Analyzing Political Discourse: Towards a Pragmatic Approach

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Abstract:

This paper examines in the perspective of performance how politicians in political interviews rely on pragmatic strategies to grapple with the conflict between being uncooperative and truthful. Four Iraqi interviews were analyzed. An eclectic model has been used in the analysis which is based on the previous works on the pragmatic analysis of political discourse. We have attempted to accomplish a comprehensive pragmatic approach that accounts for most of the pragmatic moves and strategies that are used by Iraqi politicians in managing their discourse.

Our conclusions have proved that indirectness is an essential property of any political discourse. Communication in Iraqi political discourse is accomplished through such communicative strategies such as word play, metaphor, circumlocution, use of approximation and numbers, citing historical speeches and citation from the Holy Quran. We have also found that cultural differences are reflected in the kind of verbal indirectness that politicians use. Finally, we think that the conclusions achieved can be extended to other languages.

تحليل الخطاب السياسي بطريقة براغماطية

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ملخص البحث :

تبحث هذه الدراسة في كيفية اعتماد السياسيين العراقيين أساليب براغماطيقية معينة أثناء إجراء حواراتهم السياسية ، مع محاولة بيان عدم التعاون مع المحاور في قول الحقيقة. لقد تم

تحليل أربع مقابلات تلفزيونية عراقية ، وتم اعتماد نموذج انتقائي في التحليل مبني على دراسات سابقة في هذا المجال ، ولقد حاولنا من خلال هذه الدراسة تقديم طريقة براغماطيقية شاملة في التحليل والتي تبين معظم الاستراتيجيات البراغماطيقية المستخدمة من قبل السياسيين العراقيين في إدارة حواراتهم.

أكدت نتائج هذه الدراسة بان الأسلوب غير المباشر يعد الصفة الأساسية لأي حديث سياسي. ويتحقق التواصل في أي حديث سياسي عن طريق استراتيجيات تواصلية معينة كالتلاعب بالكلمات واستخدام النسب والأرقام والاستعارة مع الاستشهاد بأقوال مأثورة وكذلك الاستشهاد بآيات من القرآن الكريم. ومن الطبيعي أن الاختلافات الثقافية لها تأثير في الأسلوب الكلامي غير المباشر المستخدم من قبل السياسيين. ومن فوائد هذا البحث هي أن النتائج المتحققة عن هذه الدراسة يمكن تطبيقها على لغات أخرى.

1. Introduction

Language is a weapon and a powerful tool in winning public support especially during current information revolution period. It is also a weapon in the struggle of community against community, world view against world view. Language, therefore, is seen as the means for achieving the politician's goals and interests.

It is apparent that political discourse revolves around being manipulative and hedgy, giving less information about the truth of things. So, it is well enough to say that political language is the tricky and twisted use of language (Zheng, 2000 : 2). A politician actually hides himself behind these skills so as not to attach himself to any kind of commitment. He may use certain pragmatic skills to attack other rival politician's face in order to improve his; or simply to simulate the feelings of the population and get them to believe in him or drive them to follow his beliefs. According to Wodak (2007 : 203) various pragmatic devices such as insinuation, allusions, word play, presuppositions and implicatures can be analyzed in their multiple functions in political discourse where they frequently serve certain goals. Pragmatically

speaking, all these devices are concerned with the meaning of the utterance, how what is said was meant by the speaker, and how the utterance is to be interpreted by the audience (Indede, 2009: 108).

2- Aims of the Study :

This paper is an attempt to examine features of Iraqi political discourse. Its aims are to explore the strategies through which politicians find their ways to defend themselves, and how they make use of the politeness strategies and why they abstain from directness. On the pragmatic level, there would be explanations of vagueness in terms of the situational properties. Where relevant, there would be mentioning for the implications of some of the communicative strategies for the conversational maxims put forward by Grice (1975).

As such, the aim of this study is rather to construct a comprehensive framework that focuses on the characteristics of political discourse from a pragmatic perspective.

3- Hypotheses :

In this study, it is hypothesized that :

1. Iraqi politicians (IPs) make use of certain pragmatic strategies and these strategies are recursive in debates and interviews.
2. IPs tend to be indirect and persuasive at the same time in their speeches.
3. IPs make use of the politeness strategies in their interviews, though sometimes an intrinsic breakdown to those strategies may occur.
4. IPs are not always in a position allow them to follow Grice's maxim, in a proper way.

4- The Problem :

In this paper, the focus would be on the theoretical and practical issues that are relevant to the discourse analysis of politicians' debates and interviews.

Like other discourse genres, politicians' debates and speeches have many structures at several levels. Thus, one may examine discourse properties as word order, metaphors, presupposition, speech acts, interactional strategies and many many more. The question then is what structural strategies are attended to within the framework of a research project with the usual, limitations of time. How to avoid getting lost in the jungle of a multitude of discursive structures and strategies, and how to make a reasoned choice of relevant or at least interesting discourse properties are to be studied in detail.

5- The Data :

The data upon which this analysis is based consist of (4) interviews taken from T.V. with Iraqi politicians (IPs). The interviews were recorded from television via tape recorder and played back later for analysis, the utterances were analyzed in relation to their context. According to Li (2008: 33) political interviews as an activity type have their own distinctive features, of which one is the stereotype of politicians vagueness and evasiveness. However, politicians in the media have no direct contact to their audience nor do they even know whom exactly their audience at a special speech event is (who watches a certain political speech, debate, etc.). Thus, the audience can only rely on situational cues which might help them to reveal indirect meanings.

6- Previous Studies and Model of Analysis :

In political interviews and speeches, politicians habitually equivocate, showing high degree of tentativeness and uncertainty. As such, their utterance is always ambiguous, vague, wishy-washy, indirect and obscure (Li, 2008 : 32). A rich and varied body of literature has investigated interactional features of political interview from a range of perspectives, for instance, discourse analysis (Blum-kulka 1997; Chilton and Schaffner, 1997; Schaffner 2004; Chilton and Schaffner, 2002); Communication and cognition (Chilton, 1987, 2004; VanDijk through a series of articles 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006; Hart 2005; Cap 2005) and pragmatics (Wilson, 1990; Obeng 1997; Zheng 2000; Wechsler 2004; Valentinaviciene, 2005; Christie, 2005; Allen, 2006; Odebunmi, 2009; Indede, 2009).

Making use of all these studies on political discourse and specifically on the pragmatic features of it, an eclectic model has been drawn. The attempt is to present a comprehensive model that can describe and explain most of the strategies that can be used in political discourse.

7- Defining Political Discourse :

The term "political discourse" has been dealt with differently by different linguists. However, the 'political discourse' dealt with in this study is confined to institutional politics, parliamentary debates, party conference speeches and the like.

According to Van Dijk (2002 : 225) "political discourse" is not primarily defined by a topic or style, but rather by who speaks to whom, as what, on what occasion and with what goals. In other words, political discourse is especially 'political' because of its functions in the political process.

As such, political discourse is full of conflicts and synergy, contestations and acquiescence, praise and dispraise, as well as delicate criticism and unmitigated support (Obeng, 1997 : 58). Owing to the rather tricky and / or risky nature of politics itself, and especially to the power of the spoken words, political actors sometimes communicate in an obscure, semantically dense, vague, oblique and rather 'cautious' manner. In effect they communicate indirectly (Ibid.).

8- The Role of Speech Acts in Political Discourse :

The notion of speech acts is central to political discourse analysis as it dissolves the everyday notion that language and actions are separate. Among many attempts at classifying speech acts, Searle (1969) usefully distinguished the following, which can be seen to have direct relevance to political discourse : representative (truth claims), directives (commands, requests), commissives (promises, threats), expressives (praising, blaming), declaratives (proclaiming a constitution, announcing an election, declaring war). Speech acts can only be effectively performed under certain conditions 'felicity conditions', which in the case of politically relevant speech acts may include complex conditions such as the power or status of the speaker, the institutional location, the holding of an election, and the style of language used. In fact, the 'positioning' of the speaker as an authoritative narrator and messenger and as a decisive actor is crucial (Chilton and Schaffner, 1997 : 219).

Thus certain kinds of speech acts, for example orders, requests, advising, warnings, promises, commitments, etc … can only be performed 'felitously' on the basis of recognized powers. Others, such as explicit or implicit claims to truthfulness, knowledge, or accurate assessment, depend partly on being empirically refutable in the light of

events, but many bald assertions appear to be 'felicitous' on other basis than the authority of the speaker. (Ibid.).

9- The Co-operative Principles :

Perhaps one of the most influential contributions to the analysis of discourse in general and to political discourse in particular, is the one made by Paul Grice (1975).

According to his cooperative principle, Grice points out that our talk exchanges are characteristically, to some degree, cooperative efforts. Besides, each participant recognizes in them, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction (Indede, 2009 :110). For detailed explanation of the cooperative principle, Grice gives four categories of maxims of conversation or general principles underlying the efficient cooperative use of language and as follows :

(1) Maxim of Quality : seek to say that which you know to be true, and do not say that which you know to be false or for which you lack adequate evidence. (2) Maxim of Quantity : Make your contribution as informative as, and no more informative than, is required for the purposes of the ongoing discourse. (3) Maxim of Relevance : Be relevant. (4) Maxim of manner : Make your contribution clear, and intelligible , brief, orderly and not ambiguous.

People do assume that anyone speaking to them is trying to be intelligible, trying to be relevant, speaking the truth and telling the whole truth, i.e. people do seem to expect they will be assumed to be behaving in these ways. Of course, it is known that people do not follow all these normative maxims all of the time, but if the norms weren't norms, there would be no concept of lying, telling half-truths, evading the issue, being deliberately obscure (Chilton and Schaffner, 2002 : 12).

Politics may be a specific context in which the CP is recognized to be in danger. However, Grice argues that when the maxims are "flouted", the cooperative principle is generally still assumed to be functioning, in such a way that hearers infer some implied meaning. These implied meanings are known as implicatures. Political implicatures as defined by Van Dijk (2005 : 66) are "the specific political inferences that participants in the communicative situation may take on the basis of the speech and its context'. The inferences involved are not semantic, but pragmatic or contextual. Moreover politicians use implicatures, too perhaps because implied, not explicitly verbalized, meanings can easily be denied (Chilton and Schaffner, 2002 : 12).

10- Politeness and Political Interviews :

It has been claimed that 'political interviews' are confrontational, competitive encounters" (Mullany, 2002 : 6). Naturally, this claim stems from the nature of politics which relies on the smartness, wit, and aggressiveness of participants, which are themselves major requisites for survival in the game. Therefore, politeness plays a significant role in political interviews.

In their pioneering study Brown and Levinson (1987) adapted Goffman's (1967) idea of positive and negative face. In interpersonal Communication, Goffman argued, people pay attention to, and have to achieve a balancing act between the positive need to establish 'common ground' and the negative need not to have one's 'territory' encroached upon. (Chilton and Schaffner, 2002 : 13). Brown and Levinson related these motivations to the face threatening acts (FTAs) that are performed through speech acts. They classified in great detail the linguistic formulation (syntactic and lexical) which speakers use in order

to mitigate their FTAs. The effect of various mitigation strategies is a function of the relations of power and intimacy between speakers. The relevance of this theory for the analysis of political discourse is clear. The notion of FTAs and mitigation can be related to the practices of political talk, in particular to euphemizing strategies, form of evasion and devices of persuasion. The fact that politeness phenomena seem natural in everyday socialized interaction makes them the more unnoticeable in political exchanges. If a politician wishes to tell his or her electorate that taxes are to be raised or unemployment figures are up, then these face threatening acts (requesting sacrifies, issuing bad news) are strategically formulated to lessen the affront. What is more, in political situations, the FTA is likely to have variable value for different groups of hearers, so the linguistic formulations are chosen carefully (Chilton and Schaffner, 2002 : 14).

11- Analyzing Iraqi Political Discourse :

Many writers suggest that politicians have purposes achieved by strategies, which are what one would call political. Just taking this assumption, one can then ask : what is the relationship between these purposes and language structure ? Chilton and Schaffner answer this question by saying that a language can be thought of as a 'resource' which is drawn upon in order political goals to be achieved (2002 : 23).

Throughout the following section, utterances and sketches taken from Iraqi political interviews would be examined to discover the pragmatic strategies used by politicians in achieving their purposes. The interviews conducted with renowned politicians and serving government functionaries to clarify our concept of politicians. In order to safe space and time, only the utterances that are relevant to the purpose of the study

would be analyzed, i.e., the analysis is not for whole interviews. Identical examples and strategies were not to be analyzed over and over, though they reveal that certain strategies are recursive in Iraqi political discourse.

The focus would be on the pragmatic moves and strategies that would be followed by the politicians. Attention is to be paid also to the cooperative principles which are flouted most of the time by the politicians for many reasons as the analysis of the data would show.

Interview I

The first interview to be analyzed here is with an Iraqi politician who is considered as one of the decision makers. He is talking about his past activities outside Iraq :

Example (1) :

– ..... وكـان جهادنـا ضـد الدكتاتوريـة واضـحاً منـذ البدايـة ..... عقـدنا مـؤتمر بيـروت للمعارضة العراقية، وبدأنا في إيجاد التفاهم والحوارات المشتركة بعدما كان هناك نوع من القطيعة بين المكونات السياسية ....

(Our struggle against the dictatorship was clear right from the start ….we held Beirut conference for the Iraqi opposition, so as to establish an environment for mutual understanding after a kind of dispute between the political components).

At the beginning of the interview, Mr. X was asked about his past activities and "Jihad" as he calls it, against the fallen system. Mr. X, throughout his reply, and almost the whole interview, avoids making reference to the fallen system by name and instead he uses the expression "dictatorship" to refer to it, to amplify its cruelty and injustice (of course from his own point of view). This strategy is referred to as "word play" which Wodak (2007) defines as "the playful of words … (through which) allusions and semantic associations with other concepts can be constructed" (p: 214). So the extensive interplay between "Saddam

Hussein's regime" and 'dictator's regime" alludes to seemingly inherent negative characteristics from the past dictatorship regime.

Moreover, the politician uses the easy noticeable hedge "نوع من" "A kind of" to limit the scope of the dispute he is talking about, so as to reduce the negative effect that this word holds; as if saying that there is a dispute, but it is not critical. "المكونات السياسية" "political components" is used as a reference to opposing power (groups) of the previous regime system. Again the strategy of wordplay is used in this speech. He uses this expression to express the idea that these groups, though they are different in their thoughts and beliefs but when combined together, they form a political mass that is able to stand against the system.

Example (2) :

– وعلى الآخرين … (X يتنهد) …. أن لا يتدخلوا في شؤوننا الداخلية.

(Others … (X sighs) …should not interfere with our internal affairs …)

This is a reply to the question asked about the interferences of the neighboring countries and their role in the disturbance happening in Iraq. Mr. X does not clarify who "others" really are, and leaves that entirely for hearers to interpret. The non-verbal communication represented by the "sigh" performs an interesting action, for it serves more than a purpose. It gives him time to think and rephrase what he is about to say. It may also show his discomfort concerning the subject at hand, and that he is reluctant, but forced to say what he has to say. This sigh can also serve as insinuation that Mr. X is sending a message to the neighboring countries. (in fact, he is making an indirect threatening) not to interfere with Iraqi internal affairs otherwise Iraq might take some action against them.

The interviewer later on asked directly if Mr. X thinks, through the reports which he used to receive as a head of the security and defense

committee, that Iran has any involvement in Iraq's current conditions, Mr. X replies :

Example (3)

– أنا لم تتوافر لدي هذه التقارير ... إلا نادرا تصلني هكذا تقارير ... لأننا لسنا جهة تنفيذية، عملنا مجرد إشراف على دوائر الأمن والدفاع ولسنا نحن جهة تنفيذية حتى نطالب بهكذا تقارير، وهذا لا يعني انه لا توجد هكذا تقارير، إذ أننا مجرد جهة تشرف على دوائر الأمن والدفاع ولهذا فإننا لا نستطيع أن نقول نعم أو لا لأننا لسنا جهة تنفيذية كما تعلم ...

(I didn't come across such reports, though sometimes I get such reports…because we are not an executive authority and our job is merely to keep security and defense offices stay track, and we are not an executive authority to demand such reports because our job is to supervise security and defense offices … this does not mean that these reports do not exist, so we can't say "yes" or "no" because we are not an executive authority as you know …).

The politician here uses a circumlocuted strategy in answering the question. i.e. he is using many words to say something which can be said in few words; to lessen the difficulty of the situation (see Obeng 1997). He overtly keeps on repeating that they are not an executive authority, and their job is of a supervision nature. In fact, he has flouted at least three maxims : maxims of quality, quantity and manner. Eventually, hearers get lost and they may even think that the politician didn't get the question.

Interview II

In this interview a politician was asked about different issues :

Example (4) :

Q : بخصوص مسألة حقل الفكة العراقي، هل الحكومة العراقية على علم باحتلال هذا الحقل من قبل القوات الإيرانية ؟

A : أنا لست متأكداً مما تقول .. الحكومة الإيرانية نفت ذلك وهذه ... كما تعلم ... أخبار تناقلتها الفضائيات ... لا اعتقد أنها صحيحة ...

Q : Concerning the issue of Al-Faka Iraqi field, is the Iraqi government aware if its occupation by some Iranian forces ?

A : I am not sure of what you say …. The Iranian government denied this… and as you know these news are transferred by some satellite channels … I don't think it is true …).

The reply did not provide any information pertinent to the question anticipating a definite confirmation or denial with some further elaboration. The utterance of the interviewee "أنا لست متأكدا مما تقول" (I am not aware of what you have said) bears nothing on the question. This apparently violates the maxims of quantity and relevance. The spokesman explicitly confessed his ignorance of what the interviewer had said by doing so, his personal face was damaged, but the presupposition was set aside or cancelled.

Example (5) :

Q : العراق إلى وقت قصير كان يتمتع بعلاقات طيبة مع جيرانه وتحديداً سوريا لكن في حال ثبت أن سوريا متورطة في الإرهاب في العراق كيف ستتصرفون لحل هذه المشكلة ..

A : حسناً … نحن نسمع عن دعم سوريا للإرهاب والعنف في العراق لكننا لا نعرف التفاصيل لحد الآن .. سوريا كانت تقف إلى جانب العراق … لكن هناك بالتأكيد جهات تدعم الإرهاب.

Q : Until recently, Iraq was enjoying good relations with its neighbors and specifically Syria, but in case, it is proved that Syria is involved in terrorism in Iraq, what would you do to solve this problem ?

A-Well … we hear about Syria's support for terrorism and violence in Iraq, but we … do not know the details until now … Syria was standing beside Iraq … but surly there are some organizations which support terrorism…).

- Again no information was provided in the reply. The politician violated the maxim of quantity and quality at the same time since his reply is being quantitively inadequate in information to the needs or interests of

the interviews and qualitively because the speaker is in a position which for sure enables him to know whether Syria is involved or not in terrorism in Iraq.

Example (6) :

A : يشتكي الناس من ازدياد نسبة القتل العشوائي من قبل الشرطة والحرس الوطني.

B : نعم مبدئيا هناك صعوبات أولية بعضها متعلق بحداثة هذه الأجهزة وارتباطها ... لربما بأجهزة أخرى.

A : People are complaining of the increasing numbers of random killing from the police and the national army…

B- Yes, initially we had some difficulties, some of them are related to the recent formation of those systems and their relations with, may be, other systems …)

The interviewer questions the competence of the Iraqi police to accurately shoot at armed groups. That random killings committed by the police is an indication that lives of innocent citizens are at risk, thus adding to the high level of insecurity in the country. The interviewer is blunt, and does not indulge in any hedges to mitigate his criticism to the inexperience and incompetence of the police. Yet the interviewee does not react rudely to this criticism. He merely presents the picture as he sees it. In facts, he seems to unintentionally confirm the insinuation that the police are incompetent. This is expressed by the affirmative 'yes' and the expression that follows "مبدئيا هناك صعوبات أولية " (initially we had some difficulties).

The interviewer, of course, seems to imply that more training in handing arms and ammunition is required for the Iraqi police.

Example (7) :

A : لماذا قررتم الترشيح مرة أخرى على عضوية البرلمان ؟ المنتقدين لكم ولحزبكم يقولون بأنكم لم تفعلوا الشيء الكثير ...

B : الأداء هو شيء نسبي … الحمد لله انك قلت بأننا لم نقم بالشيء الكثير مما لا يعني أننا لم نقدم أي شيء …

A : ولكن الكثيرين يقولون بأنك لم تفعل شيئاً

B : فعلنا ما نستطيع ضمن حدود الموارد المتاحة وكل هذه الانتقادات برأيي هي خبيثة …

A : Why did you decide to join the reelection of the parliament ? Critics to you and to your party say that you have not done too much.

B : The performance is relative. Thanks God you did not say we have not performed at all.

A : But many say you have done nothing ….

B : We have done what we could within the limits of our resources …All these criticisms, in my view, are mischievous.

The interviewer started with a hedge confrontation "لم تفعلوا الشيء الكثير" (have not done too much) and then he moved to an unmitigated proposition which is "بأنك لم تفعل شيئا" (you have done nothing).

The politician's face partially is positively redressed at the beginning with the hedging. Hence, he finds a space for justifying some performance "لم تقل بأننا لم نقدم أي شيء" . (You did not say we have not achieved at all).

This pride is smashed with the unmitigated condemnation that he has done nothing with these bald on record acts, the politician's face becomes seriously threatened.

The following is an interesting extract between the interviewer and the same member of parliament.

Example (8) :

A : كم هو راتبك الآن … يعني شكد تاخذ ؟

B : (يضحك) يعني بس آني د آخذ راتب ! اشو كلهم دياخذون الراتب وماسالتهم … عالعموم آني يتشارك ويايا بالراتب تقريبا ٦٠ عائلة من حرس وحماية ومواطنين.

A : How much is your salary ? i.e. How much do you get ?

B : (Laughing) does it mean I am the only person who takes a salary ! they are all taking salaries and you didn't ask them … Generally speaking I am sharing my salary with about 60 families including body guards and employees …)

The MP here is evading the answer. Evasion simply is avoiding answering a question directly or facing up to real, 'different' or tricky communicative or discourse issues (Obeng , 1997 : 54). When an interactant has no option other than to react verbally to potentially face threatening issue, he or she may resort to evasion. Evading a question, then involves refusing to answer it with or without explanation or mitigation. However, evasion in the example above is achieved with mitigation represented by laughing.

Interview III :

The third interview is with another Iraqi politician who is in charge of the security conditions. At the beginning of the interview the political expert was asked about the hottest zones in Iraq, he included in his answer :

Example (9) :

– أكثر من ٧٠% من المتمردين يتمركزون في المناطق الوسطى من العراق …

(More than 70% of the rebels are centered in the middle areas of Iraq).

Right from the start, we are introduced into a hedge, a quantifying one "أكثر" (more) which makes the hearer(s) broaden their thinking boundaries and makes them consider the seriousness of the situation. By adding "more", the speaker adds a touch of vagueness to give hearer(s) space to evaluate the situation. Hedging is expressed also in this example through the use of approximators (70%). Obviously, the precise numbers do not matter in such circumstances, and rarely they come to be true. In fact, these numbers are largely speculative or relative. Van Dijk (2005) calls

this strategy "the number game" which functions as a rhetorical move of emphasis and hyperbole (p : 87). Furthermore, the political expert uses the word "متمردين" (rebels) to refer to the groups that are against the government. He avoids calling then, terrorists "or" "Resistance" to add the connotation he wants.

The political expert goes on :

Example (10) :

– المعركة الرئيسية الآن تدور بين قوات أمريكية يزيد تعدادها عن حوالي ١٥٠ ألف وبين قوة التمرد التي تتركز في … وهناك حقيقة شيء آخر مثير للاهتمام …

The major battle now is between US. Forces which is nearly more than 150 thousands troops and the rebels who are centered around …and there is something interesting here … in fact ….

In addition to the use of the hedge "يزيد" , and the approximator "150 حوالي " (merely), the political expert changes the flow of speech into another direction to avoid things that he is not certain of which could lead to loss of credibility, or he hasn't the intention of sharing this kind of information with the public. So he simply changes the flow of conversation.

Interview IV :

In the fourth interview, the politician uses a highly formal language.

Example (11) :

– يجب أن لا نسمح للآخرين بان يخدعونا مرة أخرى … إن ضحكوا علينا مرة فتبا لهم وان ضحكوا علينا مرتين فتبا لنا ..

- We must not allow others to deceive us again … if they deceived us one screw them : but if they deceive us again screw us …

In order to enhance the illocutionary force of their speeches, and to avoid the responsibility of making allegations that may incur unexpected

public feedback, Iraqi politicians use, sometimes, historical speeches to support their arguments. Thus citing of historical speeches is used as a means to increase the effectiveness of a speech, and at the same time expresses vagueness and ambiguity to the person referred to .

At the end of the interview, the politician takes a very formal and serious tone saying :

Example (12) :

– انهي كلامي هذا بالقول "من المؤمنين رجال صدقوا ما عاهدوا الله عليه فمنهم من قضى نحبه ومنهم من ينتظر وما بدلوا تبديلا"

-I want to end this speech by saying that :

"Among the believers are men who have been true to their submissiveness (to Allah), (of them) some have fulfilled their obligations; and some of them are still waiting, but they never changed in the least" (the translation is from Mohammad andMohammad ,1999:421).

Analysis of the data revealed that Iraqi politicians use to a certain extent citations from the wholly Quran or prophets' sayings (Ahaadeeth) to arouse the public with vivid, emotionally supportive and persuasive words. However, such technique is only effective when the audience comprehends the full meaning of the "verse" uttered by the politician.

Another strategy used by Iraqi politicians in their interviews and speeches, is the use of metaphors. Throughout the examined interviews, metaphors are over and repeated over and over, like "حمامات الدم" (Blood showers), "ماكنة القتل" (killing machine) to refer to violent acts and other metaphors like "شركاء" (partners), "أخوة" (brothers) are used and repeated to refer to other parties.

Such metaphors should be clear and easy for hearers to get. If a metaphor is not accepted by an audience and is not explored by being

interpreted and discussed it has, then failed its political-communicative purpose (Muller,2005:57).

In fact, metaphors enable speakers to avoid direct (face-threatening and over – revealing) references. (Chilton and Schaffner , 1997 : 222). Recurrent metaphors are embedded in languages and cultures and depend both on the human conceptual system and on cultural systems. Understanding a metaphor thus, requires the audience to know and share certain values(Lakoff, 1992).

Examining the data moreover, shows that Iraqi politicians tend to use certain lexical words. In fact, lexical choice can be used to enforce or attenuate illocutionary force. This is because certain types of words can, for instance, activate particular presuppositions, reveal speaker attitudes in order to achieve thematic emphasis and topical development throughout the entire duration of the speeches. Such as : "الأمان" (security), "العراق الجديد" (new Iraq), "إرادة" (will), " تحرير " (liberation), "مستقبل" (future).

In almost all of the examples above Iraqi politicians use hedging devices. This is due to the type of the context of situation. According to Chilton and Schaffner (2002 : 185) hedges are more frequent in challenging interviews than any other types of conversation. Hedging devices include verbs with modal meaning (أتصور، اعتقد). (I think, have the impression) and adverbs like (generally , obviously) , downtoners (e.g., kind of , "نوع من") and approximating expressions.

By using those hedges , the speaker explicitly adds or modifies contextual information, which makes it possible to operate relatively freely the scope of precision of an utterance (Ibid : 190).

Sometimes, hedging devices are used to make statement more vague. This occurs whenever politicians want to reduce their commitment

to the truth of a proposition being conveyed or when they want to mitigate possible negative perlocutionary effects on their audience. As Channell (1994 : 198) argues, "understanding vague expressions requires hearers to bring to bear not just knowledge of lexis and grammar of English, but also pragmatic knowledge about how language is used, and how it relates to its settings".

On the other hand, all Iraqi politicians constantly use what is called emotive technique (Zheng, 2000). Emotion can be seen as a type of investment from which speakers expect to receive a generous return (Ibid. : 7). Emotion technique is employed in various ways. For example, when speakers talk in hushed or ringing tones or when they use exaggerated body language and facial gestures, they are using emotion technique. The interviews examined are full of examples of this technique. For instance, they all raise their voices at key points in their speeches and gesticulate rigorously with their arms and hands.

Thus, politicians may speak loudly or slowly, may applaud, gesticulate or many look furious; obviously all these non verbal activities will greatly influence the ways recipient interpret speakers as well as "read" the contextual properties of the speaker (intentions, goals, emotions, etc…).

However, pitch falling or rising is associated with the degree of confidence the speaker wishes to convey to his audience (Braga and Marques, 2004 : 2). Iraqi politicians tend to use lower pitch prominence than usual when they want to express uncertainty or try to convey certain proposition vaguely, they keep all the levels of assertiveness and involvement low.

Finally, our examination of the data revealed a tendency by IPs to be silent in response to certain questions or sometimes within their talk. This can be analyzed according to the typology proposed by Kurzon

(cited in Braga and Marques, 2004 : 2) which has dealt with silence from a pragmatic point of view. According to Kurzon, there are basically two sorts of silence : intentional and unintentional.

The first type is our main concern. Intentional silence is the power of non-speaking and in the political discourse has three basic functions. Firstly, delaying the important topic, provoking suspense to what is about to be said, secondly, conveying rhythm to speech and thirdly, suggesting implicit ideas that are not pronounced.

12- Findings and Conclusions :

The present study has been an attempt to shed light on the main characteristics of Iraqi political discourse. Such characteristics are very useful for generalizations on the genre, and aid a better understanding of the political interviews.

Our preceding discussions show that indirectness is an integral part of any political discourse. In particular, it plays a significant role by helping to mitigate and soften the hazards inherent in political discourse. As it has been explained utterances which communicate difficulty, (i.e. when the information necessary to answer the question is unavailable or the information is available but cannot be provided under current circumstances) or whose verbalization can cause face threat are verbalized indirectly.

Accordingly, indirection is motivated by political necessity, political interest, power and personal face saving. Verbal indirectness, then is an indispensable part of any theory on political discourse and is one of its essential facets.

Throughout this study strategies by means of which Iraqi politicians find their way in their conversations are discussed. We have

found that in Iraqi political discourse, communication is accomplished through such communicative strategies as word play, metaphor, circumlocution, use of approximation and numbers, citing historical speeches, citations from the Holy Quran and the use of emotive technique. However, the large majority of these moves and strategies are quite classical and recursive in nature.

Concerning the use of metaphors, it has been found that they are used by Iraqi politicians to communicate something which is difficult to express in literal speech because literal words are inadequate sometimes or to make great influence on the audience by presenting exaggerated image of that issue.

In Iraqi political discourse, and doubtless in other languages, speakers seem to assume the existence of Grice's principle, though they are not always observing them. Moreover. Politicians try to be polite whenever possible; and whenever politeness serve their interests in mitigating their propositions and reactions.

In spite of the fact that this study is based on a small number of data, we have found that cultural differences influence the kind of verbal indirectness strategies employed by politicians. This effect is clear as the data show citation from the Holy Quran.

Further research can explore political interviews in print media such as daily and weekly newspaper. It is also possible to compare politeness features in the print media with those in the electronic media of political discourse.

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