

Pragmatic Arrows Hit Where They Hurt  
Most : Innuendo Phenomenon in Arabic  
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**Abstract :**

Innuendo has been taken as one angle of the science conventionally called "the science of tropes" together with "metonymy", "metaphor", "simile" and "synecdoche". Verbal and nonverbal choices in association with the appropriate contextual variables act together to create this elegant rhetorical device.

Innuendo is taken here as an analytic procedure for the study of interaction aiming at proposing an outline of a new approach to communication. The paper claims that there are heavy loaded processes of inferences taking place during the negotiation of these expressions carrying innuendo. These processes are unified on the part of the speaker and the hearer (being both influenced by the same contextual constraints) under an overall communicative process called "A process of Innuendo - Negotiation". This process is mainly goal - shift oriented, either the intended participant or the intended view is shifted. Accordingly, a new pragmatic typology of innuendo utterances is claimed.

The paper, further, is meant to identify the possible functions innuendo - utterances (in contrast with their non - innuendo - counterparts) may have. A claim of universality of innuendo is finally suggested due to its participants - base rather than text - base nature.

**1. Introduction :**

Broadly speaking, innuendo can be defined as a rhetorical flourishing device. It is the intended and strategic extra - shade of meaning for a specific purpose (Al - Hiyali 1998 : 1). It is, further, a rhetorical trope based on creating certain cognitive effect. Innuendo is a kind of association between verbal and nonverbal choices on the one hand and contextual effects on the other to depict a veiled meaning with an intention to create a state of ambiguity.

The pragmatic effect of innuendo does not show much association with the surface structure or the propositional content of the utterance. Therefore, innuendo can be regarded as a force added to the propositional meaning of the utterance vaguely directed to the intended target.

Due to its varying stylistic peculiarities, innuendo is sometimes called the weapon of the wise men for punishment (Al-Madani MD : 60). Hence, it criticizes or comments on certain behavior. This type of innuendo can be

considered negative, since it can potentially harm the addressee. A positive type of innuendo can be established as well for the sake of politeness mitigation ... etc. (See section 5).

Innuendo is a linguistic device, which associates language with psychological effects (Ibin Manzur MD : 169). It can move the minds towards a particular state of affairs and urge the addressees to deduce further information (Al-Hiyali 1998 : 6). It is an indirect way of mitigating the harmfulness of statements without alleviating their role in provoking feelings of holding responsibility and self-reformation (Al-Katib MD : 133).

Innuendo is not a kind of development of the logical form which depends mainly on syntax and semantics. It is a matter of deduction of meaning (Cf Yus 1999 : 490 & 494). It creates a kind of opaque argumentation (in Eemeren and Grootendorst's sense 1994) between the speaker and the hearer. This argumentation is created within the hearer's mind via the speaker's stimulation (Al-Hiyali 1998 : 30). So, there seems to be a facing-mirror strategy by which the speaker evokes his partner to stand against (and start blaming) himself (Cf Al-Hiyali 1998 : 43 and Al-Qurtubi MD : 300). This argumentation could be sometimes crystallized verbally by the hearer to let the speaker hold responsibility of his speech and reveal his intentions (Al-Qurtubi MD : 300).

The crux of innuendo lies in its distinction from the non-innuendo counterpart. Such a distinction is related in a sense to the types of innuendo identified. A concept of crucial importance here is goal-shift. Innuendo is related in one way or another to the process of goal-shift associated with the utterance carrying the innuendo. The speaker either shift from the hearer or from the point of view which he adopts (Cf Al-Hiyali 1998 : 152-154).

In the first and most salient type of innuendo, the speaker directs his message towards somebody to mean somebody else (Ibid : 130). It is the job of this somebody else to understand the speaker's intention and thus a self-tacit recognition of the message should be maintained. The speaker is aiming at Hearer 1 but he shift his direction towards Hearer 2 to transfer his indirect message. The innuendo focus is the some but it has been approached via another unintended goal (see figure 1).

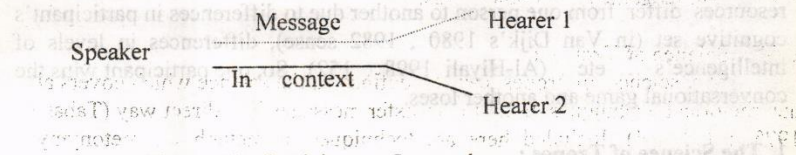


Figure (1) : Participant – Innuendo.

In a sense, then, two receivers of the same message can be established, one is the false receiver and the other is the actual receiver (Cf Verschueren 1999 : 85). By a series of hidden processes, the intended or the

actual hearer could grasp the meaning of the message and act accordingly. In this type, thus, three participants are involved. It can be called "participant – innuendo". The unintended participant either understands the innuendo and realizes that speech is directed to somebody else, so he would draw himself away to let the ground for the intended receiver, or innuendo passes unnoticed and the secondary meaning is taken to be the focus of the speaker's utterance. In both cases, the unintended participant is still passive since he is just a tool used to approach a goal and the intended proposition is pointless to him.

In the case of the second type of innuendo, view – innuendo, two views are proposed and two participants are involved: the speaker and the hearer. The speaker proposes two different (and usually contradictory) views to highlight a specific intended view. In this way the speaker has shifted from his goal via another goal (see figure 2). It is view which is our fundamental concern here and not view 2 (Cf Al-Hiyali 1998 : 104).

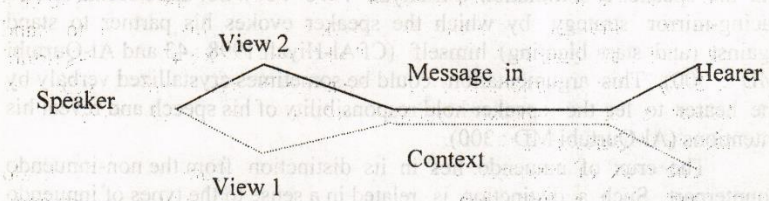


Figure (2) : View – Innuendo

In case the hearer understands the innuendo – utterance, he successfully reaches a point of convergence with the speaker. At this point, the speaker's intention and the hearer's interpretation become ALMOST identical. Accordingly, more than one level of meaning can be maintained. It is the most rational hearer who can determine the maximum number of these levels. The clear, obvious and surface meanings are not inadequate but in a sense superficial (Al-Hiyali 1998: 11 and Hilal : 299). This kind of rationality is created by a huge resources of rational thinking and ability of inference. Innuendo after all is a matter of rational deduction of meaning. These resources differ from one person to another due to differences in participant's cognitive set (in Van Dijk's 1980, 1982 sense), differences in levels of intelligence's ... etc. (Al-Hiyali 1998 : 152). So, one participant wins the conversational game and another loses.

**1. The Science of Tropes :**

The science of tropes can be defined as the science which covers all the rhetorical techniques used to transfer messages in indirect way (Tabana 1975 : 111-114). Included here are techniques of metaphor, metonymy,

simile, synecdoche and innuendo. Because of the process of goal shift it is usually characterized with (and transferring meaning, thus indirectly), innuendo is included under the title of tropes (Al-Hiyali 1998 : 14). It is not intended here to cover all these techniques of tropes. It is intended rather, to remove some misconceptions and confusion raised because of the hazy borders between innuendo in on the one hand and catachresis, insinuation? And metonymy on the other.

Catachresis (as a rhetorical device) can be defined as the use of a lexical item which is usually not used (literally or figuratively) to refer to the intended meaning (Abadi MD : 266 & Matlub : 1987 : 166).

1. **بث الحاكم السننه في المدينة**  
*(The ruler sent his mouth pieces in the city)* Instead of using the literal meaning and explicit reference of (جواسيسه) (=spies), or the figurative meaning and the implicit reference of (عيونه) (eyes = spies), the speaker chooses to say (السننه) (mouth pieces), to refer to an additional meaning (to that of spies). These spies are authoritative in the sense that they may express the ruler's words and point to view.

In catachresis, sense of indirectness is achieved via the choice of a word not a process (of inference) or a strategy. Indirectness is achieved in the case of innuendo, on the other hand, via a process of goal - shift (see section 3).

The notion of insinuation refers to "the seduction of meaning". It is the figurative implantation of a poisonous thought within the hearer's mind. "To insinuate is to penetrate furtively into the interlocutor's mind. Allusively and perfidiously implanting a thought within it generally with provocative intent through beguiling suasion and seduction often laced with a liberal sprinkling of confidential and flattering ways" (Papi 1996 : 191).

2. **عندما تكون الحرية حصرا على الرجال فلا ضرر من ذلك ولكن عندما توهب لزوجات ونسله لا يعرف معناها فما هنا الخلال ولا تخلو بيوتنا من هكذا نوع من النساء .**  
*(There is nothing wrong if we are restricting freedom to men but when freedom is given to wives and women who do not know what it means, there is something wrong and our houses are full of such women).*

The speaker, in this example, is suspecting the hearer's wife but he dare not announce this frankly. So, he is trying to implant this poisonous idea in his hearer's mind to let him think and have the chance to discover the truth himself. This technique is mostly dirty since the speaker in such cases usually has bad intentions (not to use the word technically). His aim is just to create a state of imbalance in the hearer's mind. If the speaker is sure of himself, he would not use insinuation to announce this, instead he would use metaphors, innuendo, metonymy (since they are less indirect than insinuation and less harmful) or even literal statements.

Insinuation is a matter of building suspicion . But innuendo is a matter of facing a truth. Both of these techniques meet in the middle of the road since both are indirect way of approaching a goal. However , the first achieves its goal via an evidence proposed in the discourse , the second achieves its goal via deviation from the hearer or from the view point.

Metonymy is a rhetorical technique where a word is taken figuratively to substitute another word on the condition that there is no sense of homonymy. Two related meanings are involved ; one is obvious and the other is deep, it is this last deep meaning which is intended (Ramadan 1995).

### 3. بث الحاكم عيونہ في المدينة

(The ruler sent his spies in am over the city).

Instead of using the direct reference and the literal meaning of (جواسيسہ) (=spies) , the speaker prefers the figurative use of (عيونہ) (= eyes = spies) taking into consideration the association of the sense of 'watching' in the two words 'جواسيس' and 'عيون' ; both can see and watch.

Frequently , the notion of innuendo is confused with that of metonymy because of the closeness between the two techniques which can be found in some examples (Jawad 1967). Both techniques aim at a deviated goal. However , innuendo can be understood by appealing to some contextual effects (Al-Hiyali 1998 : 12). Metonymy is almost related to meanings which become conventionally accepted in the community (Ibin Al-Atheer MD : 56). Furthermore , contextual effects have very minor role to play in the case of metonymy (Al-Hiyali 1998 : 12). In addition , to know the intended meaning in metonymy , there should be a kind of allusive scale as in the following example:

4. مضياف ، كريم = كثير الرماد  
(كثير الرماد ← كثير الجمر ← كثرة الاحتراق تحت القدر ← كثرة  
الطبخ ← كثرة الأكلين ← كثرة الضيوف ← اذن مضياف / كريم)

By the token of ( كثير الرماد ) , the speaker intends to refer to (كريم) (generous). Accordingly , different processing's are needed here to understand this meaning of ( كريم ).

Another difference between innuendo and metonymy can be elaborated as well . The two meanings in the metonymy are related somehow ; both of them represent the focus of attention (Al-Hiyali 1998 : 13). In innuendo, however, only the intended meaning is important , other levels of meaning are somehow marginal. Metonymy can be chieved by a word, a phrase , or maximally by a sentence (Al-Hiyali 1998 : 13).

Accordingly , innuendo as a rhetorical tropic device has the following features:

- 1- It is an analytic technique where a set of utterances is used to achieve a goal with the association between the linguistic choice and the appropriate contextual effects.
- 2- It is a technique where a set of utterances is used to activate something in the hearer's mind to approach a fact.
- 3- The meaning intended is not conventional.
- 4- No allusive scale is needed.

### 3. The Model of Analysis :

The phenomenon of innuendo is both speaker and hearer oriented. If the hearer was unable to manage the innuendo for one reason or another, the innuendo utterance would pass unnoticed. It is the speaker's intention which initiates the innuendo, but it is the hearer's job either to make notice of it or to neglect it altogether. Still the question is, How could the hearer understand the speaker's intention? How could the hearer realize that it is he who is intended and not anyone else? Such questions and some others are going to be answered in this section.

Taking the theory Sperber proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1981), innuendo can be considered a case of mention rather than use. The distinction between use and mention of an utterance can be drawn by the following example:

5. A. *Will you stop it?*

B. *"Will you stop it", "Will you stop it", No I will not stop it, I want to reveal it out.*

The occurrence of 'will you stop it' in B's speech is not a case of use, but a case of mention. Speaker B is not using it as a kind of order or request but as a kind of quotation. "Use of an expression involves reference to what the expression refers to, mention of an expression involves reference to the expression itself" - (Sperber and Wilson 1981 : 303).

The first expresses the content of the utterance (including some aspects of its pragmatic meaning), while the second expresses an attitude towards the utterance. Then in innuendo utterance, what matters is the attitude towards something rather than the content of the utterance which is mostly taken for granted. In other words, the speaker (by using innuendo) is expressing his attitude or belief about the content and not the content itself (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1981). The propositional meaning as well as some aspects of the casual pragmatic meaning can be used as premises for this searching of meaning.

Being a figurative device, innuendo is expected to activate two interpretations, one is the primary and the other is the secondary (or to use Sperber and Wilson's terminology 1981 second - order and first - order interpretation with innuendo we suggest belongs to the first types i.e. second - order interpretation). Through the secondary interpretation, the primary

interpretation of innuendo can be approached. Innuendo – interpretation is determined mainly by the context. When detached from its innuendo – meaning, the utterance can be interpreted just like any other utterance.

Relying on Sperber and Wilson's Relevance theory, we establish a simplified model of analysis to account for the speaker's hearer's interpretation of innuendo utterances via a unified process which can be called 'A process of Innuendo Negotiation. However, this is not a clear adaptation of Sperber and Wilson's model, some ideas and terminologies are made use of in the following treatment (cf Sperber and Wilson 1981, 1986, Gramhaw 1987, Levinson 1989 and Yus 1999).

First of all, the speaker should get the hearer to recognize his intention by attending to the "evocation process" (i.e. using a stimulus to provoke a response) (cf Sperber and Wilson 1981). Accordingly, the innuendo utterance used involves evocation of an attitude (on the part of the speaker) towards the proposition expressed. This attitude may imply a number of propositions which cannot be deduced to a single one. This is the sole essence of the psychological theory of evocation. A specific strategy in accordance with the appropriate contextual variables is selected to cause the intended effect and a process of goal shift is followed. The speaker either deviates his speech direction towards somebody else (other than the intended hearer) or he deviates from his point of view towards something usually contradictory.

The model adopted here depends on the process of choice on the part of the speaker and the hearer. Such a choice is a function of the context (cf Verschueren 1999). The speaker on his part will make a choice and will substitute the literal meaning of the utterance with that of the innuendo meaning. He is, usually aware of the extra offset of the cognitive effects provided by the innuendo utterance. He forces the hearer to compute with the possible interpretations that the scope of meaning can hold.

The speaker is usually aware of the fact that recovery of innuendo is determined by expectations of relevance (Yus 1999 : 490). He is expected to take into considerations the hearer's immediately accessible assumptions and the inferences he can readily draw when interpreting the utterance (Yus 1999). However, the speaker can make wrong predictions about the hearer's ability to recover his intention. He relies on the hearer's ability to supply the needed contextual information.

Second, the hearer is going to select a single interpretation from a set of interpretations available to him. He should, thus, establish a process of interpretation. It is the hearer who works out the process of transferring the message from the direct pole to the indirect one i.e. from the non-innuendo to the innuendo meaning by attending to the available contextual variables. When no transformation takes place for one reason or another, there would be no innuendo even though the speaker intends his utterance to be so.

This process of interpretation starts with searching which is determined by the hearer's cognitive set and psychological for relevance state. The relevance process adopted here is a three-pole concept: (i) the hearer should seek if he is relevant in the speech event, i.e. whether he is intended. (ii) The view relevance, i.e. whether this view is intended. (iii) The purpose relevance, i.e. the relevance of this utterance (as a case of innuendo) to the communicative purpose. Within relevance process, a step of evaluation of the utterance take place, Can this utterance hold innuendo? The second process of interpretation is the process of hypothesis formation. If the first process is positive and successful, (in case the hearer is relevant, i.e. intended, the view is relevant, i.e. intended and the utterance is relevant to the communicative purpose), the hearer would start then building a set of hypotheses (cf Yus 1999 : 502). The set of the formed hypotheses is not random but determined also by the relevance process referred to above. Thus, the number of these hypotheses is expected to be finite. Being further determined by the contextual constraints and variables (cf Sperber and Wilson 1981).

The third process is the testing process. The hearer would select the most powerful hypothesis (i.e. being mostly relevant and mostly close to the speaker's meaning) and then start testing his hypothesis against a huge background of his contextual variables and expextations. If the hypothesis does not prove itself, it is demolished altogether and a new one (from the already formulated ones) is chosen to start the testing process against the same contextual variables. If farther information is provided by the speaker later on, the hearer may even go back to the old hypothesis which has been demolished to retest it via the new information till a theory of interpretation is established.

Within these three processes three different contextual stages can be found and, three different associated levels of analysis can be involved. At the very early level of a grammatical nature (called thus a grammatical level), the stage of null - contextualization can be identified (cf Yus 1999 : 488 and Toolan 1991 : 334). Here, the grammatical appropriateness of the utterance is determined (i.e. the phonetic, phonological, morphological and syntactic aspects of the utterance is processed). A simple piece of evidence that can be proposed here to prove that the first thing to be perceived is the grammatical appropriateness of an utterance is the correction of the grammatical mistakes the non - native speakers may make during speech. The hearer, first of all, corrects those mistakes and then he starts comprehending the utterance. The result of this stage is that the hearer realizes the stretch of discourse as an appropriate acceptable and correct piece of language which can be interpreted if further stages, levels and processes are adopted.

At the next level, the semantic level, the second stage can be captured, the minimal contextualization stage. The hearer assigns the contextual information and reference, disambiguates the ambiguous cases, and locates

the spatio – temporal dimensions of the utterance. Simply, he locates the utterance in the speech event (cf Yus 1999).

As noted, some aspects of the meaning at this stage can be involved in the pragmatic level, but since we delimit the pragmatic level to the speaker's attitude meaning, the semantic level is enlarged. The result of this stage is the expression of the proposition that, the speaker intends to express.

At the last level, the pragmatic level, the third stage of contextualization takes place, the maximal contextualization stage (cf Yus 199). The speaker's attitude is interpreted and thus an innuendo meaning is can pretended by attending to some rational thinking as well as the contextual variables. Then the expressed proposition gives effective means to deduce the assumptions communicated sometimes, this proposition fails to help the hearer to deduce the intended meaning of the utterance.

The hearer in such a case is obliged to consult extra contextual variables and assumptions and test more and more hypotheses.

As stated above, this kind of inference depends solely on the hearer's rationality – intelligence is not the same with all people, and levels of clarity can be established clearly here. Some people may find it easy to comprehend an innuendo utterance, and some way find it difficult if not impossible to do so. Thus, there are differences in the cognitive effects and process efforts (to use sperter and Wilson's terminology on the part of the hearer).

#### 4. Innuendo Strategies :

To establish the innuendo – meaning, more than one stratgy can be used. These strategies are pragmatic in nature. They include:

##### 1- Positive Vs Negative States of Affair :

To activate something in the hearer's mind, two contradictory states are proposed, a positive and a negative one (cf Van Dijk 1994).

In the following example, a girl belongs to a good and a high status family has been accused of theft.

6. لم يتخذ أحد من ذويك سلك الاجرام  
(Nobody of your relatives take the criminal way).

Two states of affair are established. The first is negative related to the misbehavior of the hearer contextually inferred. The second is positive related to the hearer's family as the context of the message shows (your family are good people). The two states are related by the implicit innuendo meaning deduced. The speaker is expressing his surprise due to the combination of two contradictory states; "How could a good family bring a criminal like you ?" The intended meaning is directed to the girl and it is the job of the girl to understand this; "she is a criminal".

At the next level, the semantic level, the second stage can be captured. The hearer assigns the contextual information and relates the ambiguous cases and focuses

- 7: A. استاذنا الفاضل ان هذه مسألة فنية .  
B. هذه ليست مسألة فنية هذه مسألة اقتصادية جوهرية ونأمل من كل المخلصين والشرفاء في العالم ان يهتموا بها .

A. (*Déar sir , this is a technical case*)  
B. (*This is not a technical case , it is an economic one and we hone that all the honest and faille people in the world*).

A case of double innuendo in B's speech can be established here. In the first part ( هذه مسألة ----- جوهرية ) speaker B rejects A's speech and accuses him of inability to understand the case appropriately. The case is not that easy, it is a real economic problem but speaker A can not understand this. In the second part ( ونأمل ----- يهتموا بها ) , speaker B excludes speaker A from the group of honest and faithful people in the world. He is, in other words, accusing him of being dishonest and unfaithful. Since speaker A is unable to understand the case, he can't take care of it. So, he should be excluded from those wanted to take care of it.

## 2- Generality Vs Specificity :

Instead of specifying the intended goal in the stretch of language, the speaker chooses to be general. On the surface, no specific person is intended, all hearers should take the utterance into consideration. The involved person should understand the speaker's intention.

8. الجبان من وقع عليه الظلم وسكت  
(*The coward is that person who has been done unfair and he accepts it and keeps silent*)

Instead of directing speech to the person who is used to be coward, the interlocutor tries to be general. He is talking about all people not a specific person. It is the intended speaker who is supposed to understand the innuendo meaning. The goal is shifted from one specific person to all the others.

9. خير الطلبة الملتزمين  
(*The best student are those committed*)

The speaker , here, is trying to euphemistically praise a student. Believing that this student is not so intelligent, active or clever, the speaker chooses a feature which is not so relevant to tell his hearer about. Taken negatively, the speaker is announcing that his student is just committed, he is not clever, intelligent, active, etc. , he is just committed.

- 3- Intended Vs Non – Intended Hearer :  
The speaker, here, simply directs his speech towards somebody to refer to somebody else:

This 'somebody' could be either the speaker himself or a third party. The first case can be represented in the following example:

10. علم الله الصادق مني و منك وان احدنا لكاذب  
(*God knows who is saying the truth; you or I and one of us is a liar*)  
Speech is directed here towards the speaker himself and the hearer. And since the speaker cannot accuse himself of lying, he is sure that his partner is lying. But instead of accusing the hearer of this directly, this goal of accusation is approached indirectly by innuendo. The hearer would realize that the speaker is accusing him of being a liar. The second case can be represented in the following example:

11. انتبه الى عملك جيدا فالنقصير يواجه بعقوبة صارمة  
(*Take care of your job very well, any negligence is going to be faced with a severe punishment*)  
There are three participants involved here, the responsible man, the manager and the employees. The responsible man is not threatening the manager although he is directing his speech towards him, he is rather aiming to the employees. When the manager is threatened, the employees would take this as a real threat for them rather than for the manager. The manager also has got the permission to punish his employees when their work shows dissatisfaction.

#### 4- Me - First Convention :

Unlike the previous example, the speaker here, is directing his speech just towards himself to let others take the utterance personally.

12. أنا أعلم علم اليقين اني اذا اتممت عملي على اتم وجه سأجني أرباحا كثيرة فلمم النقاعس ؟  
(*I know very well that if I accomplish my work perfectly I am going to gain much money, so why should I slacken ?*)

The speaker is not advising himself, he chooses himself, however, to be the first who should hold this piece of advice. (Cooper & Ross 1975).

#### 5. Rhetorical questions :

This strategy cannot be used but in association with another strategy. Approaching the goal is established through questions, which do not need answers.

##### a. Rhetorical Questions and Generality Vs Specificity :

(A. *It is wise to submit under such circumstances till the storm passes*)

(B. *And I ask everybody, is submission wisdom ?*)

Here, the speaker in (B) is accusing his partner (A) of being coward. However, instead of proposing a real accusation, the speaker in (B) decides to choose this strategy and question a fact, which does not need questioning, i.e. submission cannot be wisdom anyway.

13. ما جزاء من قتل نفسا ؟

(What does a murderer deserve ?)

Three participant are getting involved here, A, B and C. Participant A, the speaker has called participant B to tell him that brother has been killed. A has entered the stage to see his brother's body on the ground with B and C. To get rid of the accusation, participant A attacks B with his question with its well known answer "what does a murderer deserve ?" with an association of some nonverbal cues like gaze - aversion directed towards participant C (who is seen with some blood on his hand and with staring eyes). Participant B gets the impression that it is C who is the murderer. A is able to keep B's mind busy with answering the question and how to behave in such a situation (whether to call the police or to kill the murderer himself). Both A and C are in the stage of the crime, but only C is accused and this is due to A's maneuver.

6. The Psychological Distance :

Related here is the formula of Us/Them proposed by Van Dijk (1994).

Two groups are identified, the positive and the negative. If somebody is classified to belong to Them-group, the speaker will announce his negative view towards him. Us-group is supposed to be the good group and Them-group is the bad one. When a person is dismissed from Us-group. He cannot be neutral, he should be within Them-group and vice versa. This is determined mainly by the speaker and his viewpoint towards others. (cf Hussein : 2001).

14. A. يجب أن نخرج من هنا  
B. أن الجبن عند الناس عادة مذمومة.

(A. We have to get out of here.)

(B. Cowardice is a rejected habit in people.)

Participants A and B, here, are facing a difficult situation, which needs brevity: A offers to leave the place but B finds it a kind of cowardice to do so. He definitely cannot accuse his partner of being coward. So, he decides to establish a group of 'others' (=people outside my group) and to talk about cowardice with those people. Surely, he doesn't mean himself and in this way he excludes his partner from his own group which includes 'Us', the speaker and those who are similar to him. His partner, in other words, has implicitly entered the group of 'others' who are coward.

**5. Innuendo – Function :**

Innuendo technique is used usually for the sake of indirectness to achieve one of the following aims (Jassim 1999 and Obeng 1997).

**1. Effectiveness :**

It seems that innuendo utterance is more effective than its counterpart. Receiving an innuendo utterance, the hearer would try his best to interpret the meaning of such an utterance. The speaker is not just doing an act of speech (to use spearle's concept 1969); he is rather doing more than one thing at the same time.

15. سمعت أن أخذ الخونة قد أعدم

*(I heard that one of the traitors has been executed)*

Being sure that his hearer is a traitor, the speaker decided to accuse his partner of an act of betrayal implicitly. The hearer has been motivated to think of this indirect accusation, and its consequences, i.e. his friend, now, knows that he is a traitor. Instead of thinking of defending himself against the speaker's accusation (which is a natural consequence of any direct accusation), the hearer would rather start thinking of the speaker intention and words. The direct counterpart of the preceding utterance would be:

16. انك خائن

*(You are a traitor)*

The immediate consequence of this statement could be either verbal (when the hearer tries to defend himself against the accusation) or gestural (when he tries to defend himself by attacking his partner, for instance). So, in both cases the speaker's intention is the same but the effects surely differ.

**2. Emphasis :**

For the sake of emphasis, the speaker tends to use innuendo – utterance. When interpreted, the hearer would realize that the speaker has something very important to refer to. However, salience is determined by the receiver's cognitive effort to process the utterance, the harder the utterance to process, the more salient it is.

17. جئت لأسلم عليك لأنظر وجهك الكريم

*(I come to greet you and to see your honourable face)*

The speaker, here, is asking for charity. He is not expressing his wishes of greeting and meeting the hearer. It is the job of the hearer, then, to understand that the speaker wants to keep his own face, so he is asking for charity indirectly. Charity, then, should be given secretly and this is the salient part of the message. When this message is proposed directly. It would lose its emphasis and this may affect the hearer's response negatively.

### 3. Sarcasm :

For sake of sarcasm, the speaker uses innuendo utterance and being indirect, the speaker cannot, in any case, be accused of mocking the hearer since the former can cancel his utterance so easily.

18. انكر بخيلا كان إذا أكل بيضة ذات عام يقول أكلت دجاجة بلا عظام  
(I remember a miser. When he once ate an egg he said I ate a chicken without bones).

To make fun of the hearer, the speaker accuses him of being miser and a real one. However, for the sake of politeness (see below), the speaker cannot announce such a fact directly. Furthermore, direct counterpart of the innuendo utterance does not have the same sarcastic effect.

### 4. Control :

The speaker can control the hearer's action by the use of innuendo. When the direct speech is chosen, the speaker would be under the hearer's attack to defend himself.

19. A. يجب ان نهرب من هنا قبل أن تأتي الشرطة وتتهمنا بمحاولة القتل  
B. ان الشهامة حسب علمي صفة محمودة  
(A. We have to run away before police come and accuse us of attempting murder. B. As for as I know, gallantry is a good attribute).

In (B), the speaker is accusing his partner of being coward. Speaker A cannot defend himself against this accusation due to the feature of indirectness of the utterance. So, he will start thinking of the utterance as a kind of blame for his misbehavior and thus a change of action is likely to be expected.

### 5. Politeness :

The most prominent function of innuendo is politeness. People use innuendo to avoid being rude and to decrease imposition on others.

20. A. لقد علمت انك الوحيد في الناس القادر على انجاز هذه المهمة  
B. ما أقبح الرياء فهو يرمي الناس في مهب الريح تارة هنا وتارة هناك  
A. I knew that you are the only one who can accomplish this mission.  
B. Hypocrisy is so bad, it throws people against the wind once here and once

Speaker (B) is aware that his partner is hypocrite, but he does not want to be so rude to impose this on his partner. B has done a face threatening act (cf Brown & Levinson 1983 and Yule 1996), but it is a some how decreased threatening. In case of direct counterpart of this statement, speaker B would impose his own opinion on that person directly.

21. ان خير العمال القوي المخلص  
(The best worker is the strong and faithful)

Innuendo, as pointed to above, is contextually determined. Taken in different contexts, this statement can be interpreted differently. If the speaker knows that his friend is trying to hire a worker who is weak and / or dishonest, he will use such a statement in front of his friend and the worker. He intends to tell the worker (indirectly and politely) that he is weak and dishonest and so he cannot work here. Also he intends to advise his friend to find somebody else.

On the contrary, if the worker is really strong and honest and if the speaker is a girl, another interpretation is adequate here. Being a girl, the speaker feels shy to be direct. The use of the innuendo-utterance gives her a chance to talk about the worker indirectly to avoid any future face-threatening act. In case of misbehavior on the side of worker, the statement, further, can be claimed to be general and directed towards nobody specific.

To apply these functions altogether, let us have the following example:

22. A. كان يجب أن تكون متيقظاً قبل ذهابك الى هناك  
B. حسنا لقد ذهبت وكانت صاحبة الدار كريمة معي وكانت امرأة لم أقف على بابها مطولاً من دون أن تدعوني هي وزوجها للدخول الى الدار واكرامي بضيافتهما .

A. You should have been aware before you went there.

B. Ok, I have gone and the land lady was generous with me, she was a woman didn't accept to let me stand at her door for along time without giving me (she and her husband) the permission to let me in and make me there guest.

More than one interpretation can be deduced here. Speaker A is accusing B of being uncareful because the latter has entered an inappropriate place.

Speaker B realizes this accusation though it is indirect. His answer has more than one function. He, first, asserts that his behavior was not inappropriate, so he uses the echoing of A's proposition "B goes". The following pieces of evidence mentioned in the stretch is an assertion to his belief that he has done the right thing. The house that he enters deserves to get in as we are going to see later on. Furthermore, speaker B accuses A that he hasn't received his guest (speaker B) appropriately. On the contrary, the family of that house received him and welcomed him warmly. The implicit contrast here invites the use of innuendo, "They receive me appropriately, but you don't do that". (see sec.4 : 1). Speaker A misbehaved, he was a man and the person who received him in that house was a woman, but she received him appropriately (unlike speaker A). Also speaker (B) is stating that he wasn't alone with the lady in the house, her husband was there as well. He, thus, answered A's hint

that being alone with the lady is the inappropriate thing. Unless these elements of context are taken in this way, they are redundant in this stretch. The expression "كانت امرأة" (=and she was a woman) is redundant unless the speaker means to say that although she was a woman, she was generous. Also "هي وزوجها" (*she and her husband*) is redundant unless taken in this way.

#### 6. Conclusions :

Innuendo, as a rhetorical tropical device, proves to be highly context sensitive. It's generation and comprehension in Arabic depends on the contextual variables around without which the utterance under investigation can be interpreted as clear from the innuendo meaning usually associated with Innuendo is related to the process of goal shift according to which the speaker either shifts his speech to a false recipient or he shifts from his view points towards something else. These deviations give rise to two different types of innuendo, participant-innuendo and view-innuendo respectively.

Innuendo has been identified from the other types of tropes by four different features which can be included in the following almost new definition of innuendo: Innuendo is the adaptation of the linguistic choice and the contextual variables to create a non-conventional meaning (with no intention to establish an allusive semantic scale) so as to activate the hearer's mind via a process of goal-shift.

Innuendo-generation and comprehension are established via a unified process on the part of the speaker and the hearer. This process can be called "A process of Innuendo-Negotiation". It starts with a subprocess called "evocation process" according to which the speaker uses a stimulus to provoke a response in the hearer's mind. So, an appropriate strategy is established in association with the appropriate contextual variables, and then a process of goal-shift is followed. The hearer would select a single interpretation from a set of interpretations available to him and this is conducted via a set of processes starts with relevance process (which is related to the hearer's relevance the relevance of the view point and of the communicative purpose). Then a process of the hypothesis formation is followed and finally testing of this hypothesis is established to get the theory of interpretation mostly close to the speaker's intention.

Three contextual stages (and three associated levels of analysis) are determined. These stages include: the null-contextualization stage, the minimal contextualization stage and maximal contextualization stage.

Furthermore, different strategies are found to achieve the innuendo goal. These strategies include: positives Vs negative states of affair, generality Vs specificity, intended Vs non-intended hearer, me-first convention, rhetorical questions, and psychological distance. Different functions of innuendo are also established. These functions include effectiveness, sarcasm, control and politeness.

As innuendo phenomenon is related directly to participants and context rather than to the texts and language use, universality can be claimed here. Innuendo is related to the speaker's intention and the hearer's ability to infer utterance carrying innuendo. So, it is not a matter of conventional use of language, but it is a matter of a rational adaptation of linguistic choices and contextual variables. Thus, different investigations in other languages are needed to prove this last hypothesis.

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