



Speech Act Classifications of Anti-Asians Hate Slogans During Covid-19

Asst. Lec. Rawaa Ali Hussein

rawaa.a.h.@uosamarra.edu.iq

Samarra University

Covid-19 is a virus which spread all over the world and caused not only physical problems but psychological ones. One of these problems is the hate and violence toward Asian people because the thought that is a Chinese virus. This study deals with slogans that are used by the minority Asian groups to express their refusal for the racist actions that they face during Covid-19. It sheds the light on how Asian Americans have experienced bad events such as threats, vandalism and murder which are racially motivated during the pandemic. The current research aims to figure out what is the speech act classifications that people use in composing these slogans to convey their messages. These slogans will be analyzed according to Yule's classification of speech act (1996). The analyzed data are collected from various websites in the form of images containing slogans. Also, this study aims to show how words can help to change the world's point of view about these groups. The study hypothesizes how slogans have a wide impact on the feelings of different communities as they convey the sufferings of minorities which help them to express themselves and face peoples' hate.

المستخلص

كورونا هو فيروس انتشر في جميع أنحاء العالم ولم يقتصر تأثيره على المشاكل الجسدية ، بل تعدى ذلك الى مشاكل نفسية أيضًا. واحدة من هذه المشاكل هي الكراهية والعنف تجاه الآسيويين بسبب الاعتقاد انه فيروس صيني. تتناول هذه الدراسة الشعارات التي تستخدمها الأقليات الآسيوية للتعبير عن رفضهم للأعمال العنصرية التي يتعرضون لها خلال فترة كورونا. تلقي هذه الدراسة الضوء على كيفية تجربة الأمريكيين الآسيويين لآحداث سيئة مثل التهديدات والتخريب والقتل بدوافع عنصرية أثناء الوباء. يهدف البحث الى الكشف عن تصنيفات فعل القول التي يستخدمها الناس في تنظيم هذه الشعارات لنقل رسائلهم. سيتم تحليل هذه الشعارات وفقًا لنظرية يول في تصنيف فعل القول (1996). وقد تم جمع البيانات التي اعتمدها البحث من مواقع مختلفة على شكل صور تحتوي على شعارات. كما تهدف الدراسة إلى إظهار كيف يمكن للكلمات أن تساعد في تغيير وجهة نظر العالم حول هذه المجموعات. تفترض الدراسة مدى تأثير الشعارات بشكل كبير على مشاعر المجتمعات المختلفة لأنها تنقل معاناة الأقليات و تساعدهم على التعبير عن أنفسهم ومواجهة كراهية الناس.

1.Introduction

Slogans are one of the means which are used by people to express themselves publically. They write short sentences or phrases to demand their rights or any case that they believe in. Slogans are used for various political, social or economic goals to symbolize an idea or goal. They are short but have strong meanings as it do not need a lot of explanation to clarify their significance. Minority Asian groups in many countries counter violence, hate and harassment which lead them to demonstrate and write many slogans to stop the racist actions against them during Covid-19. These slogans are the main concern of this research.

Slogans have a vital role in people's life as they can be a way of communication. Slogans state meanings more than what is written on them. Moreover, they facilitate spreading the behaviors and the attitudes of a particular group of people all over the world. Sometimes they are rhymed and easy to remember by users. (Sharkanasky, 2002:75-79). One of the functions that slogans used for is to clarify the complex issues especially the political ones. Also, they are used to grasp peoples' attention to certain goals. Sometimes they are used to unify or separate the individuals of the community depending on the purpose that they are employed for. (Denton, 1980: 15)

2.Pragmatics

Speakers usually mean much more than their words actually say, this is the key idea for pragmatics. In the early 80's, when it became common practice to discuss Pragmatics in general language textbooks, the most commonly used definitions of pragmatics are meaning in use or meaning in context. (Thomas, 2013: 21). The modern use of the word pragmatic is attributed to the philosopher Charles Morris who was preoccupied with the general form of semiotics. Morris defined pragmatics as the study of the relation of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable. (C. Levinson, 1983: 1).In addition, pragmatics can be defined as the study of the relation between linguistic forms and the users of such forms. The benefit of studying the language through pragmatics is that one can talk about the meanings people want, their goals and the kind of actions they take when the talk. (Yule, 1996: 4).To find out what a person means by what he says, it does not suffice to know the literal meanings of the words and how they have been organized together into a sentence. We need to know who uttered the words and the context in which they occur in order to be able to reach to the intended meaning. To sum up, interpreting what is said in light of the context, the, and

the beliefs of the participants in their community are called the principles of pragmatics. (J. Birner, 2013: 2-3)

Another definition of pragmatics is the systematic study of meaning according to the use of language. The fundamental topics of pragmatics involve implicature, presupposition, Speech Acts, and deixis. (Huang, 2007:2).

The core of pragmatics is Speech Act theory. Speech Act has a role in communication which can be defined as an action that is carried out by the use of an expression to communicate. It means that Speech Act emphasizes the intention of the speaker in producing words. (Akinwotu, 2013: 45).

3.Speech Acts Theory

Speech Act has its roots in the work of the philosopher J. L. Austin and now used it is used extensively in linguistics to refer to a theory that analyses the role of utterance and behavior of participants in the communication. (Crystal, 2003: 427).

Actions performed by the way of utterances are Speech Act. Speakers are generally expected that their communicative intention will be understood by the hearers. The participants in the conversation are typically assisted by the circumstances surrounding them. Such circumstances are called speech event. (Yule, 1996: 47).

To say something verbal or written means doing something and this is the central point in this theory. The theory of Speech Acts is essentially a pragmatic theory as it involves the intention of the speaker and the inference of the hearer. So it is important to take into account the speaker's intention and the context of any utterance. (J. Birner, 2013: 176).

Human being do not only present utterances containing grammatical structures, but they perform actions through their speech. So Speech Act has two function one of them is performative and the other is communicative. Speech Act is truly the performance of different acts at the same time distinguished by various intentions like invitation, promise, complaint or request. (Yule, 1996: 47)

As mentioned earlier, Austin is the first linguist who recognizes this theory in his work "How to do things with words" (1962). He accomplishes certain acts that are related to this theory and any action performed by an utterance will consist these acts:

1-locutionary act is the basis of any utterance to produce a meaningful linguistic expression. so it is not a matter of producing well formed utterances without some kinds of function .

2-Illocutionary act is presented through the communicative force of an utterance. We usually utter the same sentence (I have made some coffee) to make a statement, an explanation, offer, or for other communicative purposes. This is known as the illocutionary force of the utterance.

3-Perlocutionary act is the third type which depends on the circumstances. We might utter the same sentence (I have made some coffee) on the assumption that the hearer will perceive the intended meaning, such as getting the hearer to drink some coffee. This is also generally known as the perlocutionary effect. (Austin, 1962:113).

4- Yule's Classifications of Speect Act

Introducing the Speech Acts classification leads to use the language more efficiently and effectively. Yule (1996: 53-54) lists five kinds of Speech Act classifications these are declarations, representatives, expressives, directives, and commissives:

1-Declarations are these types of Speech Acts which alter the world by virtue of the utterances. In this type, the speaker has a special role in a specific context in order to make a declaration appropriately. It means that the world changes via words

2-Representatives present what the speaker has in mind about his world such as statements of fact, assertions, conclusions, and descriptions. All these present the world as the person believes it. In this kind the speaker's words fit the world.

3-Expressives state the speaker's feelings. They express the psychological states of the participants like statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow. They may be the result of something the speaker or the listener does, but they are the result of the speaker's experience. In this type The speaker adjusts the words to the world.

4-Directives are these type that help the speakers to get someone to do something. They represent whatever the speaker wants like commands, orders, requests, suggestions. They can be positive or negative. In using directives, the speakers attempt to make the world fit the words.

5-Commissives are the last type of these classifications which make the speakers to get involved in future actions. This kind states what the speaker intends to do like promises, threats, refusals, pledges. They can be carried out by the speaker alone or by the speaker as part of a group. In using a commissive, the speaker assumes to make the world match the words. These types of classifications are summarized in Table 4.1 below:

Speech Act type	Direction of fit	S= speaker X = situation
Declarations	words change the world	S causes X
Representatives	make words fit the world	S believes X
Expressives	make words fit the world	S feels X
Directives	make the world fit words	S wants X
Commissives	make the world fit words	S intends X

(Table 4.1) Speech Act Classifications

5- Analysis of Slogans



Slogan 1

The written words in this slogan are: **We are not your scapegoat.**

This sentence symbolizes the second type of classification, i.e. Representative. They describe their situation through this period of time by these words. Furthermore, their words match the belief of the world at that time.

Slogan 2



The written words in this slogan are: **My race is not a virus.** What is in this slogan can be linked to the Expressive type. They express their dislike about the current situation which is caused by others. They reflect their experience to the world.

Slogan 3



The written words in this slogan are: **Stop Asian Hate and Hate is a Virus.**

Stop Asian Hate represents the fourth kind of classification which is called Directive. The participants want others to change their mind about them. They want them to stop spreading hate and violence so they attempt to make the world matches with their words. Whereas the other slogan which says **Hate is a Virus** stands for the second type of classification which is called Representative. They present a fact according to their believes that hate is the cause of everything bad in a society not diseases.

Slogan 4



The written words in this slogan are: **We are not the virus your racism is.**

This slogan represents the second type of classification which is entitled Representative. They defend their rights by rejecting the world's belief about them. They try to raise the awareness of the world to support them.

Slogan 5



The written words in this slogan are: **We belong here.**

This slogan represents the first type of classification which is called Declaration. The vast majority of people blame Asian-Americans for the coronavirus and reject them in their society. So the try to put an end to these racist actions by declaring to the world that they part of the society.

6- Conclusion

This study concludes that Speech Act is an attempt at doing something simply by speaking. So Asians try to change the world's belief by words (slogans). They compose slogans in an accurate way to attract people's attention to their situation. All the types of Speech Act classification are applicable to the analyzed data in which either the words fit the world or the world fits the words. So slogans have a wide impact on the feelings of different communities as they manage to express themselves. Most of the slogans are Representative because they believe that they are able to create a society in which all people can feel safe no matter who they are or where they come from.

References

- Austin, J.L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. United Kingdom: Clarendon Press
- Akinwotu, S.A. (2013). *A speech Act Analysis of The Acceptance of Nomination Speeches of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief OMK Obiola*. English Linguistic Research. P.45
- C. Levinson, Stephen. (1983). *Pragmatics*. United Kingdom: Cambridge.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. United Kingdom: Blackwell.
- Denton Jr., & Robert E. (1980). *The Rhetorical Functions of Slogans: Classifications and Characters*. Communication Quarterly– Volume 28, Number 2, p.15
- Huang, Y. (2007). *Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford.
- J. Birner, Betty. (2013). *Introduction to Pragmatics*. United States. Wiley Blackwell.
- Sharkansky, I. (2002). *Slogan as Policy*. Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis – Volume 7, Number 1 P. 75-79.
- Thomas, J. (2013). *Meaning in Interaction: An Introduction to Pragmatics*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford university press .