A Pragmatic Analysis of Reactions to Rumors on COVID-19 in Iraq

Assist. Lect. Riyadh Ameen Husein⁎
Ministry of Education / Ninawa Fine Arts Institute
riyat1987kazan@gmail.com

Abstract

A rumor is an unverified piece of information that often appear during general health crisis, conflict or war. Studying pragmatic functions of rumors on COVID-19 and vaccination are almost rare. Speech acts, which are a part of pragmatics, mean to perform actions by uttering words or phrases in a certain context. This study investigates how media rumors are functioning as pragmatic messages that influence the modern communication. Additionally, an attention is paid as well to the strategies of impoliteness that appear by the commenters as response to the rumor posted. This research hypothesizes that people use less impoliteness strategies as a reaction to rumor on general health. The second hypothesis assumes that people use only "requesting" as a form of "directive speech act" when the subject matter is about general health.
Keywords: Rumor, Speech acts, Impoliteness, Communication.

⁎ **Corresponding Author**: Riyadh Ameen Husein**, Email:** riyat1987kazan@gmail.com
   Affiliation: Ministry of Education / Ninawa Fine Arts Institute **-** Iraq

تحليل تداولي لردود الأفعال تجاه الشائعات حول كوفيد 19 في العراق

م.م. رياض أمين حسين

مديرية تربية نينوى

الــمستخلــص

الشائعة هي معلومة لم يتم التحقق منها والتي غالبًا ما تظهر أثناء الأزمات الصحية العامة أو الصراعات أو الحروب. إن دراسة الوظائف العملية للشائعات حول كوفيد-19 والتطعيم أمر نادر الحدوث. أفعال الكلام، التي هي جزء من التداولية، تعني القيام بأفعال من خلال نطق كلمات أو عبارات في سياق معين. تبحث هذه الدراسة عن كيفية عمل الشائعات الإعلامية كرسائل عملية تؤثر على التواصل الحديث. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتم التركيز أيضًا إلى استراتيجيات غير المهذبة التي يظهرها المعلقون ردًا على الشائعة المنشورة حول التطعيم. يفترض هذا البحث أن الناس يستخدمون استراتيجيات غير المهذبة بشكل قليل كرد فعل على الشائعات المتعلقة بالصحة العامة. اما الفرضية الثانية تنص على أن الناس يستخدمون صيغة "الطلب" فقط كشكل من أشكال "فعل الكلام التوجيهي" عندما يكون الموضوع حول الصحة العامة.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Buck (2002: 26) communication is of two types, either verbal (linguistically) or nonverbal (gesturers) communication.   The former is the technique of conveying utterances via words, phrases or sentences. Whereas the latter is done by using gesture, facial expression or eye contact to communicate certain messages.

Communication is one of the essential components of human existence in a community. Both the production and interpretation of particular meanings are parts of human communication. One of the fundamental communicative signs in human psychic facticity is rumor. Communication is generally involves the construction and transmission of facts. However, rumors state that communication contains a variety of "non-factual" pragmatic functions which are rooted in human interaction as well (Zubiaga & Ji, 2014: 37).

It is obvious that rumors have their pragmatic messages to structure the interrelations of the social and communication systems. Therefore, the field scientist may have another way to gauge the degree of productive social interaction in a community by using rumours. Conversely, certain rumours might be the product of fiction. Instead of relying only on fact or fiction (Bugge, 2017: 4).

The discipline of pragmatics holds that communication encompasses more than just words. The significance of the words or phrases themselves is not as profound as the utterances

that speakers make throughout conversation. As a result, pragmatics according to Yule (1996: 3) is more interested in examining and analyzing what individuals mean when they speak than with determining what the sentences and words in those statements could represent on their own. Since pragmatics and the context in which something is being expressed are closely related, it is essential that speakers focus on the context. According to Leech (1996: 6), the study of pragmatics focusses on meaning that is pertaining to the contexts of the utterances. In the scope of pragmatics, some factors like speech acts, presupposition, context, and deixis, should be considered because these factors are to elicit some of the pragmatic and social value of specific goals that go beyond the utterances.

Facebook presents a significant opportunity for researchers to observe how individuals communicate inside a social network and thus to analyze a wide variety of human behavior in a social setting (Wilson, Gosling, and Graham, 2012).

1.2 Aims of the Study

1. To examine the types of rumor messages generated in social media as a   response to the falsely reported "Corona virus vaccine causes

   infertility."

2. To determine which categories of speech acts are most commonly

   utilized by Iraqi Facebook users.

3. To investigate the strategies of impoliteness occurred in rumor.

4. To highlight the impact of topic on the production of speech act and

   impoliteness strategies among the Iraqi Facebook users.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the most common kinds of speech acts appeared in rumor?

2. Is there any room for the strategies of impoliteness to be used in

   rumor?

3. Does the type of rumor affect to the production of speech acts and

   impoliteness strategies among Iraqi Facebook users?

2. MODEL OF ANALYSIS AND DATA COLLECTION

There are two distinct analytical methods that serve this research: descriptive and qualitative methods. By using a descriptive method, one can elaborate viewpoints, emotions, rude behaviour, etc. This technique is followed by a quantitative strategy that is likewise relevant to this research in order to generate precise percentages and statistics of Searle's taxonomies and the strategies of impoliteness used.

To analyze the data, the researcher is adopted an eclectic model composed of Searle's (1969) taxonomies of speech act as well as Culpeper's (1996) strategies of impoliteness. A total of (82) comments were gathered from social media platform (Facebook) as reactions to a rumor about COVID-19 pandemic entitled "Corona virus vaccine causes infertility"

The data were categorized and analyzed according to the model suggested by Searle (1969) and Culpeper (1996) and then the findings and the types of messages created by the rumor are presented in tables to be discussed together.

2.1 What is Rumor?

Rumours are the antithesis of facts, which are verifiable pieces of information backed by data, while rumours are unverified pieces of information that lack any supporting evidence. Since rumor is not supported by any data, it is usually quite exaggerated piece of information that can be far away from truth. The ability to spread disinformation for breaking news presents another additional difficult where new pieces of information are frequently available piecemeal, habitually starts as rumor that has not been verified information. These rumours are then spreading among a huge numbers of participants, influencing on how events are perceived and understood, despite being not confirmed. Rumours on social media that are verified later to be untrue may have detrimental and negative impact for individuals and community as well (Zubiaga &Ji, 2014: 2). For example, a rumor was spread in 2013 which says that "The white house has been boomed and Barack Obama is hurt". Hackers tweeted this rumor from the Associated Press account. The AP then said that the rumour about blowing up the White House was completely untrue and that the AP Twitter account had been compromised.

For decades, rumours have been employed extensively and in a variety of ways during battles and their use to undermine enemy morale is well-known. It is perfect for such an aim to spread hostility. For example, German agents in France disrupted morale by interchangeably spreading rumors about hopeful (optimistic) and gloomy (pessimistic) in such a quick succession where the Frenches were nearly very much confused to defend themselves adequately. (Knapp, 1944: 28).

As previously said, a rumor is a kind of knowledge which is not confirmed yet; as a result, its veracity is still up for debate while it is in circulation. It is described as "unverified information which is spread during the absence of formal confirmation till a reliable source or evidence supports it." (e.g., People with a reliable reputation) or trustworthy bases might be reliable in a certain situation, e.g., eyewitnesses" (Zubiaga et al., 2018: 2-3).

Rumour, according to DiFonzo & Bordia (2007: 13), is defined as "an unsubstantiated, strategically relevant assertion of information that circulates, in situations of uncertainty, danger, or possible threat and serves to assist people understand and manage risk." To certain extent, this definition is linked with the definition given by Oxford English Dictionary (OED) as a major source, that defines a rumor as "A presently circulating report or story with questionable or ambiguous veracity" or according to Merriam Webster Dictionary (MWD), which defines it as "a current remark or story but still lacks a recognised source of confirmation."

In all these definitions, the unconfirmed or the ambiguous piece of information may prove to be true, or partially or completely incorrect; it may stay unresolved (Zubiaga A. et al., 2018: 2). Similar to this argument, Bugge (2017: 8) assumes rumours are frequently viewed as idle chatter or gossip, and often have negative connotations. So they are considered to be neither intrinsically good nor evil. But they can be genuine, false, or a combination of the two.

2.3 Functions of Rumors

One's health or life may be threatened by rumours, much as in the case of natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, and nuclear mishaps. It may also serve other purposes including amusement, granting wishes, forming and preserving alliances, and upholding social standards, but these are ancillary. (DiFonzo, N. and Bordia, P. (2007: 15).

Rumours spread in direct proportion to ambiguity; the more unclear the situation, the more readily rumours will spread. Additionally, rumours proliferate quickly in settings that do not deter them. A rumour spreads more widely the more attention it receives. Rumours will quickly gather attention if the culture of the area—whether it be a home, institution, or workplace—supports them and there is no system in place to discourage them. Usually, rumours begin when people are attempting to make sense of a situation that is unclear. For instance, if one of five friends who regularly go for morning jogs begins to miss the jog for several days in a row, a rumour may begin that the buddy is absent because they are unwell (Bugge, 2017: 34)

People begin speculating about a situation based on their experiences, to the best of their knowledge, and before you know it, a rumour has begun. While some rumours can damage a person's or an entity's reputation, others are innocuous. Some rumours are spread with the goal of harming the object or person's reputation. The person who starts the rumours has multiple goals in mind (Knapp, 1944: 54). The rumour starter may start a rumour for the reasons listed below:

1. To Feel Better

The person spreading the rumour may be depressed about a personal shortcoming and, in an attempt to boost their own self-esteem, spread a rumour that disparages another person.

2. To Fit in

The person spreading the rumour might be trying to blend in with a new group, so they might try to seem more informed than they actually are.

3. To Gain Attention

A person who has news that clarifies a confusing issue is sure to draw attention. A rumour may be started by someone who wants to attract attention.

4. To Improve their Power/Position

By spreading a rumour that damages their rival's reputation, the rumour starter may increase their influence and strengthen their position.

5. To Take Revenge

The individual who starts a rumour may do so out of revenge, seeking to exact revenge on the target of the rumour.

 6. To Pass Time

Some people create rumours to pass the time while they're bored!

2.4 Classification of Rumor

A taxonomy of rumours was established by Knapp (1944: 23–24), and it can be broadly divided into three categories:

1. The Pipe-dream (wish rumor): Such rumors convey the wishes to reflect the hopes of the individuals in the society. These rumors can be commonly identified with "wishful thinking" as illustrated in the flowing example: "The government of Canada is reportedly going to permit earthquake sufferers to work in Canada. How can I get to Canada?"

2. The Bogie rumor (fear rumor): The pipe-dream rumour is exactly the opposite of this. The bogie is fundamentally based on fears and anxieties, much like the mirrors of hopes and wants. Bogie or fright can range from grim, pessimistic rumours to the panic rumours that social psychologists are so accustomed to. A typical example of this type of rumor is: 'If anyone wishes to go back from Germany to Turkey, he will be sent to Assad in Damascus'. The most common kind of rumours are those about fear. They enable people to react by either defending themselves against the emotional effects of such an incident or by engaging in physical activity.

3. The Wedge-driving (aggression rumor): The term "wedge-driving rumour" refers to the way it can split organisations and break loyalties. Spreading anger or violence is the primary driving force here. They frequently target outside groups and reflect prejudices or threats to the community. The following is a typical example of aggression: "Compared to Syrian refugees, Iraqi refugees receive less assistance."

3. SPEECH ACTS THEORY

The field of speech act theory springs from pragmatics. This theory focuses on how utterances can be utilized to perform various activities. It is used in the fields of linguistics, psychology, philosophy, law, literature and even the development of artificial intelligence. Speech act theory is more than just a way to identify language-based behaviours. It also looks at the elements that affect how well these initiatives work. These elements consist of the social environment, the interpretation of the hearer, the intentions of speaker, as well as to the information that both parties share (Searle, 1969, p. 24- 67).

Austin, who in (1975) introduced a theory of speech act in his book "How to Do Things with Words", then the American philosopher J.R. Searle came to develop this theory. It consists of three levels or components of utterances:

1. **Locutionary acts** (generating certain linguistic signs or sounds that have a certain meaning and reference that the listener may understands).
2. **Illocutionary acts** (saying anything with an intention, like informing).
3. **Perlocutionary acts** (saying something that commits the listener to act).

Austin (1962, p. 15) claimed that utterances frequently serve as actions that change the environment we live in. Saying "I apologise" for example does more than just communicate

regret; it also performs the social act of expressing an apology, which may alter the speaker-hearer relationship.

There are numerous types of behaviours linked to the utterance of the speaker in a typical communication situation, where a speaker, a hearer, and an utterance are involved. Usually, the speaker moves his tongue and jaw and makes noises. Additionally, he will typically have done a few things in class, such as to educate, annoy, or to disturb his/her colleagues. The speaker will typically make things like making statements, asking questions, giving orders, delivering reports, greeting, describing, remarking, commenting, ordering, criticising, apologising, censure, approving, welcoming, promising, expressing approval or regret, and warning. These categories are what Austin called "illocutionary acts" and this is what the present study concerned with (Searle, 1971).

3.1 Searle's Taxonomy

Searle (1969) comes up with five categories of illocutionary speech acts based on performed functions:

1. **Assertives**: To inform, committing the listener to the veracity of the proposition, in another way, the speaker asserts a proposition to be true by making use of verbs like; affirming, believing, concluding, denying, reporting, statements, describing, classifying, and explaining.

2. **Directives**: To direct or commit the listener to do something. The speaker is trying to get the hearer to act in a certain way or to behave in such a way including asking, commanding, begging, challenge, dare, inviting, insisting, and requesting.

3. **Commissive**: The speaker is making a commitment about himself to a future plan of action via utilizing verbs like; promising, making guarantee, contracting, pledging, swearing, vowing, undertaking, and warrant.

4. **Expressives**: Is to express the inner feelings of the speaker towards a situation, by apologizing, appreciating, congratulating, deploring, detesting, regretting, thanking, welcoming.

5. **Declaratives**: The speaker changes something in the real world including a status or an object by producing utterances, for instance; "I now declare you husband and wife", or "I name this child..."

3.2 What is Impoliteness?

Impoliteness according to (Culpeper, 1996: 350), is "using certain strategies that have the opposite impact, and to make social disharmony". Damaging face, is the focus of these tactics. This definition was first reflection of the notion of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson. According to Culpeper, being impolite is not about fostering social harmony but about attacking the addressee's goals, whether they are positive or negative. This definition is later expanded upon and rewritten by Culpeper et al (2003: 1546) to be as "face-attacking communication techniques that lead to social discord and conflict".

Since the majority of the study on politeness is done in the field of socio-pragmatics, therefore, the study of impoliteness should be done here too, because the aim of impoliteness is directed to "explain communicative behavior". It makes sense that the area would also produce the seeming

antithesis of politeness. In addition to this, impoliteness aligns with socio-pragmatics (Culpeper, 2011a: 5).

Impoliteness, as Culpeper (2011a) claims, is able to be examined in a number of fields, such as business, media, history, psychology, sociology, and literary studies, he claims that rudeness occurs during social interactions. According to the hypothesis put forward by Brown and Levinson, an act is considered impolite if it targets the addressee's face; on the other hand, any conduct that aims to protect the addressee's face is considered polite. Impoliteness is defined as a deliberate, premeditated conduct that targets the face of another person (Bousfield, 2008).

According to Leech (2014: 219), a theory of politeness, which is obviously linked to impoliteness and actually the antithesis of politeness, is the best place to start when developing a theory of impoliteness." This idea is contrasting with Bousfield (2008), Wieczorek (2013), and Bassis (2914), When Culpeper mentioned that "being impolite is a communication tactic used to damage someone's face, which leads to social discord and conflict", he was doing precisely this in his first seminal article (Culpeper et al. 2003: 1546).

However, Culpeper's (1996, 2005) established a method of impoliteness strategies in order to investigate the various forms and representations of impoliteness expressions and to explore the kinds and the functions of impoliteness. Culpeper makes use of politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson to alters them for describing impoliteness. Consequently, Culpeper (1996, 2003 and 2005) established a categorization of the impoliteness strategies as the following:

1. Bald on record impoliteness

The Face Threatening Act (FTA) is carried out in situations where face is not minimised or unimportant in a straightforward, plain, and succinct manner. It's critical to differentiate this tactic from the documented Bald of Brown and Levinson. This strategy, according to Brown and Levinson, is a tactic for being courteous in certain, relatively particular situations. For instance, when the speaker has more social power than the listener (e.g; "Stop watching TV" said by a father to a child), when there is no damage to the listener's face (e.g, "pick up the phone" or "Do sit down"), or when face concerns are suspended in an emergency. Little face is at risk in any of these situations, and more significantly, the speaker does not intent to assault to the hearer's face.

2. Positive impoliteness

Employing the tactic meant to attack the listener's positive face desires. A positive face is everyone's wish to be accepted, liked, or valued by others.

- Ignoring, snubbing the others- to fail acknowledging the presence of others.
- Excluding someone out of an activity.
- Disassociate from the other, such as to deny relationship or shared some interests with others; or avoiding to sit with.
- Being disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic.
- Employing unsuitable identity markers, such as utilizing title and surname in a close partnership, or a nickname in a distant relationship.
- Employing cryptic, confidential terminology, like to mystify others with jargon, using a code known in the group but not the target.
- Seeking disagreement, selecting a sensitive subject
- Making others uncomfortable, by talking too much, joking, and using small talks.
- To use taboo expressions by swearing, or by using abusive or profane language.
- Calling others' names, by using disparaging nominations, etc

3. Negative impoliteness

The application of the strategy is meant to harm the listener's negative facial desires. Negative face is the desire for everybody to be independent and free from external pressures.

- Frighten, install beliefs that detrimental actions will occur to him/her/

 them

- Concerned, scorning or ridiculing – emphasizing self power.

- Being contemptuous

- T not treating others honestly.

- Belittling others (such as using diminutive words)

- Invading others' position either literally (e.g; position yourself close to

 the other than the relationship permits) or metaphorically (e.g; asking or

 speaking about too intimate information)

- Associating others explicitly with a negative aspect – personalizing by

 using "I" and "you". Put the other's indebtedness on record.

4. Sarcasm (Mock Politeness)

The FTA is conducted by using blatantly fake politeness techniques, which are only surface realisations. For example; "What an intelligent boy you are..!" said to someone not smart as a way of mocking at him/her.

5. Withhold politeness

Whenever it is expected, politeness is not present. Brown and Levinson discuss how the absence or avoiding etiquette work can harm one's face.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Before analyzing the data, some points should be illustrated. According to the interpretation of impoliteness, too explicit words and phrases are used by some participants. They are describing their own views in an offensive way which are considered taboo expressions in Iraqi community. It is improper to discuss such expressions here, therefore the writer has removed them from the collection of data.

Searle's (1969) taxonomy and Culpeper's (1996, 2005) strategies of impoliteness are intended to serve as a model for the current study. The data will be analyzed according to the model mentioned to investigate whether these strategies and speech act taxonomies are applicable to the data or not. Finally, these strategies and classifications of speech act that are found will be clarified by providing examples that are representative of each type of the categories. Afterward, the results will be discussed in the light of the kind of rumor in language altogether with the impact of topics to generate rumor.

1. Assertives + Positive impoliteness

Assertives (representatives) speech acts involve speeches which obligate the speaker to the proposition's veracity. These utterances are based on what the speaker has observed about certain things. A clear extract of assertive speech act is " احنا اصلا ما عدنا ثقه بكلامكم انتو فشـله " (We no longer trust your words. You are a failure). In this comment, the speaker is trying to get the listener to form a belief of denying the post about "Corona virus vaccine causes infertility". He/she uses his/her own proposition to be assessed as true in order to constitute his identity and to maintain his personal self-image. The subject matter is of importance and the speaker's health is threatened, insecure and he/she is highly stressed about the posted rumor. Consequently, the speaker makes use of positive impoliteness when he/she assesses an offensive response towards the rumor. This strategy is used by the commenter to display his disagreement with any other participants that may agree with the rumor posted.

Another assertive speech act can be noted by the following extract:

"يسبب العقم والايـدز وضـمور العضـلات" which can be translated to "Corona virus vaccine causes infertility, AIDS, and muscular dystrophy". A statement of assertion, conclusion, and description is represented by the participant based on facts or just on his/her own opinion about health condition of humanbeings.

2. Directives + Impoliteness Strategies

Most of our data are found to be directive speech acts. For example; a speaker's response " هو وين الحكومـة وويـن وزيرالصـحة مـن التهـريج اللـى جـاي يحصـل " (Where is the government and where is the Minister of Health concerning the current clowning..?) is used as a request for aid from the government. This act occurs when the speaker requests the listener to do something for his/her benefit. In fact, directive speech act is easy to identify by the existence of the question mark in the writing, but unfortunately the language of social media is almost ungrammatical and does not have punctuation marks. It is obvious that the meaning of the comment is a request for assistance even it does not contain a question mark.

The commenter uses "derogatory nominations" as a strategy of positive impoliteness to call the Minster of health and the whole government. Such strategy is designed when a speaker wants to attack and harm the addressee's face, thereby causes social conflict and disharmony.

Another example of directive speech act is " هل الصينى يسبب عقم لكبار السن؟ "

(Does the Chinese vaccine cause infertility in elderly people?). Similar to the previous comment, the speaker requests the hearer to answer his/her question about the Chinese vaccine. However, any speech acts urges someone else to do something comes under the umbrella of directive speech act.

3. Expressives

An expressive speech act appears in utterances whenever someone expresses his/her inner feeling (psychological state) toward the hearer. Expressive speech acts contain apologizing, greeting, thanking, regretting, condoling, congratulating, complaining and welcoming. Obviously, the data includes six examples of expressive speech acts. The extract " يا ريت ما اخذت الجرعة اصـلا " (I wish I had never taken the dosage) illustrates the speaker's feeling by "regretting" about him/herself. In

other words, the speaker makes use of expressive speech act to express his regret for he took the dosage of vaccine. Another example is noted in our data. The expression " بالشفاء العاجـل للـذي تلقـى اللقـاح " (Get well soon to those who received the vaccine) is the speaker's main goal towards the hearer in order to express emotional attitude and to establish emotional connection.

However, expressive speech acts are common in social media because the participants often greet, welcome and condole the others at the beginning of a comment.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is crucial to have the ability to figure out the utterance's hidden messages, so that achieving better understanding of the utterances is by comprehending pragmatics and speech acts. One of the instruments by which a society creates and maintains its norms of behavior is called rumor. In order to investigate the effect of rumor on the social production of speech acts and impoliteness, the researcher begins to tabulate the responses used by Iraqi Facebook participants. The following table provides clarification of the frequency of Searle's taxonomies and Culpeper's strategies of impoliteness.

No	Searle's Taxonomies	Frequency	Impoliteness Strategies	Frequency
1	Assertives	31	Bald on Record	0
2	Directives	45	Positive	19
3	Expressives	6	Negative	0
4	Commissives	0	Sarcasm	1
5	Declarations	0	Withhold politeness	0
Total		82		20

Table (1): Total Numbers of Searle's Taxonomies & impoliteness Strategies.

Starting with Searle's taxonomies, it is found that from 82 responses directive speech act occurred 45 times in the data. As it was stated at the beginning, one of the objectives of the research is to figure out the most frequent type of speech acts used, the table above reveals that directive act was the most common speech act among Facebook participants. The high occurrence of this act reflects participants' desires to be informed whatever necessary about epidemic disease "Corona". Consequently, the participants used directive speech act on as an instrument for requesting facts and instructions about Corona vaccine. Invoking Allah, making a request, asking to do something, giving an advice, making an order, and other situations are good examples of directive speech acts that are noticed in our data.

Isnaniah conducted a research in (2015) by which Directive is the most frequent and dominant category of speech acts employed by Woody in the movie of Toy story 3 (2013:38). It involves that directive plays a significant part in the movie. In the film, direction plays a

significant part. The phrases "asking," "advising," "begging," "forbidding," "ordering," "requesting," "recommending," "demanding," "insisting," and "permitting" are the ones that Woody uses the most. It is obvious that directive is mostly used act to communicate in the movie.

The second most used category was assertive speech acts. These utterances occurred 31 times in the data which are mainly used to convey information to be judged as true or false based on the speaker's belief or observation. Examples of assertive speech acts include statements from our data like; " طالما قلتو هاكذ يبقى خطر على الانجاب " (As long as you said this, there is still a danger to procreation) or "اللقاح يسبب مصايب" (The vaccine causes calamities). These propositions are represented by the speaker as factual beliefs that may potentially influence the hearer's knowledge.

Expressive is the least frequent speech act occurred in the data, only 6 comments were noticed to express psychological state or emotional attitude. Examples found in the data like; "بالشفاء العاجل للذي تلقى اللقاح" (I wish I had never taken the dosage) or "الله خير الحافظين" (Allah is the best of protectors).

Commissive speech acts did not occur in the data in that it appears when the speaker is committed by utterances to some future course of actions like; threatening, promising, offering. Therefore, commissive speech act has nothing to do with such data. Instead, enhancing social connections and creating relationships with the others are essential to maintain.

As illustrated in the table above, the main speech act of "Declarations" is not included in this section because it is never appeared in the data. This is because as Searle (1969) describes declaration acts are utterances used to change the reality. According to Searle, declarations are typically made by people with official power, such as ministers, lawyers, and juries. For example; when a priest declares "I pronounce you husband and wife", a change of the situation has taken place by this declaration of speech act. In another words, something has changed in the real world. Consequently, the participants communicate in spontaneously about Corona vaccine and the relationship among them is equal, so there is no need to produce utterances that change their realities.

With regard to the strategies of impoliteness, it is found that these strategies are approximately abandoned. As it is hypothesized in the abstract above, there is only a small room left to use impoliteness as response to rumor. As illustrated in the above table, positive impoliteness occurred 19 times as direct messages to seek disagreement, show lack of interest, and sympathy with the situation. This means that people often tend to avoid impolite forms of messages and avoid sarcasm in such sensitive cases, especially when the topic discussed is "Epidemic" such as Covid-19. Instead, they tend to be more accurate in the production of their utterances as much as possible. So the participants have a strong desire to feel better and waiting for certain benefits to be gained. As a result, the commenters hide impoliteness strategies and take more attention to the aspects of social services and to establish common ground. The second hypothesis is confirmed as well, in that people make use of only "requesting" as one of the forms of "directive speech act" because the subject matter is about general health. More precisely, the aim of "requesting directive speech act" is to have the listener/hearer provide answers and instructions about Covid-19 pandemic. In the effort of raising awareness of general health, people

in such circumstances paid more attention to the questions about the disease which is not accurately diagnosed.

6. CONCLUSION

The rumor that "Corona vaccine causes infertility" is based on a disproven idea launched by a German doctor named Dr. Wolfgang Woodarge, and it was transmitted through various social media outlets. In cultures with large attention to health affair, people are assumed to follow the falsely reported rumors about diseases because they are not in touch with reality. Rumor is accepted as truth till reassertion is given. In this scene, one should have kept in mind two things to reinforce his/her beliefs, namely: raising awareness and knowledge building. Thus, rumors serve a variety of pragmatic messages, such as indoctrination, direct and indirect speech acts, covert communication, attitude expression, and more. Few words or utterances could be used and interpreted as strategies of impoliteness. So misdirecting words or utterances could damage the hearer's face and thus produce disharmony among participants. By grasping the norms and idiomatic expressions of Iraqi culture, the pragmatic message of the utterances could be determined as a result of performing speech acts. The goal of speech acts is to raise consciousness of the participants to avoid misinterpretation. Nevertheless, speech act is not restricted to maintain harmonious relations, it can be used to fulfill the function of impoliteness by directly using expressions.

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The Appendix

لقاح فايروس كورونا يسبب العقم Post: Corona virus vaccine causes infertility			
no	Reactions to Rumor	Searle's Taxonomy	Impoliteness Strategies
1	احنا اصلا ما عدنا ثقه بكلامكم انتو فشله	Assertives	Positive
2	طالما قلتو هاكذ يبقى خطر على الانجاب	Assertives	-------
3	اخدته وحملت	Assertives	Positive
4	هو اشون بعد ما كان بدون ضرر للحوامل والمرضعات وفجأة هيجي بقى يعمل عقم	Directives	Positive
5	انتوا اصلا ما تعرفون تأثيره على الناس العاديه حتى تنصحون بيه الفئات الخاصة	Assertives	Positive
6	الشهادة لله اللقاح غير امن نهائيا انا محجوز بالمستشفى بسببه يعمل مشاكل في الدم الحمد لله علي كل حال وحسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل	Assertives	-------
7	بالشفاء العاجل للذي تلقى اللقاح	Expressives	-------
8	يسبب العقم والايدز وضمور العضلات	Assertives	-------
9	طيب الناس اللى اخدت اللقاح صالها سنتين ولهسة عايشة تجي هسه تكول اللقاح يسبب العقم	Assertives	--------
10	هل صاحب عملية قلب مفتوح يكدر يأخذ اللقاح؟	Directives	-------
11	بلا زحمة عندي استفسار انا جتلي رساله حتى اخذ اللقاح . هل ضروري اخد اللقاح ارجو الافاده	Directives	--------

12	يسبب جدرى القرود	Assertives	-------
13	لو سمحتم انا اريد اعرف اللقاح مال فايزر وين اكو محتاجه ضروري	Directives	------
14	تابعوني لو تريدون تعرفون عن هذا الموضوع	Directives	------
15	انا صارلي شهرين من اخذت الجرعه شسوي هسه؟	Directives	--------
16	لو سمحتو اني اخذت فايزر شنو لازم اسوي ؟	Directives	------
17	قبل كم يوم جتلي رسالة لتلقي الجرعة 2 من اللقاح	Assertives	-------
18	هل الصينى يسبب عقم لكبار السن؟	Directives	-------
19	حصلت على الجرعة الثانية فى ديسمبر الماضى ومن وقته وعندى تنميل مستمر مكان الحقنة ويمتد للذراع كله ماهو العلاج ؟؟	Directives	------
20	الله خير الحافظين	Expressives	-----
21	هل يمكن الحمل بعد أخذ القاح بكم شهر؟ نرجو الرد	Directives	-------
22	انا اخذت الجرعتين الاولى والثانية سينوفارم الصينى شنو الحل؟	Directives	-----
23	إللى ترضع تأخذ اللقاح لو لا؟	Directives	-------
24	فعلا منتشر اشاعه عن الجرعه انه يسبب العقم للسيدات .. كلام فارغ	Assertives	Positive
25	انا ما اخذت اللقاح الثاني أصلا. هم راح اصير عقيم؟	Directives	------
26	هل الجرعه التنشيطية للشباب ام لكبار السن فقط	Directives	------
27	انا اخذت لقاح فايزر هل يصير الحمل؟ وهل الجنين راح يكون عندو تشوهات ارجو الرد ضرورى	Directives	-------
28	بلا زحمة اشون اعرف اماكن للقاح؟	Directives	------
29	العقم ب اطفالناا مو بينا	Assertives	------
30	اريد رقم تليفون لتلقي اللقاح	Directives	-------
31	انتو موافقين ناخذ اللقاح ؟	Directives	------
32	هل الخبر بيه نوع محدد من اللقاح لو اي نوع ؟	Directives	------
33	انا بالمانيا وما اعرف اخد اللقاح لو لا	Directives	------
34	اني مااخذت الجرعة	Assertives	------
35	إنتشر كلمة اللقاح يسبب عقم معظم الشعب لم يأخذو ولا جرعه ويزورن الشهادات بأنهم تلقو ومختومه والمشكله الشعب لا كمامه ولا كحول	Assertives	------
36	اريد لينك الحصول على شهادة التطعيم من فيروس كورونا	Directives	--------
37	يحيا العراق	Expressives	Sarcasm
38	لقاح كورونا مو امن على الام والجنين وتسبب مشاكل فى الحمل .. اى وحده حامل خلي لا تاخد الزفت هذا	Assertives	Positive
39	لا تخافون راح تجيبوا ولاد	Assertives	Positive
40	جهزوا لقاح الجدرى بقى وعوفوكم من كورونا الموضه هسه جدرى القرود	Directives	Positive
41	الله خير حافظ وهو ارحم الراحمين	Expressives	-------
42	انتو لي هسه جاي تفكرون بموضوع اللقاح , الي اخترعوا اللقاح هسه يفكرون بشى جديد حتى يمشون بضاعتهم	Assertives	Positive
43	اللقاح يسبب مصايب	Assertives	-------
44	هل وزارة الصحة قامت بعمل تجارب سريرية لذلك؟	Directives	-------
45	اللقاحات غلط بالحمل وانتو بنفسكم كنتو تقولون هاكذ . لحقتو تعملو دراسات عليها بهاي السرعة	Directives	Positive
46	خلاص أفلام كورونا خلصت.... جهزوا لقاح فيروس جدرى القرود....جدول الأمراض والفيروسات لمنظمة الصحة العالمية والأمم		

	المتحدة ورجال الإقتصاد ورجال الصحة الماسونيين فى كل دول العالم لتدمير البشريه...اللهم أحبط أعمالهم وشتت جمعهم وإجعل مكرهم وتدبيرهم فى تدميرهم يارب العالمين...اللهم آمين	Assertives	Positive
47	بناتى تؤام مصابين بمرض " ضمور العضلات الشوكي.. ارجو المساعدة	Directives	Positive
48	نعم يسبب العقم ولو كره الكارهون	Assertives	--------
49	فروا الى الله	Directives	--------
50	شنو لازم نسوي بعدما اخذنا اللقاح	Directives	--------
51	انا اخذت اللقاح هل استمر باخذ الجرعه الثالثه	Directives	--------
52	يصير اللي ترضع تأخذ لقاح؟	Directives	-------
53	ياريت واحد يرد علينا وينطينا موقف الدكاتره والممرضين من هذا الخبر	Directives	-------
54	صارلي اكثر من ٦ شهور من اخذت الجرعة الثانية و ما اعرف بعد. أرجو الإفادة	Directives	--------
55	اخدته وحملت الحمد لله ربي يكمل على خير	Assertives	Positive
56	عقم ايش كل اللي اعرفهم اخذوه وحملوا بعدين	Assertives	Positive
57	لو سمحتم انا اخذت الأولى والثانية شنو المفروض اعمل؟	Directives	--------
58	اخدت جرعتين قبل 9 اشهر هل اخد الجرعه الثالثة لو ابطل	Directives	--------
59	واللي اخذ اللقاح شنو لازم يسوي؟	Directives	------
60	طيب والحامل	Directives	------
61	حرام عليكم راح تتحاسبون عليها والله	Expressives	Positive
62	انا حجزت عالجرعة بس ما اجتني رسالة والحمد لله ما اخذت	Assertives	--------
63	الاشاعات اللي كنا نخاف منها صارت حقيقة	Assertives	------
64	وبعدين بقي	Directives	------
65	قبل يومين اخذت الجرعة	Assertives	------
66	انا اخذت الجرعه الأولى لازم اخذ الثانية هم؟	Directives	------
67	انا الشهاده مال التطعيم مالي ضاعت منين اطلع وحدة؟	Directives	------
68	ينطون لقاح للناس وبعدين يكولون يسبب عقم	Assertives	Positive
69	أنا اجاني مسج بس لا رحت ولا اخذت	Assertives	------
70	ياريت ما اخذت الجرعة اصلا	Expressives	------
71	السلام عليكم الي اخذ الجرعه الأولى يبطل يأخذ جرعات بعد؟	Directives	------
72	هل المرضعة لو تاخذ اللقاح مع الحمل ياثر	Directives	------
73	هي الجرعه الثانية إجباري لو اختياري	Directives	------
74	هذا الكلام صادق	Assertives	------
75	وربي اني اخذت الحقنه وحملت	Assertives	Positive
76	يسبب العقم فقط للنساء لو للرجال همين	Directives	--------
77	هو وين الحكومة ووين وزير الصحة من التهريج اللى جاي يحصل	Directives	Positive
78	انا بس اخذت الأولى ووراها سلملي	Assertives	------
79	وشنو المطلوب من عدنا هسه	Directives	------
80	بدت المشاكل	Assertives	------
81	انا اخذت جرعة أولى , لازم ناخذ مضادات بهاي الحالة؟	Directives	------
82	أنا اخدت جرعتين وما صارلي شي	Assertives	Positive