action or avoid doing bad actions.

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