دراسة تداولية للمغالطة الشخصية في المناظرات الرئاسية الأمريكية

أ.م.د هاني كامل نعيمه

جامعة ذي قار , كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية, قسم اللغة الانكليزية, ذي قار , العراق

dr.hani.kamil.alebadi@utq.edu.iq

الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة تحليلاً عمليًا للمغالطة الشخصية في المناظرات الرئاسية الأمريكية. وتحلل الأنواع المختلفة من المغالطة والاستراتيجيات التداولية، بما في ذلك أفعال الكلام واستراتيجيات عدم الكياسة في الحديث, وتستخدم الدراسة نموذجًا تداوليا لتحليل هذه المغالطات في جذب الجماهير، وتشويه سمعة المعارضين، وتشكيل تصورات المصداقية. وتتقصى الدراسة الأسئلة الاتية: ما أنواع المغالطات الشخصية المستخدمة في المناظرات الرئاسية؟ ما أفعال الكلام المستخدمة لتنفيذ هذه المغالطات؟ ما استراتيجيات عدم الكياسة المستخدمة لنقل هذه المغالطات؟ تُستخدم ثلاثة نماذج لتحليل البيانات: دامر 2009 لتحليل نوع المغالطة، وسيرل 1975 لتحليل أفعال الكلام، وكالبيير 1996 لتحليل استراتيجية عدم الكياسة. تفترض هذه الدراسة أن المرشحين الرئاسيين يستخدمون انواع المغالطات شخصية المختلفة وأفعال كلام واستراتيجيات وعم كياسة للتأثير على الجمهور. وتوضح الدراسة التأثيرات البراجماتية للمغالطات الشخصية على جودة الخطاب السياسي وتداعياتها على المشاركة الديمقراطية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المغالطة الشخصية، التداولية، الأفعال الكلامية، عدم الكياسة

A Pragmatic Study of Ad Hominem in American Presidential Debates

Asst.Prof. Dr. Hani Kamil Neimah

University of Thi-Qar, College of Education for Humanities, Dept. of English, Thi-Qar, Iraq

dr.hani.kamil.alebadi@utq.edu.iq

Abstract

This study conducts a pragmatic analysis of the ad hominem fallacy within American presidential debates. It analyzes the various types of the fallacy and the pragmatic strategies, encompassing speech acts and impoliteness strategies. The study employs a pragmatic model to examine these fallacies in appealing to audiences, discrediting opponents, and shaping perceptions of credibility. The paper addresses the following questions: What types of ad hominem are utilized in American presidential debates? What speech acts are employed to execute these fallacies? What impoliteness strategies are used to convey these fallacies? Three models are utilized to analyze the data: Damer 2009 for fallacy type, Searle 1975 for speech act, and Culpeper 1996 for impoliteness strategy. This study hypothesizes that American presidential candidates employ various types of ad hominem fallacies, speech acts, and impoliteness strategies to influence the audience. The study demonstrates that the pragmatic effects of ad hominem attacks on political discourse quality and their implications for democratic engagement.

Keywords: ad hominem, fallacy, Pragmatics, speech acts, impoliteness

1-Introduction

In American presidential debates, candidates encounter pressure to distinguish themselves and influence public opinion. These debates function as venues for policy discussion and as performances in which candidates convey strength, credibility, and reliability to their audiences. Candidates employ strategies that might enhance or undermine their opponents' public perception. The ad hominem fallacy has gained prominence among these strategies. While ad hominem attacks are considered logical fallacies, their allure in political discourse is unmistakable, frequently diverting attention from policy matters to personal criticisms that either resonate with or polarize the electorate. These fallacies can fulfill several functions in a debate: they may divert focus from a candidate's own weaknesses, portray an opponent as untrustworthy or inept, or associate a politician with the attitudes and prejudices of particular voter demographics. Although inherently erroneous, ad hominem assaults have demonstrated efficacy in shaping audience views, adversely framing adversaries, and bolstering in-group loyalty among proponents. This study examines the utilization of ad hominem fallacies in American presidential debates, assessing how politicians strategically employ these assaults to attain their objectives.

2.Literature review

2.1Presidential Debate

The presidential debate constitutes a sub-genre of political discourse due to its contextual characteristics. Chilton (2004, p. 72-73) asserts that presidential debates include political contextual references and historical political allusions recognized by the audience. Presidential debates are conducted primarily to convey the candidates' objectives and viewpoints to the inhabitants of a nation. Debates possess specific parameters and regulations that participants must adhere to. These regulations influence the manner in which political figures communicate, necessitating their adaptation to a constrained timeframe for articulating their issues. According to Rzepecka (2016, p. 199), a presidential debate is the direct interaction occurring between interviewers and interviewees. The interviewer poses provocative questions to the interviewees to engage the viewers and maintain their interest. The interviewees are candidates seeking election as president and must respond to questions within a specified time frame.

2.2 Fallacy

The term 'fallacy' originates from Latin and denotes the act of deceiving. Fallacies are deceptive because they possess the characteristics of sound arguments, yet being illogical and lacking the qualities that make arguments strong. As a result, fallacies frequently deceive the audience and are not readily detected or recognized by the participants in the argument (Toulmin et al, 1984, p.132). Eemeren and Grootendorst (1999) define fallacy as a deviation from effective strategic maneuvering. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004, p.175) examine fallacies within the framework of pragma-dialectics, specifically in the setting of a critical discussion, which is a form of persuasive dialogue. A fallacy is defined as a mistake that occurs when the rules of critical conversation are violated, which hinders the settlement of a difference of opinion. Tindale (2007, p.14-15) asserts that while most arguers strive to convey their arguments in a logical and rational manner, certain arguments deviate from this ideal. Human reason is not flawless in the same manner as their physical abilities. Damer (2009, p.52) asserts that some debaters deliberately employ fallacies in their arguments with the aim of eliciting an emotional response from their audience and manipulating their understanding of a certain subject to suit their own agenda.

2.2.1 Ad Hominem Fallacy

An ad hominem is a type of argument that is focused towards attacking personal qualities of an individual. It is ineffective in providing a proper rebuttal since it unfairly attacks the critic of an argument instead of addressing their complaints or presentation of counterevidence (Damer, 2009, p.198). When engaging in an argumentative discourse, it is crucial to differentiate between a person's argument and their testimony. To put it differently, while an individual's questionable motives, personal qualities, or behavioral issues may correctly influence our judgment of their evidence, it should not in any way impact our evaluation of their argument (ibid., p.199). Walton (2007: 60) locates this fallacy in a specified setting involving three players: the respondent, the proponent and the audience. Ad hominem attack takes various forms, as Damer (2009, p.198) states, such as abusive, two-wrongs and poisoning the well.

2.2.1.1 Abusive Ad Hominem

This type of the personal attack is the most basic because it directly criticizes the character of the other person. The characterization of a person can be categorized into two branches: either having bad moral character and/or bad truthfulness character (Walton, 2006, p.123). A form of abuse or personal attack involves pointing out an undesirable personal trait of someone who is criticizing you. The unpleasant thing in a specific situation is determined by what the arguer personally dislikes. The ad hominem fallacy involves more than just using abusive language towards someone. It is not incorrect to call people names or make negative comments about them. The error occurs when someone uses a personal insult to avoid or weaken a counterargument (Damer, 2009, p.199).

2.2.1.2 Poisoning the well

Walton (2008: 170) suggests that "poisoning the well" is concerned with a secret agenda owned by an arguer attacked on the basis of her/his supporting a specific side so that a certain gain can be attained. Simply said, the essence of this type is that, by supporting a certain argument, an arguer's impartiality or sincerity is at risk since s/he stands to gain. As Damer (2009, p. 200) points out, the fallacy seeks to discredit the source of an argument or point of view in a way that renders the need of assessing the soundness of that viewpoint obsolete. To put simply, "damning the source" is the arguer's personal trait or goal-based rejection of everything derived from that source without giving it any thought.

2.2.1.3 Two-wrongs fallacy

This fallacy implies that "You do it too." When an arguer uses this fallacy, they are effectively telling the critic, "Your argument is not worthy of my consideration because you are guilty of doing the same thing or thinking the same way that you are criticizing me for." By attacking the critic back, one can escape the need to refute the critique or argument made by the critic (Damer, 2009, p. 202).

2.2.2 Face

Yule (1996: 60) posits that face represents an individual's public self-image, which is anticipated to be recognized by others. To cultivate a peaceful connection, individuals may preserve the dignity of others. Conversely, individuals may assault others' faces to inflict harm. According to Yule (ibid.: 61), an utterance that poses a threat to another's face is classified as a face-threatening

act, while an utterance that does not pose such a threat is considered a face-saving act. The principle concerning politeness and impoliteness pertains to face.

2.2.3 Impoliteness Strategies

Impoliteness manifests as non-cooperation, disapproval, and mutual dislike through communication acts that indicate contempt (Thompson & Agyekum, 2016). Impoliteness is regarded as a pragmatic failure to adhere to the rules of politeness (Leech, 1983; Brown & Levinson, 1987). Limberg (2009) posits that a speaker may deliberately utilize a communicative approach to instigate a social dispute with the addressee. Impoliteness denotes a detrimental disposition towards particular behaviors manifested in specific settings. It is upheld by anticipations, aspirations, and/or convictions on social structure, particularly concerning how an individual's or group's identities are influenced by others throughout interactions (Culpeper, 2010: 3233). Culpeper (1996) effectively employs Brown and Levinson's politeness model to present his theory of impoliteness, which he described as a "parasite of politeness" (Thielemann and Kosta, 2013, p. 238). Culpeper (1996), characterizes it as the employment of methods intended to undermine face, thereby inciting social disagreement and discord.

2.2.3.1 Bald On-Record Impoliteness

Bald on-record impoliteness (henceforth BRI) is utilized when significant face is at stake and when a speaker aims to undermine the hearer's face, resulting in a direct and explicit impolite utterance (Bousfield, 2008, p. 92). Culpeper employs the notion of face-attack-act, contrasting it with face-threatening act, to pinpoint instances of face attack characterized by the speaker's intentionality (Mullany and Stockwell, 2010, p. 71).

2.2.3.2 Positive Impoliteness

Positive impoliteness (henceforth PI) aims to undermine the hearer's positive face want, namely their need for acceptance (Bousfield, 2008, 134). Culpeper (1996) expands upon positive impoliteness by incorporating various sub-strategies, which include: disregarding or snubbing the interlocutor, rejecting shared understanding with the listener, choosing a sensitive or unwelcome subject for discussion, employing inappropriate identity markers, exhibiting disinterest and lack of sympathy towards the listener, seeking out disagreements, and utilizing ambiguous language along with the insertion of covert terminology, including taboo expressions (Mullany and Stockwell, 2010, p. 72).

2.2.3.3 Negative Impoliteness

Negative impoliteness (henceforth NI) targets the addressee's negative face desires. This can be accomplished by the following ways: intimidate a conviction that harmful actions against another will transpire; mock to underscore one's superior strength, or refrain from treating others with seriousness, or demean them, encroach upon another's personal space, both physically and symbolically, directly link the other to a negative characteristic-personalize by employing the pronouns 'I' and 'you' (Culpeper, 1996, p.358; Thielemann and Kosta, 2013, p. 239).

2.2.3.4 Sarcasm

Under his approach, the speaker executes the FTA with politeness techniques that are obviously hypocritical (Thielemann and Kosta, 2013, p. 239). Stated differently, sarcasm is the use of one or more sub-strategies that are apparently appropriate and approved but, fundamentally, have the opposite meaning (Bousfield, 2008, p. 95). Culpeper's sarcasm or fake politeness fits Leech's

(1983) definition of irony quite precisely. "If you must cause offence, at least do so in a way which does not openly conflict with the politeness principle, but allows the hearer to arrive at the offensive point of your remark indirectly, by way of an implicature" (1983, p. 82).

2.2.4 Speech Acts

First published in 1962, Austin's book *How to Do Things with Words* notes in every utterance a speaker may perform an act such as stating a fact or opinion, confirming or denying something, making a prediction or a request, asking a question, issuing an order, giving advice or permission, and so forth. Whereas Kearns (2000: 50) defines a speech act as a purposeful, meaningful act performed by language users, Mey (1993: 111-13) sees speech acts as "actions happening in the world, that is they bring about a change in the existing state of affairs." He substitutes speech acts for language acts.

Searle (1975: 355-57) recognizes five kinds of speech acts:

1- Assertives have a truth value, show words-to-world fit, and express speaker's belief in proposition.(p.355). e.g., statements.

2- Directives are attempts to get hearer to do something; therefore they show world-to-words fit, and express speaker's wish or desire that hearer do A.(ibid.) e.g., orders

3- Commissives commit Speaker to some future course of action, so they show world-to-words fit, and Speaker expresses the intention that Speaker do A.(p. 356) e.g., promises

4- Expressives express Speaker's attitude to a certain state of affairs specified (if at all) in the propositional content (e.g., *I apologize for stepping on your toe*). There is no direction of fit; a variety of different psychological states; and propositional content must be related to Speaker or Hearer (p.357) e.g., congratulations.

5- Declarations bring about correspondence between the propositional content and the world; thus direction of fit is both words-to-world and world-to-words. Searle recognizes no psychological state for declarations. (ibid.) e.g., an excommunication

3.Methodolgy and Discussion

3.1 Data Collection

The data of the study represent a presidential debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump, the candidates of the American presidency 2024. The debate is the first between the candidates in their electoral campaign. The data have been obtained the analysis data from Cable News Network (CNN), a multinational news channel. It provides a comprehensive overview of global political events that are occurring worldwide. Furthermore, CNN is among the channels that specialize in presidential debates. The data that is currently being examined is sourced from CNN's website, which was published on June 28, 2024, and can be accessed at https://edition.cnn.com/2024/06/27/politics/read-biden-trump-debate-rush-transcript/index.html . The duration of the presidential debate is approximately ninety-nine minutes. A representative sample of candidates' responses to their interviewers is illustrated by the selected data. Ad Hominem fallacy analysis necessitates the selection of a random sample.

3.2 Model of Analysis

The analysis of the data under scrutiny involves a multi-layered eclectic model. It consists of three levels of analysis: types of ad hominem fallacy, impoliteness strategies and speech acts. The types of ad hominem are analyzed by Damer 2009. They include abusive ad hominem, poisoning

the well ad hominem, and two-wrong fallacy. In addition, impoliteness strategies are examined by Culpeper 1996. They involve bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness and sarcasm. Furthermore, the model contains the analysis of speech acts according Searle 1975. They include assertives, directives, expressives, commissives and declaration. These strategies are adopted in this study to analyze the use of fallacies in the American presidential debates and the pragmatic strategies used by the candidates. The following figure shows the eclectic model:

Fig. (1): Model of analyzing ad hominem fallacy in American presidential debates

3.3 Data Analysis

The current study's data represent chosen texts from the presidential debate between Democratic candidate Joe Biden and Republican contender Donald Trump. Due to the scope of the study and the study's aims, the data for analysis are limited to some texts from the debate and does not include all texts. The sample is picked at random for analysis using the study's eclectic model.

Text one: Biden:

"You have to take a look at what I was left when I became president, what Mr. Trump left me. We had an economy that was in freefall. The pandemic are so badly handled, many people were dying. All he said was, it's not that serious. Just inject a little bleach in your

arm. It'd be all right. The economy collapsed. There were no jobs. Unemployment rate rose to 15 percent. It was terrible".

The text above represents ad hominem fallacy which is an implicit criticism of Trump's handling of the economy and epidemic exists.

a-Ad hominem types

By the quotations "it's not that serious" and "just inject a little bleach in your arm," Biden criticizes Trump's competency and judgment reflects the abusive ad hominem. These remarks criticize Trump's moral fiber and decision-making prowess. Poisoning the well ad hominem is also observed. Biden insinuates that Trump's actions were shaped by poisoning the well that resulted in adverse outcomes, implying that he was ill-equipped to manage the epidemic or economic crisis successfully. This form diminishes Trump's credibility in light of his behavior. Additionally, the two-wrongs type is seen in Biden's speech. Biden implicitly implies a critique of Trump's prior assertions and behaviors, so questioning his credibility and suggesting a dissonance between his declarations and the actual circumstances.

b-Impoliteness strategies

First, Biden employs BRI through 'direct attack' to criticize Trump by ascribing adverse consequences to his actions and decisions. Expressions such as "the economy in freefall" and "it's not that serious" diminish Trump's credibility. Second, Biden uses sarcasm to refer to an infamous remark associated with the previous administration. Here, Biden mocks the alleged advice given during the pandemic, implying it was dangerously misguided and foolish. The sarcasm suggests ridicule and disbelief at the proposed solution: "Just inject a little bleach in your arm. It'd be all right.". Thirdly, Biden utilizes NI to minimize the response of the previous administration, portraying it as careless or dismissive. It implies a failure to take appropriate action, thus damaging the previous leader's reputation by framing them as neglectful or incompetent: "All he said was, it's not that serious."

c-Speech act types

Assertives are employed by Biden to articulate claims that communicate facts or beliefs. Statements such as "we experienced an economy in freefall" and "The unemployment rate escalated to 15 percent" serve as assertive acts that delineate the circumstances. Secondly, commissives are utilized. Biden suggests a determination to rectify the repercussions of the prior administration's actions, albeit without making explicit pledges. Third, Biden uses expressives to convey emotions or sentiments against the previous administration's performance. Expressions such as "it was terrible" communicate a profound negative attitude. Finally, directives are employed such as "you have to take a look", urging the audience to examine the information provided and to critically evaluate the previous administration's influence.

Text two: Trump:

"But the thing we never got the credit for, and we should have, is getting us out of that COVID mess. He created mandates; that was a disaster for our country. But other than that, we had – we had given them back a – a country where the stock market actually was higher than pre-COVID, and nobody thought that was even possible. The only jobs he created are for illegal immigrants and bounceback jobs; they're bounced back from the COVID. He has

not done a good job. He's done a poor job. And inflation's killing our country. It is absolutely killing us".

Trump's text features an ad hominem fallacy. Regarding inflation and COVID-19, Trump faults Biden's government by criticizing the competency of Biden without referencing certain programs or statistics.

a-Ad hominem types

By utilizing 'abusive ad hominem' "He has not done a good job. He's done a poor job." Trump blatantly criticizes Biden's competency and performance without offering real facts or addressing particular policies. Furthermore, Trump asserts, "The only jobs he created are for illegal immigrants and bounceback jobs," suggesting that Biden's efforts are not only unsuccessful but detrimental, so undermining his credibility and decision-making capabilities. Poisoning the well ad hominem is also used. Trump asserts that "he created mandates; that was a disaster for our country." Biden's policies are deemed damaging due to the adverse outcomes they are seen to have created, suggesting that his stance on the mandates is faulty because of its influence on the nation.

b-Impoliteness strategies

NP is shown in the frank criticism of Biden's performance: "He has not done a good job. He's done a poor job." His performance was unsatisfactory. Moreover, Trump not only undermines the efficacy of the employment generated but also asserts that Biden's efforts were ineffectual and maybe detrimental. Furthermore, Trump employs PI in the preceding text. Initially, he undermines Biden by implying that they took undue credit for successes that belong to others. "But the thing we never got the credit for, and we should have..." BRI is exemplified by Trump's direct assertions, such as "He has not done a good job," which serve as unequivocal assaults that lack any attempt to mitigate their impact.

c-Speech act types

The data reveals that Trump employs a range of speech acts to establish ideas as facts, so reinforcing his perspective while disparaging the subject. The subsequent delineates the principal categories of speech acts employed:

Assertives, such as "But the thing we never got the credit for, and we should have, is getting us out of that COVID mess" indicate that Trump is asserting a claim regarding a prior event, framing it as a fact. Furthermore, Trump articulates a specific perspective regarding the consequences of the requirements, conveying the speaker's conviction that they were harmful: "He created mandates; that was a disaster for our country." Expressives are also utilized, as in "he's done a poor job," to convey the speaker's displeasure and discontent.

Text three: Biden:

"Well, look, the greatest economy in the world, he's the only one who thinks that, I think. I don't know anybody else who thinks it was great – he had the greatest economy in the world. And, you know, the fact of the matter is that we found ourselves in a situation where his economy – he rewarded the wealthy. He had the largest tax cut in American history, $2 trillion. He raised the deficit larger than any president has in any one term. He's the only president other than Herbert Hoover who has lost more jobs than he had when he began, since Herbert Hoover. The idea that he did something that was significant. And the military – you know, when he was president, they were still killing people in Afghanistan. He didn't

do anything about that. When he was president, we still found ourselves in a position where you had a notion that we were this safe country".

a-Ad hominem types

Initially, Biden employs an abusive ad hominem attack towards Trump by insinuating that his views are crazy or disconnected, rather than engaging with the substantive issue on the economy: "He's the only one who thinks that, I think. I don't know anybody else who thinks it was great." Furthermore, poisoning the well ad hominem is utilized by Biden to personally assail Trump, emphasizing the assertion that the opponent's actions were motivated by a desire to advantage the affluent, suggesting that his economic plans were influenced by self-serving objectives rather than sound economic principles: He compensated the affluent. He implemented the most substantial tax reduction in American history, amounting to $2 trillion. Finally, Biden uses two-wrongs fallacy by criticizing Trump by highlighting hypocrisy, claiming that despite assertions of strength in security and military issues, the opponent neglected to confront the persistent violence throughout his presidency. "and the military-you know, when he was president, they were still killing people in Afghanistan. He didn't do anything about that."

b-Impoliteness strategies

First, BRI involves a straight and unambiguous assault on the recipient, devoid of any attempts to soften the effect. Biden does not endeavor to mitigate the discourteous remark: "He's the only one who thinks that, I think. I don't know anybody else who thinks it was great." This clearly undermines Trump's credibility, claiming that his perspective is both unique and irrational. Secondly, PI is utilized by compromising Trump's good face through actions such as criticizing, ridiculing, or expressing displeasure, thus undermining their need for acceptance and admiration: "He rewarded the wealthy." Furthermore, NI is employed to undermine Trump's negative face desires through actions such as belittling, condescension, or highlighting imposition: "He's the only president other than Herbert Hoover who has lost more jobs than he had when he began, since Herbert Hoover." Furthermore, sarcasm is employed by Biden to convey impolite language infused with an ironic or mocking tone, so underscoring disrespect or criticism: "The greatest economy in the world, he's the only one who thinks that."

c-Speech act types

In accordance with the model employed in this study, Biden articulates multiple assertives to convey convictions and presenting information as factual: "He rewarded the wealthy….He had the largest tax cut in American history, $2 trillion.", "He's the only president other than Herbert Hoover who has lost more jobs than he had when he began, since Herbert Hoover." These are all claims of alleged facts intended to characterize Trump's activities and economic performance. Biden's demeanor and skepticism are apparent in his vocabulary, reflecting an expressive act: "Well, look, the greatest economy in the world, he's the only one who thinks that, I think." This reflects incredulity and criticism.

Text four: Trump:

"And the jobs went down and then they bounced back and he's taking credit for bounceback jobs. You can't do that. He also said he inherited 9 percent inflation. No, he inherited almost no inflation and it stayed that way for 14 months. And then it blew up under his leadership, because they spent money like a bunch of people that didn't know what they were doing. And they don't know what they were doing. It was the worst – probably the

worst administration in history. There's never been. And as far as Afghanistan is concerned, I was getting out of Afghanistan, but we were getting out with dignity, with strength, with power. He got out, it was the most embarrassing day in the history of our country's life".

a-Ad hominem types

The ad hominem fallacy criticizes the competency and intelligence of Biden's administration instead of engaging with their specific economic policies or expenditure choices: "they don't know what they were doing". Another type is two-wrongs fallacy: "It was the worst – probably the worst administration in history. There's never been." Here, Trump implies that Biden's assertion of economic recovery is hypocritical or unfounded. Furthermore, poisoning the well ad hominem is employed in the quotation: "and then it blew up under his leadership, because they spent money like a bunch of people that didn't know what they were doing." The statement implies that the administration's expenditure choices were affected by incompetence or ineffective resource management, indicating a fundamental bias in their leadership approach or policy decisions.

b-Impoliteness strategies

Trump attacks Biden's capabilities, behavior, and leadership by BRI serves as a direct attack that undermines the validity of Biden's assertion regarding employment, devoid of any moderation or softening: "You can't do that." Furthermore, Trump employs PI through ridicule or devaluation of accomplishments: "He's taking credit for bounceback jobs. You can't do that." That action is not permissible. This mocks the subject for asserting credit for an achievement Trump considers unmerited. Another strategy is employed by Trump, NI, by condemnation and dismissiveness: "It blew up under his leadership…" This is a condescending statement that frames Biden's leadership as directly responsible for negative outcomes, thus damaging the target's negative face by suggesting they are incompetent.

c-Speech act types

Several types of SAs can be identified. The quotation uses assertives to state job numbers and Biden's behavior. Trump claims that Biden is taking unwarranted credit for: "and the jobs went down and then they bounced back and he's taking credit for bounceback jobs." Indirect directives are also used to command Biden not to take credit for job rebound: "You can't do that." Trump tells the opponent not to take credit. Third, Trump employs expressives to convey sense of shame or frustration: "it was the most embarrassing day in the history of our country's life." Additionally, Trump uses commissives to indicate a past commitment to a certain Afghanistan withdrawal strategy. Trump compares their strategy to what happened: "I was getting out of Afghanistan, but we were getting out with dignity, with strength, with power."

Text five: Trump:

"Well, he's right: He did beat Medicaid (ph). He beat it to death. And he's destroying Medicare, because all of these people are coming in, they're putting them on Medicare, they're putting them on Social Security. They're going to destroy Social Security. This man is going to single-handedly destroy Social Security. These millions and millions of people coming in, they're trying to put them on Social Security. He will wipe out Social Security. He will wipe out Medicare. So he was right in the way he finished that sentence, and it's a shame. What's happened to our country in the last four years is not to be believed. Foreign countries – I'm friends with a lot of people. They cannot believe what happened to the United

States of America. We're no longer respected. They don't like us. We give them everything they want, and they – they think we're stupid. They think we're very stupid people".

a-Ad hominem types

Trump uses abusive ad hominem to implicitly criticize Biden, insinuating ineptitude or evil intent rather than addressing particular policies or evidence. First, Trump uses an abusive one to make an exaggerated, personal attack of Biden by attributing the complete destruction of social security to their actions. The statement demonizes Biden rather than engaging with their specific policies or decisions in detail: "This man is going to single-handedly destroy Social Security." Trump also uses the poisoning the well ad hominem when he says that Biden's actions are based on certain political or ideological circumstances. It denigrates their policies based on what they think are Biden's personal motivations or biases: "These millions and millions of people coming in, they're trying to put them on Social Security."

b-Impoliteness strategies

First, BRI makes the strong and direct charge that Biden will destroy social security. There is no attempt to use softer wording or a more tactful approach to state the assertion: "This man is going to destroy Social Security on his own." Second, PI is used by Trump makes it sound like other countries think the US and its people are "stupid." This not only insults the intelligence of Americans, but it also attacks Biden's good looks by suggesting that their leadership is to blame for this: "They think we're stupid. They think we're very stupid people." Third, NI focuses on implying that Biden's leadership has led to a loss of foreign respect. Trump is being condescending and questioning Biden's ability to make decisions on their own. It means that other countries look down on the US when the opponent is in charge, which is an implicit threat to the opponent's image: "Foreign countries – I'm friends with a lot of people. They cannot believe what happened to the United States of America. We're no longer respected." Fourth, sarcasm is used to deliver a face-threatening message: "Well, he's right: He did beat Medicaid. He beat it to death." The phrase "he beat it to death" is sarcastic because it initially agrees with the opponent but then contradicts it with a biting "he beat it to death" to imply that the opponent's actions were damaging.

c-Speech act types

In analyzing the quotation, assertives are statements that describe the world and commit the speaker to the truth of the proposition. They aim to convey information or state facts or beliefs. Trump makes an assertive statement by claiming that the person did something harmful to Medicaid. The use of "beat it to death" is a figurative way of emphasizing the alleged negative impact: "He did beat Medicaid. He beat it to death." Another assertive speech act is where Trump is presenting it as a fact that the opponent is causing harm to Medicare: "He's destroying Medicare. Expressives are used by Trump expresses his disapproval or disappointment about the current state of affairs. This is an expressive act that conveys an emotion regarding the described situation: "It's a shame." Here, the speaker expresses disbelief and perhaps indignation about the country's state, indicating a strong emotional reaction to the changes in the past four years: "What's happened to our country in the last four years is not to be believed."

3.4 Result Discussion

Analysis of the selected data reveals that American presidential debates employ ad hominem fallacies 13 times, amounting 29.545% of the total. Impoliteness strategies are used 14 times,

amounting 31.818%. Speech acts are utilized 17 times, amounting 38.636%. The subsequent Table 1 and Figure 2 elucidate:

Table (1): Use and Frequency of Fallacy and Pragmatic Strategies

| Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Fallacy	13	29.545%
Impoliteness	14	31.818%
Speech acts	17	38.636%
Total	44	
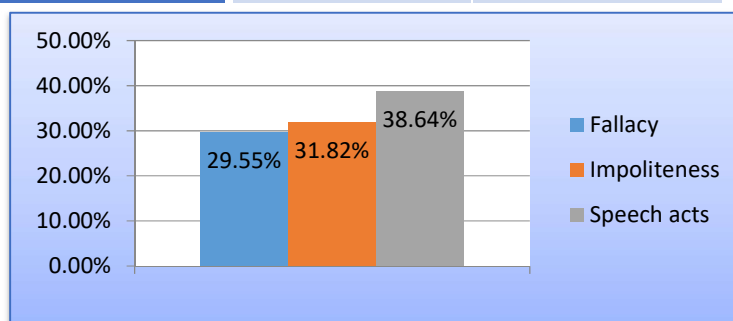
Fig. (2): Percentage of Fallacies and Pragmatic Strategies

Three types of ad hominem fallacies are employed, according to the data analysis: abusive, poisoning the well, and two-wrongs. Here's how they're used: Abuse occurs 6 times, amounting to 46.153%. It comes first, demonstrating the significance of this fallacy in such data. Poisoning the well is the second type in rank. It is utilized 5 times, totaling 38.461%. The fact that it occurs so frequently indicates how important it is to electoral campaigns. The third type of ad hominem is two-wrongs, which accounts for 15.384% of the total. Table 2 Figure 3 and below show:

Table 2: Use and Frequency of Ad Hominem Fallacies

| Ad hominem type	Frequency	Percentage
abusive	6	46.153%
Poisoning the well	5	38.461%
Two-wrongs	2	15.384%
Total	13	
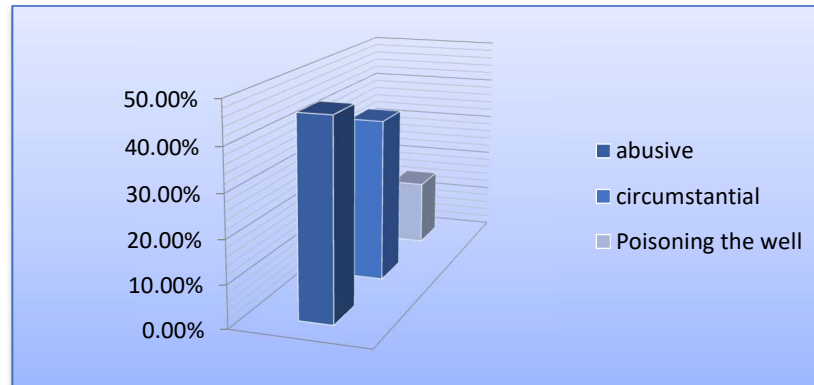
Fig.3:Percentage of Ad Hominem Fallacies

Regarding impoliteness strategies, the study reveals the candidates' strong inclination for employing them in their speeches. With 5 times use and accounting to 29.411%, BRI comes first. Using NI by 5 times, the second strategy comes with a 29.411%. The study reveals the great equal application of these two strategies. This frequency explains why such strategies are so successful in electoral speeches. PI ranks third in frequency. It is used 4 times in accounting to 23.529%. At last, sarcasm is the least common strategy since it is applied 3 times and for 17.647%. The following Table 3 and Figure 4 show:

Table 3: Use and Frequency of Impoliteness Strategies

Impoliteness strategies	Frequency	Percentage
BRI	5	29.411%
NI	5	29.411%
PI	4	23.529%
sarcasm	3	17.647%
Total	17	
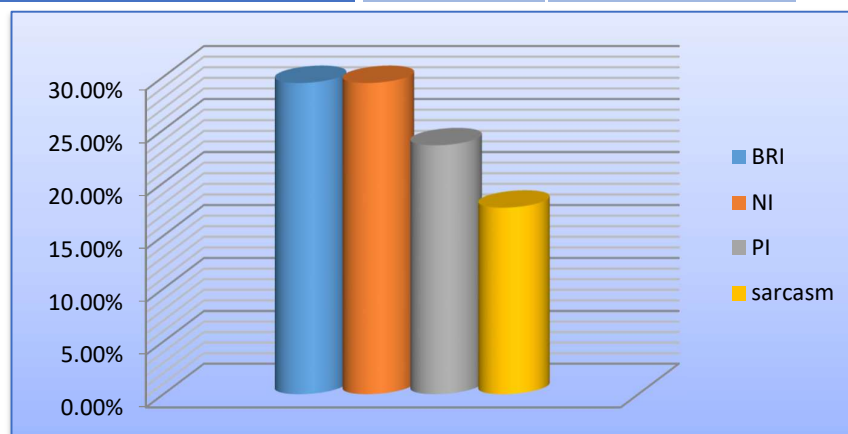
Fig.4: Percentage of Impoliteness Strategies

Regarding speech acts, the study reveals the use of four types of speech acts in electoral presidential debates including assertives, expressives, directives and commissives. Assertives and expressives are highly used, 5 times each and accounting to 35.714%. On the other hand, directives and expressives come second by using them 2 times and accounting to 14.285% each. The study reveals the candidates' preference of the first two types in comparison with the second type. The following Table 4 and Figure 5 show:

Table 4: Use and Frequency of Speech Acts

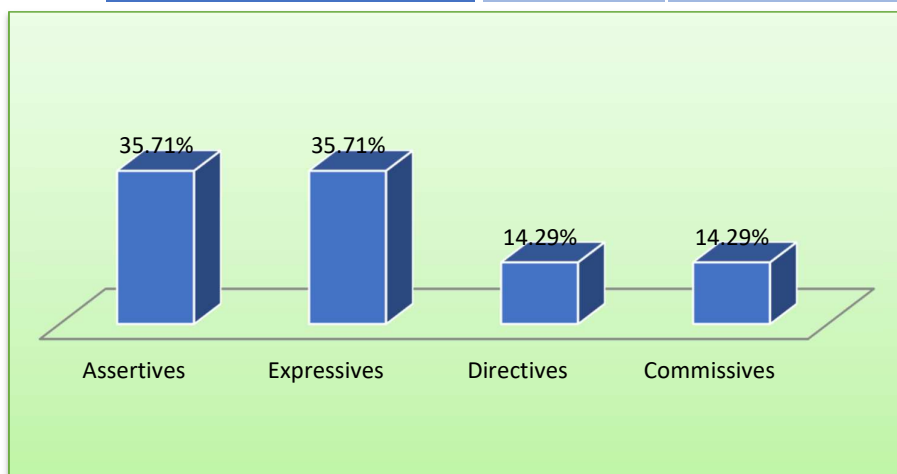| Speech acts	Frequency	Percentage
Assertives	5	35.714%
Expressives	5	35.714%
Directives	2	14.285%
Commissives	2	14.285%
Total	14	

Fig. 5:Percentage of Speech Acts

Conclusions

The analysis of the selected data reaches several conclusions that prove the hypotheses of the study. It is proved that the American presidential debates represent rich linguistic data for the use of ad hominem fallacies. Put differently, the debaters resort to this linguistic means to achieve their electoral goals and achieve the victory they plan for. The analysis also shows that the three types of ad hominem fallacies are employed in the debates despite their frequencies: abusive, poisoning the well and two-wrongs. Hence, both abusive and poisoning the well play an influential role in the presidential debates as shown in Table 2. In addition, the strategies of impoliteness are employed primarily to express these fallacies, including BRI, NI, PI and sarcasm. To the contrary of the last one, the first three ones seem significant in the candidates' speeches as shown in Table 3. Finally, the candidates make use of four types of speech acts to express the fallacies, including

assertives, expressives, directives and commissives. On the other hand, declarative speech acts are not used by American presidential debates. The candidates make use of the first two types more than the last two in their debates as shown in Table 4. Accordingly, these conclusions prove the hypothesis.

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