Rejection strategies in American political debates: A Pragma- linguistic Study

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دراسة تداولية لغوية لإستراتيجيات الرفض في المناظرات السياسية الامريكية

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Abstract:

This study attempts to investigate the strategies of rejection in the arena of political debates. The main challenge in dealing with rejection strategies pragmatically lies in the idea that rejection is divided into two types: Explicit or Implicit. As such, the study tries to identify the main implicit pragma-linguistic strategies of rejection that the American debaters employ in arguments with their opponents. Furthermore, it highlights these indirect strategies of rejection that have been utilized more frequently by American debaters so as to serve their political agendas. Moreover, the study pinpoints the stage at which the rejection process takes place.

Thus, the qualitative study uses an eclectic model primarily based on previous studies conducted in the field of argumentation (Van Eemeren & Grootendrorst, 2018) to investigate rejection strategies. The study has been concluded that American debaters more frequently employ offensive than defensive tactics to defend their positions and reject those of their opponents. As a result, they make an effort to discredit the

الملخّص:

تحاول هذه الدراسة البحث في استراتيجيات الرفض في مجال المناظرات السياسية حيث يكمن التحدي الرئيسي في التعامل مع استراتيجيات الرفض بشكل تداولي في كونه ينقسم إلى نوعين: صريح أو ضمني. على هذا النحو، تحاول الدراسة تحديد الاستراتيجيات البراغماتية اللغوية الضمنية الرئيسية للرفض التي يستخدمها المتناظرون الأمريكيون في الحجج مع خصومهم. بالإضافة الى ان الدراسة تسلط الضوء على استراتيجيات الرفض غير المباشرة التي يستعملها المتناظرون الأمريكيون بشكل متكرر لخدمة أجنداتهم السياسية. علاوة على ذلك ، تحدد الدراسة المرحلة التي تتم فيها عملية الرفض.

وبالتالي ، تستخدم الدراسة النوعية نموذجا انتقائيا يعتمد في المقام الأول على الدراسات السابقة التي أجريت في مجال الجدل (Van Eemeren & Grootendrorst , 2018) من اجل بيان استراتيجيات الرفض. وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى أن المتناظرين الأمريكيين يستخدمون في كثير من الأحيان الأساليب الهجومية أكثر من الدفاعية للدفاع عن مواقعهم ورفض مواقف خصومهم. ونتيجة لذلك، فإنهم يبذلون جهدا لتشويه سمعة آراء خصومهم بطرق متنوعة مثل الاتهامات، والإهانة، والانتقاد، والإنكار، والإدانة. وعلاوة على ذلك، لوحظ أن عملية رفض وجهة النظر تبدأ في مرحلة التطوير. وبالتالي ، يمكن النظر إلى هذه المرحلة على أنها جوهر الجدل الذي يتم فيه الدفاع عن وجهات النظر أو رفضها.

opinions of their opponents in a variety of ways such as accusations, insulting, criticizing, denial, and condemning. Moreover, It has been noted that the process of rejecting a standpoint is initiated within the developing stage. Thus, the developing stage can be viewed as the essence of argumentation in which viewpoints are defended or rejected.

Key Words: American debates, Argumentation, Defensive Strategies, Offensive Strategies, Pragma-linguistic Strategies, Rejection Strategies.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المناظرات الامريكية , الحجج , استراتيجيات دفاعية , استراتيجيات هجومية , استراتيجيات جدلية- لغوية , استراتيجيات الرفض.

1. Introduction

Pragmatics means the use of language in communication, as well as covering numerous of phenomena involving the way in which language encodes properties of the context of utterance, conversational structure, and the conversational work undertaken to concern with miscommunications of various types, (Ellis, 1994: 23). Based on pragmatic perspective, rejection deploys the ability to reply, the proficiency of responding and speaking as well as acting form formidable impacts in relation to political debates. Some politicians; therefore, employs rejection strategies reflecting their thoughts, ideologies as well as attitudes towards numerous topics, (Cattani, 2006:1).

Thus, the process of rejection can be a tool of argument in political debates. Argumentation can be used in a variety of ways to accomplish the ultimate communicative goal of persuading the audience of the

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veracity of a particular idea. First, a direct reference to reality can be used to support the statements (claims) (experiments, observations, etc.). Argumentation can also be used to support claims by citing well-known statements (arguments) that are based on particular opinions (proofs).

In American presidential debates, politicians use different strategies to reject the standpoints of each other in their arguments to win the debate. The current study attempts to uncover the rejection strategies used by American debaters through different occasions. Hence, the current study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the pragma-linguistic strategies of rejection that are manipulated by American politicians in their debates?

2. Which is the most prevalent technique utilized more frequently by American debaters to elicit rejection?

3. How and where the process of rejection takes place in the aforementioned debates?

Theoretical Background
1.1 Argumentation Theory (AT): An Overview

According to Freeley and Steinberg (2009: 2), argumentation means giving reasons in communicative circumstances by people whose goal is to justify deeds, attitudes, beliefs and values. In the same vein, Toulmin (2003: 34) states that argumentation refers to what kind of justificatory acts should one engages in to convince his/her colleagues that these notions are relied on good reasons. These good reasons denote reasons which are psychologically appealing for particular audience, making further investigations both redundant and unnecessary.

Brooks and Warren (1949: 141) define argumentation as a speech used to persuade the listener to think or act in accordance with the arguer's desires. Argumentation, according to Van Eemeren (2018: 17), is born out of a reaction to, or anticipation of, a difference in opinion, whether genuine or imagined. The arguers can communicate this difference in viewpoints either overtly or implicitly. It could take the form of a complete or partial disagreement with one or more opposing viewpoints.

This suggests that an arguer may not share the same point of view, or at the very least, is undecided about whether or not to accept it. The essential point of an argument is that the addressee does not yet agree that the subject under consideration is acceptable. The primary goal of argumentation is to find a solution to a disagreement. There will be a debate when there is a difference of opinion.

2.2 Pragma-Dialectic Theory (PDA)

PDA is Van Eemeren's idea applied in his theory which is considered his primary contribution to AT. It was created to address argumentation from a pragmatic standpoint. Between the 1970s and the 1990s, Van Eemern and Rob Grootendorst of Amsterdam proposed it in a systematic and philosophical framework (van Eemeren et al., 2014: 36). Historically speaking, pragma and dialectic make up the term "pragma-dialectic." While "pragma" is derived from the Greek word "πράγμα", which means "discuss," "dialectic" is derived from the Greek "διαλέγεσθαι" denoting "deed, enterprise, act, doing, etc.," (Stydom, 2014: 1).

With reference to PDA, argumentation is investigated practically from two views: critical and communicative. While critical is made by dialectical perceptions from logic, dialogic and critical rationalism, communicative is achieved by pragmatic perception from discourse analysis, speech act theory as well as ordinary language, (van Eemeren et al., 2014: 37). The pragmatic perspective is denoted by utilizing speech acts in terms of argumentative moves. The dialectical perspective includes two arguers who attempt to put a point to their argument through exchanging moves in discussions (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1992: 43).

2. Political Debates as an Argumentative Genre

According to Freeley and Steinberg (2009: 6), research and advocacy are steps in the conversation process that result in a rational judgment about a proposition. Debatable topics can be used by people or groups to reach their own conclusions, or they can be used to persuade others to agree with them. In a debate, all sides of a proposition's argument are made. It forces two opposing parties to engage in a bipolar debate on their support for and opposition to the ideology. Debate encourages listeners and opposing supporters to compare and contrast various possibilities, which calls for critical thinking.

Both individuals and society need a reliable method for making decisions. In a free society, many decisions are determined after discussion. For instance, discussion is a key component of the design of legislative and judicial bodies. In reality, discussion is the preferred mode of functioning for any institution that adheres to legislative principles. In most societies, debate permeates every level of decision-making, (ibid).

Political debate is regarded as a form of speech having thematic relevance and utility in a similar way. It serves a purpose because it helps political goals get accomplished. It has a specific theme because it focuses on political issues, concepts, and actions (Schaffner, 1997: 89). Political discourse can be studied as a sort of speech that aims to reveal political ideas and show how language is employed to sway public opinion (Chilton & Schaffner, 2002: 67). To study political debate, the communicative (semantic) and interactive (pragmatic) functions of language must be taken into account as two parts of language. While the former is focused on mental representation, the latter is focused on requests, orders, offers, and declarations. Politicians use language to issue warnings, proclaim crises, and declare war, among other things, (ibid).

In conclusion, debate is an important aspect of social action in this regard. In addition, it is a crucial element of the social process. It is used to accomplish political objectives like election campaigns. As a result, the inquiry includes how discourse is processed in a political context.

Additionally, it examines the social construction of discourse, including issues of power, dominance, and control, (Van Dijk, 2006: 24).

3. Rejection: A Pragmatic Perspective

Incurvati and Schlöder (2017: 742) explicate that rejection is unstable in that a previously rejected idea can become accepted simply by providing new information to the existing consensus without changing the existing consensus:

4) *Alice: "X or Y will win the election".*

  Bob: "Is it the case that X or Y will win? No! X or Y or Z will win".

In the above example, "X or Y will win," Bob announces, is no longer acceptable in the common ground. However, if "Bob's" proposition that "X or Y or Z will win" becomes common ground, and later "Alice and Bob" add "z dropped out" to the common ground, "X or Y will win" will reappear in the common ground, but without any change. As a result, Bob's rejection of "X or Y will win" was insecure, because correcting it did not require any revision (ibid).

For Schloder and Fernandez (2014: 152), rejection is a speech occurrence that is a rejecting act if and only if it is inconsistent in the dialogue context. Rejection is generally modeled in this way as affirming the negative of a contextually important notion. A number of implicated discrepancies can cause a completely coherent utterance to be rejected. Think about the following scenarios:

5) A: "We're all mad, aren't we?"

  B: "Well, some of us".

  not (necessarily) all of us.

6) A: "Maybe three days".

  B: "Three or four days".

  not (necessarily) three

What's interesting about these rejections is that they're not only consistent with their antecedent, but they're also informationally redundant—they're just prior assumptions, and so intuitively harmless. On the other hand, the existence of a conflicting implicature is surprising

from a theoretical standpoint. Because implicatures might be cancelled by prior context, the occurrence of an inconsistent implicature is unexpected, (Walker, 2012: 79).

4.1. Pragma-linguistic Strategies

Pragma-linguistic strategies involve two kinds of tactics in terms of the orientation of the speech act, whether to defend or to attack:

- Offensive Strategies
- Defensive Strategies

4.1.1 Offensive Strategies

Harris et al (in Culpeper et al, 2003: 45) refer to a pattern that described offensive techniques as responding face attack with face attack. These tactics can be classified as speech acts of:

Verbal Aggression

Aggressive communication is an interpersonal attribute, which means that one person sends verbal aggressiveness and another receives it. To be categorized as verbally hostile, a communication must be perceived by the listener as an attack on his or her own self-concept, (Infante, 1987:65). In a debate setting, verbal violence may occur; however, the influence of that aggression on the electorate's perceptions would occur only if the audience interprets the aggressive message from the candidate as an attack on the other's self-concept. Many factors can contribute to verbal hostility. One of the reasons is the arguing skills deficiency theory, which states that people use verbal hostility because they are not proficient at argumentation, (ibid). As a result, the following sub-acts can be utilized to achieve verbal aggression:

a. **Insulting acts** have numerous speech acts to reflect lack of prestige and respect towards other parties. They could be verbal acts or non-verbal as facial expressions or body movements. The effect of being insulted is a perlocutionary impact that is directed by the writer or speaker relying on lucid accounts in the views of the addressees, (Van Eemeren, 2010:37).

b. **Condemning acts:** political condemnations are addresssivity-structured actions of public speaking (Noy, 2009: 79). They are not intended to specific audiences, but to a multifaceted, international public sphere

whose occupants are thereby reminded of what is proper or permissible in human affairs, as well as what is regarded wrong and sanctionable. **c. Reproaching**: It denotes a formal reprimand delivered by a superior (person in authority), or an official or official body: rebuked by the judge and warned of the possibility of being charged with contempt of court. According to Roger (2002: 33), this style of speech act is typically conducted by someone in a high position. His notion of rebuke is providing a clear verbal declaration of displeasure on the part of the hearer regarding inappropriate behavior. It usually takes the form of informing the listener what he/she has been doing or should be done in an irritating or furious tone of voice. When reprimands are issued discreetly, they are more effective and less prone to engender dissatisfaction.

d. Criticizing: Hyland (2000: 20) states that criticizing is "an illocutionary act whose illocutionary goal is to convey a negative appraisal of the hearer's (H) actions, choices, words, and goods for which he/she may be held responsible." As such, it is said that criticism is a kind of expressing negative comment on the other party's part in order to disprove his own point.

e. Teasing: refers to verbal action as such, probably multi-turn, whereas a 'tease' corresponds to a single funny turn. Teases can be generated on the spur of the moment and used only once, or they can be preserved in the speaker's idiolect and utilized at appropriate times (Norrick, 1993: 28).

f. Mocking: Straehle (1993: 121) maintains that mockery is a broad category of (non-)verbal behaviors in which the speaker reduces something important to himself, others, or a third party who is not present. Besides, Holt (2011: 64) adds that laughter may be connected with severe rejection or resistance to mockery, or even topic termination, so considering the mockery as non-serious through laughter does not indicate that recipients are always accepting or going along with it, or that they are perceiving it as hilarious per se.

g. Degrading: is widely known as hate speech. In line with the pragmatic approach, referring to the study of language use with its actual usage aspects, the utterances produced by language users have an effect that

could influence the listener to grasp the meaning conveyed and take action
as a result of the utterance, (Hidayati, 2021: 11).

h. Accusation

Fritz (2005: 43) suggests that accusations are part of a complicated set of critical maneuvers in dialogues that includes speech acts such as reproaching, blaming, complaining, criticizing, disagreeing, and insulting. As Trent and Friedenberg (2008: 12) note, voters use discussion to obtain information to assist them understand about topics and pick who they would vote for. Zaska (2012: 75) defines a debate as "a confrontation, in equal and enough time, of matched combatants on a specified proposition in order to obtain an audience decision."

4.1.1.2 Defensive Strategies

As Labov (in Culpeper et al, 2003) claims, defensive strategy mainly counters a face attack by defending one's own face. Defensive strategy is the most commonly used strategy to respond a face attack. It can be achieved through:

a. **Denial**

For Horn (1989: 223), denials can be used to reject an utterance of a preceding speaker for whatever reason. As Horn points out, a speaker may simply object to or reject its truth because of the presuppositions linked with it, the implicatures suggested, or other non-truth-conditional inferences. This account differs from Horn's in that it extends the latter to normal proposition denials and rejects his distinction between a standard truth-functional operator for unmarked situations and a non-truth-functional metalinguistic device for marked circumstances.

b. **Justification**

It is reasonable to include the speech act of justification in the model of analysis because justification appears to incorporate the rejection process. In general, justification is the act of providing an explanation or excuse for something or doing something. As an example:
- The Prime Minster has been asked to justify the decision to Parliament, (Hornby, 2010: 38),

Justifications, as Comparini (2013: 27) suggests, are socially and culturally positioned speech acts. They are a pragmatic device used at specific interpersonal junctures to achieve specific interpersonal aims. Van Dijk (1977: 46) previously suggests that justification is an auxiliary speech act. An auxiliary speech act is one in which the outcome is intended to be a sufficient condition for the success of a primary act.

To sum up, Apotheloz et al., (1993: 136) outline that justification involves two facets: *positive justification* and *negative justification*. In the instance of positive justification, the speaker sticks to his thesis and accepts all of his arguments. Negative argumentation, on the other hand, refers to a speaker who does not agree with his argument and likely improves his position by rejecting beliefs that he does not share. The following is an example of negative justification: "Until now, I believed that..., but today I reject this position because," (ibid).

c. **Explanation**

Searle (1979: 77) mentions that the term "explain" belongs to the category of assertive whose purpose is to commit the speaker to the truth of the idea delivered. Van Dijk (1980: 62) defines explanation as another relationship that happens between speech acts in speech act sequences. As an example:

"I have no watch. Can you please tell me the time?"   (Justification)
"Can you please tell me the time? I have no watch".   (Explanation)

The contextual conditions for the second sequence are presumed to be the same as those for the first. The distinction is due to the fact that the assertion no longer defines the correct context for the request but rather gives the grounds for the request later on.

d. **Rejection by Definition**

Political disputes are bound to be rife with opposing viewpoints. Debaters use language complexity to their advantage in order to defend oneself (David et al., 2004: 51). "Definition" is one of the strategies provided. As a result, definitions are frequently utilized to support one's perspective and reject the argument of others. In a previous observation,

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Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969: 67) ascertain that definitions are regarded as arguments by themselves and ought to be evaluated as arguments. Similarly, Walton (2001: 55) stresses that "a persuasive definition should be treated as a *particular* kind of argument". To relate the topic of *definition* neatly to the process of rejection, a pragmatic analyst should know how to find out the most important types of definitions employed by debaters to issue rejection. Moreover, he should employ the relationship between linguistic and rhetorical features and definitions used in the debate at hand.

Consequently, it can be noted that the pragmatic structure of rejection is done by three basic stages outlined below:

a. Initiating Stage

At this point, there is a split in opinion over whether to accept or reject particular viewpoints (them). The commencement of a circumstance that displays a viewpoint can be equated to the confrontation stage. This viewpoint corresponds to existing or anticipated doubts. As a result, a conflict of opinion begins or is expected to begin.

b. Developing Stage

In this stage, the protagonist employs his or her reasoning to defend the established viewpoint in the face of the antagonist's doubts or critical comments. This stage also takes into account the antagonist's critical reactions to the set viewpoint(s), the protagonist's argument(s), or the manner in which it is delivered (them). Using more argumentations to overcome doubt(s) and other criticism(s) and critically reviewing the arguments for its satisfactoriness are constantly necessary to finding a final end to any difference in opinions, regardless of whether the critical exchanges are carried out fully or parity explicit.

c. Terminating Stage

In this stage, both the protagonist and the antagonist determine if the offered standpoint(s) is (are) successfully defended or not, based on the preceding phases. If the protagonist withdraws, the antagonist's point

of view is no longer valid. When the protagonist properly argues his or her viewpoint, the antagonist withdraws his or her viewpoint(s), and the conflict of opinion is resolved in favor of the protagonist. There will be no actual completion of the parties' attempt to resolve their disagreement as long as they do not reach a definitive conclusion(s). Thus, the pragmatic structure of rejection can be performed by three major stages mentioned in Fig. (1) Below:
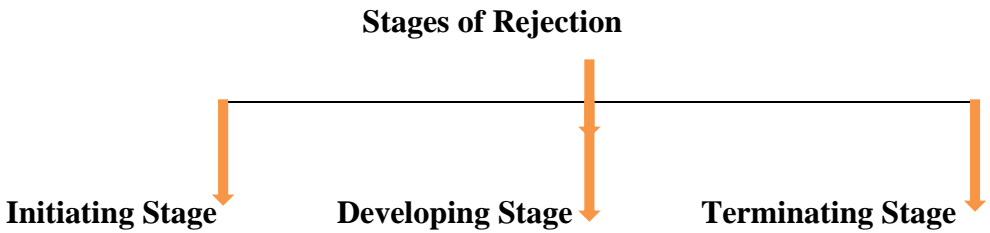
Stages of Rejection

Initiating Stage   **Developing Stage**   **Terminating Stage**

Fig. (1) Stages of Rejection

As a result, as illustrated in the proposed model, the developing stage stated above can be completed by numerous pragmatic tactics outlined and diagrammed in Fig. (2) Below:
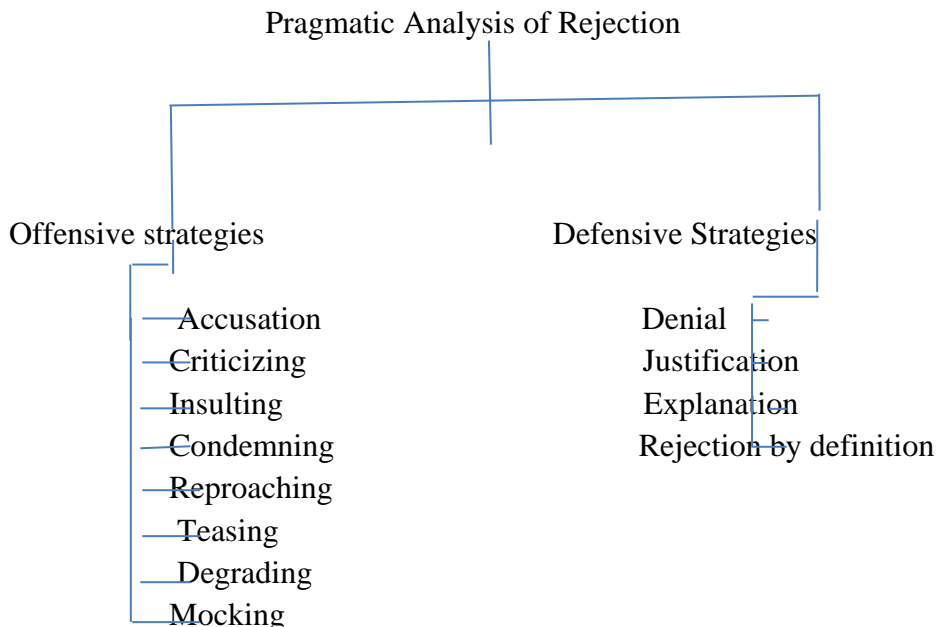
Pragmatic Analysis of Rejection

Offensive strategies   Defensive Strategies

Accusation   Denial
Criticizing   Justification
Insulting   Explanation
Condemning   Rejection by definition
Reproaching
Teasing
Degrading
Mocking

Fig. (2) Eclectic Model of Analysis

5.1. Data and Methodology

The model developed earlier is the major instrument for analyzing rejectional processes in American political debates under investigation. The analysis also incorporates a mixed-method approach, which combines qualitative and quantitative instruments to strengthen and confirm the analysis's results in terms of objectivity and reliability.

Analysis of Extract No.1

Participants: Joe Biden (D) and Donald J. Trump (R)

Date: September 29, 2020

Location: Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland Clinic

City: Cleveland, OH

Time: 9:00 – 10:30pm Eastern

Sponsor: Commission on Presidential Debates

Moderator: Chris Wallace, Fox News

Topic: All Topics

Viewership: 73.1 million (Data provided by Nielsen Media Research)

Format: 90-minute debate with candidates standing at podiums. Divided into six time segments of approximately 15 minutes, with topics selected and announced beforehand by the moderator. Each segment opened with a question, after which each candidate had two minutes to respond. The moderator used the balance of the time in the segment for a discussion of the topic.

This part of the debate is activated by the following stages:

A. The Initiating Stage

This stage is realized in the moderator (Wallace's) question where the standpoint is advanced:

"*Why are you right in the argument you make and your opponent wrong? And where do you think a Justice Barrett would take the court?* ". The job of the debaters, thus, is either to confirm or reject the standpoint raised by the moderator.

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B. The Developing Stage

The core of the rejectional process is represented in the developing stage. It can be achieved by employing certain strategies as noted below:

- **Pragma-linguistic strategies**

Trump responds to Biden's argument utilizing some pragma-linguistic strategies for the purpose of rejecting the standpoint that are demonstrated in the initiating stage. Thus, they transfer from 'offensive' to 'defensive' strategies:

a. Offensive Strategies

Consequently, Trump employs a number of offensive strategies to ensure his rejection. For instance, he employs the act of political 'accusation' by complaining his adversary, Biden:

- *"The bigger problem that you have is that you're going to extinguish 180 million people with their private health care, that they're very happy with."*

Although the government thinks that the Affordable Care Act is not Constitutional, Trump in this extract accuses Biden of ending the private health care of (180) million people. Furthermore, Trump utilizes the strategy of criticizing. Consider the following extract:

- *"I don't know where you got that number."*

In the preceding extract, Trump criticizes Biden implying that he is not accurate or he does not have any adequate information about what happened.

He uses such a type of verbal aggression, as in the following instance to attack Biden's self-concept with the intent of making him feel awful about himself:

- *"The bigger problem that you have is that you're going to extinguish 180 million people with their private health care, that they're very happy with."*

Here, Trump employs the strategy of 'criticizing' to defend his position and reject Biden's argument as he is going to terminate the heath care of those who need special concern. Thus, he quotes the strategy of 'criticizing' from Biden's utterance in order to degrade him. Furthermore, he uses another strategy of 'condemning' to weaken his position and prove his view:

- *"Well, you're certainly going to socialist. You're going to socialist medicine."*

b. **Defensive Strategies**

Trump has manipulated different defensive strategies in order to defend his own situation. In the following extract, he uses the explanation strategy so as to explicate the issue of health insurance for certain people:

- *"There aren't a hundred million people with pre-existing conditions. As far as a say is concerned, the people already had their say."*

He carries on to affirm such claim based on the strategy of explanation:

- *"Okay, Justice Ginsburg said very powerfully, very strongly, at some point 10 years ago or so, she said a President and the Senate is elected for a period of time, but a President is elected for four years."*

Trump maintains that the president is not elected *"each three years.*

Rather, the Senate and a President are existed who have their own roles Additionally, he uses the strategy of denial within the frame of 'objection' in order to confirm his stand and reject Biden's claim. He also confirms his denial through providing a counter-claim to rout Biden's claim as in the extract below:

- *"So we have the Senate, we have a President-"*

This denial is verified by another strategy, i.e., rejection by 'definition'. In this strategy a debater adjusts his thesis to encounter the requirements of the discussion. Thus, Trump demonstrates himself as one of American people who has been greatly involved in their issues.

c. Terminating Stage

Trump draws the attention to sum up the debate by rejecting Biden's claim through the following concluding extract:

- *"You would have been much later, Joe, much later."*

The argument is terminated with Trump's indirect rejection. Thus, the whole argument temporarily finishes neither for Trump nor Biden as they do not get their desire and fail in persuading each other. So far, all of the techniques employed in this debate have been constructed in such a way as to effectively verify a specific agenda. Hence, Trump raises a case for his own perspective and in return Biden, answers that with a counter-argument involving a variety of tactics to reject the allegation at hand.

Analysis of Extract No.2

This part of the debate is motivated by the following stages:

A. The Initiating Stage

This stage is realized in the moderator (Wallace's) question where the standpoint is advanced:

"*What is the Trump healthcare plan?*". The task of the debaters is either affirm or reject the standpoint initiated by the moderator.

B. The Developing Stage

The main purpose of the rejectional process is represented by the developing stage. It can be achieved by employing certain strategies as observed below:

- **Pragma-linguistic Strategies**

In his response to Biden's argument, Trump anticipates several pragma-linguistic techniques in an effort to reject the viewpoint that has been put forward in the opening exchange. Both debaters switch from "defensive" to "offensive" tactics as follows:

a. Offensive Strategies

Trump employs certain offensive strategies to confirm his rejection towards Biden's attitudes. In this case, Trump utilizes "reproaching" as one of the important verbal aggressive strategies. Trump uses such strategy to offer formally an adverse judgment to Biden about the issue of healthcare. In other words, Trump declares that Biden is the liar. Trump's judgment represents a negative view which is considered as an irrespective manner of exchange. Consider the following extract:

-" *But you agree. Joe, you're the liar. You graduated last in your class not first in your class"*

Additionally, Trump rejects Biden's speech in terms of teasing strategy. He attempts to harass him in his speech. He does not give him his time through discussion as observed in the following extract:

- *"Listen, you agreed with Bernie Sanders and the manifesto."*

It is worth mentioning that Trump does not only use the strategy of teasing in the extract above but also the accusation one. He arraigns Biden that he is in a plan with both *Bernie Sanders and the manifesto* concerning the fact of healthcare. In the same vein, Biden uses the verbal aggressive strategy of criticizing to express his rejection towards Trump's stand:

- *"The wrong guy, the wrong night, at the wrong time."*

He criticizes Trump, the night as well as the time describing them as "wrong". The extract above reveals the extent of frustration that Biden feels towards Trump. Biden claims that Trump is the wrong man in the wrong time and that he is not suitable to be the president. In return, Trump tries to tease Biden and rejects his claims as in the extract below.

- *"You graduated last in your class not first in your class."*

Mocking is another strategy which is used by Trump in this extract. He ridicules Biden and attacks his intelligence by telling him that he graduated the lowest in his class. He intends to demonstrate that Biden is not competent enough to run the administration. Finally, he uses the act of political 'accusation' by complaining his adversary, Biden:

- *"You agreed with Bernie Sanders on a plan that you absolutely agreed to and under that plan [crosstalk], they call it socialized medicine."*

In this extract, Trump accuses Biden that he has a plan with Bernie Sanders dealing with "socialized medicine". Thus, Trump negates that Biden overcame Sanders, i.e. "The fact of the matter is I beat Bernie Sanders". Trump replies to Biden by "Not by much" intending that he has a game to reach their own interests.

b. **Defensive Strategies**

To defend his position, Trump has utilized a variety of defensive tactics. He applies the explanation method in the following extract to clarify the problem of health insurance for certain people:

- *"There's nothing symbolic. I'm cutting drug prices. I'm going with Favored Nations, which no President has the courage to do because you're going against big pharma."*

He continues to support this assertion with the strategy of 'explanation'. Consider the following example:

- *"Drug prices will be coming down 80 or 90%. "*

Trump defends his duty as a president by explaining how he attempted to help people by following certain procedures to decrease drug prices. Additionally, he ensures to do that to be the first one (as he suggests) who has the courage to impose these procedures in an attempt to gain the American's sympathy. Furthermore, he employs the tactic of denial within the context of "objection" in order to affirm his position and disprove Biden's assertion. He supports his denial by making a counterclaim to reject Biden's assertion as in the extract below:

- *"You could have done it during your 47-year period in government, but you didn't do it. Nobody's done it. So we're cutting healthcare".*

He argues that no one, including Biden, has the ability or resolution to cut the highest prices of drug. In this respect, Trump again ensures that he will cut healthcare later on. Biden affirms that Trump has not carried on his decisions regarding the many promises he has made for health care:

-" *He has not done healthcare*."

Trump supports his rejection to Biden's claims using a different technique, known as a rejection by "definition". Using this technique, the debater modifies his argument to meet the exchange's criteria. Thus, he provides an example of "Insulin" to confirm his speech. He tries to demonstrate his achievements in this regard and exemplifies insulin as a medicine that was so expensive and was destroying families because they were not able to buy it easily but now, it is as cheap as water. Consider the extract below:

-*"I'll give you an example. Insulin, it was destroying families, destroying people, the cost. I'm getting it for so cheap it's like water, you want to know the truth. So cheap. Take a look at all of the drugs that what we're doing."*

c. Terminating Stage

Biden's attitude below sums up the debate by rejecting Trump's claims which have been communicated through the aforementioned stages:

- "*He sends out wishful thinking. He has Executive Orders that have no power. He hasn't lowered drug costs for anybody. He's been promising a healthcare plan since he got elected. He has none, like almost everything else he talks about. He does not have a plan. He doesn't have a plan. And the fact is this man doesn't know what he's talking about.*"

Consequently, neither Trump nor Biden temporarily win the debate since they denied their goals. Likewise, they are unable to persuade each other. So far, every strategy used in this exchange has been designed to successfully verify a particular agenda. Trump then argues with his own viewpoint. Biden responds with a counterargument that uses a number of strategies to reject the accusations.

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5.2 Results

With reference to the results of the qualitative pragmatic analysis of the data analyzed above, the process of rejection appears to be engaged through certain stages of the data under research, including the initiating stage, developing stage as well as terminating stage. However, it has been noted that the act of rejection is practically processed within the developing stage. This is consistent with the idea that the core of an argument is still being developed in the argumentation stage. Additionally, it has been observed that American debaters typically use offensive and defensive tactics as their favourite strategies for debating a point of view. Thus, in order to advance their political objectives, they employ pragma-linguistic techniques like criticizing, accusing, mocking, denying, insulting, and the like. Since offensive and defensive strategies both reflect the greatest rejection strategies among other strategies in the two selected extracts. The results indicate that the use of offensive strategies was more than defensive ones.

5.3. Conclusion

It has been concluded that American debaters more frequently employ offensive than defensive tactics to defend their positions and reject those of their opponents. As a result, they make an effort to discredit the opinions of their opponents in a variety of ways such as accusations, insulting, criticizing, denial, and condemning. It is important to note that this kind of argument does not seem to follow the rules of logic upon which rationalism is based, since American debaters use rejection strategies in order to achieve certain political agendas other than to protect and secure them. In other words, they intend to disclose the weakness and feebleness of their adversaries. Hence it cannot be considered plausible.

It has been noted that the process of rejecting a standpoint is initiated within the developing stage. Thus, the developing stage can be viewed as the essence of argumentation in which viewpoints are defended or rejected.

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