

A Pragma-Discourse Study of the CNN Article's "Omicron is Now the Dominant Strain of Coronavirus in the US, According to the CDC"

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Abstract:

The coronavirus pandemic has become the most common subject nowadays. It is the recent crisis that attacks the world. So, it is significant, when making a pragma-discourse study, to be concerned with the arguments that deal with such a topic. This study is dedicated to examine one of the CNN's articles on Omicron, the latest variant of Coronavirus. However, Eemeren's Pragma Dialectical Model has been applied to analyze a selected article on CNN, the American Channel, that covered Coronavirus Omicron Variant news and how the United States dealt with such a variant. As speech acts are vital in the process of analyzing such a text, the study investigates these acts to show how the arguer uses them to defend his standpoint and convince the audience. To do so, the argumentation structure is also determined. The study is concerned with CNN's article: Omicron is Now the Dominant Strain of Coronavirus in the US, According to the CDC.

Keywords: Omicron, Coronavirus, Argumentation, Pragma-Dialectical, Speech Acts, Argumentation Structure.

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دراسة خطاب براغماتية لمقالة قناة (سي ان ان) الامريكية بعنوان " اوميكرون سلالة كورونا المهيمنة في

امريكا بحسب مركز السيطرة على الامراض

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ملخص البحث:

تعد جائحة كورونا الموضوع الأبرز المتداول في الوقت الحاضر. كما انها تعتبر احدث كارثة تجتاح العالم بأسره ، من اجل ذلك فأن من البديهي عند اجراء دراسة خطاب براغماتية ان نتناول النصوص التي تناقش مثل هذا الموضوع لذلك تناقش الدراسة احدث متحور لكورونا والذي اطلق عليه اسم (اوميكرون). من اجل اجراء التحليل، استخدمت الدراسة نموذج أميرن (الجدلية البراغماتية) وتطبيقها على مقالة القناة الأمريكية (سي ان ان) المعنية بتطورات المتحور أوميكرون وكيف تعاملت الولايات المتحدة معه. و بما أن الافعال الكلامية عنصر أساسي في عملية تحليل النص، فأن الدراسة تناولت هذه الافعال الكلامية للإشارة الى استخدام المجادل لهذه الافعال بهدف الدفاع عن وجهة نظره وتبريرها ، كان لا بد من الخوض في البنية الجدلية للنص. تناولت الدراسة مقالة سي ان ان (اوميكرون سلالة كورونا المهيمنة في امريكا بحسب مركز السيطرة على الامراض).

الكلمات المفتاحية: أوميكرون، كورونا، الجدل، الجدلية البراغماتية، الافعال الكلامية، البنية الجدلية.

1. Introduction

The study is pragma-discourse and conducted to clarify both pragmatics and discourse analysis meaning. Pragmatics is the study of how people make sense of each other linguistically. Yule (1996: 3) states that "Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). It has, consequently, more to do with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances than what the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves. It is the study of speaker meaning". Regarding discourse analysis, it is a research method for studying written or spoken language in relation to its social context. It aims to understand how language is used in real-life situations. Discourse analysis not only studies language use 'beyond the sentence boundary' but also refers to analyzing naturally occurring language use, not invented examples. Broun and Yule (1983: 1) state that "the analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. The argumentation theory is applied in this study, specifically, Eemeren's pragma-dialectical approach.

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Above all, Argumentation Theory is the interdisciplinary study of how to reach conclusions from premises using logical reasoning. It encompasses civil debate, dialogue, conversation, and persuasion as arts and sciences. It investigates inference rules, logic rules, and procedural rules in both artificial and real-world settings. According to Frans H. van Eemeren, Argumentation is considered to be part of a regimented procedure for testing the standpoint at an issue in relation to critical reactions. (2010: 3). Moreover, The Pragma Dialectical Approach is developed by Frans van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst to study argumentation as a discourse activity, a complex speech act that occurs as part of interactional linguistic activities with specific communicative goals whereby "pragma" refers to the functional perspective of goals, and "dialectic" to the interactive component. Argumentative discourse is primarily directed at the reasonable resolution of a difference of opinion.

Furthermore, the study aims to study the argumentative structure in one of CNN's media coverage of the Omicron variant which is the online article: "Omicron is Now the Dominant Strain of Coronavirus in the US, According to the CDC". Finding out speech acts that occur in the article is very helpful in the process of analyzing the article.

It is worth mentioning that the study includes the following hypotheses:

1. Argumentative structure in the article of the CNN's channel on the Omicron variant is used for different functions.
2. Eemeren Pragma- Dialectical Model of argumentation is very applicable to the CNN's media coverage on dealing with the new virus.
3. Speech acts are not the same in all argumentations, they depend on the person, his real intention, and the nature of the topic.
4. The number of argumentations varies from one speech to another.

2. The Argumentation Theory

Argumentation is an important part of communication, and it has been around in our society for centuries. This theory arose from foundationalism, a philosophical theory of justification or reasoning. However, argumentation was based on oration and logic. Scholars quickly rejected and questioned Aristotle's theories, they discovered a more general premise for argument than formal philosophical systems. Several scientists have attempted to develop techniques used by the people to gain support for their views and opinions between 1960 and 1970. Similarly, many scientists and authors have developed argumentation in many ways. Argument is a method to increase the reliability of communication. Here, a speaker gives a validation to receive the conclusion. But the listener can check this validation to accept the given conclusion. Argumentation is also an activity of reason. When

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people argue, they place their thinking in the domain of reason. They use reasoning to assess and accept the conclusion. Communication is perfected with proper reasoning and also a true conclusion is supported by fair arguments. So, the speaker could convince the listeners and the listeners could gain a reliable piece of information. Thus, the communication process will be successful.

Three main approaches have been developed to analyze argumentation, they are Toulmin's approach, Eemeren's Approach, and Walton's Approach. Toulmin's approach aims at analyzing instances of debate in everyday life. It concedes that the tools of deductive logic alone are not sufficient to discuss argumentation in all its complexity and pragmatic import. According to the Toulmin method, argumentation is broken down into six arguments: claim, grounds, warrant, qualifier, rebuttal, and backing. Accordingly, every argument begins with three fundamental parts: the claim, the grounds, and the warrant. According to Eemeren & Houtlosser (2000:2), Toulmin's Approach aims at getting an adequate grasp of argumentative discourse by specifying modes of arguing and indicating when they are acceptable.

The most influential approach is the pragma-dialectics tradition developed by Frans van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst. Pragma-dialectics studies argumentation as a discourse activity, a complex speech act that occurs as part of interactional linguistic activities with specific communicative goals whereby "pragma" refers to the functional perspective of goals, and "dialectic" to the interactive component. Argumentative discourse is primarily directed at the reasonable resolution of a difference of opinion. "In this model, argumentative discourse is conceived as aimed at resolving a difference of opinion by putting the acceptability of the 'standpoints' at issue to the test by applying criteria that are both problem-valid as well as intersubjectively valid". (Eemeren & Houtlosser. 2003:387)

Another leading author in argumentation theory is Douglas Walton, who pioneered the argument schemes approach to argumentation that borrows tools from formal logic and expands them in order to deal with more arguments larger than those expressed by classical logical systems. "Argumentation schemes are instruments for argumentation, involving the activity of critically evaluating a viewpoint and the reasons given in its support. For this reason, every scheme has a corresponding set of critical questions, representing its defeasibility conditions and the possible weak points that the interlocutor can use to question the argument and evaluate its strength" (Walton, et al 2008: 517).

3. The Pragma- Dialectical Approach and Argumentation Structure

As illustrated above, the pragma-dialectical approach is an approach to argumentation that incorporates dialectics (the study of critical exchanges) with pragmatics (the study of language use in actual communication). "Pragma dialectics thus combines a dialectical view of argumentative reasonableness with a pragmatic view of the verbal moves made in argumentative discourse". (Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2006:1).

The pragma-dialectical approach is based on a methodical philosophical system that uses critical analysis and reasoned debate to settle disagreements around its ideal. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst create a theory of argument as a particular form of complicated speech act made up of several smaller speech acts divided into four stages in order to give a foundation upon which this kind of debate might be built (confrontation, opening, argumentation, and concluding). They propose an integrated "communication principle" with a set of communication rules that outlines the ways in which a discussion might most effectively be conducted, drawing on Grice's (1975) Cooperative principle and Searle's (1975) speech acts. Furthermore, the pragma-dialectical method contends that adherence to its guidelines will lead participants toward a fair resolution of a disagreement, if not bring it to an end entirely. Eemeren (2017:329) assumes that in the pragma-dialectical approach we have tried to develop all the analytical tools necessary for carrying out such a systematic reconstruction, such as categorizations of standpoints, differences of opinion, starting points, argument schemes, and argumentation structures.

However, proponents of the pragmatic-dialectical method do not always assume that discussants would follow the guidelines they provide in a particular argumentation setting. Instead, the pragma-dialectical model is intended to have both heuristics worth in as much as it offers a foundation for the creation of solid arguments and critical merit in so far as it offers a foundation for the analysis of an argument.

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: p.59) identify four stages of argumentative dialogue. These stages can be regarded as an argument protocol. The stages are as follows:

1. Confrontation stage: Presentation of the difference of opinion, such as a debate question or a political disagreement.
2. Opening stage: Agreement on material and procedural starting points, the mutually acceptable common ground of facts and beliefs, and the rules to be followed during the discussion (such as how evidence is to be presented, and determination of closing conditions).

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3. Argumentation stage: Presentation of reasons for and against the standpoint(s) at issue, through the application of logical and common-sense principles according to the agreed-upon rules.

4. Concluding stage: Determining whether the standpoint has withstood reasonable criticism, and accepting it is justified. This occurs when the termination conditions are met (among these could be, for example, a time limitation or the determination of an arbiter.)

A thorough list of regulations that must be followed at each stage of the procedure is provided by Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: p.62). Additionally, in the description of argumentation provided by these writers, there are designated protagonist and antagonist roles in the protocol that are decided by the circumstances that need argument.

4. A Pragma- Discourse Study of the CNN's Article "Omicron is Now the Dominant Strain of Coronavirus in the US, According to the CDC"

This article is related to CNN. It is one of many articles that discusses the Omicron variant. It is written by Travis Caldwell and Claire Colbert (December 21, 2021). Travis Caldwell is a writer and weekend supervisor on CNN's Digital's national desk, where he covers breaking news. Claire Colbert is a producer and writer for CNN. The following argumentation consists of five arguments. They discuss how the new virus is serious and dangerous, and that the Americans should be vaccinated. This study depends on the CNN's article "Omicron is Now the Dominant Strain of Coronavirus in the US, According to the CDC" so as to make the analysis as the following:

Argument 1:

A. Confrontation Stage

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1. The Omicron Covid-19 variant is now the most dominant strain in the US, accounting for over 73% of new coronavirus cases less than three weeks after the first was reported, according to estimates posted Monday by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (assertive)
2. It's been just 20 days since the US detected its first case of Omicron. (assertive)

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B. Opening Stage

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1. For the week ending December 18, Omicron accounted for 73.2% of cases, with Delta making up an additional 26.6%. (declarative)
2. The week prior, ending December 11, Omicron was estimated at just 12.6% of circulating virus, (declarative)
3. and in the first week of December, Omicron accounted for about 1% of new cases. (declarative)
4. Omicron is even more prevalent in certain parts of the country — making up over 95% of circulating virus in parts of the Northwest and Southeast, the data shows. (assertive)
5. As of Monday, 48 US states have reported cases of Omicron, according to public statements from hospital systems and state officials, as well as Puerto Rico and Washington, DC. (assertive)
6. The only states that have not reported cases of Omicron are Oklahoma and South Dakota. (assertive)

C. Argumentation Stage

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1. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious diseases expert, warned on CNN's "State of the Union" Sunday that Omicron was "going to take over" soon due to its highly contagious nature. (commissive)
2. The World Health Organization says Omicron cases are doubling every 1.5 to 3 days. (assertive)
3. Meanwhile, the death of a Texas man in his 50s is related to Omicron, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo announced Monday. This is the first known, confirmed Omicron-related death in the US. (declarative)
4. According to a release from Harris County Public Health, the man "was unvaccinated and had been infected with COVID-19 previously. (assertive)
5. The individual was at higher risk of severe complications from COVID-19 due to his unvaccinated status and had underlying health conditions." (assertive)

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D. Concluding Stage

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Scientists are still waiting on data on the severity of Omicron in the US compared to other variants. But it is expected to put added strain the health care system and healthcare workers especially. (assertive)

Argument 2:

A. Confrontation Stage

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Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy and the University of Minnesota, told CNN's Kate Bolduan on Monday that even if Omicron proves to be less severe, "We are going to see 20%, 30% of health care workers getting infected, who will then be off of work in a health care system right now that is already stretched to the point of breaking." (declarative& assertive)

B. Opening Stage

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1. Health experts push vaccines and boosters With the Delta and Omicron coronavirus variants spreading across the nation as the new year approaches, (assertive)

2. health experts are urging Americans to get vaccinated or boosted to protect themselves and others before they face greater chances of infection. (commissive)

C. Argumentation Stage

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1. Airport travel before Christmas is up by nearly double from a year ago, according to Transportation Security Administration data, with more than 2 million people screened each day from December 16-18. (commissive)

2. And the indoor gatherings among friends and family could ultimately infect more who are at higher risk for Covid-19 complications. (declarative)

3. As the virus spreads, more cities are adding restrictions, including New York and Washington, DC. (assertive)

4. Mayor Muriel Bowser announced an indoor mask mandate for the District will be reinstated starting at 6 a.m. Tuesday through January 31. (declarative)

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5. The announcement comes as DC has been experiencing its highest daily coronavirus case count since the start of the pandemic. (declarative)

6. Bowser also said she plans to reinstate the district's state of emergency and announced a six-part plan to limit the spread of the coronavirus. (declarative)

7. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said Monday the city is testing "more people than ever" for Covid-19 and city officials are working with federal officials and the private sector to get more testing supplies. (declarative)

8. Officials are also working to get more in-home test kits to offer to people as an alternative testing option. (declarative)

9. De Blasio also spoke about the annual New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square. Currently, the outdoor event is still scheduled to go on and all guests must be fully vaccinated. (commissive)

D. Concluding Stage

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But de Blasio said city officials are reviewing plans for the event in light of Omicron and said any changes would be announced before Christmas. (assertive)

Argument 3:

A. Confrontation Stage

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1. Experts discuss what's next (assertive)

2. Dr. Francis Collins, the outgoing director of the National Institutes of Health, told CNN's Anderson Cooper on Friday that the Omicron variant could result in as many as a million new cases a day. (assertive)

3. Collins suggested the impact of that level of spread on an already stressed health care system remains uncertain. (directive)

B. Opening Stage

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"The big question is, are those million cases going to be sick enough to need health care and especially hospitalization?" Collins said on CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday, his last day as NIH director. (directive)

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C. Argumentation Stage

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1. Americans are less willing to take precautions as the coronavirus wears on (assertive)
2. Covid-19 hospitalizations trended upward over the past month as medical facilities in some parts of the country have been inundated with patients infected with the Delta variant. (declarative)
3. Now, the presence of Omicron which scientists believe to be more contagious though most cases so far appear to be mild -- may push some strained health care systems to the brink. (assertive)
4. "It is quite likely that we are going to see in some sections of the country, a significant stress on the hospital system as well as on the health care workers who are getting exhausted by all of this," (assertive)
5. Dr. Anthony Fauci told ABC's "This Week" on Sunday, noting that a more transmissible form of Covid-19, such as Omicron, will have a greater impact on the tens of millions of Americans who have not been vaccinated. (assertive)
6. Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, has said traveling and gathering for Christmas and New Year's can be done safely among those who are inoculated, (declarative)
7. and getting booster shots into the arms of vaccinated Americans remains paramount to increase antibody response. (commissive)

D. Concluding Stage

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"If we're going to deal with Omicron successfully, vaccinated people need to get boosted," Fauci told NBC on Sunday. (commissive)

Argument 4:

A. Confrontation Stage

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1. Recent data are demonstrating the potential dangers of remaining unvaccinated, (assertive)

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2. including a 10-times greater risk of testing positive and 20-times greater risk of dying from Covid-19 than those vaccinated and boosted, according to US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data through October. (declarative)

3. Omicron 'is going to take over' this winter, and Fauci says Americans should brace for a 'tough few weeks to months' (assertive)

B. Opening stage

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1. President Joe Biden was set to meet with his Covid-19 response team Monday. (assertive)

2. He will address the nation Tuesday regarding the latest developments with Omicron (declarative)

3. and to issue another “stark warning of what the winter will look like for Americans who choose to remain unvaccinated,” the White House said. (declarative)

C. Argumentation Stage

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1. Omicron will lead to a spike in cases in the upcoming weeks, (assertive)

2. but those who are vaccinated and unvaccinated will have a “stark difference” in experience, US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy told anchor Tony Dokoupil on “CBS Mornings” Monday. (assertive)

3. “In the coming weeks, Tony, we are going to see a spike in cases. And that’s because Omicron is incredibly transmissible, and you know, we have to be prepared for that,” (declarative)

4. Murthy said. “But there will be a stark difference between the experience of those who are vaccinated and boosted versus those who are unvaccinated.” (declarative)

D. Concluding Stage

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People who have maximum protection from vaccines and boosters either won’t get an infection, or if they do, it will most likely be mild, said Murthy. (commissive)

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Argument 5:

A. Confrontation Stage

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States responding to outbreaks (assertive)

B. Opening Stage

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With Omicron reported in nearly every US state and Delta still present, cases in some areas are rising. (assertive)

C. Argumentation stage

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1. New York -- which was among the hardest-hit states at the beginning of the pandemic -- set a new record for single-day Covid-19 cases for a fourth consecutive day Monday, (assertive)

2. reporting a threefold increase in number of Covid-19 cases in one week, according to Gov. Kathy Hochul.(declarative)

3. Long lines for Covid-19 testing as Omicron variant looms (assertive)

4. There's generally about a three-week lag behind Covid-19 case trends and hospitalizations, according to a CNN Health analysis, but officials are hopeful the state will be in a more favorable position than last year. (commissive)

5. "This is not March of 2020, we are not defenseless," Hochul said. (assertive)

6. "We have the tools to protect ourselves and the vulnerable loves ones in our families: (assertive)

7. Get vaccinated, get the booster and wear a mask when indoors or in large gatherings. (directive)

8. Don't take a chance during the winter surge." (directive)

9. New Jersey just hit its highest daily positive case count in nearly a year with 6,533 positive PCR tests, according to Gov. Phil Murphy and Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli; the statewide percent-positivity rate is 12.11%. (assertive)

10. Still, the governor said hospitalizations are not growing at the same rate as cases. (assertive)

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11. The states reported Monday that there were 1,902 people currently hospitalized with Covid-19, far fewer than the peak in April 2020 when there were 8,270 reported Covid hospitalizations. (assertive)
12. Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont said he would be "a little hesitant" about visiting New York or New Jersey right now given his state's lower caseload. (declarative)
13. But he said he isn't looking to enforce any quarantines on those traveling to and from Covid-19 hotspots. (declarative)
14. "I can't enforce quarantine from anything. I'm not going try and do that," Lamont said. (declarative)
15. New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu told CNN's "State of the Union" Sunday that the state has been preparing for a winter surge (assertive)
16. and hopes to combat Covid-19 spread with measures including state-issued at-home testing and flexing beds within hospitals. (directive)
17. Bringing in health care workers from other states has been key as well, Sununu said. (assertive)
18. Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan predicted that the state will see "probably the worst surge we've seen in our hospitals throughout the entire crisis" (declarative)
19. over the next three to five weeks, telling "Fox News Sunday" that officials are "trying to do everything we can to get the last 9.2% of our population vaccinated." (commissive)

D. Concluding stage

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1. On Monday, Hogan announced in a tweet that he has tested positive for Covid-19. (declarative)
2. Hogan, who is vaccinated and has received a booster shot, said the test was part of his regular testing routine. (assertive)
3. The Republican governor's announcement follows a string of lawmakers who have been fully vaccinated and boosted and tested positive for Covid-19. (assertive)

Investigating **argument 1**, the arguers try to defend their standpoint concerning Omicron by giving truthful information and statistics to support their speech. They also mention the speech of some officials and decision-makers such as Biden, Fauci, Osterholm, and others. The main intention is to convince people that the new variant is not less important than the other previous variants. If we know that CNN is the

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President's channel (Democratic Party Channel), we will readily realize that this procedure is one of the channel's policies.

In the confrontation stage, the arguers use assertive speech acts twice to express their standpoint. They give ratios and numbers of Omicron infected cases depending on the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In the opening stage, three declarative speech acts are used, as well as three assertive ones. The two arguers here want to show how Omicron cases are rising and how they are more than Delta cases. In order to reinforce their point of view, they mention the declarations of state officials and hospital statistics.

Concerning the argumentation stage, we have commissive, assertive, and declarative speech acts. The arguer here, Dr. Fauci, uses commissive speeches to warn people of the new variant. In addition, four assertive utterances are used to describe the situation in the United States. The declarative acts are used twice.

Besides, the concluding stage contains an assertive speech act to defend the speakers' point of view.

To begin with **argument 2**, we can notice that the arguers insist on defending their viewpoint by mentioning further numbers and statistics concerning Omicron since it is a new variant and people know nothing about it. They keep making interviews with scientists, doctors, and officials.

Concerning the confrontation stage, an assertive speech act is used in order to describe how the new variant is ruthless in that it may result in an economic crisis if the workers are infected with it and become out of work. The speakers employ two speech acts, assertive and commissive, in the opening act to implore the American people to get the shot and the booster so they can protect themselves.

As for the argumentation stage, the arguers discuss the case of celebrating the new year and traveling abroad. So, the declarative speech act is used six times when they publish the instructions of the government relating to such celebrations and traveling. Furthermore, two commissive speech acts and an assertive one is used. The concluding stage reveals an assertive speech act to improve the above.

In **argument three**, the same thing occurs. The arguers want to convince the audience by mentioning more and more officials' declarations. So, it is the political argument that the arguer wants the audience to do something by employing his power. Eemeren states that "Political argumentation is about gaining and by using power, about collective decision-making for the public good, about mobilizing individuals in pursuit of common goals, about giving effective voice to shared hopes and fears. These are what the pragma-dialecticians would call its activity types" (Eemeren, 2009:115).

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The confrontation stage includes two assertive utterances as well as a directive one. When the arguer, Dr. Francis Collins, declares that (the omicron variant could result in many as million cases a day) we can realize that he is worried about the situation and that the updates they have about this virus are not sufficient.

In the opening stage, Dr. Collins appears very faithful as it is the last day for him as the director of NIH when he asks his "big question" as he calls it, about hospitalization and healthcare.

Moreover, the argumentation stage comprises four assertive utterances that describe Omicron and its effect on the United States. The other kind of speech act is declarative which is applied twice to give certain steps for the readers to follow. These steps are to get the vaccine and the booster shots. The arguer, Dr. Fauci, uses the commissive speech act to give trusted information about the Omicron danger.

The concluding stage only consists of a commissive utterance used by the arguer to strengthen his standpoint.

In **argument 4**, the arguers again use documented input to convince people to take the vaccine and protect themselves from the new variant.

In the confrontation stage, the disputants begin their arguments by making claims about the vaccine and the risk to the unvaccinated. This is the rationale for the assertive speech act. Additionally, the speakers employ a declarative speech act to state specific viral statistics. The data used in this report comes from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The arguers want to convince the reader to get the shot.

Similarly, in the opening stage, the arguers urge people about the danger of Omicron. They use an assertive speech act when they mention meeting Biden with his Covid-19 team. They also use two declarative utterances to declare that the president will address the American people to give them the latest news about the developing variant.

When discussing the statements made by US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, further information is provided at the argumentation stage by employing assertive speech acts. Additionally, the authors employ declarative speech acts to suggest that the reader should take this infection seriously.

The concluding stage contains only one commissive utterance. This is to ensure that vaccinated people will be safe, and even if they get infected, they will not be in danger.

The last argument, **argument 5**, discusses how the States of America deal with Omicron, and what procedures they should take to face it. It is longer than the other arguments since it contains more details about Omicron and the health situation in some states.

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The confrontation stage is made of a headline that draws the attention of the reader and makes him eager to read the rest of the text. An assertive utterance is used to report the standpoint of the arguer. In addition, in the opening stage, the arguers used assertive speech acts to support their viewpoint.

In fact, the argumentation stage is rich with precise information obtained from trustful authorities. This reinforces the standpoint of the arguers. An assertive utterance is used to state that New York has a big number of Omicron infections. A declarative speech act is used when the arguers mention the speech of Gov. Kathy Hochul when speaking about the increasing numbers of Coronavirus. A commissive speech act is used as the speaker wants to inform the reader about the official's wishes concerning Omicron. Assertive speech acts are then used twice to encourage people to take the vaccine and to prove that the government is able to face Omicron with the vaccine. Furthermore, three assertive utterances are used when speaking about New Jersey by giving a certain number of positive cases, rates of the infected people, and stating that the number is not huge as it was in the previous months. Then, Gov. Ned Lamont declared that he preferred not to visit New York and New Jersey at the present time. Despite that, any quarantine is not to be required. We can see that the American administration is making an effort to reassure its citizens and help them cope with the new variety fearlessly. Since it proclaimed there would be no further quarantines, as Lamont claims, the administration appears to be in charge of the issue. Gov. Chris Sununu uses directive as well as assertive speech acts when discussing the government's response to the pandemic. Additionally, Governor Larry Hogan makes explicit recommendations on how to stop the "worst spike" of the virus using declarative and compliant language.

The concluding stage reveals the usage of declarative and assertive speech acts to express that Hogan himself is infected with Covid-19 while he has received the two doses of the vaccine. This indicates that vaccination does not prevent infection, but reduces the syndrome of the disease.

The following table involves the speech acts that are used in the CNN's article "Omicron is now the dominant strain of coronavirus in the US, according to the CDC".

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Table 1: Speech Acts Distribution in Argumentation Stages of CNN Article "Omicron is Now the Dominant Strain of Coronavirus in the US, According to the CDC"

Stages	Argument 1	Argument 2	Argument 3	Argument 4	Argument 5
Confrontation Stage	Assertive, assertive	Declarative, assertive	Assertive, assertive, directive,	Assertive, declarative, assertive	assertive
Opening Stage	Declarative, declarative, assertive, assertive, assertive	Assertive, commissive	directive	Assertive, declarative, declarative,	assertive
Argumentation Stage	Commissive, assertive, assertive, declarative, declarative, assertive, assertive	Commissive, declarative, assertive, declarative, declarative, declarative, declarative, commissive	Assertive, declarative, assertive, assertive, declarative, commissive	Assertive, assertive, declarative, declarative	Assertive, declarative, assertive, commissive, assertive, assertive, directive, assertive, assertive, declarative, declarative, assertive, directive, assertive, declarative, commissive
Concluding Stage	assertive	Assertive	commissive	commissive	Declarative, assertive

Next is table 2 which illustrates the numbers and the kinds of speech acts that are used in the arguments of the CNN's article "Omicron is Now the Dominant Strain of Coronavirus in the US, According to the CDC":

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Table 2: Number and Kinds of Speech Acts in The CNN Article “Omicron is Now the Dominant Strain of Coronavirus in the US, According to the CDC”

Speech Acts	Argument 1	Argument 2	Argument 3	Argument 4	Argument 5	Total
Assertive	10	4	6	4	12	36
Directive	0	0	2	0	2	4
Commissive	1	3	2	1	2	9
Expressive	0	0	0	0	0	0
Declarative	5	7	2	5	6	25
Total	16	14	12	10	22	74

First of all, both tables 1 and 2 reveal that the most used speech act is assertive which is used 36 times in all five arguments. It is employed more in the fifth argument which is used 12 times. This is because the arguers want to express, defend, trace his standpoint, and convince the reader with it. In addition, the declarative speech act comes next. It is used 25 times since to give orders, commands, and instructions. The arguers make use of declarative utterances when speaking about vaccines and boosters and discuss the importance of such methods to avoid infection. It is worth mentioning that expressive use is absent in all five arguments.

Expressive refers to the speaker's attitude toward a certain circumstance. It is used to convey a person's mental or emotional condition, and as the essay is entirely about telling readers to take precautions to avoid contracting the Omicron virus and outlining ways to manage it, the expressive speaking act is meaningless in this context.

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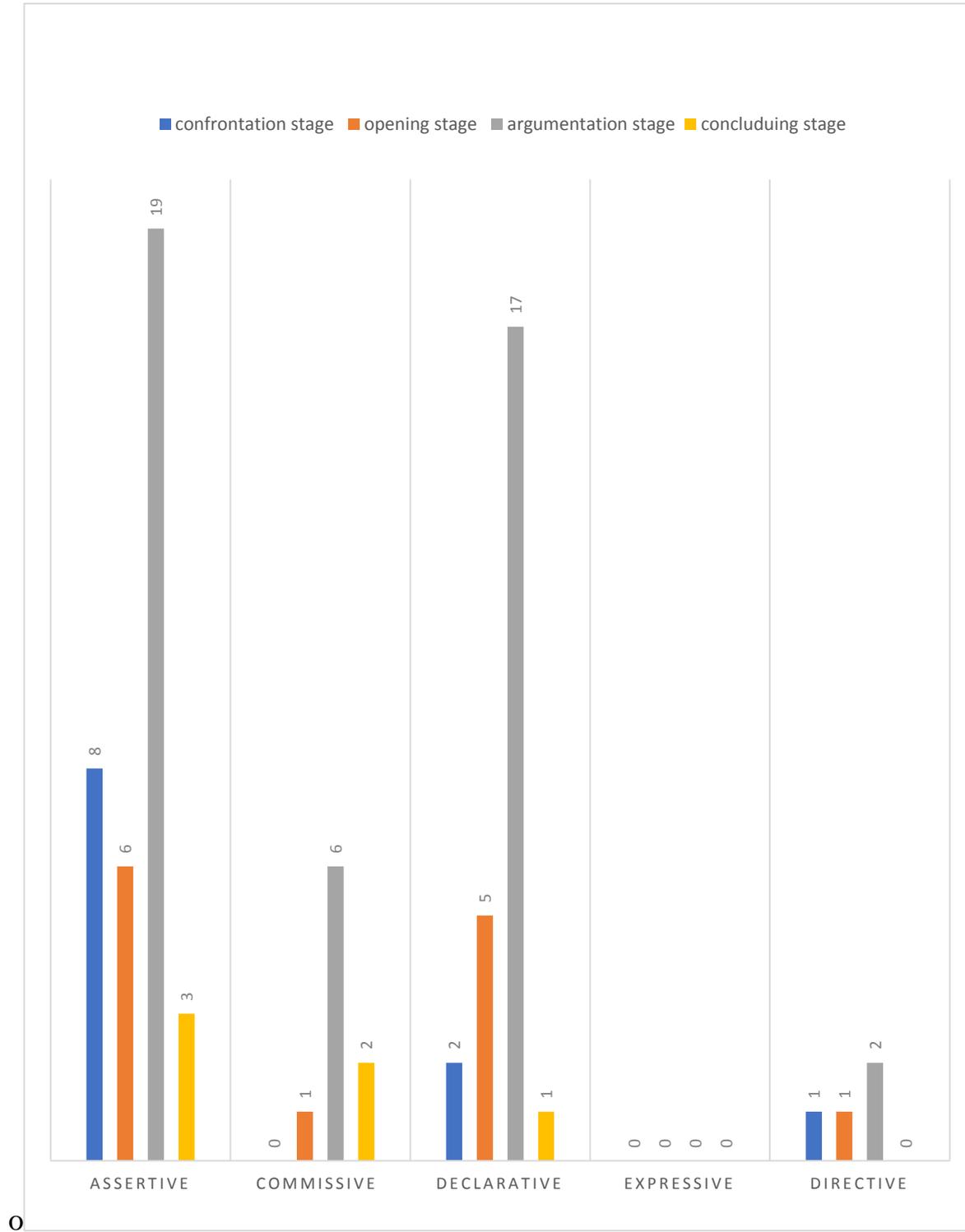


Chart 1: The Ratio of Speech Acts in the Argumentation Structure of CNN article "Omicron is Now the Dominant Strain of Coronavirus in the US, According to the CDC"

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The Chart shows excessive assertiveness, unlike the expressive one which the arguers prefer not to use at all. The directive speech act is used 4 times, twice in argument 3 and twice in argument 5. The commissive speech act is employed in all arguments. The speakers used it once in argument 1 in the argumentation stage, 3 times in argument 2 once in the opening stage, and twice in the argumentation stage, twice in argument 3 both in the argumentation stage and the concluding stage, then in argument 4, it is used once in the concluding stage, and finally twice in the fifth argument both in the argumentation stage. As for the declarative one, it is used 25 times. In argument 1 the writers used 5 declarative speech acts, 3 in the opening stage, and 2 in the argumentation stage. Argument 2 consists of 7 declarative usages, 1 in the confrontation stage, and 6 in the argumentation stage. Argument 3 contains two declarations both in the argumentation stage. In argument 4, declarative usages take place 5 times, 1 in the confrontation stage, 2 in the opening stage, and a similar number in the argumentation stage.

5. Conclusion

Analyzing CNN's text "Omicron is Now the Dominant Strain of Coronavirus in the US, according to the CDC" shows that the pragma-dialectical approach for argumentation is fruitful in determining the structure of argumentation by dividing it into stages to help analyze it. The confrontation stage concentrates on the speaker's points that he finds easiest to deal with. The opening stage is the most advantageous starting point. In the argumentation stage, the arguer can choose strategic lines of defense or attack. The concluding stage aims at achieving the result of the discourse. Moreover, investigating the types of speech acts is essential in determining the stages of the argument.

In addition, the analysis of the CNN's article using the pragma-dialectical approach helps to identify the argumentation structure, as well as the speech acts that the arguers used to support and defend his standpoint, then convince the receiver with it. The study concludes that the text is a political one by which the arguers want to defend their standpoint convince people to take the Corona vaccine to avoid infection so as to save their lives. This is apparently what the arguers want the American people to believe, but essentially, the aim is to protect the American economy and resume the US commercial transactions.

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