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وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
جامعة الأنبار



مجلة جامعة الأنبار للغات والآداب

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المحتويات

الصفحة	اسم الباحث أو الباحثين	عنوان البحث	ت
1-17	فاطمة مهدي صالح الجنابي أ.د. حسين كياني	الزمن السردي في قصص لوى حمزة عباس القصيرة مجموعة إغماض العينين أنموذجا	1.
18-35	Taisir Abdulhafed Abdulrahman	Creativity of Compound Adjectives in Shakespeare's Hamlet: A Cognitive Grammar Approach	2.
36-45	Asst. Lect. Rola Fawwaz Hammad Al- Faragy	Women's Voice Between Suppression and A Discourse Analysis of Female :Resistance Characters in Arther Miller's The Crucible	3.
46-64	م. م. وريما ناجي عبد الله	أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين المتبي ونالي الشهري - دراسة مقارنة في ضوء المدرسة الأمريكية - للأدب المقارن	4.
65-86	<i>Omar A. Khalil Dr. Ammar A. Al Abdely</i>	Pragmatic Analysis of Refusals in Arabic and English: Strategies and Sociocultural Influences	5.
87-104	<i>Asmaa Khalaf Mohaisen Asst.Prof. Ramia Fu'ad Abdulazeez</i>	A Pragmatic Analysis of Anti-Drug Awareness Posters	6.

A Pragmatic Analysis of Anti-Drug Awareness Posters

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ABSTRACT:

To raise awareness against drug abuse requires effective messages to guide interpretation and behaviour. The current study examines how pragmatic strategies are employed in anti-drug awareness posters. The aim is to communicate implicit meanings and encourage behavioural change. The analysis develops an eclectic model. The developed model is built on Grice's (1975) theory of conversational implicature and Yule's (1996) presupposition frameworks. Accordingly, five authentic English anti-drug awareness posters were purposefully selected from the Pinterest platform. It revolves around three main questions: (a) what types of posters can be identified, and how do they connote meaning? (b) what conversational implicature is generated to empower the intended meaning, and (c) which type of presupposition is most commonly used in the utterances found in the dataset.

The findings show that utterances used in anti-drug posters mainly depend on persuasive or emotional appeals and convey meanings with either positive or negative connotations. Conversational Implicatures function as specific inferences in context, while generalised ones appear in negatively connotated utterances. Existential and lexical presuppositions are frequent, embedding implicit assumptions about drugs as harmful and life-threatening. These strategies enhance the effectiveness of the messages and emphasise the importance of adopting a pragmatic approach to analysing public awareness campaigns. The study recommends expanding to larger datasets and conducting comparative research to enhance its applicability across different contexts and increase its generalizability.

Keywords: anti-drug awareness, conversational implicature , informative, persuasive, posters

تحليل تداولي لملصقات التوعية بمكافحة المخدرات

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المستخلص

إنَّ تعزيز الوعي بمخاطر تعاطي المخدرات يتطلب رسائل قادرة على التأثير في عملية التفسير والسلوك على نحو فعال. تتناول هذه الدراسة كيفية توظيف الاستراتيجيات التداولية في ملصقات التوعية بمكافحة المخدرات بهدف إيصال المعاني الضمنية وتشجيع التغيير السلوكى. تعتمد الدراسة نموذجاً انتقائياً مستنداً إلى نظرية غرايس (1975) في التضمين

الحواري، ومقاربة يول (1996) للافتراض المسبق. وبناءً على ذلك، تم اختيار خمس ملصقات توعوية أصلية باللغة الإنجليزية من منصة "بيتنريست" لغرض التحليل النوعي. وتدور الدراسة حول ثلاثة أسئلة رئيسة: (أ) ما أنواع الملصقات التي يمكن تحديدها، وكيف تُعبّر عن المعنى؟ (ب) ما أنواع التضمينات الحوارية المستخدمة لدعم إيصال الرسالة؟ (ج) ما نوع الافتراض المسبق الأكثر شيوعاً في الملصقات المختارة؟

أظهرت النتائج أن العبارات المستخدمة في حملات مكافحة المخدرات تعتمد أساساً على النداءات الإقناعية أو العاطفية ذات الدلالات الإيجابية أو السلبية. وتعمل التضمينات الحوارية الخاصة بوصفها استنتاجات سياقية محددة، في حين تظهر التضمينات العامة في العبارات ذات الدلالات السلبية. كما تبيّن أن الافتراضات المسبقة الوجوبية والمعجمية تتكرر بكثرة، إذ تدمج افتراضات ضمنية حول كون المخدرات مواد ضارة ومهّدة للحياة. تُعزّز هذه الاستراتيجيات قوة الرسائل وتؤكّد أهمية اعتماد المنهج التداولي في تحليل حملات التوعية العامة. وتوصي الدراسة بتوسيع العينة لتشمل مجموعات بيانات أكبر وإجراء بحوث مقارنة لتعزيز قابلية تطبيق النتائج في سياقات مختلفة وزيادة إمكانية تعميمها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوعي بمخاطر المخدرات، التضمين الحواري، الافتراض المسبق، الإقناع، الملصقات.

1. Introduction

Generally speaking, awareness is not a linguistic concept in the first place. It is a psychological and cognitive concept that is related to mental state. The APA Dictionary of Psychology introduces the concept of awareness as a perception or knowledge of something. However, this is not how this research will dig deep into this concept; its main aim is to present it from a linguistic perspective, as far as anti-drug awareness is concerned.

Awareness is going to be operationally defined as any utterance whose main aim is to educate people on the harmful effects of some specific phenomena, for example, addiction, consuming social media and domestic violence, etc. The kind of awareness that this paper is going to shed light on is that of posters which educate people on how to avoid becoming drug addicts.

Anti-drug posters in social environments function as powerful tools designed to raise awareness of the dangers of drug abuse and to promote preventive messages. By targeting a broad audience, particularly young people, these posters aim to deliver immediate and impactful messages. That is the point of departure of this paper.

Studies on anti-drug awareness show a significant gap. This gap appears in how these messages are communicated. Many studies focus on psychological, social, or design elements. A very few studies examine posters from a practical standpoint. Particularly, those that communicate implicit meanings. Pragmatic strategies, such as conversational implicature and presupposition. These pragmatic strategies affect how messages are inferred, and are often overlooked. In addition, most studies focus on official materials and overlook posters shared on platforms such as Pinterest. These posters reach a broad audience but have not been studied extensively. As a result, there is a lack of a unified analytical model that combines different hidden meanings. There is no systematic classification of poster types based on their communicative purpose, emotional impact, or connotations. This confirms a need for more detailed and practical research on anti-drug awareness posters.

Awareness studies on anti-drugs have extensively concentrated on psychological, sociological, or design elements, while pragmatic and contextual analyses remain unexplored. For example, Jaafar (2025) examined social media discourse on drug addiction from a corpus-linguistic perspective, focusing on lexical patterns rather than inferential

meaning. Similarly, Winasih, Cahyono, and Prayogo (2019) investigated e-poster design in language learning contexts but did not analyse pragmatic strategies. More recent studies, such as Al-Subhi (2025) and Mesinioti (2025), have explored multimodal discourse in health communication, yet they still prioritise visual composition and metadiscourse over pragmatic interpretation. Therefore, there is a clear research gap to examine how pragmatic strategies, such as conversational implicature and presupposition, shape the implicit meaning of anti-drug awareness posters. Addressing this gap can contribute to a more comprehensive investigation of how linguistic and contextual factors influence public attitude and behavioural change.

The present study is organised to answer the following questions:

1. What types of anti-drug posters can be identified, and in what way do they connote meaning?
2. What types of conversational implicatures are used to convey anti-drug awareness messages?
- 3-What types of presuppositions trigger assumptions in the receivers' minds?

To answer these questions, an eclectic model has been developed that focuses on the pragmatic strategies typically employed in anti-drug awareness posters. In the end, conclusions and recommendations have been provided to promote further research in this area.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Anti-Drug Awareness

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) defines awareness of anti-drugs as a deliberate procedure of informing and educating individuals, especially youth , about the risks and the negative consequences of drug abuse. Its primary objective is to prevent or delay the initiation of drug use or to minimise harm associated with substance consumption (UNODC, 2023). In the present study, however, awareness will not be treated as a process since the type of data intended for analysis does not support such a definition. Instead, awareness is operationally defined from a pragmatic perspective as an utterance primarily meant to educate people about harmful phenomena, such as harassment, violence, and addiction.

Awareness campaigns, especially those disseminated through posters, employ linguistic strategies to shape public perception and promote preventive actions (Gold,1980; Smart,1980). Posters serve as social and public health tools that spread knowledge about risks while fostering protective attitudes (UNODC, n.d.). From a linguistic standpoint, these campaigns go beyond merely transmitting information. They constitute complex communicative acts that combine persuasive, informative, and emotive language to engage audiences (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 2006).

In a social context, Posters are recognised as a powerful tool for communicating information. Posters encourage audiences to generate new ideas and activate prior knowledge. (Winasih, Cahyono, & Prayogo, 2019). The ability to combine language and visuals makes them valuable in awareness campaigns. The immediacy of comprehension and emotional resonance are vital. Fairclough's and van Dijk's critical discourse approach connects societal language impact with specific communicative actions. For example, persuasion or

information provision. This study draws ideas from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It investigates awareness in anti-drug posters. Utilising pragmatic theories to reveal how hidden meanings are obtained through implicit assumptions, and speech acts. A new model categorises communication into three aspects: intention, appeal, and connotation. The model focuses on how utterances are used in awareness posters regardless of visual aspects. The present study bridges the gap between harmonious communication and the CDA view of language. It illustrates how awareness of anti-drugs employs language to convey their message. It categorises posters according to their primary linguistic function, as reflected in the main utterances. To promote a systematic analysis. Old sources, such as Gold (1980) and Smart (1980), provide foundational insights into media campaigns and remain relevant. They offer an anchor to enhance the analysis. Recent studies modernise these concepts.

2.2 Classification of Posters

To address the first research question, it is necessary to classify posters used in anti-drug awareness campaigns. According to Fairclough (1998), language functions as a social practice that operates at both textual and sociocultural levels. From this perspective, media campaigns are not merely a medium for providing information, but are deliberately designed to influence attitudes and shape behaviours. Language is a powerful tool that facilitates harmonious interaction. Nevertheless, it can be utilised for obtaining specific purposes (Hassan & Muhammed, 2022).

Similarly, Van Dijk (2006) emphasises that media campaigns strategically employ devices such as categorisation, consensus building, disclaimers, euphemisms, and counterfactuals to persuade audiences, evoke emotional responses, and promote behavioural change. Building on these theoretical concepts, the present study proposes a tripartite classification of anti-drug awareness posters. The framework classifies posters along three dimensions: firstly, communicative intention, which includes persuasive and informative posters; secondly, appeal, which encompasses emotional or reasonable posters; and finally, connotation, which includes positive or negative orientations. The classification is achieved by examining the caption regardless of any associated figures.

Posters are not randomly created; they are performative acts that aim to promote social and behavioural change. Speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) considers language as a form of action. It explores what is accomplished through language (Miller, 2001). According to Speech Act Theory, utterances are the primary means of expressing and conveying communicative intentions (Austin, 1962, as cited in Abbas et al., 2023). Qassim et al. (2021) emphasise Phuong's (2006) view, stating that inadequate pragmatic competence results in improper speech acts. Which consequently causes misunderstandings and miscommunication. In his classification, Searle (1975) presents speech acts, termed illocutionary acts. The classification comprises five types: representatives, expressives, commissives, directives, and declarations (Searle 1975, as cited in Almarsomi & Hussein, 2021, p. 5). Anti-drug posters perform the illocutionary act (the communicative intention). Slogans are designed to perform actions such as persuading, informing, evoking emotions or warning.

Persuasive posters perform directive acts that intentionally influence lexical choices and implicature to shape the audience's attitudes, feelings, and behaviours. Encouraging language is employed to motivate, persuade, or strongly advise individuals to take or avoid specific actions, often presented as appeals or motivational statements. A key linguistic feature is the use of second-person pronouns (you, your), which personalise the intended message. Positive modality markers including, can, will, and must emphasise possibility and

obligation. These posters also appeal to fundamental values, including family, health, future, and dreams. (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Grice, 1975; Yule, 1996).

(1) Example: Don't let drugs ruin your future.

Informative posters perform directive acts. By adopting a factual and explanatory tone. They present knowledge, descriptions, or scientific data. They aim to clarify and enhance understanding, enabling audiences to make informed decisions. The language is characterised by factual statements, technical or descriptive terms, and the integration of statistics or data to establish credibility. A professional or scientific style reinforces the reliability of the message. (Searle, 1969; Levinson, 2000; Yule, 1996).

(2) Example: The law prohibits the possession of illegal drugs.

Emotional posters perform expressive acts. They seek to evoke powerful feelings including, fear, hope, guilt, pride, or empathy. The language makes the utterances vivid, personal, and urgent by drawing on values and fears. It guides audiences away from harmful behaviours. Linguistic features include strong adjectives, verbs, and nouns with affective force, as well as metaphor, imagery, direct address with second-person pronouns, and contrastive structures. (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Aristotle, trans. 2007; Yule, 1996).

(3) Example: Drugs are deadly traps.

Reasonable posters perform representative acts that are grounded in logic, evidence, and cause-and-effect reasoning. Their utterances are fact-based and linguistically shaped through logical connectors. These connectors, include because, therefore, as a result, and leads to. They substantiate their claims using statistics, data, and technical or medical terminology (Grice, 1975; Levinson, 2000; Searle, 1969).

(4) Example: Drug addiction reduces productivity and increases healthcare costs.

Positive posters combine commissive and directive acts. the acts emphasise hope, recovery, empowerment, and desirable outcomes. They frame messages around potential gains from avoiding harmful actions and promote optimism as well, encouraging constructive behaviour. Their linguistic features include affirming vocabulary such as hope, future, freedom, success, strength, and recovery. Imperative verbs are often used to motivate proactive steps (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Yule, 1996).

(5) Example: Staying away from drugs is the key to a bright future.

In contrast, negative posters, perform directive acts; they emphasise risks and harmful consequences through warnings and threats. Their slogans depend on fear-inducing vocabulary such as destroy, ruin, kill, poison, and danger, often reinforced by imperative forms to stress urgency. These messages are typically short, direct, and alarming to maximise their impact (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Grice, 1975; Yule, 1996).

(6) Example: Don't let drugs steal your future.

Accordingly, the second and third research questions explore pragmatic strategies: conversational implicature and presupposition. In his seminal essay Logic and Conversation, H. P. Grice (1975) introduced the concept of implicature to describe meanings conveyed beyond what is explicitly stated (Meibauer, 2009). Conversational implicature (CI) is classified into two types: generalised conversational implicature (GCI) and particularised conversational implicature (PCI).

GCI refers to implied meanings typically understood in most conversational settings without requiring specific contextual information. The inference arises from common knowledge or ordinary language use rather than unique situational details. Because it functions across general contexts, the listener can recognise the additional meaning without relying on background knowledge (Sarsono et al., 2025).

Example (7): Malorie says, “Under no circumstance are you allowed to take off your blindfold.”

The implicature is generalised: removing the blindfold is dangerous, a meaning apparent without additional context.

In contrast, PCI refers to implied meanings that can only be understood when the listener has specific contextual knowledge. The interpretation depends on prior awareness of the situation, relationship, or background details (Sarsono et al., 2025). Since conversational exchanges generally occur in particular contexts, interlocutors rely on locally recognised inferences. Yule (1996, pp. 42–43) illustrates this with the following exchange:

Example (8):

- Carol: Are you going to the party tonight?
- Lara: I've got an exam tomorrow.

Although Lara's response does not directly answer “yes” or “no,” it is readily inferred that she means “no” or “probably not.” This inference arises from the shared contextual assumption that preparing for an exam prevents attending the party. Thus, PCI represents additional meaning derived from context-specific knowledge.

In addition, Oualif (2017) defines presupposition as a proposition that the speaker assumes the audience recognises and accepts within a given shared context. He also emphasises that presupposition cannot be reduced solely to semantics or logic but must be understood as a pragmatic phenomenon. Yule (1996, pp.27-30) identifies six types of presupposition, each associated with specific linguistic triggers. Table 1 summarises all six types along with their corresponding triggers.

Table (1): Types of Presupposition and their triggers (Adopted from Yule, 1996)

Type	Example	Presupposition	Triggers
Existential	The X	X exists	e.g. the possessive pronouns.
Factive	I regret leaving	I left	e.g. realise, regret, phrases involving be with “aware” “odd” and “glad”
Non-Factive	He pretended to be happy.	He wasn't happy.	e.g. dream, imagine, pretend
Lexical	He managed to escape.	He tried to escape.	e.g. stop, start, again
Structural	When did she die?	She died.	Wh words
counterfactual	If I weren't ill,...	I am ill.	If clause

2.3 Previous Studies

Through extensive investigation, it was confirmed that many studies have addressed drug addiction from a linguistic perspective. A study conducted by Strapparava and Mihalcea (2017) included a computational examination of how drug addicts express their experiences with drugs. To understand the traits of drug users, the psycholinguistic processes and emotions linked to different types of drugs was analysed. Another study conducted by Haidar et al. (2020) utilised informal interviews, focus groups, and observational approach to examine the discourse of drug addicts. This research revealed that different categories of drug addicts communicate in different ways. Language is influential in addiction practices, suggesting that a novel form of treatment called discourse therapy may be effective.

Another research piece titled “The Role of Teachers in Drug Abuse Prevention in Schools (2020)” investigates how teachers contribute to preventing drug abuse within educational institutions. Drugs are among the prohibited substances used by individuals, yet many young students are increasingly exposed to them. The results confirms that teachers play a significant role in preventing drug use , so that students consume a significant portion of their time at school. This study aims to explore the extent of teachers’ involvement in drug prevention efforts within Malaysian schools. It employs a mixed methods research design and establishes a conceptual framework that includes factors such as teaching competence, teachers’ self-efficacy, the learning process within the classroom, and the overall school environment.

Another study conducted by Jaafar’s (2025). The study examined social media discourse on drug addiction. Utilising a corpus linguistic model. The results confirm that addiction is frequently framed as a “battle,” “disease,” or “crime.” While punitive frames support stigma, health-oriented and harm-reduction frames promote empathy and evidence-based solutions. Collocations , including “treatment and recovery,” “harm reduction,” as well as “overdose prevention” , were frequently observed. These findings highlight the vital role of language in shaping public attitudes and informing effective awareness campaigns.

3.Method

The study employs a qualitative analysis. It examines how pragmatic strategies are utilised in anti-drug awareness posters. This method is appropriate since the aim is to reveal implicit meanings, rather than to measure correlations. The qualitative research method takes small samples, and the findings tend to be subjective (Bricki, 2007). It enables the researcher to investigate, comprehend, and analyse a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative method prompts the researcher to provide a conceptual explanation of global issues (Yin, 2011).

The dataset consists of five awareness posters about anti-drugs. The posters are purposefully collected from Pinterest. It is an American online platform for user-generated content. The posters were sourced in April 2025. This platform was chosen since it represents authentic English messages. Individuals widely circulate the posters. Compared to official institutions such as the WHO and UNODC, Pinterest reflects public informal health communication in digital contexts. Posters are typically featured with bold graphics, concise slogans, and powerful imagery tailored for rapid attention capture on digital platforms. This small but focused sample was chosen to align with qualitative principles, such as data saturation, which allows in-depth pragmatic analysis. The dataset is limited to online

materials; therefore, the findings are not generalisable to all anti-drug campaigns but provide exploratory insights into digital awareness discourse.

This study utilises a qualitative approach to analyse five selected anti-drug posters. Although the small sample size limits general results. It aligns with the qualitative principle of saturation, where a small, well-chosen example can reveal common themes. The posters are sourced from Pinterest. This platform is recognised for its user-generated content, which distinguishes it from formal campaigns, making it a valuable resource for studying real-world online communication.

The selection criteria required the posters to be in English. Contain a written utterance that focuses on drug prevention, and include both text and images. This approach minimised bias and ensured each poster represented a unique example of anti-drug message. The analysis is conducted in a systematic procedure: (1) selecting posters based on criteria, (2) categorising each by purpose and meaning, (3) identifying conversational implications, and (4) recognising presupposition triggers based on Yule's framework. The study primarily focuses on utterances. Also, considering how visuals enhance the meaning of these utterances. Limitations include the subjective nature of qualitative analysis and the restricted scope of Pinterest content, which suggests that the findings are exploratory rather than universally applicable. However, they present valuable insights into the effectiveness of anti-drug awareness posters.

3.1 Instruments

The study's analytical instruments involve utilising the eclectic model. This model is designed to achieve the aims of the study. The analysis will be conducted as follows: first, selecting the appropriate posters; second, identifying the types of posters following the categorisation that the study suggested earlier, and analysing the types of conversational implicatures, whether generalised conversational or particularised. Finally, investigating the types of presuppositions based on the kinds of triggers identified in each case, using established pragmatic frameworks, specifically Grice's (1975) theory of conversational implicature and Yule's (1996) model of presupposition. The frameworks were chosen for their ability to reveal hidden meanings and assumptions. These tools have been extensively validated in pragmatic research. They ensure their reliability in this study. All these components are clearly shown in Figure (1) below.

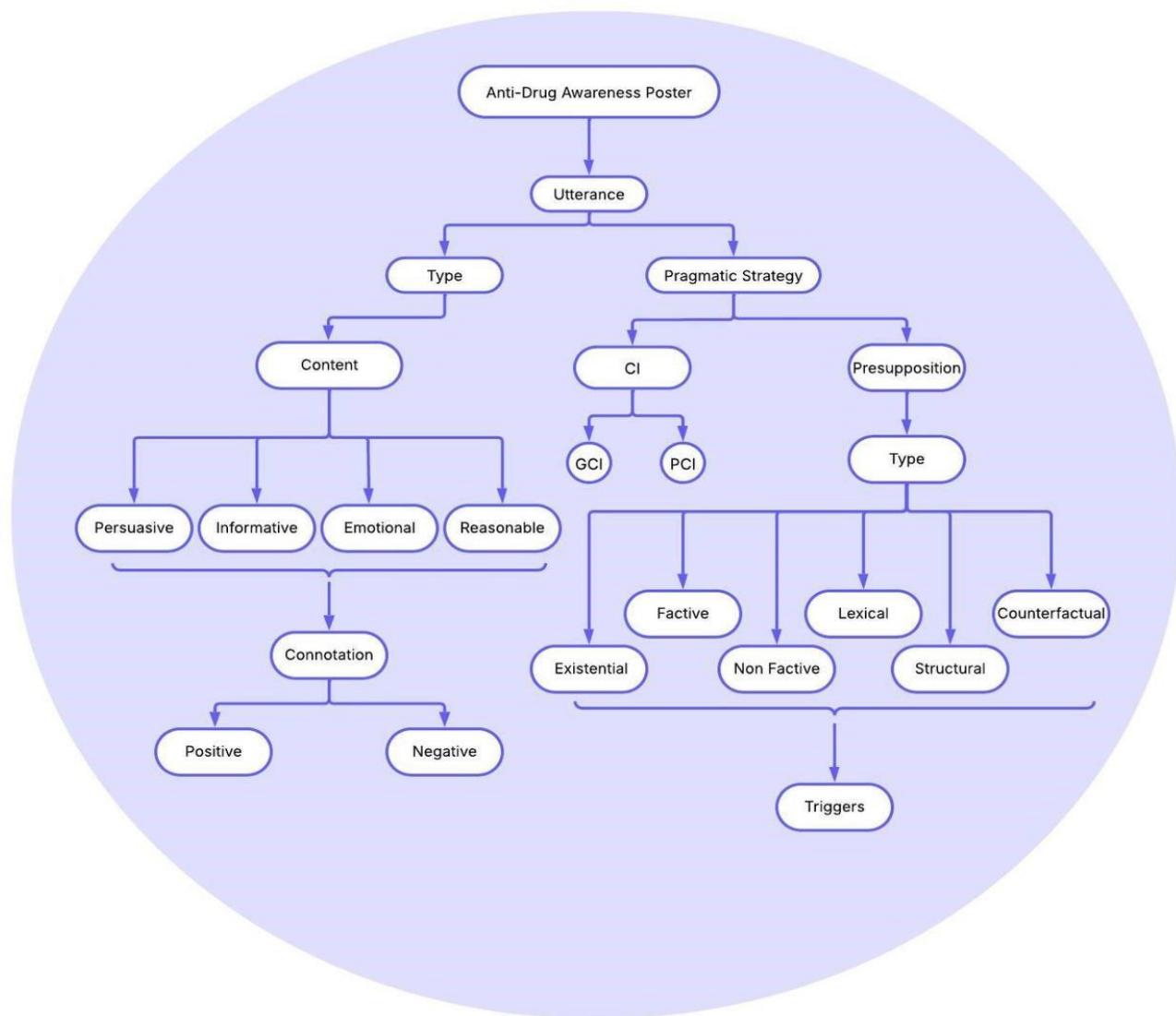


Figure (1): A Model for The Pragmatic Analysis of Anti-Drug Awareness Posters

3.2 Data Analysis

Poster (1):



Poster's type:

This poster is primarily persuasive through its tone and positive connotations. It does not offer informational or factual explanations. The utterance does not evoke emotions, so it cannot be classified as an emotional poster, but instead encourages the audience to adopt specific behaviours. Ultimately, it promotes a positive outlook through "Do life," emphasising constructive choices and delivering an uplifting message. The literal meaning suggests that a person should "do life" and "not do drugs". The poster intends to persuade people to avoid drugs. It encourages them to engage in healthy and productive living.

Conversational Implicature

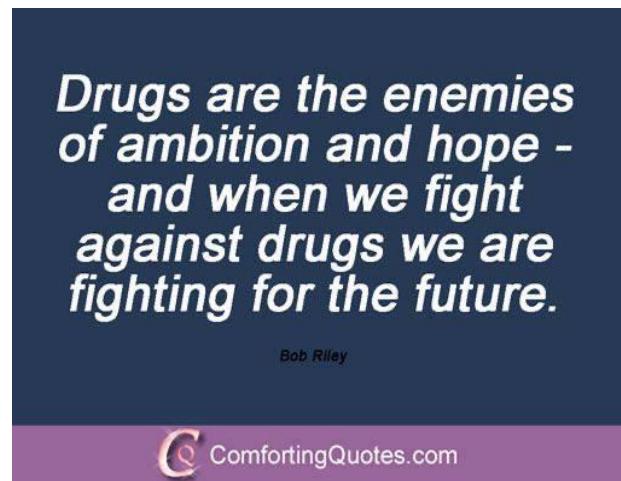
PCI is generated because "Do life" suggests that truly living a meaningful life requires avoiding drugs. It depends on cultural context and shared knowledge to convey the full meaning. The prohibition symbol suggests that drugs are dangerous and harmful. This is not clearly mentioned, but the audience infers it. The main maxims flouted are the manner and quantity maxims. They create an utterance that stimulates inference and memorability.

Presupposition

- Existential: The verb "Do" is a trigger that presupposes the existence of life that can be actively pursued. The linguistic triggers are contrastive structure (Not), imperative form (Do), and visual trigger (drug use). The word (Not) triggers a presupposition that drugs are something the audience may consider doing. This presupposes that the audience has a choice to make. The prohibition sign presupposes that the action (drug use) needs to be stopped. The poster presupposes that life and drugs are opposites and that life without drugs is better. The types of presupposition are existential, value, and comparative presuppositions. The poster assumes the existence of drugs as a social issue. It assumes that life is good and drugs are

bad. It contrasts life vs. drugs. Regarding the pragmatic function of the presupposition, the poster employs visual and verbal strategies to persuade the viewer to refrain from using drugs.

Poster (2):



Poster's Type:

The type of this poster is emotional, which is positively connotated. It does not rely on scientific data or direct the audience to change their behaviour, so it is not a persuasive or informative poster. The phrase “fighting for the future” appeals to the audience’s feelings by contrasting ambition with hope. Overall, the utterance positively emphasises a bright and promising outcome. The literal meaning is that drugs are described as enemies, and fighting them means defending the future. The speaker intends to persuade the audience that drug use destroys goals, dreams, and progress. Resisting drugs is a moral and social duty to protect the next generation.

Conversational Implicature

A PCI occurs because the metaphorical framing (“enemies”) requires contextual knowledge to understand. Resisting drugs is not explicitly mentioned but is implied. The reader inferred that one must stay away from drugs to have a hopeful future. The speaker violates the maxim of quantity. He gives less explicit detail about how drugs harm the future.

Presupposition

- Existential: the definite article ‘the’ is a trigger that presupposes the existence of such enemies. The linguistic triggers are definite description: “the enemies of ambition”, temporal clause: “when we fight against drugs”, and causal structure: “links drugs with loss of future.” Regarding the pragmatic function, presenting the harmful effects of drugs as unquestionable truths to strengthen the persuasive message. The message becomes harder to challenge to create shared assumptions with the audience. The drug is framed as a moral obligation toward the future to motivate anti-drug behaviour.

Poster (3):



Poster's type:

This poster is emotional, which carries a negative connotation. It chooses the word “ruin” to evoke fear of losing the value of life rather than logical or statistical evidence. The connotation is negatively oriented by framing the drug in terms of destructive consequences. The literal meaning is that drugs cause the destruction or severe damage of people’s lives. “Lives” refers to the overall well-being, health, social status, and future of individuals. The intended meaning refers to the aim to communicate that drug use leads to negative, harmful, and often irreversible consequences.

Conversational Implicature:

A GCI emerge because the destructive effect of drugs is explicit without a specific context. Drugs imply destruction, and avoiding drugs means protection. The hearer infers that drug use leads not only to general harm but to severe personal, social, and emotional destruction. He also infers that life includes all aspects of human existence. The speaker violates the maxim of quality since he employs exaggeration by presenting a broad claim, “ruin lives,” without literal statistical evidence. He also violates the manner maxim. The poster lacks details that encourage the reader to infer the variety of negative consequences.

Presupposition:

- Lexical: the verb “Ruin” presupposes that life was good before being destroyed by drugs. Regarding the linguistic triggers, the verb “ruin” implies the existence of something that can be damaged. “Drugs ruin lives” triggers a presupposition that a causal connection already exists. The communicative function is represented by warning, fear appeal, and social persuasion. The types of presupposition are existential “lives” and causal “ruin”. Regarding

pragmatic function, enhancing persuasion, frame drug danger as factual, establish emotional and moral urgency.

Poster (4):



Poster's type:

This type of poster is persuasive through its utterance, which has a positive connotation. It does not present factual or scientific data. It seeks to create a behavioural change by using advice and caution. The main focus is positive connotation because its central emphasis is on future achievement. The poster literally instructs the reader not to allow drugs to prevent them from achieving their dreams. The intended meaning implies that drug use leads to negative consequences that will hinder life goals. It also indicates that avoiding drugs is essential for success, well-being, and achieving one's aspirations.

Conversational Implicature

PCI implies that achieving one's dreams is impossible if drugs are chosen. Context is required to infer the likeness between "Dreams" and the dangers of using drugs. The poster suggests a cause-and-effect relationship between drug use and life failure, without explicitly stating it. Regarding Grice's Maxims, there is a violation of the manner maxim. The statement is metaphorical: "keep you from your dreams", not literal.

Presupposition

- Existential: The possessive pronoun "Your" presupposes the existence of dreams and ambitions. The main linguistic trigger in "keep you from" presupposes the existence of something that could be hindered. Another linguistic trigger is that the negative imperative presupposes the existence of such a threat (drug). It is capable of obstructing something valuable. The presupposed meaning is that the addressee has dreams, and drugs have the potential to prevent individuals from achieving their dreams. The pragmatic function of the

presupposition is to personalise the message, naturalise the danger of drugs, and enhance the persuasive impact.

Poster (5):



Poster's type:

The type of this poster is emotional, which carries a negative connotation. The poster presents the utterance through negative lexical choice, “kill,” aiming to evoke feelings of anxiety and panic. The utterance emphasises harm, fate, and gradual destruction, as indicated by the word “slowly”. The literal meaning is that drug use results in death, but the process is slow rather than immediate. It presents drugs as an agent that causes harm over time. The intended meaning is stronger and more persuasive than the literal one. The speaker aims to communicate that drug consumption leads to severe, life-threatening consequences. The utterance functions as a warning as drug use gradually destroys the body, mind, and life.

Conversational Implicature:

The use of drugs implies inevitable death, though not immediate. The type of conversational implicature is GCI with PCI. It is universally inferred that drugs kill, but “slowly” implies knowledge of gradual/social decline. The poster implies a cause-and-effect relationship between drug use and death. It encourages the addressee to reject drugs. The implicature arises from the understatement of danger. Regarding Grice’s Maxims, the utterance violates the maxim of quality. The speaker uses a metaphorical or hyperbolic expression “kill”. It is not scientifically literal that drugs act as a direct agent killing the person. But the exaggeration is used to strengthen the message.

Presupposition

- Existential: the personal pronoun “You” presupposes the addressee’s existence at risk. The linguistic trigger in the verb “kill” is a verb implying a harmful action. The pronoun “you” presupposes that the addressee is a person vulnerable to the danger. The utterance presupposes that drugs are dangerous and harmful. The drugs have the ability to cause death, even if slowly. The pragmatic function of the presuppositions is the personalising of the warning. The use of “you” casts the danger directly onto the reader. It makes the message intimate and urgent.

4. Results

The examination of the dataset exhibits evident patterns in its pragmatic construction. Concerning the poster categorisation, posters number one and four were classified as persuasive with positive connotations. While posters number two, three, and five were classified as emotional, posters two and five connoted meaning negatively, and poster three was positive. None of the posters showed to be classified as purely informative or reasonable.

PCI demonstrated four posters. The result indicate that contextual and general knowledge are vital for interpretation. Only poster number three exhibited GCI.

In terms of presupposition, existential was the most frequent type. Existential type is indicated through definite articles and possessive pronouns. Lexical presuppositions were used; this type is triggered by verbs like “destroy” and “kill”.

The results emphasise that anti-drug awareness messages rely on implicit pragmatic strategies to construct the intended communication effectively.

5. Discussion

Firstly, the anti-drug awareness posters across the dataset have been categorised as persuasive or emotional. The data does not include any informational or logical evidence.

Posters 1 and 4 combined persuasions with positive connotations. They motivate audiences to make constructive choices and take future or protective actions. Posters 2,3, and 5 were emotional with contrasting connotations. Posters 3 and 5 were an emotional type that adopts a negative connotation. This confirms that anti-drug campaigns tend to avoid neutral or reasonable utterances and use affective and motivational appeals. The results at the pragmatic level show that the two main patterns of implicature were identified in the analysis of conversational implicature. Posters 1, 2, 4, and 5 mainly relied on PCI. Contextual and cultural knowledge is necessary to infer that avoiding drugs results in a bright life or future. Posters 3 and 5 displayed a mixture of GCI and PCI: their destructive imagery (“ruin lives,” “kill slowly”) is generally interpretable, yet context still influences the interpretation.

Regarding presupposition, existential presuppositions (e.g., “Do,” “The enemies,” “your dreams”, “you,”) appear systematically, positioning the audience as already involved in the risk of drugs. Lexical presuppositions (e.g., “ruin”) establish prior assumptions about life, values, or struggles. Collectively, these presuppositions embed assumptions into the discourse, making the messages difficult to challenge.

6. Conclusion

This study reveals that pragmatic strategies are central to the effectiveness of anti-drug awareness campaigns. The posters primarily function as persuasive and emotional texts. It is

framed with either positive or negative connotations. Their reliance on presuppositions, particularly existential and lexical, and their frequent use of both PCI and GCI, enables them to communicate powerful meanings with minimal utterance.

The results exhibit that such campaigns succeed not by providing factual data. It embeds implicit assumptions and relies on social and contextual knowledge. This confirms that pragmatic approaches offer valuable insights to analyse public awareness messages.

Future studies should expand beyond a small digital dataset. They could include a larger and diverse range of materials. This will enhance comparative research across social and interaction channels. Integrating multimodal analysis, particularly the interaction between visual and linguistic strategies, can further illuminate how awareness campaigns obtain their persuasive impact.

This investigation revealed that pragmatic strategies, particularly presupposition and conversational implicature, play a crucial role in shaping anti-drug awareness messages. By embedding meanings, the senders of these messages can communicate meanings that go beyond the literal words. Thereby, designers highlight the hidden consequences of drug abuse. As a result, the intended meaning of the utterances used in posters lies not directly but in what the audiences infer. By investigating hidden meanings, the study addresses the key research questions. It showed how posters can be classified, and what the main presupposition type senders employ, and how these utterances generate implicature. The analysis exhibits that the audience infers the harmful consequences. Even though the ideas are not directly stated. From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes to the existing literature by incorporating multiple frameworks, including critical discourse analysis, Speech act theory, and pragmatics. These approaches add a deeper and systematic investigation of how language functions within educational campaigns. Thereby, these frameworks show how linguistic and social strategies contribute to making campaign posters effective. The study also showed that successful awareness messages cannot depend solely on information. They should employ hidden meanings and assumptions to trigger the audience engagement. This contributes to evolving future campaigns through direct professionals to select and design language appropriate for the intended audiences.

The study has two limitations: the first is the small sample size, and the second is its focus on a single platform. This may limit the generalizability of the results, and it is concluded that broader data are necessary to validate the study. Even in the presence of these limitations, the study provides compelling evidence that implicit meanings play a crucial role in conveying the effective meaning of anti-drug awareness utterances. The examination of the selected data reveals that the utterances in the posters are not merely simple and concise statements. The utterances are complex acts that depend on inferred meanings. This confirms the importance of pragmatic study in evaluating public health communication.

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