



The (Im)politeness of political fallacies: A pragmatic analysis

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating linguistically from a pragmatic perspective the (im)politeness of political fallacies of the 2020 US presidential campaign debates. There is relatively little literature that tackles the relation between (im)politeness and political fallacies. This study tries to fill in that gap and shed light on these linguistic concepts in accordance with particular pragmatic theories. Two main pragmatic theories are used to analyse these data: Van Eemeren, and Henkemans' (2017) Pragma-dialectical Theory of Fallacy, and Culpeper's (1996, 2005) Theory of Impoliteness, in addition to Brown and Levinson's views of politeness. The data are extracted from the first and the second (final) US presidential debates between Trump and Biden. They are analyzed in detail to find out the fallacies committed by the politicians and to determine whether they are committed politely or impolitely. This study ends with some conclusions that show the politicians' language has a considerable number of fallacies, and the fallacious arguments or fallacious standpoints committed by them are kinds of impolite fallacies, committed intentionally to impose their authority and power upon their opponents. Nevertheless, some other fallacies are committed in a polite way especially when addressing the audience to gain their approval.

Keywords: Argumentation; Fallacy; (Im)politeness; Political Debates; Power; Pragma-Dialectics

1. Introduction

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 1), in their Systematic Theory of Argumentation, define argumentation as "a verbal, social, and rational activity" in which the reasonable arguer aims to persuade a reasonable critic to accept a particular standpoint by giving argument or arguments which represent "a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint."

1.1. Fallacy

One of the wrangling areas the argumentation theorists have an interest in is the area of fallacy. A Fallacy is dealt with from different perspectives, like logic, dialectic, pragmatic, as well as pragma-dialectic. Aristotle and the Sophists deal with fallacies logically (in *Sophistical Refutations*).

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For Aristotle, fallacies are deceptive techniques used by the arguer to attack his opponent in a discussion. (Walton, 1995: 1). Hamblin (1970: 254) criticizes the standard treatment of fallacy ‘as seeming valid’, and proposes to deal with fallacies dialectically in dialectical contexts. Some Scholars approach fallacies from a pragmatic perspective. Walton (1995) proposes to deal with fallacies pragmatically in the contexts of dialogues.

He defines a fallacy as the misuse of argumentation scheme and argumentation theme that in turn subverts the goals of dialogue. (Walton, 1995: 22) Johnson (2000) also deals with fallacy pragmatically, for him, fallacy results from violating the criteria of a good argument including acceptability, sufficiency, relevance, truth, dealing with objections, and criticisms.

The study under discussion focuses on Van Eemeren and Grootendorst’s view of fallacy. They (2004: 175) deal with fallacies pragma-dialectically in the context of a critical discussion which is a type of persuasion dialogue. They define a fallacy as the one that results from violating the rules of the critical discussion that impedes the resolution of the difference of opinion.

1.2. (Im)politeness

Linguists hold different viewpoints about the topic of (im)politeness. Concerning politeness, Leech (1983: 82) regards it as a principle that is complementary to the cooperative principle and has the role of maintaining social balance and friendly relations between interlocutors that are assumed to be cooperative.

Brown and Levinson (1987), in their linguistic theory of politeness, develop politeness strategies that can help to save the person’s face from threat. Another definition of politeness is given by Yule (1996: 60) who defines it as showing awareness of another person’s self-image. In holding this sense, politeness takes place “in situations of social distance or closeness.” It is clear from Brown and Levinson’s, and Yule’s definitions that politeness is connected with the notion of a face (the person’s self-image).

For Eelen (2001: 1), politeness is a phenomenon that is related to the relation holding between language and social reality. Leech (2014: ix) says that “politeness is a social phenomenon” which emerges during language use. He (2014: 3) describes it as a “communicative altruism” in which the person says or does something politely to the addressee for a certain benefit. For Leech, one is giving value to the person talking to, rather than oneself. It is noticed that politeness is linked with language and social behavior. It is a means that can help to create harmony among people through respecting and showing awareness of each other’s face.

For Culpeper (2005: 38), Impoliteness takes place when (a) “the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally”, or (b) when the hearer understands that the face-attack is intentional, or when both of the cases (a) and (b) occur. In this respect, Culpeper (2008: 36) mentions that impolite behaviour, whether it is intended by the speaker or perceived by the hearer to be intentional, leads to the hearer’s “face loss”. He adds that such loss takes place in the context of impoliteness when there is a “conflict and clash of interests” between interlocutors. Consequently, causing a face loss to the hearer leads to having an emotional effect on him.

Similarly, Bousfield (2008: 132) defines the impoliteness phenomenon “as constituting the issuing of *intentionally* gratuitous and conflictive face-threatening acts (FTAs) that are *purposefully* performed: 1) Unmitigated [...] and/or, 2) With deliberate aggression, [...]” [The researcher’s emphasis]. Both Culpeper (2005, 2008) and Bousfield (2008) regard intentionality as part of issuing impoliteness.

Mills, in her view of (im)politeness, focuses on the subjective judgment of what is polite or impolite. She regards (im)politeness to be “fundamentally concerned with the judgment of others’

behaviour in relation to what are perceived to be norms of appropriate behaviour.” (Mills, 2017: 42). The emphasis will be on the participants’ judgment of behaviour, not viewing (im)politeness objectively as inherent in utterances which is the view of Culpeper (2005, 2008), and Bousfield (2008). She also focuses on the recognition of the speaker’s intention, as she argues that “... impoliteness is attributed to a speaker on the basis of assessments of their intentions and motivations ...” (Mills, 2005: 264-265)

To sum up, the shared aspects in the fore mentioned definitions of (im)politeness are the “face” notion (face saving and face attacking), context, the speaker’s intentionality and the recognition of the intention by the hearer, the interactive side of human communication, and the emotional effect on the hearer.

1.3. *The Notion of Debate*

1.3.1. *The Political Debate*

The debate is defined as a contest that takes place between two or more debaters who are trying to win against each other. It is governed by rules and directed by a referee or a moderator whose role is to manage the discussion, decide the order in which the parties speak, illustrate the rules for the parties, and end the debate according to the time put for it. A fixed and equal time is given to each party to speak and answer the questions, and each party speaks in an order that is agreed upon according to the rules of the debate. (Woods, Irvine, and Walton, 2004: 25-26)

In the discussion or debate, the debaters attempt to persuade the audience of their viewpoints to gain their support. (Szylo, 2013: 122) The Presidential debate is a type of debates in which the candidates present their views to the audience or viewers to get their voting and approval. In this case, the debaters are required to present strong arguments to gain the audience’s acceptance and persuasion. (Warman and Hamzah, 2020: 71)

1.3.2. *The (Im)politeness and Power in Political Debates*

In political debates, the debaters have equal power and the difference between them is “measured in terms of one’s arguments, not wealth, title, or prestige.” (Hinck and Hinck, 2002: 235) Concerning the power between the politicians and the audience, there is power dissimilarity between them where the audience has the maximum power, and the politicians have lesser power than the audience. (Garcia-Pastor, 2007: 65)

Shulze (1987) cited in Garcia-Pastor (2007: 66) presents what is called the ‘paradox of persuasive politeness’ in which politicians attempt apparently to reduce their power in front of the public and let the audience have the maximum power in order to appear in a good and modest self-image in front of them. It is a kind of symbolic power that is given to the audience while the politicians keep “their institutional power” which in turn leads to dissolving the paradox. Although the moderator is the most powerful one, the politicians hold “almost similar mutually respected institutional power with the moderator.” (Garcia-Pastor, 2007: 68) It seems that the moderator and the audience are more powerful than the debaters because they are the target to which the politicians attempt to get their approval.

Garcia-Pastor (2008: 105-106) highlights the relation between power and impoliteness in political interaction. She mentions that the type of power found in political debate is a persuasive one and that the politician’s main aim is the persuasion of the public. Moreover, this power is overt and official, and it is expected to be performed by the debaters. In such debates, the candidate’s self-image is important, and impoliteness is used by the politicians to disrepute their opponents so as to implicitly enhance their own image or reputation in front of the public.

1.4. The Pragmatic Theories

The theories that are adopted in this study are Van Eemeren, and Henkemans' (2017) Pragma-dialectical Theory of Fallacy, and Culpeper's (1996, 2005) Theory of Impoliteness.

1.4.1. The Pragma-Dialectical Theory of Fallacy

Van Eemeren and Henkemans (2017:96) define fallacies as “violations of the rules for critical discussion” which impede resolving the difference of opinion. They can be committed by any participant and at any stage of the critical discussion. The critical discussion proceeds through four stages: the confrontation stage, the opening stage, the argumentation stage, and the concluding stage.

The pragma-dialecticians propose ten rules of critical discussion and when they are violated, the following types of fallacies take place:

(1) The Freedom Rule: In this rule, each party is free to put forward a standpoint or to criticize or doubt the other's standpoint. The violation occurs at the confrontation stage. The fallacies are declaring the standpoint as sacrosanct or as taboo, appeal to threat, appeal to pity, and personal attack.

(2) The Burden of Proof Rule: A party has the obligation to defend the standpoint he presents when he is asked by the other party to do so. The violation takes place at the opening stage. The fallacies are shifting the burden of proof and evading the burden of proof.

(3) The Standpoint Rule: A party has to attack the standpoint that is presented by the other party. It is violated at all stages of the discussion. The fallacy of straw man results when it is violated.

(4) The Relevance Rule: A party's defense of a standpoint should not be done by means of non-argumentation or irrelevant argumentations which are not relevant to the standpoint. It is violated at the argumentation stage. The fallacies are irrelevant argumentation, pathetic fallacy, and appeal to authority.

(5) The Unexpressed Premise Rule: A party should not present in a false way a premise that is left unexpressed by the other party, or “deny a premise that he or she has left implicit”. It is violated at the argumentation stage. The fallacies are magnifying what has been left unexpressed, and “denying an unexpressed premise”.

(6) The Starting Rule: The party should not falsely deal with a starting point as something agreed upon, or deny a starting point that was already agreed upon. The violation occurs at the argumentation stage. The fallacies are “falsely denying an accepted starting point”, making unfair use of presuppositions in making assertions, and many questions.

(7) The Validity Rule: Logically valid argumentation does not have logical errors in reasoning. It is violated at the argumentation stage. The fallacies are division and composition, “affirming the consequent”, and “denying the antecedent”.

(8) The Argument Scheme rule: To have a conclusive defense of the standpoint, the arguer has to defend it by using “an appropriate argument scheme that is correctly applied”. The violation happens at the argumentation stage. The fallacies are the populist fallacy, appeal to authority, the fallacy of “confusing facts with value Judgment”, false analogy, slippery slope, post hoc ergo propter hoc, and hasty generalization.

(9) The closure Rule: After the protagonist fails to defend his or her standpoint, (s)he has to withdraw it, and after (s)he defends it successfully, the antagonist has to withdraw his or her criticisms or doubts. It is violated at the concluding stage. The fallacies are “refusing to retract a standpoint that has not been successfully defended”, “concluding that a standpoint is true because it has been defended successfully”, “refusing to retract criticism of a standpoint that has been successfully

defended”, and “concluding that a standpoint is true because the opposite has not been successfully defended”.

(10) The Usage Rule: Parties should not use any unclear or ambiguous formulations, and they should not deliberately interpret the other party’s formulations in a wrong way. It is violated at all stages of the discussion. The fallacies are unclarity and ambiguity. (Van Eemeren, and Henkemans, 2017: 163-167)

1.4.2. The Impoliteness Theory

Culpeper (1996, 2005) is the first theorist who deals with impoliteness comprehensively. He follows the scheme of Brown and Levinson’s ([1978]1987) model of politeness and proposes five superstrategies for issuing face threatening acts that are opposite to politeness strategies. They are opposite in relation to the face orientation that is they are designed to attack the face instead of enhancing it. (Culpeper, 1996: 356) Before illustrating Culpeper’s impoliteness superstrategies, the researcher starts by explaining Brown and Levinson’s politeness superstrategies.

1.4.2.1. Strategies of Politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987) state five politeness strategies as a means to mitigate or avoid face threatening acts. They are arranged from the least threatening to the highest threatening:

A-Bald on-Record Strategy: The speaker does the FTA directly and efficiently without paying attention to the addressee’s face, but with motivations to do so. The imperative forms are used in this strategy. The efficient use of face threat is important in urgent situations, for example: “Watch out!”, “Help!”. In this case, the face threat is not minimized. Another case includes the implied minimization of the face threat while performing directives as farewells, greetings, or offers, e.g. “Don’t bother, I’ll clean it up.” (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 94-100)

B-Positive Politeness: In this strategy, there is a mitigation of the threat directed at the addressee’s positive face (that is his want to be preferred and respected by others). Such linguistic behaviour occurs between intimates who have shared wants and mutual interests. However, it also takes place between strangers as an attempt to reduce the social distance between them. (Ibid,102-103)

Brown and Levinson (1987) propose the following fifteen output strategies or linguistic means that are used for the purpose of social involvement or closeness:

(1)“Notice, attend to H (his interest, wants, needs, goods)”, (2)“Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)”, (3)“Intensify interest to H”, (4)“Use in-group identity markers” (5)Seek Agreement, (6)Avoid Disagreement, (7)“Presuppose/raise/assert common ground”, (8)Joke, (9)“Assert or presuppose S’s knowledge of and concern for H’s wants”, (10)“Offer, promise”, (11)Be Optimistic, (12)“Include both S and H in the activity”, (13) Give reasons or Ask for reasons, (14)“Assume or assert reciprocity”, (15)Give gifts to the hearer (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 103-129)

C-Negative Politeness: In this strategy, the speaker uses certain linguistic means to mitigate the threat directed toward the addressee’s negative face (that is his want to be free from imposition and not have his actions impeded by others). (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 129) To do so, the speaker makes use of indirectness, hedges, polite pessimism, and many other linguistic means. (Ibid: 130) Brown and Levinson (1987) propose ten output strategies that are used for the purpose of social ‘distancing’:

(1)Be Conventionally Indirect, (2)Question, hedge, (3)Be Pessimistic, (4)“Minimize the imposition, Rx”, (5) Give Deference, (6) Apologize, (7)“Impersonalize S and H”,(8)“State the FTA as a general rule”, (9)Nominalize, (10)“Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebteding H”. (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 132-210)

D-Off-Record: In such a strategy, the speaker does the act without a clear intention. He attempts to make himself out of the utterance and leaves the mission of interpreting it suitably to the addressee. (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 211) The linguistic means used in off-record politeness are irony, metaphor, understatement, rhetorical questions, tautologies, in addition to different types of hints to convey the speaker's wants in communication. (69) For example, when one says "it's cold in here", it means "Shut the window". (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 215) Concerning the last strategy, it does not do the FTA.

Leech (2014: 34) mentions that, in Brown and Levinson's theory, the choice of a suitable strategy is determined by the speaker who measures the weightiness of the face threatening act. The seriousness or the weightiness of the FTA is determined according to three social variables: social distance (D), relative Power (P), and the rank of imposition (R).

1.4.2.2. Strategies of Impoliteness

Culpeper (1996) proposes the following five impoliteness superstrategies:

1-Bald on record impoliteness: in this strategy, "the FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where a face is not irrelevant or minimised." Culpeper distinguishes it from Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy of Bald on record. According to them, bold on record is used in certain circumstances where there is a little threat to the face including cases of emergency, cases of greetings or offers (e.g. "Do sit down") when there is a small threat to the addressee's face, and in cases when the speaker holds much power than the hearer (e.g. "Stop complaining" said by a parent to a child). It is important to mention that, in the forementioned cases, the speaker doesn't intend to attack the hearer's face. (Culpeper, 1996: 356)

2- Positive impoliteness: The speaker uses strategies to cause damage in the hearer's positive face wants.

3- Negative impoliteness: The speaker uses strategies to cause damage in the hearer's negative face wants.

4- Sarcasm or mock politeness: The speaker performs the FTA by using politeness strategies in a superficial and insincere way.

5- Withhold politeness: The speaker does not use politeness in situations where it is expected to be used. For example, when a person fails to thank the other for a gift, his behavior is considered impolite. (Culpeper, 1996: 356-357)

In (2005:44), Culpeper extends the model of impoliteness proposed in (1996) by adding another super strategy which is off-record impoliteness.

Off-record impoliteness: "The FTA is performed by means of an implicature but in such a way that one attributable intention outweighs any others."

Moreover, he separates sarcasm or mock-politeness from other strategies by regarding it as a meta-strategy. Culpeper (Ibid: 42) says that Sarcasm "... is not the counterpart of [Brown and Levinson's] off-record politeness." In proposing sarcasm Culpeper gets inspiration from Leech's (1983) notion of irony in which politeness is used to convey impoliteness. The shared aspect between irony and sarcasm is being polite superficially, but implicitly they convey impoliteness. The difference between them is mentioned in Culpeper (1996: 357), who says that sarcasm is the opposite of banter (mock impoliteness) as it is used to convey social disharmony, while irony can be comic and used for enjoyment.

Culpeper (Ibid: 357-358) proposes a number of output strategies related to positive politeness and negative politeness.

A-Positive impoliteness output strategies: “Ignore, snub the other - fail to acknowledge the other's presence. Exclude the other from an activity. Disassociate from the other - for example, deny association or common ground with the other; avoid sitting together. Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic. Use inappropriate identity markers - for example, use title and surname when a close relationship pertains, or a nickname when a distant relationship pertains. Use obscure or secretive language - for example, mystify the other with jargon, or use a code known to others in the group, but not the target. Seek disagreement - select a sensitive topic. Make the other feel uncomfortable - for example, do not avoid silence, joke, or use small talk. Use taboo words - swear, or use abusive or profane language. Call the other names - use derogatory nominations. etc.”

B-Negative impoliteness output strategies: “Frighten - instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur. Condescend, scorn or ridicule - emphasize your relative power. Be contemptuous. Do not treat the other seriously. Belittle the other (e.g. use diminutives). Invade the other's space - literally (e.g. position yourself closer to the other than the relationship permits) or metaphorically (e.g. ask for or speak about information that is too intimate given the relationship). Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect - personalize, use the pronouns 'I' and 'you'. Put the other's indebtedness on record etc.”

In addition to these output strategies, Culpeper (1996: 358) cites Brown and Levinson's (1987: 233) other means of doing FTAs. They are "... turn-taking violations (interruptions, ignoring selection of other speakers, not responding to prior turn) are all FTAs in themselves, as are opening and closing procedures." Additionally, Culpeper mentions also the paralinguistic means to convey impoliteness as shouting or avoiding eye contact. In addition to the strategies, Culpeper et al., (2003: 1555) emphasizes the need for context, mentioning that like politeness, impoliteness does not entirely emerge from strategies rather there is a need to depend on the context for this matter.

2. Methods and Analysis

2.1. Data and Methods

The data of this study are extracts taken from two American presidential debates between Donald Trump and Joe Biden in 2020. The researcher selects five extracts that represent different examples of political fallacies to fulfill the aims of this study. The researcher analyses the data pragmatically depending on two main theories. The first theory is Van Eemeren, and Henkema's (2017) Pragma-Dialectical Theory of Fallacy. The reason behind choosing it is its process-product orientation in studying argumentation. The pragma-dialecticians regard argumentation as a verbal, rational, and social activity within which arguments and standpoints are analysed and evaluated. Moreover, as a theory of evaluation, the pragma-dialecticians propose ten rules of critical discussion when violated by the arguers, fallacies take place.

Another reason for choosing the Pragma-Dialectics Theory is that it gets inspiration from the pragmatic theories including speech act theory and Gricean maxims. Argumentative moves in the discourse have the form of speech acts. Such an aspect is useful to identify whether the fallacies committed in a polite or impolite way that is whether the fallacy is committed as a polite face saving act or impolite face threatening act. The second theory is Culpeper's (1996) Theory of Impoliteness in addition to Brown and Levinson's views of politeness. The reason behind using them is to know the clear intention of the arguers when they use particular strategies or linguistic means in their interaction. Such theories are useful to know how the arguers when they commit such fallacies, behave politely or impolitely towards each other, and also to know the behavior they adopt when addressing their audience to convince them of their views.

The procedure of the analysis applied by the researcher is finding the context in which the fallacy occurs, identifying the fallacies by using the Pragma-Dialectics Theory of fallacy (2017); this can be done through evaluating the standpoints and the arguments according to the ten rules of critical discussion put by the pragma-dialecticians and see which rule is violated by the arguer(s) (the protagonist or the antagonist), and at which stage of the discussion depending on the type of the fallacy committed; then analyzing the fallacies resulted (or the fallacious argumentative moves) in the discourse according to the (im)politeness theories to know if the fallacy is committed in a polite or impolite way through depending on Brown and Levinson's (1987) strategies of politeness: bald-on record politeness, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record politeness; and Culpeper's (1996, 2005) strategies of impoliteness: on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm (mock politeness), and off record impoliteness. The researcher depends on the verbal and the nonverbal means used by the arguers in their interaction to identify which one of the strategies of (im)politeness is used.

2.2. Data Analysis

The following are extracts that are taken from the first and the second (final) debates between Trump's and Biden's presidential campaigns 2020:

Extract 1:

PRESIDENT TRUMP SAID: "I paid millions of dollars in taxes, millions of dollars of income tax. And let me just tell you, there was a story in one of the papers that paid..." (interruption)

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN SAID: "[s]how us your tax returns."

PRESIDENT TRUMP SAID: "I paid \$38 million one year, I paid \$27 million one year." (interruption)

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN SAID: "[s]how us your tax returns."

PRESIDENT TRUMP SAID: "[y]ou'll see it as soon as it's finished, you'll see it. You know, if you wanted to, go to the Board of Elections. There are 118 pages or so reports that say everything I have, every bank I have, I'm totally under leveraged because the assets are extremely good, and I built a great company. ..." (Biden here laughs)

THE MODERATOR CHRIS WALLACE SAID: "...Will you tell us how much you paid in federal income taxes in 2016 and 2017? ..."

PRESIDENT TRUMP SAID: "[m]illions of dollars. And you'll get to see it. And you'll get to see it." (interruption)

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN SAID: "[w]hen? Inshallah?" (NBC News, 2020)

This extract is about the taxes paid by Trump in his years of presidency. The moderator asks Trump whether he paid taxes in the years 2016 and 2017. Trump's response of paying millions of dollars of income taxes is doubted by Biden by asking Trump to prove his claim. Trump, instead of proving his standpoint, asks Biden to go and see the possessions of Trump by himself.

Trump violates rule 2 (the burden of proof) at the opening stage and commits the fallacy of shifting the burden of proof when he said: "...*You know, if you wanted to,...*" because according to the pragma-dialecticians, the protagonist (Trump) does not prove his standpoint when he is asked by the antagonist (Biden), instead he shifts the obligation of proving it to Biden. In their confrontation, being the protagonist Trump has the obligation to prove his standpoints against doubt. With respect to the pragma-dialectics theory, there is a single multiple difference of opinion and that shifting the burden of proof on Biden is not justified.

Trump's claim starts with the hedging expression "you know" which is positive politeness means that can be used to raise a common ground with the H (Biden) by assuming that H's knowledge is equal to S's knowledge in respect to the theory of politeness. It is also a hedging expression that can mitigate the threat to Biden's negative face. Trump then requests Biden to "go to the Board of Elections" if he wants to know about his (Trump's) tax returns. Before his request, Trump uses an adverbial if- clause hedge to mitigate the imposition on Biden's negative face. Moreover, Trump also uses more other hedges as "118 pages or so" (a quantity hedge), "totally", "extremely", "great" (hedges on the propositional content). However, Biden's ironic laughing after hearing Trump's claim gives the impression that he is not convinced with what Trump has said. Still, Trump uses polite linguistic means to convince Biden and the audience of his claims, so, his fallacy is committed as a polite face saving act (FSA).

In this extract, there is another confrontation between Trump and Biden. Trump claims that he paid "[m]illions of dollars" for taxes. Biden confronts Trump's claim with doubt by asking: "[w]hen? Inshallah?". Here Biden uses an Arabic Islamic formulae 'Inshallah' which means 'God's willing'. It indicates that nothing is going to happen without God's willing. In Arabic contexts, it can also be used as a polite way of saying 'no' (Ismail, 2020). But in the context of a political debate in which there is an exchange of attacks, it is unlikely to be used with this meaning.

Biden here uses this Islamic phrase sarcastically to show that Trump will never show his tax returns and he just lies about this issue. In saying so, he violates rule 1 (the freedom rule) at the confrontation stage and commits the fallacy of circumstantial ad hominem which is a type of the fallacy of personal attack because, with respect to the pragma-dialectical theory of fallacy, the protagonist (Biden) attacks the antagonist (Trump) indirectly and offends him in front of the audience to show him as a man that never keeps his promises. In this type of attack, Trump is accused of being biased, and the attack is directed at his motives. In respect to the theory of impoliteness, the phrase 'Inshallah' is used sarcastically. So, Biden commits impolite fallacy as face threatening act (FTA) to discredit Trump in front of the audience and to convince them that there is no use to listen to Trump's claims and arguments.

Biden, in saying 'Inshallah', violates rule 10 (the usage rule) and commits the fallacy of unclarity because the expression 'Inshallah' is unclear and vague to the English community and that the English speakers are unfamiliar with it.

Extract 2:

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN SAID: "[w]ell, I'll give you the list of the people who..." (interruption)

PRESIDENT TRUMP SAID: "I'll fire them."

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN SAID: "I'm sure that you've already fired most of them because they did a good job."

PRESIDENT TRUMP SAID: "[s]ome people don't do a good job."

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN SAID: "[w]ell, here's the..." (interruption)

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN SAID: "[w]ell, it's hard to get any word in with this clown. Excuse me, this person." (NBC News, 2020)

In this extract, Biden claims that he did an honorable job and served the country well. He proves his claim by appealing to the opinion of people who testified under oath in Trump's administration. After confronting him with those people, Trump says that he will fire them claiming that they didn't do a good job. Due to Trump's continuous interruptions to Biden in their exchanges, Biden attacks him verbally when he describes him as "this clown".

In his standpoint, “[w]ell, it’s hard to get any word in with this clown. Excuse me, this person”, Biden violates rule 1 (the freedom rule) at the confrontation stage and commits the fallacy of ad hominem, abusive variant, because according to the pragma-dialectics theory, the protagonist (Biden) attacks the antagonist (Trump) verbally and directly instead of attacking his standpoints or arguments. By his attack (calling Trump a clown), Biden attempts to silence Trump and restricts his freedom of action to distort his image in front of the audience.

Biden starts his attacking claim with the hedging expressions "well" and “it’s hard” which have a negative politeness function, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), so as not to impose the addressee (the audience and Trump) and not to assume that Trump is willing to cooperate with him. However, depending on the context of debate and what follows these hedges, what is said is noticed to be impolite as Biden attacks Trump by calling him "this clown". Here Trump, in respect to Culpeper’s (1996: 358) theory, commits positively impolite FTA and applies the strategy "Call the other names". At the end of his fallacious claim, Biden said "Excuse me"; it is a formulae that has politeness meaning of apologizing, but this polite formulae is used here sarcastically since Biden does not say "this clown" accidentally, but intentionally to ridicule Trump in front of the public. So, it can be said that Biden commits impolite fallacy as a face threatening act (FTA) to distort Trump's image and to enhance his own image.

Extract 3:

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN SAID: “[a]nd there was no one... We didn’t shut down the economy. This is his economy he shut down. The reason it shut down is that look, you folks at home. How many of you got up this morning and had an empty chair at the kitchen table because someone died of COVID? How many of you are in a situation where you lost your mom or dad and you couldn’t even speak to them, you had a nurse holding a phone up so you could in fact say goodbye?”(NBC News, 2020) (Here Biden looks at the camera and directs his speech to the audience)

This extract is about shutting down the country or the economy by Trump. Biden notes that when America got infected by Swine flu, H1-N1, the economy was not shut down under Obama’s administration as opposed to shutting down the country by Trump when America got infected by Coronavirus. Biden puts his own claim and proceeds to justify it in the form of blame directed at Trump because he causes a lot of people to lose their lives. In the argument Biden puts, he reminds people of losing their family members and the ones they love because of Covid 19.

There are two fallacies committed by Biden in the argumentation stage. The first one is the fallacy of false analogy that is committed when he said: “This is [Trump’s] economy he shut down”. Here Biden makes a comparison between Trump’s economy and Obama’s economy. To have a clear evaluation of Biden’s fallacious claim of analogy, there is a need to identify the argument scheme and to make the unexpressed premises explicit. The Pragma-dialecticians’ argument scheme of analogical relation is the following one:

“Y is true of X,”

“because: Y is true of Z,”

“and: Z is comparable to X.” (Van Eemeren, and Henkemans, 2017: 87)

Biden’s argumentation can be represented, according to the scheme of analogical relation, in the following form:

Shutting down the economy is true of the pandemic of Covid 19 during Trump’s presidency,

Because: [not] shutting down the economy is true of Swine Flu H1-N1, during Obama’s presidency,

And: A Swine Flu H1-N1 situation is comparable to Covid 19 situation.

Biden's standpoint (shutting down the economy is true of the pandemic of Covid 19 during Trump's presidency, and not true of Swine Flu H1-N1, during Obama's presidency) is defended by the argument or the premise that is left implicit (a Swine Flu H1-N1 situation is comparable to Covid 19 situation). To assess the soundness of Biden's analogical argument and to determine if the two cases compared are really comparable, there is a need to answer the following critical question attached to the scheme based on analogy:

-“Are there any significant differences between Z and X?” (Van Eemeren, and Henkemans, 2017: 87)

The answer to this question is ‘Yes’, there are differences, because X (Covid 19) is not a serious pandemic as Z (Swine Flu) and the death cases in Swine Flu are less than the cases of Coronavirus. Additionally, the economy is not shut down in the situation of Swine Flu. So, Covid 19 and Swine Flu are not similar cases, they cannot be compared with each other; and Biden's comparison is not accurate. Therefore Biden here violates rule 8 (the argument scheme rule) at the argumentation stage and commits the fallacy of false analogy because, in respect to the pragma-dialectics theory, he uses the argument scheme based on an analogy incorrectly due to the inadequate answer to the critical question attached to it.

Biden starts his fallacious claim with the proximal pronoun ‘This’ in addition to the vivid present simple to convey the sense of immediacy and involvement with the H (mainly the audience). This technique is a part of the positively polite strategy of presupposing or asserting a common ground with the hearer. Then Biden uses possessive adjective pronoun in the phrase “his economy” (referring to ‘Trump's economy’) instead of saying for example ‘our economy’. Such usage gives the impression that this economy belongs only to Trump, not to the whole Americans. Therefore, Biden commits impolite fallacy by using the positively impolite strategy of denying a common ground or association with Trump.

The second fallacy made by Biden is the fallacy of irrelevant argumentation “*ignoratio elenchi*” because, according to the pragma-dialectical theory, the protagonist (Biden) produces irrelevant argument(s) (when reminding the people of losing their family members and the ones they love because of the pandemic) as a defense (or reason) to justify his fallacious standpoint (the reasons for shutting down the country by Trump). In fact, there is no relation between the standpoint and the second argument, so Biden here violates rule 4 (the relevance rule) at the argumentation stage and commits this type of fallacy.

Biden starts his fallacious argument by the attention getter 'look' when saying, "look, you folks at home". It is used for metaphorical urgency to emphasize what he is going to say. Here Biden goes politely on record in which there is no need for face redress because what he is going to say is mutually known to him and the audience; and that the emergency is more important than redressing the face (according to Brown and Levinson, 1987). Biden then addresses people's negative emotions by asking two critical questions that are true. In using the rhetorical questions, he does the FTA off-record and leaves the responsibility of interpreting the questions to the audience by leaving himself out. It can be said that Biden here commits polite fallacy to persuade the audience and show the sense of involvement with their suffering and pain.

Extract 4:

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN SAID: “[w]e’re in a situation now where the New England Medical Journal, one of the serious, most serious journals in the whole world said for the first time that the way this president has responded to this crisis has been absolutely tragic. And so folks, I will take care of this. I will end this. I will make sure we have a plan.”(NBC News, 2020)

This extract is about the crisis of Covid 19 and how the nominees are going to deal with it in the next period. Biden criticizes Trump implicitly for not responding properly to the crisis. To support or

prove his implicit standpoint, Biden cites the opinion found in “the New England Medical Journal” as an argument from authority. His implicit standpoint, ‘*Trump does not deal with coronavirus crisis properly and causes thousands of people to lose their lives*’, is revealed from the context.

To evaluate the reasonableness of the argument from authority put by Biden, there is a need to identify its argument scheme, and to make the unexpressed premises explicit. Biden’s argumentation is the following one:

‘Trump does not deal with coronavirus crisis properly and causes thousands of people to lose their lives’, because “...the New England Medical Journal, one of the serious, most serious journals in the whole world said for the first time that the way this president has responded to this crisis has been absolutely tragic” (and this is a characteristic that Trump does not deal with coronavirus crisis properly and causes thousands of people to lose their lives).

The argument scheme of Biden’s argumentation is the one of symptomatic relation. The argument scheme of symptomatic type is the following one:

“Y is true of X,”

“because: Z is true of X,”

“and: Z is symptomatic of Y.” (Van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Henkemans, 2002: 97)

Trump’s argumentation can be represented, according to the scheme of symptomatic relation, in the following form:

- Not dealing with the coronavirus crisis properly and causing thousands of people to lose their lives is true of Trump,

- because: what is said in “the New England Medical Journal”... that the way this president has responded to this crisis has been absolutely tragic” is true of Trump,

-and: being approved by “the New England Medical Journal” that Trump’s response to this crisis has been absolutely tragic is a sign that he does not deal with the coronavirus crisis properly and causes thousands of people to lose their lives.

The standpoint (Trump does not deal with coronavirus crisis properly and causes thousands of people to lose their lives) is defended by the explicit premise or argument that is left implicit (being approved by “the New England Medical Journal” that Trump’s response to this crisis has been absolutely tragic is a characteristic that he does not deal with coronavirus crisis properly and causes thousands of people to lose their lives). The relation between the standpoint and the argument is a symptomatic one.

To assess the soundness of Biden’s argument, there is a need to answer the following critical questions put by the pragma-dialecticians:

1- “Is Z indeed symptomatic of Y?”

1.1-“Aren’t there also other non-Y’s that have the characteristic Z?”

1.2-“Aren’t there also other Y’s that do not have the characteristic Z?” (Van Eemeren, and Henkemans, 2017:85)

So, the critical questions to be raised related to this argumentation are ‘Is approving, that Trump has responded tragically to the crisis, by the authoritative journal is indeed a sign that he does not deal with the coronavirus crisis properly and causes thousands of people to lose their lives?’, ‘Aren’t there also cases of Coronavirus where Trump attempts to handle them well and save lives? The answer to the first question is ‘No’ since even if the journal is authoritative; the opinion cited in it is not adequate proof that Trump mishandled the crisis. While the answer to the second question is ‘Yes’, there are cases where Trump attempts to manage the crisis and help people. So, one cannot ignore his attempts.

So, with respect to the pragma-dialectics theory, the argument scheme is considered not sound since the critical questions are unsatisfactorily answered. Therefore it can be said that Biden violates rule 8 (the argument scheme rule) at the argumentation stage and commits the fallacy of authority due to the application of the symptomatic scheme incorrectly without getting satisfying answers. In this respect, Biden's implicit standpoint is not conclusively defended.

In this fallacy, Biden uses indirect reported speech which can represent a warning to the audience. This technique is a part of the negatively polite strategy "impersonalize S and H" (according to Brown and Levinson, 1987: 205-206) in which the speaker (Biden) attempts to organize the report or speech in a way that distances himself from the H (Trump and mainly the audience) and the FTA so as not to impose the hearer. Biden also uses hedging particles as "ever" and "absolutely" to intensify or exaggerate the interest of the H in what he is saying about Trump and this is a positively polite strategy "Exaggerate interest with H" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 104). However, though Biden uses polite linguistic expressions in his argument, still his argument represents criticism of Trump and his dealing with the crisis. So, there is an implicit attack in his argument, and it cannot be considered polite. Therefore, it can be said that Biden commits impolite fallacy as FTA to criticize Trump and to inform the audience of the seriousness of the situation they are in because of Trump.

Extract 5:

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN SAID: "... And again, I go back to this. He had nothing, he did virtually nothing. And then he gets out of the hospital and he talks about, "Oh, don't worry. It's all going to be over soon." Come on..." (NBC News, 2020)

In this extract, Biden criticizes Trump's dealing with the pandemic indicating that he has done nothing to save the lives of people. When Trump gets out of the hospital after being infected, Biden claims that Trump said that the virus is going to end soon. However, Trump does not say the phrase 'over soon', he just earlier, in the final debate, said that "[i]t will go away. And as I say, we're rounding the turn. We're rounding the corner. It's going away."

Biden, in his quoting of Trump's standpoint: "Oh, don't worry. It's all going to be over soon" commits the fallacy of the straw man when violating rule 3 (the standpoint rule) at the confrontation stage because according to the Pragma-dialectics theory, the protagonist (Biden) attributes a fictitious standpoint to the antagonist (Trump). In his quote, Biden misrepresents Trump's original standpoint and exaggerates it by adding the phrase "over soon" which is not said by his opponent (Trump). In this respect, Biden dresses Trump's claim as an image of a straw man that can be easily smashed and attacked. Moreover, Trump refutes what is said by Biden when saying: "I didn't say over soon. I say we're learning to live with it."

Biden, in his fallacious claim, uses directly quoted speech. Such usage is a part of the positively polite strategy "intensify interest to H", (according to Brown and Levinson, 1987: 107), by which Biden attempts to intensify the audience's interest in what he says and gives them the indication that he shares their needs and wants (being involved with them). However, when comparing this quote with what Trump has said originally, it is noticed that Biden exaggerates Trump's standpoint by adding the adverb "over soon" to it and such addition distorts the truth. So, Biden here is not truthful in his quoting and commits this fallacy impolitely.

2. Conclusion

The findings of this study are the following:

1-There is a relation between fallacies and (im)politeness as some of the fallacious arguments or fallacious standpoints committed by the politicians are kinds of impolite fallacies as they represent a threat to other person's face and that politicians commit them intentionally to impose their authority

and power upon their counterparts, while some other fallacies are committed in a polite way especially when they address the audience so as to gain their approval. So, (im)polite fallacies have used a means of persuasion and manipulation.

2-Some of the fallacies are committed in a sarcastic impolite way that is they are polite on the surface level (in which the arguer uses polite linguistic expressions) but contextually and implicitly they are impolite.

3-The most frequent fallacies committed by the politicians in this study are appeal to authority, ad hominem or personal attack with its three variants, the fallacy of the strawman, the fallacy of mass appeal (appeal to the public), and the fallacy of “post hoc ergo propter hoc”, in addition to other types of fallacies.

4- Politicians show awareness of the audience’s positive and negative faces when they commit fallacies so as not to impose upon them and to reduce the distance between them and the audience. They do so by using different linguistic means of positive and negative politeness.

5-In most of their interactions with each other, politicians commit their fallacies in an impolite way as face threatening to the other’s face-wants by using various linguistic means of negative and positive impoliteness. Each one attempts to impose his power upon the other and distort the other’s self-image so as to enhance his own image in front of the audience because the ultimate aim of the politicians is to gain the audience’s approval, not to gain the other politician’s acceptance or approval.

6-The Political debates are chaotic ones, full of interruptions, rule-breaking, violation of turns, exchange of attacks, loud voice, and ironic laughing. The first debate is more chaotic and contentious than the second one. Trump did more interruptions than Biden and invaded the time put to Biden to speak.

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