



ISSN: 2663-8118 (Online) | ISSN: 2074-9554 (Print)

Journal of Al-Frahedis Arts

Article Available Online: Iraqi Scientific Academic Journals, Open Journals System

Tikrit University

J.A.A | TU

College of Arts

Journal of Al-Frahedis Arts

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Keywords:

- Emotional Appeals
- Persuasion
- Protests
- Slogans

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted: 19/06/2020

Accepted: 03/09/2020

Published: 11/10/2020

Tikrit University / College of Arts / Journal of Al-Frahedis Arts Tikrit University / College of Arts

Emotional Appeals as A Persuasive Technique in The Language of Slogans

ABSTRACT

People can express their opinions and feelings towards issues and events freely using any medium. This is stipulated in all constitutions and declarations. Language, whether spoken or written, is an important means of communication, a main aspect in persuasion and a powerful tool to express emotions. These emotions can be positive or negative based on the expressions used in slogans. Therefore, this study aims at examining the language of slogans to determine the type of emotions reflected by them. To achieve this objective, a number of Arabic slogans used in Iraqi protests are collected to be translated into English and then analyzed using critical method. The study concluded that the language of slogans reflects positive and negative emotions. This is because of the strong relation between the feelings and language when used to express sufferings.

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1. Introduction:

In fact, people have the right to express what they feel through using any medium of communication, whether spoken, written, audial or visual. This is consistent with Article (19) of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulated that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers". This reflects that people can express their opinions and feelings towards issues and events freely using any medium. Hence, people are suffering from different defects and shortcomings in almost all vital sectors because of wars, economic sanctions, occupation, as well as the Islamic movements and military operations. The most defected sectors are those related to basic needs and services. Therefore, these events and defects should be expressed and documented effectively to persuade the addressee. Persuasion is important in any field, especially in relation to language and emotions. Language is considered a main aspect in persuasion, especially if it is simple, direct and vivid; besides other stylistic devices that clarify important issues and keep the attention of the audience, such as emotive words (Bjerregaard and Compton, 2011). In this regard, persuasion is typically defined as "human communication that is designed to influence others by modifying their beliefs, values, or attitudes" (Oberholzer, de Kock and Walker, 2008: p.23). Moreover, persuasive technique refers to a strategy or method that is used to persuade audience to agree with the author's point of view, like the use of rhetorical questions, evidence, repetition, contrast, reliable sources, emotional appeal, direct personal appeal, analogy, and other features of figurative language (Dillard and Pfau, 2002).

Hence, language is considered a powerful tool to express emotions. "Emotions have been viewed as a universal set of internal processes that are largely hard wired, arising when an event that is relevant to the concerns of individual occur" (Darwin, 1896 cited in Aaker and Williams, 1998: p.241). In this regard, emotive words refer to words that carry emotional appeal. Emotional appeal refers to a type of argument which attempts to arouse the emotions of its audience in order to gain acceptance of its conclusion (Walton, 1992). Emotional appeals reflect feelings of people towards an event or issue. They can be found in any form of expression that carries emotions, such as slogans. In this concern, slogan as a term is derived from "Slough-ghairm, pronounced as Slogorm from Scottish Gaelic which means battle cry". Slogan is usually an unforgettable phrase that is frequently used to express an idea or purpose. Slogans are employed in social, religious, economic and political areas. They vary from other ordinary text and images, and often because of their simple structure cannot convey a lot of concepts and details. They address general audience to convey their particular meanings. They reflect audiences' needs (Abdi and Irandoust, 2013: 62).

Accordingly, emotional appeals can make the language of slogans more effective to persuade the addressee and attract his/ her attention towards the events in question. The language that reflects emotions can be either positive or negative depending on the expression used. Thus, this study examines the language of slogans to determine the type of emotional appeals, i.e., whether positive or negative. This can be achieved through using a critical analysis of such slogans.

2. Literature Review:

According to Samovar and Porter (2001: 139), “language is important in ethnic and nationalist sentiment because of its powerful and visible symbolism; it becomes a core symbol or rallying point”. Thus, there is a strong relationship between the effective language use and emotions as a means of persuasion. However, studies on emotional effects caused by language are still few. Only recently, it has been shown that emotional processes elicited by language are in many aspects similar to those caused by non-linguistic motivations, such as pictures, films, or faces and language comprehension can be affected by emotional states (Jiménez-Ortega et al., 2012). However, there are studies conducted to investigate the emotional appeals and their effect on marketing, language comprehension, conflict and metaphors in political discourse, coverage of climatic issues in news media, advertisements, interaction and TV discourse (Mayr, 2014; Jiménez-Ortega et al., 2012).

An emotional appeal is designed to arouse emotions among the addressees and use these emotions as bases for persuasion to make them interacting with the events. An emotional appeal is an attempt to make a correlation between the writer’s message and an important feeling (Breuer et al., 2009). The audience needs to interact emotionally with the topic; therefore, emotional appeals are used to make people feel sad, angry, guilty, happy, or any emotion that is wanted to be achieved (Bjerregaard and Compton, 2011). In this case, the figurative language is used to depict emotions towards certain issues. Emotions can be positive, for instance happiness, joy, and warmth; or negative like sadness, fear, and anger (Roozen and Claeys, 2009). Therefore, these emotions are affected by and can affect peoples’ behaviors.

As has been stated before, emotional appeals can be found in any form of expression that carries emotions, such as slogans. According to Halim (n.d.), slogans have become an integral part of today’s public life, be it a street, bus stand, office, market place or in a public place. They are everywhere! And let’s face it- we can’t do without them. The history of slogans goes back to ancient times. Slogans came into existence very early, when individuals grouped together into tribes for shared protection. There is nothing that is new or culture specific about the use of slogans; they have been in existence as long as language has been around and generally employed as a means of focusing attention and exhorting to action.

3. Research Method:

As clarified earlier, this study examines the language of slogans to determine the type of emotional appeals, i.e., whether positive or negative, through employing the method of critical analysis. A number of slogans written in Arabic language used in the Iraqi protests represents the data of this study. As this study is conducted in the field of English language, thus these slogans are translated into English and then analyzed critically to show how they express persuasive emotions and their types, whether positive or negative.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, a number of slogans used in the Iraqi protests are collected to be analyzed critically to determine how they express persuasive emotions and their types. These slogans are first translated into English and then analyzed critically.

Slogan no. 1: كفا العبث ببغدادنا الجميلة

Translation: Stop abusing our beautiful Baghdad

The protesters expressed their inner feelings towards the social, economic and political issues happening in Iraq. They made protests to ask for their rights and defend them. Thus, they tried to use different phrases to convey the message of their protest in order to express their demands properly. In this slogan, they expressed their emotions towards their capital "Baghdad" which suffered from lots of social, economic and political problems. Therefore, they asked the government to stop abusing it by wrong actions and measures that only destroy it and make it a terrible place not appropriate to live in. In fact, this slogan shows negative emotions as the protesters feel sadness towards "Baghdad" which becomes unpleasant place due to different bad events happening in it.

Slogan no. 2: سلمية ... سلمية

Translation: Peaceful ... Peaceful

Protesters attempted to show their peaceful protest through using slogans with peaceful expressions. They wanted to express verbally and non-verbally. Therefore, they used this slogan "peace... peace" to confirm their peaceful protest as well as to ask for peace and stop all forms of killing they suffered from. This slogan is used in all protests occurred in Iraq previously and currently. It reflects negative emotions as it is used as a means to defend and protect themselves from killing by the military forces in the protests. Thus, it expresses the feeling of fear, which is a negative emotion.

Slogan no. 3: أخوان سنة وشيعة هذا الوطن ما نبيعه

Translation: Sunnis and Shiites are brothers and will not betray this country

As it is known, after the 2003 US-led war, Iraq becomes suffering from poor situations in almost all aspects of life including religion. Hence, the issue of sectarianism has appeared and led to worse events and results in the Iraqi cities. This issue is still negatively affecting all aspects of life as well as being used by Islamic movements and irregular military forces as a reason for killing Iraqis. To negate this thing, protests wanted to show the unity between Sunnis and Shiites by describing them as brothers of one family who will not betray their country or cause damage to it. In this slogan, protesters reflect a positive emotion of confidence in their unity as people against the evil plans surrounding them.

Slogan no. 4: كافي ظلم.. كافي احتلال.. عاش العراق

Translation: Stop injustice ... stop occupation... long live Iraq

This slogan expresses that Iraqis no longer accept injustice and occupation; they want to be free and get their liberty. They cannot stand all forms of injustice practiced in Iraq whether formally or informally. As a result, they used this slogan to express their dissatisfaction with insecurity and instable situation in Iraq. They wanted their country to be safe and prosperous. This slogan reflects positive emotion of courage and revolt against the poor situation in Iraq.

Slogan no. 5: نترجاكم وفروا لنا فرص عمل نريد نعيش بكرامة

Translation: Please, provide us work opportunities; we want to live in dignity

As clarified earlier, Iraq is suffering from poor situations in its different sectors. Among these sectors is the poor standard of living and the high rates of poverty as documented in the reports of Human Rights Organization. This is due to unemployment and the lack of work opportunities, especially among young people. Accordingly, this has a negative impact on the adequate standard of living among Iraqis. As they realized that their right to have work and adequate standard of living is not achieved, they decided to protest and use this slogan to ask for this right. This slogan expresses the positive emotion of hopefulness to have work opportunities and employment to live in dignity.

Slogan no. 6: ما نقبل السكوت لو نغير لو نموت

Translation: We will no longer keep silent; we either make a change or die

Also, this slogan reflects Iraqis' dissatisfaction with events happening in Iraq. Consequently, they protested against the current situation in Iraq to change its poor situation. They said that they will not be silent again and they will either make changes or die. They wanted to have a better life, live in a peace and safe place, have work, improve their standard of living and services as well as providing their basic needs like other people. This slogan expresses positive emotion of self-confidence and ability to make changes in Iraq.

Slogan no. 7: اليوم مظاهرة وغدا ثورة**Translation: Today is protest and tomorrow will be a revolution**

In this slogan, the protesters threatened the government by making a revolution. They expressed their ability to revolt against the poor situation in Iraq as they would not protest any more. This slogan reflects warning and threatening, and hence it reflects the positive emotion of courage.

Slogan no. 8: نعم نعم للتظاهر لحين تحقيق المطالب**Translation: Yes, yes to protest until the realization of demands**

The protesters wanted to show their determination and insistence on the realization of their demands. They expressed this through using this slogan. In addition, this slogan reflects the importance of protest as a means for the realization of rights and demands of people. Hence, Iraqis believe that protest is a peaceful means to ask for their rights. This slogan expresses the positive emotion of determination.

5. Conclusion

This study dealt with the reflection of different types of emotions in the language of slogans. According to the results of analysis, protesters expressed both of negative and positive emotions. The slogans represented a peaceful means used by protesters to ask for their rights and defend them. This, in turn, reflects the power of language in expressing inner feelings and demands effectively through using effective words and expressions. These expressions reflect different meanings and emotions like fear, threat, courage, determination, sadness ... etc.

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