

Pragma-Rhetorical Strategies in British Parliamentary Argumentative Discourse

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استراتيجيات التداولية- البلاغية في الخطاب الجدلي البرلماني
البريطاني

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Abstract:

This study aims at investigating the pragma-rhetorical structure of argumentative discourse in British Parliament. To achieve this aim, Van Eemeren and Houtlosser's (2002) model of strategic maneuvering is utilized.

Among the important conclusions the study comes up with are: Both figures, i.e. the Prime Minister and Jeremy Corbyn in British parliament utilize certain pragma-rhetorical strategies either to defend or support their standpoints. Besides, Overstatement extends over the other figures of speech and argumentative appeals in British parliamentary discourse and makes the debates highly rhetorical as a result. Finally, Pathos prevailed other argumentative appeals. This proves that arguers in British parliament resort to feelings and stimulation of the audience's emotions in making their arguments.

Key words: pragma-rhetoric, Parliamentary discourse, argumentation, strategic maneuvering, figures of speech, argumentative appeals.

الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى استكشاف البنية التداولية في الخطاب الجدلي البرلماني البريطاني. ومن اجل تحقيق هذا الهدف تم استخدام نموذج المناورة الاستراتيجية الذي اعده فان ايميرين وهولوسر (٢٠٠٢).

ومن بين الاستنتاجات المهمة التي توصلت إليها الدراسة: أن كلا الشخصيتين ، أي رئيس الوزراء وجيرمي كوربين في البرلمان البريطاني ، يستخدمان بعض الاستراتيجيات البلاغية إما للدفاع عن وجهات نظرهما أو تأييدها. وعلاوة على ذلك ، اكتشفت الدراسة ان المبالغة تمتد لتغطي الصور الشعرية للكلام والمناشدات الجدلية الأخرى في الخطاب الجدلي البريطاني مما تجعل المناقشات شديدة البلاغة نتيجة لذلك.

واخيرا فقد وجدت الدراسة بان العاطفة سادت على المناشادات الجدلية الاخرى وهذا يثبت ان المتجادلين في البرلمان البريطاني يلجأون إلى المشاعر وتحفيز عواطف الجمهور في تقديم حججهم.

كلمات مفتاحية: التداولية البلاغية، الخطاب البرلماني، الجدل، المناورة الاستراتيجية، الصور الشعرية، المناشادات الجدلية..

1. Introduction

Parliamentary discourse is one of the most important mechanisms through which democracy works in the UK. It is defined as “a part of the more comprehensive genre of the political discourse. It has some specific sub-genres, corresponding to the basic forms of parliamentary activity such as debates, motions, written/oral questions, interpellations, etc.” (Ionescu Ruxandoiu, Roibu, & Viorica, 2012: 10).

From a rhetorical perspective, Ilie (2015: 3) provides an account of parliamentary discourse in which he states that it saying that it "belongs to the deliberative genre of political rhetoric, which is an oratorical discourse that puts an audience in the position of making a decision by assessing the pros and cons of a future course of action".

Within the argumentation theory, the term argumentation refers to the process of formulating reasons, drawing conclusions, and applying those conclusions to the case at hand. Holowchak (2007: 15) offers a definition where he states that “argumentation is a group of statements where the evidence or the premise in the form of one statement is given in support of another statement which is the conclusion”.

Due to the sensitivity and importance of the issues discussed during the British Parliamentary argumentative debates, the study will focus on how pragma-rhetorical strategies are achieved during these debates, especially the conclusions. In order to achieve the aim of this study, Van Eemeren and Houtlosser’s (2002) model of strategic maneuvering will be utilized.

2. Model of Analysis

The model that is adopted for analyzing the debates in British parliamentary is Van Eemeren and Houtlosser’s (2002) model of strategic maneuvering.

In their book, *Dialectic and Rhetoric*, Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2002) attempt to extend the pragma-dialectical theory by integrating rhetorical insights within the domain of pragma-dialectic. Thus, they develop the concept of strategic maneuvering. Strategic maneuvering tries to

understand how arguers aim to achieve rhetorical effectiveness by means of persuasive argumentative moves. This concept has three inseparable aspects, namely, topical potential which means how the arguers choose the materials from those available alternatives according to what they believe best serves their interests (Van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 2002), audience demand which refers to the role of audience in argumentation and the attempt to create empathy or communication between the arguer and his audience (Van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 1999: 484-85), and presentational devices which refer to the ways that the speaker chooses to present his ideas effectively in order to win the audience to his side. Argumentation is represented in a way rather than another by means of presentational devices to gain rhetorical advantages. Presentational devices will be only taken into account in analyzing the data, since they involve the pragmatic strategies and they are argumentative appeals and figures of speech.

2.1. Argumentative appeals strategies

Aristotle (1956) puts forward his famous theory that states if one wants to be a compelling speaker, he should be well-acquainted with three means of persuasion. These are logos, ethos, and pathos. Logos is concerned with the construction of logical argumentation. Ethos refers to the credibility and trustworthiness of a speaker. Pathos means appealing to the emotions of the audience (cited in Tkachova, 2016:2). These modes or appeals that make speech persuasive are called proofs (Keith and Lundberg, 2008: 36) The first pragma-rhetorical strategy is the logos (rational appeal) of speech which refers to the logic of speech or the arguments it makes. The speech changes the beliefs of audience by walking them through reasonable steps. Kennedy (2007:4) points out that logos refers to the the support of the claims, the logic of the reasons, and the internal consistency of the message.

Pathos is the second argumentative appeal. It is the appeal to emotion. It is a way that can be used in argument to attract the audience. According to Aristotle though a person is a rational animal by nature, he was often

prompted to do something or accept something by his or her emotions (Xiu Guo, 2005: 23). Persuasive speakers, according to Keith and Lundberg (2008: 39), are those who succeeded in aligning the audience's emotions with the argument they make.

The last and the most potent appeal of Aristotle's three modes of persuasion is known as "ethos". Ethos is a persuasive method which "refers to the personal standing, academic authority and moral qualities of the writer or speaker, used to guarantee or raise the writer's or the speaker's credibility and the acceptability in the eyes of the readers or audience" (Xiu Guo, 2005: 23). Keith and Lundberg (2008:39) add that persuasive speakers attempt to gain the audience's trust by creating ethos through actions, deeds, understanding, and expertise.

2.2. Figures of speech strategies

Figures of speech, also known as figurative language or tropes, are utterances that are expressed in a way that primarily intends to make the expression of language more beautiful and effective. A figure of speech can be described as "an expression that departs from the accepted literal sense or from the normal order of words, or in which an emphasis is produced by patterns of sound" (Baldick, 2008: 140). Airenti (2017: 17) points out that all figures of speech are seen as a violation of Grice's maxim of quality, i.e. 'try to make your contribution one that is true'.

The main goal behind the use of figurative language or figures of speech, McQuarrie and Mick (1996:424) maintain, is persuasion where the speaker aims at reaching the most effective form of the expression. Moreover, they (ibid: 425) illustrate that a figure of speech occurs when an expression deviates from expectation, i.e. the expression cannot be considered as faulty or nonsensical because the deviation occurs at the level of form rather than content. McQuarrie and Mick (1996:427) make a distinction between two types of figures of speech: schemes and tropes. Schemes are out of the scope of pragmatics. Thus, they will not be tackled in this study and the researcher is going to explain tropes only.

Tropes are pragma-rhetorical strategies that arise from flouting the maxims of interaction in a given situation. The word “Trope” comes from the Greek word that means “turn of phrase”, “twist of plot”, and “turn of thought”.

A trope twists the words from their meaning in an unexpected way. It is described as “turning a word’s meaning from its conventional sense to a new and oftentimes surprising one” (Killingsworth, 2005: 121).

Huhmann (2008: 90) divides tropes into two types: destabilization and substitution. The former involves deciphering the intended meaning through greater cognitive effort. The latter involves the interpretation of the intended meaning through simple substitution of intended for literal meaning.

Tropes of destabilization

This kind of tropes involves the use of an expression whose meaning is indeterminate in its context. In a trope of destabilization, one means more than what is said, and relies on the recipient to develop the implications. Destabilization tropes include simile, metaphor, and irony.

The first destabilization trope is simile. Simile is a figure of speech where two dissimilar concepts or things are compared descriptively or imaginatively because they have something in common. The common markers of this comparison is the use of "like" and "as (...as)" and other words like “more than”, "as if", "resembles", etc. (Xiu Guo, 2005: 157).

The second destabilization trope is metaphor which is a pragma-rhetorical strategy that arises from flouting the maxim of quality. It involves the case where a word or phrase is used to describe something it does not literally denote, e.g. this journal is a gem” (McGlone, 2007:2). Brdar et al (2011: 27) state that metaphor is a cognitive mechanism whereby one experimental domain is partially ‘mapped’. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their seminal *Metaphors We Live By*, have tackled metaphor from a cognitive perspective in which they present the term of “conceptual metaphor”. The notion of conceptual metaphor is defined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980:25) as a cognitive phenomenon that human beings use

automatically, commonly, and unconsciously in their everyday life. Conceptual metaphors connect two semantic areas or domains. Those domains are referred to as Source domain (concrete domain) and Target domain (Abstract domain). Among the conceptual metaphors is Happy is up. In this case, the source domain of direction (up) shares a resemblance with the target domain of emotion (Happy). This resemblance is based on the systematic correlation of human experience (ibid: 15).

The last type of destabilization tropes is the strategy of irony. This destabilizer is defined as a discordance between what a speaker says and what he or she believes to be true, as in “What a sunny day!” during a storm (Xiang Li, 2008: 5). Hutcheon (1995: 94) illustrates that irony is always a culture-specific and rely on the presence of a common shared memory by speaker and hearer. He (ibid) adds that irony is an indirect speech act that relies heavily on mutually shared factual background information.

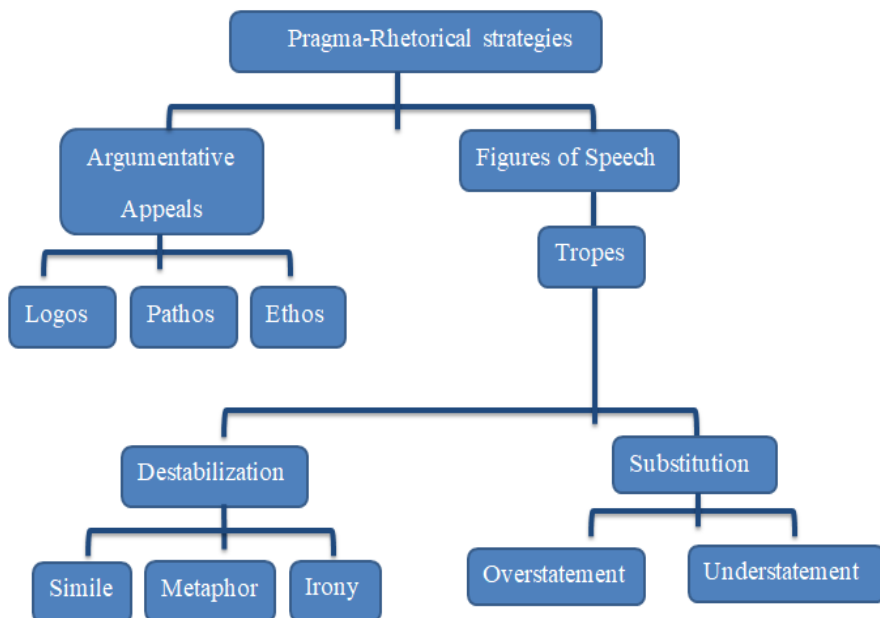
2.2.1. Tropes of substitution

McQuarrie and Mick (1996: 429) argue that tropes of substitution involve selection of an expression that requires more processing in order to arrive at the intended meaning. This includes: overstatement and understatement. Overstatement or hyperbole is a figure of speech which refers to positive or negative exaggeration to increase impact or to attract attention, as in “The traffic was moving at a snail’s pace” (Cruse, 2006:80). this kind of tropes is considered as a rhetorical pragmatic strategy where the description of the speaker is stronger than the actual situation. It arises from the flouting of the maxim of quality as in the example “it made my blood boil” (Leech 1983:145).

Understatement, also known as litotes, is the opposite to overstatement. Understatement denotes the opposite of overstatement. According to Levinson (1983: 110), this trope represents a deviation from conventional communication and thus flouts the maxim(s) of cooperative conversational. Leech (1983) points out that understatements are

employed to disguise the degree to which things are bad. He (ibid: 148) states that this strategy is "a way of underplaying aspects of meaning which are pragmatically disfavored". For example saying "He was a little intoxicated" of a man who was known to have broken up all the furniture (Cruse: 2006: 186).

The model just described is diagrammed as follows:



Pragma-Rhetorical Strategies
(Following Van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002)

3. Data Analysis

The data of this study are collected from different British parliamentary debates from 2019 to 2020 which consist of (4) situations. These situations are selected from different parliamentary debates between the Prime Minister of the UK Boris Johnson (the leader of the Conservative Party) and Jeremy Corbyn (the leader of the Labour Party). The debates are taken from Hansard where the official transcripts of debates are

published. All of these debates can be universally reached through this website.

Situation (1)

The Text

Jeremy Corbyn

we simply cannot give the Government a blank cheque. Mr Speaker, you do not have to take my word for that. Listen, for example, to the TUC general secretary, Frances O'Grady, who says—[Interruption.] She represents an organisation with 6 million affiliated members, and she says:

“This deal would be a disaster for working people. It would hammer the economy, cost jobs and sell workers’ rights down the river.”

Listen also to the Green Alliance, which says that the deal amounted to a

“Very sad Brexit read from a climate perspective.”

The message is clear that this deal is not good for jobs and is damaging for our industry and a threat to our environment and our natural world.

I also totally understand the frustration and fatigue across the country and in this House, but we simply cannot vote for a deal that is even worse than the one that the House rejected three times. The Government’s own economic analysis shows that this deal would make the poorest regions even poorer and cost each person in this country over £2,000 a year. If we vote for a deal that makes our constituents poorer, we are not likely to be forgiven.

Voting for a deal today will not end Brexit, and it will not deliver certainty.

The Prime Minister

The right hon. Gentleman is wrong about environmental and social protection. This Government and this country will maintain the very highest standards, and we will lead in environmental protection and social protection across Europe and the world. We lead, for instance, in our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2050, and as I have told him many times, Brexit gives us the freedom and the opportunity to do things that we have not been able to do and that are deeply desired by the British people, such as banning the live export of animals—that is to say nothing of shark fins—and many other things we can do differently and better.

The overwhelming view of business is that there are great opportunities from Brexit.

As I look ahead, the only risks I see to the British economy are the catastrophic plans of the right hon. Gentleman and his semi-Marxist party.

The right hon. Gentleman talks about trust. I do not wish to be unnecessarily adversarial today, but he patently does not trust his own party—

I suggest to the House, in all humility and candour, that it should ignore the right hon. Gentleman's pleadings and vote for an excellent deal that will take this country and the whole of Europe forward.

(Web Source 1)

Text Analysis

i. Argumentative Appeals

Corbyn claims that the UK withdrawal from the European Union is not a good agreement as it damages the industry and threatens the environment in the UK. To prove that what he claims about the UK withdrawal deal is true, Corbyn resorts to logos (*The Government's own economic analysis shows that this deal would make the poorest regions even poorer and cost each person in this country over £2,000 a year*) .

Pathos, is a rhetorical device with which the speaker uses manipulation of emotion. Corbyn makes use of pathos to get a reaction from the audience about voting for the UK withdrawal deal. He wants people to reject such a deal (*If we vote for a deal that makes our constituents poorer, we are not likely to be forgiven*). Whereas the Prime Minister tries to convince the audience of the importance of this agreement by highlighting the case of live-animal exports which is a public demand in the UK. As a member of the European Union, the UK was previously unable to ban live export but if this agreement happens it will be able to ban such a trade “*Brexit gives us the freedom...better*”

ii. Figures of Speech

Metaphors are among the highly used figures in argumentative discourse. They are used to convey a message about one thing in terms of another. The conceptual metaphor “*it would hammer the economy*” is used by Corbyn to refer danger of this deal to the economy. He portrays the abstract concept of the economy (target domain) as a physical thing (source domain) that can be hammered and destroyed.

Overstatement is used by both speakers in this argument. Corbyn uses overstatement through using words that give negative meaning “*this deal would be a disaster*”. He also utilizes adverbs of degree “*totally understood, truly*” in addition to the comparative and superlative forms “*a deal that is even worse than the one that the House rejected three times, this deal would make the poorest regions even*” in order to focus attention on how dangerous this deal would be to the UK. However, the Prime Minister is against his claim where he uses overstatement in by using positive adjectives “*overwhelming view, great opportunities, an excellent deal that will take this country and the whole of Europe forward*” and superlative sentence “*this country will maintain the very highest standards*” to confirm that this deal will be good for the UK.

Understatement minimizes the severity or importance of the issue at hand. Corbyn tries to show that what the Prime Minister says has no importance or value. He describes it as “nonsense” in (*I simply say: nonsense*).

Situation (2)

The Text

The Prime Minister

As for the NHS, this is the party whose sound management of the economy took this country back from the abyss and enabled us to spend another £34 billion on the NHS—a record investment—and, as I promised on the steps of Downing Street, to begin the upgrade of 20 hospitals, and as a result of the commitments this Government are making, 40 new hospitals will be built in the next 10 years. That is this party’s commitment to the NHS.

Jeremy Corbyn

I hate to break it to the Prime Minister, but "under his Government and that of his predecessor, privatisation has more than doubled to £10 billion in our NHS". There are currently 20 NHS contracts out to tender, "and when he promised 40 hospitals, he then reduced that to 20", and" then it turns out that reconfiguration is taking place in just six hospitals". So these numbers keep tumbling down for the unfunded spending commitments that he liberally makes around the country.

The Prime Minister

*The right hon. Gentleman is completely wrong in what he says about privatisation of the NHS,
... not recklessly wrecking the economy and renationalising companies in the way that he would do.*

Jeremy Corbyn

... all he is said is that there is seed funding. I am not sure what seed funding is, but it does not sound like the commitment we were seeking, and it sounds awfully like private finance going into the NHS to deal with the

issues it faces. Less than one year ago, the Prime Minister said that any “regulatory checks and...customs controls between Great Britain and Northern Ireland” would damage “the fabric of the Union”. Given that this deal clearly does damage the fabric of the Union, does he still agree with himself?

The Prime Minister

I know that this was raised many times in the House yesterday, and I believe that the Union is preserved, and indeed we are able to go forward together as one United Kingdom and do free trade deals in a way that would have been impossible under previous deals. This is a great advance for the whole UK, and we intend to develop that together with our friends in Northern Ireland. But I must say to the right hon. Gentleman and indeed his colleagues on the Front Bench that I think it is a bit rich to hear from him about his sentimental attachment to the fabric of the Union between Great Britain and Northern Ireland when he has spent most of his political lifetime supporting the IRA and those who would destroy it by violence.

(Web Source 2)

i. Arumentative Appeals

Logos is concerned with the proofs and reasons to convince others. To support his claim that the privatization has increased under the government of Johnson and his predecessors, Corbyn directly provides a fact. This fact is "***when he promised 40 hospitals, he then reduced that to 20, and then it turns out that reconfiguration is taking place in just six hospitals***"

Pathos aims at putting the audience at a favorable state of mind for accepting the message employed by the speaker. To stimulate the emotions of the audience and to convince Corbyn of the importance of the union between Britain and Northern Ireland, Johnson uses words like "***together***" and "***friends***".

ii. Figures of speech

Metaphor is used several times in this argument. One important metaphor is utilized by Johnson “*took the country from abyss*”. The literal meaning of falling into the abyss is falling down a very deep hole, but figuratively, means getting into some problems that you can't get out of. Therefore, it is a metaphor that describes the United Kingdom (source domain) as a thing that is taken from the abyss (target domain) because of the good management of the economy under the leadership of his party. Another metaphor by Johnson is “*wrecking the economy*”. The main meaning that most dictionaries give to wreck is to severely damage or destroy a vehicle or building, which is a very concrete concept. But an economy is not a physical entity that can be wrecked. Therefore, the economy (target domain) is described as a physical entity (source domain) that can be wrecked or damaged to refer to the idea of being in a bad state. Corbyn also uses a metaphorical image of “*seed funding*”. Corbyn here describes seed (source domain) which is a concrete entity in terms of an abstract domain of funding (target domain) to refer to "money that is used to start a new company, business, activity, etc. as an investment (Combley, 2011: 758). Another striking metaphor is employed by Johnson “*the fabric of the union*” where he likened the union of Britain and Ireland (target domain) to the cords (source domain) that held the clothes together. Union is the structure that held the relationship between these two countries.

Overstatement as a rhetorical device of exaggeration, it creates effect in the mind of the speaker and not to be taken as a literal speech. It refers to a case where the speaker's description is stronger than is meant by the state of affairs described. To strengthen his argument, the Prime Minister employs an overstatement through using words like “*completely*”, “*impossible*” and “*great*” in the statements “*completely wrong in what he says*”, “*impossible under previous deals*” and “*great advance for the whole UK*”. He also resorts to overstatement by using the superlative marker “*most*” in “*most of his political lifetime*”.

Corbyn uses only one overstatement “*awfully*” in “*it sounds awfully like private finance going into the NHS*”.

In contrast to the conventional term 'overstatement,' the term 'understatement' is used. The main idea of understatement is to speak less while conveying greater meaning. It is regarded as a figure of speech in which the speaker reduces the length of his or her statement in order to make the fact appear less significant than it is. Only one understatement is used in this argument. Corbyn of understatement is carried out through the use of the qualifier "**just**" in "**reconfiguration is taking place in just six hospitals**" to refer that the number of hospitals build is not as promised. He refers that Johnson is not capable of keeping his promises.

Situation (3)

The Text

The Prime Minister

Clearly, the strict issue of legality is not for the UK to determine, since it was not our operation. I think that most reasonable people would accept that the United States has a right to protect its bases and its personnel. I remind the House that the individual concerned—General Qasem Soleimani—was, among other things, responsible over many years for arming the Houthis with missiles with which they attacked innocent civilians; arming Hezbollah with missiles, which again they used to attack innocent civilians; sustaining the Assad regime in Syria, which is one of the most brutal and barbaric regimes in the world; and, of course, supplying improvised explosive devices to terrorists who, I am afraid, killed and maimed British troops. That man had the blood of British troops on his hands.

Jeremy Corbyn

If we stand by international law, as I am sure the Government do and would want to, surely killing somebody in a foreign territory is an illegal act and should be condemned as such. If we believe in international law, it should be the solution to the problems in the world. ...try to bring about a resolution to the very dangerous situation in the region will be allowed to attend

The Prime Minister

As the House can imagine, I have spoken extensively to our friends around the world, including our friends in Baghdad and Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi, who, like many people in Iraq, has come to rely and depend on the support of coalition forces, not least from the UK. As the right hon. Gentleman will know, there is a very significant NATO mission in Iraq at the moment, helping in the fight against Daesh. It is my wish and the wish of this Government—and it should be the wish of this House—that we do everything we can to support the security and integrity of Iraq and the Iraqi people.

Jeremy Corbyn

The actions of the United States have undoubtedly escalated the risk of a dangerous conflict in an already destabilised region.

The Prime Minister

This is absolute fiction. But what I will say is that the UK will continue to work for de-escalation in the region. I think we are having a great deal of success in bringing together a European response and in bridging the European response with that, of course, of our American friends, and working both with the Iranians and with the Iraqis to dial this thing down. The right hon. Gentleman should be in absolutely no doubt. I am very surprised at the end of these exchanges that the right hon. Gentleman has yet to condemn the activities of Qasem Soleimani and the revolutionary guard.

(Web Source 3):

Text Analysis

i. Argumentative Appeals

The prime Minister provides reasons and evidence for his argument the assassination of Qasem Soleimani was legal. He uses logos *“Qasem Soleimani—was, among other things, responsible over many years for arming the Houthis with missiles with which they attacked innocent civilians; arming Hezbollah with missiles, which again they used to attack innocent civilians; sustaining the Assad regime in Syria, which is one of the most brutal and barbaric regimes in the world; and, of course, supplying improvised explosive devices to terrorists who, I am afraid, killed and maimed British troops”*. Corbyn, on the other side considered that the assassination of Qasem Soleimani was illegal following the international law. He resorts to logic as he tries to convince others of the importance of the law *“If we believe in international law, it should be the solution to the problems in the world”*.

Pathos is the technique that simulates emotions. The Prime Minister tries to evoke a sense of empathy regarding his point of view towards Soleimani’s assassination and his support to Iraqis. He uses words such as *“friends”* and *“together”* in *“I have spoken extensively to our friends around the world including our friends in Baghdad, I think we are having a great deal of success in bringing together a European... down”*.

Ethos aims at persuading the audience by giving the speaker’s opinion towards a subject based on his experience. Ethos is obvious in *“I think that most reasonable people would accept that the United States has a right to protect its bases and its personnel, I will say that the UK will continue to work for de-escalation in the region”*.

ii. Figures of Speech

Metaphor is used by Corbyn in his utterance *“the United States have undoubtedly escalated the risk of dangerous conflict”*. In this metaphorical image, the source domain of the direction (up/escalation)

onto the abstract target concept of (the risk). This metaphor is used to indicate that the actions of the United States will increase the severity of the problems between the destabilized regions.

Overstatement is a figure of speech that emphasizes a point through exaggeration and is not meant to be taken literally. Adjectives, adverbs of degree and superlative forms are most common in overstatement. Overstatement is utilized by the Prime minister in “*most reasonable, over many years, the most brutal and barbaric regime in the world, extensively, very significant, we do everything we can, absolute fiction, a great deal, in absolutely no doubt, very surprised*”. It is also utilized by Corbyn in “*Surely, very dangerous situation, undoubtedly*”.

Situation (4)

The Text

Jeremy Corbyn

They have told me that they cannot afford the insurance on their homes, as costs have skyrocketed. Recent studies have shown that 20,000 homes are not protected by the Government’s insurance scheme and are also not protected by flood defences. That is 20,000 homes with no insurance will be in danger of being flooded imminently.

Just imagine what it is like to live in a home that is in danger of being flooded when you cannot get it insured and, if you own it, you cannot sell it or cannot move—you are totally stuck.

The Prime Minister

The right hon. Gentleman is perfectly right in the sense that there are particular problems to do with insurance, as anybody who has visited a flood-affected household will know. Flood Re, on the other hand, has provided cover for over 164,000 households since 2018-19.

Since last December’s events, we are now looking at what we can do to protect households that do not have proper insurance.

... to compensate themselves for the worst damage that flooding can do. That is cash we can put in thanks to the investment we have made in flood

defences, which, believe me, would be beyond the capacity of any Government led by the right hon. Member.

Jeremy Corbyn

Last week he had his head in the sand in a mansion in Kent. How can the country trust a Prime Minister, a part-time Prime Minister, who last night was schmoozing Tory party donors at a very expensive black-tie ball instead of getting out there and supporting the people who are suffering because of the floods?

The Prime Minister

The right hon. Gentleman asks what this Government have been doing in the past few days, so let me tell him. Not only have we been investing massively in flood defences and compensating those who have suffered from flooding, but we have been stopping the early release of terrorists; we have restored the nurses' bursary; we are beginning work on 40 new hospitals; and we are recruiting 20,000 more police officers. We can do that because we have a strong and dynamic economy, with employment at record highs, unemployment down to the lowest levels since the early '70s, wages going up and home ownership up.

(Web Source 4)

Text Analysis

i. Argumenatative Appeals

Corbyn resorts to sympathy in which he uses pathos *“just imagine what it is like to live in a home that is in danger of being flooded when you cannot get it insured and, if you own it, you cannot sell it or cannot move—you are totally stuck”* to show the importance of insurance for those who are vulnerable to flooding

To strengthen his argument, the Prime Minister makes use of ethos *“we have been stopping the early release of terrorists; we have restored the nurses' bursary; we are beginning work on 40 new hospitals; and we are recruiting 20,000 more police officers”*.

ii. Figures of Speech

To refer to the high costs of insurance, Corbyn uses a (MORE IS UP) metaphor “*costs have skyrocketed*” and HEAD IS DOWN metaphor “*he had his head in the sand*” to imply that the Prime Minister is refusing to think about the problem of the situation. He also uses a metaphor in which Country is personified as a human who can trust the Prime Minister “*How can a country trust a prime minister...*”.

The Prime Minister, on his turn, uses a LESS IS DOWN metaphor in “*unemployment down to the lowest levels*” and a MORE IS UP metaphor in “*wages going up and home ownership up*”.

Corbyn and the Prime Minister utilize the substitutional trope of overstatement. Corbyn, in this argument, overstated the way he talks about the victims of floods in which he uses adverbs of degree to show how bad their status is “*learned a lot, flooded imminently, totally stuck, a very expensive*”.

As regards The Prime Minister’s arguments, it includes overstatement in “*Perfectly right, investing massively, worst damage*”.

Corbyn uses an understatement in his argument “*beyond the capacity of any Government led by the right hon. Member*” as a substitutional technique.

4. Conclusions

The text analysis has led us to draw the following conclusions:

1. The model developed to analyze the data proved successful in meeting the aims of the current study.
2. Both figures, i.e. the Prime Minister and Jeremy Corbyn in British parliament utilize certain pragma-rhetorical strategies either to defend or support their standpoints.
3. Overstatement extends over the other figures of speech and argumentative appeals in British parliamentary discourse and makes the debates highly rhetorical as a result.

4. Pathos prevailed other argumentative appeals. This proves that arguers in British parliament resort to feelings and stimulation of the audience's emotions in making their arguments.
5. Pathos is not used alone, so it cannot be regarded as a central means by itself; rather, it is used to generate various logos and ethos.
6. Figures of speech, as shown by the equal occurrences mentioned above, have been used in a parallel manner. Accordingly, they are not being used as decorators, but rather, as a way to achieve another purpose that is of clarification and facilitation.

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