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## A Pragmatic Study of Implicature in Iraqi's Election Propaganda Posters

**ABSTRACT**

The current study aims to explore the phenomena of election propaganda posters. A political slogan is viewed as one of the most important ways for political parties and candidates to communicate with voters, particularly when a party identification is declining. Political advertising in Iraq began with the use of posters, flyers, and other printed materials. The present study sheds light on how candidates and political parties in Iraq communicate with their audiences. Also, it tries to answer the research question, that is, is there implicature utilized in the Iraqi election propaganda posters. It studies Iraqi election propaganda posters from a pragmatic point of view and takes Grice's theory (1975) of implicature as a model for data analysis. The data concerning the candidates have been chosen from different Iraqi provinces to investigate those electoral campaigns pragmatically. Furthermore, this study deals with various aspects in terms of the utterances used for the purpose of influencing the voter's decision for the right candidate. The current study concludes that the candidates use implicature in their electoral campaigns in which they utilize a unique style in the matter of influencing the voters' choice.

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### دراسة تداولية للتضمين في ملصقات الدعاية الانتخابية العراقية

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**الخلاصة:**

تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى تفحص ظاهرة صور الدعاية الانتخابية العراقية. يعد الشعار السياسي أحد أغلب الطرق المهمة للمرشحين السياسيين والاحزاب لغرض التواصل مع الناخبين خصوصا عندما تضمحل شخصية الحزب. بدأت الدعاية السياسية في العراق باستخدام المنشورات ، الملصقات والمواد المطبوعة الاخرى. تسلط الدراسة الحالية الضوء على كيفية تواصل المرشحين والاحزاب السياسية في العراق مع جمهورهم. و تحاول هذه الدراسة أن تجيب على سؤال البحث وهو: هل يوجد تضمين في ملصقات الدعاية الانتخابية العراقية. حيث تدرس صور الدعاية الانتخابية العراقية من وجهة نظر تداولية وتم أخذ نظرية

جريس (1975) للتضمين كنموذج لتحليل البيانات. تم أخذ البيانات من محافظات عراقية مختلفة لغرض كشف الدعاية الانتخابية تداوليا. علاوة على ذلك، تناولت هذه الدراسة جوانب مختلفة من حيث الأقوال المستخدمة لغرض التأثير على قرار الناخب للمرشح المناسب. توصلت الدراسة الحالية بأن المرشحين يستخدمون التضمين في دعايتهم الانتخابية حيث يستخدمون أسلوب خاص لغرض التأثير في قضية اختيار المرشح.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدعاية، الاقناع، الانتخابات البرلمانية، التضمين

## 1. Introduction

Language is utilised to convey messages or information from the speaker to the receiver (Levinson, 1983). In order to convey messages or information, individuals must engage in conversations or use media such as advertisements, books, and magazines. According to Fromkin (1988), language is much more than spoken words; this implies that people can use the written language to communicate messages or information. Depending on the perspective from which a language is considered, the mission of defining it can vary. Language is primarily a communication tool according to the primary definition that can be applied to it in general. Thus, Keraf (1980) mentioned that language is identified as “a means of communication between members of the public symbol of the sound produced by means of said human”(p.1).

In addition to what it has been mentioned above, language is regarded as a sophisticated and multifaceted mode of communication. The words and their combinations in a language are frequently employed in a politically and socially charged manner. This advanced instrument of language is frequently used by political figures to manipulate the public to accept their opinions and policies by making the language more persuasive and convincing. Politicians primarily employ this language to mediate and compromise a particular ideology (van Dijk, 1997).

The candidates employ a unique way of showing their slogans or their electoral program during the parliamentary elections. To do this, the candidates seek in the first place how to choose words or expressions that can manipulate or persuade the voters. This can be obvious in the Iraqi parliamentary propaganda posters.

However, the current study investigates the types of presuppositions that are implemented in the Iraqi electoral parliamentary propaganda 2021. Additionally, this study tries to propose the question whether there is implicature used in the Iraqi's election propaganda posters or not.

This study is limited to the Iraqi election propaganda 2021. The researchers have chosen four electoral propaganda posters.

## **1.1 The Iraqi Political System**

In July 2012, Iraq had a total population of 30 million people. Six countries border Iraq: Jordan and Saudi Arabia to the southwest, Turkey and Syria to the north, and Iran across the Arabian Gulf to the east. The January-elected Iraqi National Assembly drafted a new constitution to be ratified in a national referendum on October 15, 2005, which has remained unchanged to this day. The constitution established Iraq as a republic with an elected parliament. The president is chosen by the parliament, who then chooses the prime minister. When a prime minister is appointed, he is responsible for forming his government by selecting ministers and then obtaining parliament's approval. The parliament, on the other hand, consists primarily of elected representatives. Iraq has been previously divided into 18 electoral districts. Parliamentary elections are the nation's highest-level contest.

According to the Iraqi constitution, the 375 members of parliament are elected every four years. Therefore, it is essential to include the fields and terms that define the framework of election activity.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Propaganda**

The phenomenon of propaganda has indeed been defined by a wide number of writers from many disciplines such as sociology, psychology, politics, mass communication, and history, due to its controversies. The definitions below can help understand what propaganda is all about.

Lasswell (1937) was the first writer who defined propaganda as “the technique of influencing human action by the manipulation of representations; these representations may take: spoken, written, or musical forms” ( p.521).

Ellul (1964) claimed, from a sociological point of view, that propaganda is an endeavor to achieve consistent behaviour in everyone’s everyday life. In terms of the persistent social context, it also influences the individual’s thoughts and attitudes.

Doob, a psychologist, defined propaganda in 1948 as the endeavor to influence and control the behaviour of individuals toward unscientific goals in an area at a particular time (as cited in Willcox, 2005). In this vein, Willcox (2005) added that it is important to mention that the term “unscientific” is fundamentally expressive since it emphasizes the negative connotations of the term propaganda. It also implies that the propagandist's goals are ineffective. As a result, Doob’s definition fell short of demonstrating propaganda’s true value. To sum up, such a definition implies a negative connotation.

In terms of politics, propaganda was described as a politician’s attention to manipulate a large group of people (Merril & Lowenstein, 1971). This definition emphasized the manipulative nature of the word “propaganda”, whose ultimate aim was to promote something.

Additionally, according to Walton (1997), propaganda is fundamentally indifferent about the reality; that is, it disseminates information, whether accurate or inaccurate, good or bad, in order to persuade a target audience to recognize the propagandist's preferred attitudes or beliefs. Propaganda is mainly defined as “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist”(Jowett & O’Donnell, 2012, pp.6-7). As a result, propaganda is defined merely as persuasion. According to this meaning, the term simply refers to the ability to convince masses.

## **2.2 The Language of Persuasion**

To deliver a message to the people, modern propaganda could be spread across a variety of organizations or institutions, such as radio stations, newspapers, television stations, libraries, etc. Propaganda communications are built on language that may be written, auditory, or visual in nature. Emotion, formation of connotations, repetition, and reduction of reality are fundamental

components of propagandist language (Mesthrie, R., Swann, J., Deumert, A., & Leap, W. L., 2000).

According to Jowett and O'Donnell (2012), propagandists may use word symbolism to generate a sense of dominance. The language is connected with authority characters like as parents, teachers, and national leaders. Agents of propaganda can also utilize sacred symbols and authority in order to influence the recipient's and the public's perspective of society. Furthermore, propaganda's use of language serves to determine the cause while dissipating opponents. During times of war, propagandists may allude to the enemy like a savage or cruel to convey the murderousness and criminality of the enemy in a linguistically effective manner.

### **2.3 Propaganda and Persuasion**

The most common definition of propaganda, as stated on earlier pages, is “any attempt to persuade anyone of any belief” (William & Keith, 1949, p.2). Pratkanis and Aronson (1997) opined that modern propaganda involves using convenient persuasion methods. It is a mission to take advantage of and manage the cognitive masses' poor capacities. Propaganda is associated with the qualities of modern persuasion and takes the form of messages focused at a suitable setting. The recipient's capacity to persuade makes it really hard to think seriously about crucial topics and decisions. Qualified propagandists have the power and freedom to utilize a variety of strategies in order to persuade the target audience.

Propaganda is a weapon of mass persuasion for public opinion, as Willcox (2005) pointed out, especially during wartime. As a result, it is vital to research the occasions where propaganda is deployed, as well as the methods by which messages are delivered. Propaganda is used in the press and other forms of media, as well as in governments and in establishing belligerents' roles in conflicts. Therefore, propaganda employs tactics that are identifiable by the general population easily.

Hennigan (2010) established a complete and unbiased definition of propaganda, stating that it is a form of persuasion designed to affect the masses' sentiments, attitudes, actions, and beliefs for ideological, political, or economic goals. This is accomplished by distributing one-sided messages that may or may not be factually accurate via direct mass media channels.

Additionally, Miller (1980) defined persuasive communication as the process of shaping, reinforcing, or changing reactions. These replies take the form of messages, which are frequently connected with coercive force or are indirectly coercive by eliciting an emotional response from the addressee. Persuasion, generally, refers to the processes of mediated communication.

Al Ghezzezy (2020) stated that researchers interested in election campaigns, public speeches, political forums, legislation ...etc., have studied the language of politics extensively. According to Jowett and O'Donnell (2012), persuasion is a distinct communication style from propaganda utilising techniques to achieve its persuasion goals. A vital aspect of persuasion is interactive communication, which implies that both the audience and the speaker can alter their roles immediately throughout the speech. While propaganda is a one-way communication method, the recipient cannot reply or exchange discourse. In other words, persuasion is a process that involves speech and direct communication.

It is usually considered that propaganda is little more than the art of persuasion, which succeeds in influencing attitudes and beliefs. There is little question that persuasion is one of the purposes of propaganda, but in fact, it is restricted and connected. Propaganda is concerned with current patterns and views. It is a fallacy that propaganda is nothing but a form of falsehoods and falsity, but it essentially operates on various levels of truth, from an open lie to a half-truth to the entire fact taken out of context (Cull, N. J., Culbert, D. H., & Welch, D., 2003). Algezzy (2017) also asserted that “political cartoons have been used by newspapers and magazines as a method of criticizing the governments and political figures” (p.3).

## **2.4 Parliamentary Elections**

Elections are a critical component of each democratic country's political system. It is vital to the government's operation and institutional system. Election, in general, is the process of selecting a person or group by the public. According to Collins Dictionary (n.d.), an election is “a process in which people vote to choose a person or group of people to hold an official position”. By such a process, citizens can choose the appropriate person in giving their votes for the right one. In democratic countries, Iraq is among them, elections can give freedom for the person to elect the one who deserves his or her vote. Many countries around the world apply such a system.

Elections are now viewed as a process that practically all countries have successfully handled. The primary objective of this system is to ensure effective political communication. The entire electoral process has been designed to facilitate political communication. Communication between campaign leaders, volunteers, contributors, activists, and supporters is critical. The election system is designed to make the entire process pleasant and public. It is intended to promote relationships and connections amongst groups. The entire political campaign is designed to maximize the influence and effectiveness of political communication. The political campaign can be conveyed via a variety of media channels (Strömbäck & Kioussis, 2014).

Parliamentary elections can be conducted in order to select the members of the council of representatives. After that, they choose the President, who chooses the Prime Minister. When the prime minister is appointed, he is responsible for forming his government by selecting ministers and obtaining parliament's agreement. Parliament, on the other hand, is primarily composed of elected members. Iraq is divided into eighteen electoral districts. Parliamentary elections are the country's highest-ranking race. Elections are conducted to elect the council of representatives (329 members) every four years based on the Iraqi Constitution.

Medvic (2010) opined that any campaign action requires communication, the majority of which is persuasive in design. Additionally, he notes that they employ arguments designed to persuade voters to support their position because candidates seek votes.

Additionally, political campaigns fulfill four main functions. To begin, they assist citizens in formulating their preferences and ultimately choosing who to vote for. Secondly, it is a communicative event where voters, parties, candidates, and the media engage in "crosstalk" as the campaign unfolds. Thirdly, it enhances citizen participation. Political campaigns can affect an individual's intention to elect. Collectively, these campaigns motivate voting through their self-interested search of additional adherents for their causes. Lastly, and perhaps most crucially, political campaigns provide an opportunity for persons living abroad to vote and participate in elections (Medvic, 2010).

## **2.5 The Model of the Study**

The current paper is devoted to analyse Iraqi election propaganda posters (2021) from a pragmatic perspective and also how those expressions can persuade the voters. To do so, Grice's (1975) theory of implicature is taken as a model for the current study.

### **2.5.1 Grice's (1975) Theory of Implicature**

According to Grice (1975), what a speaker intends with an utterance can be split into two categories: what the speaker “says” and what the speaker “implicates”. This results in what Grice refers to as conversational implicature. To him, to insinuate something means to imply something that goes beyond what one says. Implicature as defined by Grice, “what the speaker can imply, suggest or mean as distinct from what the speaker says”(as cited in Levinson, 1983, p.31). In other words, it provides an explicit explanation of how more than what is expressed can be meant. An utterance’s speaker may communicate the intended message openly or implicitly. Kreidler (2002) noted that an implicature is a connection made by the hearer or reader to connect an utterance to a previous utterance, and this connection is frequently made unconsciously. He continued by defining implicature as a meaning that is obtained not from what is stated but from the necessary means of interpreting what is said. Grice distinguished two kinds of implicature: conversational implicature and conventional implicature.

#### ***1. Conversational implicature***

Conversational implicature, as a concept, is a crucial term in pragmatics; numerous linguists have defined it. As with its counterpart, implication, the term “implicature” is derived from the verb ‘to imply’. Etymologically, “to imply” means “to fold something into something else”. Thus, which is implied is “folded in”, and has to be “unfolded” in order to be understood” (Mey, 2001, p. 45). Mey later claimed that conversational implicature is something inferred in conversation, anything left implicit in real language use. In other words, it occurs when the speaker says something that has a different meaning than what he or she is saying. In this respect, what matters are the contextual elements that contribute to the variation of meaning. Another definition of conversational implicatures is “an assumption beyond the meaning of the sentences used which the speaker knows and intends that the hearer will make, in order to interpret the speaker’s sentence in accordance with the cooperative principle”( Kempson,1977, p.70). From another point of view, Levinson (1983) argued that “the concept of conversational implicature provides some explicit account of how it is possible to mean, more than what is actually said i.e. more than what is literally expressed by the conventional sense of the linguistic expressions uttered”(p.97).

Grice (1975) distinguished two sorts of conversational implicature: generalized and particularized implicature.

### ***1.a Generalized implicature***

Yule (1996) pointed out that generalized implicature occurs when the hearer does not require special knowledge to identify the additional transmitted meaning. In other words, it occurs in the absence of any context from which required inferences might be drawn. As an example of generalized conversational implicature; I was sitting in a garden one day. The garden in this example is not the speaker's, since if it is, he will say so (I was sitting in my garden).

### ***1.b Particularized conversational implicature***

The majority of conversations occur in highly particular contexts that necessitate inferences. These inferences are needed for recognizing the conveyed meanings. According to Yule (1996), this particularized conversational implicature emerges when the speaker says something and the hearer responds implicitly. As a result, the speaker must be able to infer the hearer's statement from the context, for example:

“Rick: Hey, coming to the wild party tonight?

Tom: My parents are visiting.” (Yule, 1996, p.43)

Tom's statement here indicates that he will not attend the party since he will be staying with his parents.

## ***2. Conventional Implicature***

According to Yule (1996), conventional implicature arises when a speaker misstates a fact. It is associated with specific words that may convey additional meaning when stated. uttered. “Conventional implicatures are associated with specific words and result in additional conveyed meanings when those words are used” (p.45). Furthermore, Mey (2001) argued that such implicatures cannot be modified by invoking a different context. They are standardized through conventions, and so are referred to as conventional. Whereas Levinson (1983) remarked that “conventional implicatures are non-truth-conditional inferences that are not derived from superordinate pragmatic principles like the maxims but are simply attached by conversation to

particular lexical items” (p.127). Therefore, the conventional implicature of an utterance can be understood in terms of the words’ literal meaning automatically.

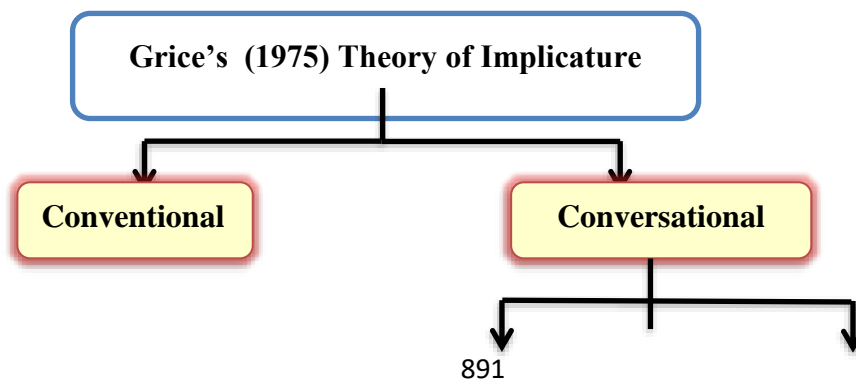
### 3. Methodology

The current study uses data concerning the Iraqi election propaganda photos (2021) gathered from different Iraqi provinces from social media such as Facebook. The number of selected posters is four and each one has a certain aim to be investigated. This study follows a qualitative research. Shank (2002) maintained that it is “a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning” (p. 5). The term systematic in this meaning refers to being organized and according to established rules among qualitative researchers. On the other hand, the term empirical implies that this method of study is supported by specific knowledge and experience, so that the researchers can create sense about their own experiences. In qualitative analysis, Moleong (2009) and Nakhilawi (2016) opine that the researcher serves as the planner, interpreter, collector, analyst, and reporter of research findings.

Annie and Blair (2012) maintained that the researcher is the main instrument in qualitative research since he or she gathers words, does inductive analysis, and examines the speakers’ or authors’ utterances. There are several steps for data gathering, including study preparation, selection of data, categorization of data, analysis of data, and interpretation. The researchers collect posters from social media in order to analyze them in terms of implicature utilized in the Iraqi election propaganda.

Murray and Chamberlain (1998) maintained that when qualitative researchers pick a sample, the sample should both represents the full population under research and is controlled. In other words, a well-selected sample should be typical of the population it reflects.

#### *Theoretical Framework of the study*



#### 4. Data Analysis

This section is devoted for data analysis. The study takes Grice's theory of implicature (1975) as a model to be adopted.

##### Poster 1



##### Pragmatic Analysis of Poster 1

Pragmatically speaking, the candidate uses the utterances “*We will make your mark the secret of your smile*” and “*The orphans and the disabled are our responsibility. We will make life smile for you*”. In this poster, there is a conversational implicature since it implies that the candidate promises the disabled to make their life better instead of their votes. These words implicate the suffering of the disabled and the orphans and their need for a support from the government for giving their rights.

##### Poster 2



### Pragmatic Analysis of Poster 2

From a pragmatic point of view, the candidate uses the words “Just as you triumphed in the battles of terrorism, let us triumph against the corrupt”. The audience addressed in this poster is not mentioned, from the content and the chosen words, it seems that the candidate addresses the soldiers. In this poster, there is a conversational implicature since it implies that the candidate invites the soldiers to vote for him and together they can triumph against the corrupters. The candidate here emphasizes the power and strength of the Iraqi Armed Forces when he mentions these words in his electoral post. The ideology that is used by the candidate in this poster in order to convince his target audience is that he tells them that he is honest and courageous to fight the corrupt. The word “the terrorism” indicates that Iraq has been conquered by ISIS and by those armed forces they defeated ISIS. The candidate here uses words that imply the victory against terrorism and also the corruption of the politicians. The word “alternative” in this poster refers to the right choice for the Iraqi armed forces in this 2021 parliamentary elections. He claims to be a supporter of them. In addition to that, there is a metaphor here in this poster when the candidate uses the image of the war against ISIS and compares it to the war or battle against corruption.

## Poster 3



## Pragmatic Analysis of Poster 3

From a pragmatic perspective, the candidate in this poster uses certain words in his electoral campaign. The target audience are stated explicitly, namely the intellectuals and elites. This candidate seeks to have an impact upon the intellectuals and elites toward choosing the suitable candidate since his essential electoral program is about those people. Implicature is found in this poster. The candidate uses the utterances “The educated candidate is the one who appreciates the role of intellectuals and elites and does not bargain their rights; because they are the heart of the nation that beats with knowledge without hesitation”. A conversational implicature is employed in this poster. It is conversational as these words imply that there is a class of people who are intellectual in the nation and such people need their rights and one who appreciates their main demands. The intellectuals are like a factory that provides the country with knowledge. There is a metaphor in this photo in which the intellectuals are like the hearts. Whenever this heart stops the knowledge can decrease. A country is regarded as powerful whenever there are intellectuals and elites.

**Poster 4****Pragmatic Analysis of Poster 4**

Pragmatically speaking, this candidate employs an electoral propaganda in a way or another to announce his situation toward the change of the scene that the country suffers for many years. This candidate uses the phrase WE CAN in this poster to maintain that the candidate and the voters have the power to change the politic reality of the country. Moreover, this candidate urges the October demonstrators that with our will and our strength, we can change the reality as long as we are one hand. Our goal is one to change the situation. He conversationally implicates that the will of the voters and his support can make a change. The phrase WE CAN implicates that the power and the will of the October demonstrators can take part and take its position in the Iraqi government. Therefore, the candidate implies something not said by using such phrase in his electoral campaign. He tries to be more concise in using such words but can imply many things.

**Conclusions**

The current study has found out that the Iraqi parliamentary election propaganda employs a unique style or language to show their political propaganda in a way that may influence the reader or the voter. So to answer the research question posed earlier, we reach the answer that there is a conversation implicature in Iraqi electoral propaganda posters. In such case, the candidates try to choose certain words or expressions that can manipulate the audience. Such language can create extra effect among the voters in order to attract their attention. The

candidates are in a strong competition among themselves so that they do their best to show their propaganda in a distinctive way, which in turn can affect the opinions of the voters. It is found that candidates use implicature in the electoral campaigns. Therefore, the Iraqi election propaganda contains implied meaning according to Grice's theory of implicature (1975).

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