The use of irony in USA Congress members' speeches

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Abstract

This study is investigating the use of irony in the congressional members' speeches during the testimony of Sec. Antony Blinken on the withdrawal from Afghanistan. This research aims to determine the most frequent forms and functions of irony used by Republican and Democratic members. The data for this inquiry was derived from the session of the members of Congress on September 13, 2021. A descriptive qualitative approach was used in this investigation in order to get an in-depth explanation of the data. An eclectic model, in this study, is adapted, with the help of pretense and implicit display, to fit the needs of this study. The results revealed that the most pragmatic strategy used by Republican members is rhetorical questions, and the main function behind their use of irony is to blame Biden's administration and persuade the other members that what Biden did during the withdrawal is wrong. On the other hand, the most common strategy of irony used by Democratic members is sarcasm. They also utilised irony to blame the republican members' opinions about the withdrawal and to persuade the other members that what had been done during the withdrawal was done according to the schedule.
Keywords: irony, rhetorical question, sarcasm, persuasion, political speech.

1-   Introduction

People's social ties are a part of who they are, no matter how long they live. Humans must engage and communicate with one another in order to maintain a strong sense of community. There must be a way to communicate this effectively. Language is the chosen method of human communication. Non-literal meaning is occasionally used instead of literal meaning in communication. Literal meanings use terms in their literal, widely recognised meanings. Non-literal meaning uses terms that don't mean exactly what they say to give a deeper interpretation. Figurative language refers to non-literal meaning.

Modern political speech is experiencing several transformations. It is becoming more like a talk show with a high degree of amusement, losing its official tone. Instead of just providing information, today's audience prefers a type of entertainment known as "infotainment" (Fialkova, Yelenevskaya, 2013). At the same time, "political discourse" aims to obtain and keep power (Van Dijk, 2009). Modern politicians use a variety of tactics in order to acquire supporters, the most common of which are persuasion and manipulation. Such communication purposes could be achieved by using ironic language.

This study will illustrate the use of irony in congressional members' speeches during the withdrawal from Afghanistan by using an eclectic model. In order to find out which US party used more irony in their speeches and the reasons behind that. Moreover, this analysis will also identify the types and purposes of irony most commonly used by Democratic and

Republican members of Congress, as well as the cause behind this phenomenon.

2-   Figurative language

Every day, people communicate about their surroundings. As human beings, we have a natural tendency to behave in this manner. One of the most interesting methods to convey our thoughts is to use figurative language techniques such as irony and metaphor, which are used in a variety of contexts. This enables us to express ourselves in a unique manner by using the words not only in their most obvious sense but also in a creative and humorous manner. Figurative language refers to the use of words or statements that have a meaning which is distinct from their literal interpretation (Farías et al, 2016, p.18). To Mahmood et al, (2014, p. 212), figurative language is a way of speaking or writing which uses words or phrases that don't mean what they say literally. Its main purpose is to explain, give information, exaggerate, modify, or manipulate. According to Roberts & Kreuz (1994, p.159), Figurative language is not rare or only used in poetry; it is a common part of both spoken and written language.

To Grice, figurative language refers to "conversational implicatures" that contain a flouting of any of the maxims of conversation. His view of figurative language has a similar link to the classic explanation of metaphor; exaggeration, meiosis, and irony are breaching the maxims and have two levels of meaning. The "figurative meaning", or "implicature", is a deviation from the semantic meaning for other communication purposes. Grice thinks that the difference between the intended meaning and the semantic meaning is a flouting of the "quality maxim", which is needed for irony to happen, and that the speaker does this on purpose (Wilson & Sperber, 2012).

2-1-   Irony

According to Wilson (2013, p. 1), to state one thing while actually meaning something opposite is a classic definition of Irony. It is a complex phenomenon with many dimensions. Among other things, it may be characterised as a statement, a speech act (when seen in conjunction with a response), or a speech genre (viewed as a text). The speaker and the listener understand irony depending on the context and language manipulation, which is using a word, phrase, or collocation in a way that is different from its literal meaning (Gornostaeva, 2018, p. 719). Irony is defined in dictionaries such as Webster (1969, p. 444) as the use of language to convey meaning different than or particularly the opposite of that which is intended literally. The New Encyclopedia Britannica (1983, p. 432) defines irony as, "either speech (verbal irony) in which the real meaning is hidden or contradicted by the literal meaning of words, or a situation (dramatic irony), in which there is an incongruity between what is expected and what happens". To Shen (2006, p. 463), irony refers to the fact that the link between what is stated and what is intended is completely at odds. This provides the speaker with the freedom to exaggerate or understate facts, as well as to be sarcastic, sardonic, or cynical as he or she wishes to. For example, when someone replies to a particularly dumb behaviour by stating *"that was really good"*. The positive use of phrase stands in stark contrast to the clearly negative response to the situation. It is problematic to determine what the opposing meaning could be and what the speaker's true purposes are from his or her words. The question of how to describe irony, as well as how to characterise it scientifically, has been the subject of much discussion in the fields of linguistics and psycholinguistics (Lagerwerf, 2007, p. 1703).

Colebrook (2004, p. 15) expressly develops the definition when she claims that irony is expressing something that is the exact opposite of what the listener expects to hear. It seems as if this explanation is evident due to the fact that irony is a kind of allusion that has a double

meaning. In a similar manner, some critics, such as O'Gorman (2004, p. 11), emphasise the doubleness of meaning by stating that irony is a way of communicating that creates an unquantifiable difference between what is said and what it means.

2-1-2- Types of verbal irony

To Gibbs (2000), in figurative language, there are many distinct kinds of irony, each with its own set of cognitive, linguistic, and social bases and pragmatic implications. So that, he considers this variance in the forms of irony to be a serious problem for "cognitive science theories" of irony (Wilson, 2017, p.203). According to him (2000, p. 5) there are "five main types of irony," including "joking, sarcasm, hyperbole, rhetorical questions, and understatements."

2-1-2-1- Jocularity

According to Rothermich et al, (2015, p. 3), Jocularity is a kind of irony that is typically defined as "positive" sarcasm, banter, ridiculing, or teasing, among other things. In the present database, jocular comments are defined as negative utterances with the purpose of being positive. However, the distinction between jocularity and sarcasm may be difficult to distinguish. Colston (2017, p. 36) argued that jocularity is a function rather than a distinct form. To him, jocularity, which may include sarcastic praise, is used to affirm relationships or to lighten the situation.

2-1-2-2-   Sarcasm

Sarcasm is described, according to Wicana et. Al, (2017, p. 469), as having a "bitter, caustic" tone that is aimed towards a person. Chatterjee et. al, (2020, p. 228), describe sarcasm as a kind of linguistic irony meant to convey scorn or mockery. It has an implied negative (usually) emotion but does not necessarily have a negative surface mood. Consider the following sentence.
" I love being hated."

It has a pleasant surface attitude but an implicit negative feeling (producing an incongruity) and is hence sarcastic.

2-1-2-3-   Hyperbole

According to Gibbs, hyperbole occurs when communicators express nonliteral meaning by exaggerating the truth of the event (2000, p 12), as in.
(A child describing his small burger)
"I have the biggest burger in the world"

According to Kreuz and Roberts (1995: 24), the link between exaggeration and irony seems to be significant on an intuitive level. When ironic comments are delivered in a completely deadpan manner, they are often very extreme. Since, Non-veridicality is a reliable marker of verbal irony.

2-1-2-4-   Rhetorical question

Han, (2002, p. 202), states that when asking a rhetorical question, the speaker does not anticipate the respondent to provide an answer, as is the case with an ordinary questioning. In general, a "rhetorical question" has the "illocutionary" power of a statement that is essentially opposite to the question being asked. In other words, a rhetorical "positive question" has the "illocutionary" force of a negative claim, whereas a rhetorical "negative question" has the illocutionary power of a positive statement. People use rhetorical questions since the latter increases the persuasive power of the implicated statement. As a result, the combination of

irony with a rhetorical question is an effective method for enhancing the perlocutionary impact of negative judgements, particularly those directed towards the hearer's behavior.

2-1-2-5-   *Understatement*

Understatement occurs when someone intentionally minimises what she\ he intends. It is the total opposite of hyperbole, a more subtly conveyed manner of expressing how someone really feels. In this case, understatement is merely speaking "less" of what you intend, while linguistic irony is saying the "opposite" of what you mean (Dunham, 2020: para 2). According to Bergman, (2017: para 1), understatement is used when something is communicated less powerfully than anticipated or when something is shown as being smaller, poorer, or lesser than it actually is.

2-1-3- *Functions of irony*

The irony, according to Anolli & Infantino (2002, p. 147), is that it "speaks in order not to say," which implies that it both reveals and hides what it says. This method of saying one thing while meaning another appears to be founded on "dichotomy" (Barbe, 1995) or "discrepancy" (Hamamoto, 1998) and accomplishes a number of different communication objectives (e.g., "politeness, emotion display, fun, lessening discontent, enhancing criticism") (Milanowicz, 2013, p 118).

Verbal irony has been attributed to a variety of functions. Some are social in nature, while others are "psychological" in nature. The psychological purposes are dealing with the communication roles of ironic statements as "a sign of conformity," "a reserve boundary," and "a relational ambiguity" (Anolli et al., 2002: 12). This means the irony is a method that involves a extensive purposes and connotations that may be either good or bad, reliant on the speaker's or writer's intent while expressing themselves. Only six functions are used in this study, which are including: "blaming", "praising", "humour", "evaluative", "mocking", and "persuasive" (Kreuz & Link, 2002).

3-   Prosody: Its Functions and Components in Relation to Irony

The term "prosody" refers to the use of suprasegmental features of speech (Culpeper, Haugh, and Kadar, 2017, p. 358). It is the vocal impact that arises from the creation of discrete segments of speech and covers statements, phrases, and words. Prosody is the ability to generate the same words, phrases, and utterances in diverse ways, as defined by prosodic theory (Culpeper, ibid.). Prosody consists of loudness, pitch (intonation), voice quality, and speed, which are all crucial components. Regardless of how they work together or alone, each of these elements is critical. Intonation is a powerful indicator of irony. Therefore, ironic intonation has a flat shape that is neither rising nor dropping. According to Attardo (2013), an ironic tone is characterised by a lower pitch, and this is certainly relevant for skilled performers. According to Cutler (1974), irony, indeed, has an ironic tone of speech. Using a sarcastic tone of voice is one of the most significant ways to tell whether someone is being ironic or not.

4-   Approaches to verbal irony

4-1-   *Grice's Conversational Irony (CI)*

Grice interprets the discrepancy between the speaker's meaning and semantic meaning as a breach or flouting of the "quality maxim", which is required for the emergence of irony, and that an ironist purposefully flouts the standard (Wilson & Sperber, 2012). Later, he included Plato's idea of irony as pretence in his definition of irony. Later, Grice considers the

ironic tone of voice that a speaker uses to show a negative attitude or ironic feelings in different situations (Barbe, 1995).

4-2-   The Echoic Mention Theory

Relying on this view, irony is a normal speaking act that does not utilise the literal meaning to communicate a message, but rather "mentions" (transmits) it as a "echo," while at the same time conveying a certain attitude toward it (Kotthoff, 2003, p.1391). Psychological investigations and other cognitive theories, such as the 1989 echoic recall theory proposed by Kreuz and Glucksberg, (1989), support this idea of irony (Utsumi, 1996, 31). To this theory, ironists use an "ironic tone of voice" to show how they feel about the ironic intention and the person who is supposed to be hurt by it. The speaker's sneering, mocking, and disdainful attitude is usually shown by the speaker's "ironic tone of voice", which has several characteristics such as deadpan or flat intonation, a lower pitch, a stronger intensity, and a slower tempo (Sperber & Wilson, 2012).

4-3-   The Pretense approach of Irony

The word "irony" comes from the Greek word "eironia," which means to confuse or try to make hilarious on purpose. Pretending was thought to be linked to irony (Clark, Gerrig, 1984). The pretence theory of irony was established by Clark and Gerrig (1984) in response to Grice's earlier work on irony, which was inspired by the Mention Theory. Pretending to be unaware, the ironist takes on the role of the pretender. Rather than using their natural tone of voice, ironists switch to a sarcastic one during this part. According to Clark and Gerrig (1984), the ironic tone of voice may be used by the speaker to trick the victim. Like the echoic mention theory, the pretend theory has two sides: the ironist and the victim. As opposed to presenting a speaking performance, the ironist attempts to convince the listener to change their suspicion and scornful attitude (Barbe, 1995). Clark and Gerrig saw Grice as a pioneer in his attempt to define irony: to them, pretending to be someone you are not an essential aspect of irony, but admitting that you're pretending would tarnish the sense of the irony you're attempting to portray (Grice, 1989b as cited in Garmendia, 2014, p. 644).

4-4-   The Pretense Theory of Irony

Irony's implicit display theory offers a solution to the issues that plagued earlier methods of investigation. To Utsumi, (1996, p.32), the word "irony" refers to a statement that, when heard, gives the listener an "implicit display" of the ironic situation that surrounds the event. The implicit display hypothesis aims to characterise the understanding of irony by the use of prototype category initiation (Campbell & Katz, 2012, p. 461). According to this theory, irony is interpreted by recognising that the statement is part of or is embedded in a situation that indicates the type of irony. To Pexman and Olineck, (2002, p. 250 and Popa-Wyatt, 2014, p.179), the "implicit display theory" says that ironic words show the speaker's bad attitude about the environment. The words show how far the situation didn't encounter the speaker's anticipations.

So that, if an utterance is to be understood as ironist, it necessity be detected as emanating from or contained within an ironic context. According to Utsumi, (ibid), the "ironic environment" is comprised of three occurrences:
1. "The speaker has an expectation Eat T".
2. "The speaker's expectation E fails".
3. "As a result, the speaker has a negative emotional attitude toward the incongruity between what is expected and what actually is".

5-   Methodology

The present research uses a descriptive approach to data collection. For the purpose of theoretical illustration, description and analysis of certain extracted utterances, this research is qualitative. Pragmatically, it looks into certain ironic remarks. The September 13, 2021, Congress session on the departure of the United States from Afghanistan is used to choose the data. Because context is critical in deciding whether a speech is ironic or not, this content is collected using this information.

5-1-   Sources of the data.

The analysis of this study is focused on the speeches of Congress members of the USA. The data were collected from the speeches of 38 congress members during the congress session of September 13, 2021. For more recognition and understanding, the data was seen on high quality YouTube video (PBS, 2021) and read on the transcription website (Sanford, 2021).

5-2-   Model of the analysis.

Pretense and implicit display theories will be used to differentiate ironic from non-ironic utterances. The ironic utterance will be analysed according to Gibbs's (2000) pragmatic strategies (including "joking, sarcasm, hyperbole, rhetorical questions, and understatements). Moreover, the functions or the communication goals of the ironic utterance will be examined according to Kreuz and Link's (2002) purposes of irony. In order to identify the positive and negative reactions or evaluations of the ironist toward the victim, Kreuz and Link's (2002) canonical irony and non-canonical irony will be used in the final stage. Therefore, this contributes to the development of the literature on ironic utterances and the way they are perceived and understood.

5-3-   The analysis of the data

1-   **Rep. Ted Lieu- "And if the Biden administration has somehow said, Hey, just kidding,** we're not leaving Afghanistan. We're going to renege on this agreement. The Taliban would have started attacking US forces again. Isn't that correct?"

-    Blinken- *"that is correct"* (Sanford, 2021).

In this situation, the Democratic congressman, Ted Lieu, was asking Blinken and addressing other members on September 13, 2021, during the congressional session. Lieu addressed those Republican members who questioned the possible existence of US troops for a longer time. The speaker uses the expression "just kodding" to achieve his communication goals. People usually say "Hey, just kidding," which means the statement is not to be taken seriously, in humour, or when making fun of a friend (using jokes to hurt someone). In this case, it is used as a metacommunicative marker for their implied message.

So, Lieu used to break the deal with the Taliban by saying, "*Hey, just kidding, we're not leaving Afghanistan"* in order to create a discrepancy. The discrepancy will be between saying such an expression to a friend and everything will be normal (the friend will not punish us since we were joking) and saying it to our enemy, as a result, the war will be escalated, and many will lose their lives. This implies that the speaker wants to say, "We can't do that, we can't just say the deal is over and everything will go back to normal." In light of this discrepancy, in a linguistic context, an ironic utterance will be employed. Since the speaker, semantically, minimises the effect of the war, while pragmatically highlighting its effect. This indicates that such an utterance is an ironic understatement. The speaker (Lieu) uses this pragmatic technique to convince the members and blame the victim (publican members). Moreover, because of the bad reaction of the speaker toward the victim, this utterance is a

canonical ironic one.

2-   Rep. Mark Green – "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary. Yes or no, and I do mean yes or no, is the Taliban a terrorist organization?"
-        Blinken – *"The Taliban has been designated as a terrorist organization. That's correct"* (Sanford, 2021).

In the same session of September 13, 2021, the republican congressman Green asked Blinken a question: "Whether or not Blinken acknowledges that the Taliban is a terrorist organization? "Yes *or no, and I do mean yes or no, is the Taliban a terrorist organization".* Since both of them (Blinken and Green) are politicians, this means, according to their inference, that they are more aware that the Taliban is a terrorist organisation than ordinary people. This implies that the speaker knows that the victim acknowledges the answer. On the other hand, the victim also knows that the questioner knows the answer. This shows that the speaker's goal is not to elicit unknown information from the victim, but rather to imply pragmatic meaning through rhetorical questions.Depending on the discrepancy between the reality that every politician knows that the Taliban is a terrorist organisation and the speaker himself pretending to not know the answer, an ironic rhetorical question will be utilised. Besides that, the speaker highlights the incongruity of his ironic question by pretending that he really does not know the answer *"I do mean yes or no"* (exaggerated).

The speaker does such things to achieve his implied meaning. In this situation, Green wanted to imply that even though the US government knew that the Taliban were terrorists, they dealt with them, depended on them to make a clear passage and left the entire country under their control with American citizens inside. On account of this, Green desired to blame Blinken and the Biden administration for dealing with and trusting (according to the speaker) a terrorist organisation. As a result, a canonical ironic utterance will be utilized.

3-   *"You keep telling us that the DOD and President Biden had no idea that the Taliban would be so successful. The collapse of the Afghan forces. And then you want us to believe you when you say the Russians and the Chinese aren't empowered by this. That kills your credibility by saying, hey, we failed to predict that this would happen. Nobody had an idea that they'd collapse like that. And then you say, oh, but I assure you, the Russians and the Chinese aren't empowered by this. And we're supposed to believe you."* (Sanford, 2021).

On September 13, 2021, in the congressional session, Mark Green addressed Blinken, saying that the former didn't believe Blinken's excuse for the quick failure of the Afghan government and, on the other hand, the quick success of the Taliban in controlling Kabul. Since Blinken announced that they didn't anticipate such a quick failure. For that, Green responded that you (Blinken) keep telling us (the members) that the DOD (Department of Defense) and Biden didn't know that the Taliban would be so effective. Moreover, the Chinese and Russia had no hand in that. Since your (Blinken) credibility will be affected by saying the truth. In his utterances, *"Hey, we failed to predict that this would happen. Nobody had an idea that they'd collapse like that." and "Oh, but I assure you, the Russians and the Chinese aren't empowered by this."* Green tried to imitate Blinken's voice. The speaker does that in order to make a pretence of being him (Blinken) saying the truth. This means Blinken will kill his honesty by stating *"we failed to predict"* while the rest of the people will no longer believe in him and his government. So, the speaker uses prosodic feature by imitating the victim's voice as a paracommunication mothed. Cutler (1974) refers to this prosodic feature as the ironic tonne of the voice. which is used as a marker or the ironic intention from the speaker's side. According to Wilson (2013), one of the purposes that irony has is the "ironic tone of voice". Such a tone

is what distinguishes it from other categories of "figurative language", which are characterised by a "slower tempo, deadpan or flat intonation, greater intensity, and a lower pitch level". In this case, the speaker lowers his pitch level in these sarcastic utterances in order to mock and blame the victim.

In this situation, Green used such a technique to mock Blinken and blame him and his administration for not telling the truth. This indicates that the speaker pretends to be an unwise person by saying the truth (according to the victim), which implies that the victim cannot state such a thing in order not to be an unwise person from his people's perspective. In his last words, *"And we're supposed to believe you"*. Green implied that, after knowing that you (Blinken) can't tell the truth because it will kill your credibility, we (the members) are supposed to believe you. In this kind of linguistic context, there will be a discrepancy between knowing the truth and being able to believe in it. This disparity will serve as a trigger for ironic sarcastic utterances, implying that we are not supposed to believe you. As a result of the bad reaction from this congressman, these utterances will be understood as canonical ironic utterances.

4-   *"*Okay. You say that there's nothing the Chinese would've wanted us more than to stay in Afghanistan. Is it your testimony that… Is it your testimony that the Chinese wanted the United States to remain in the only air base in the country with a physical border with China? You think that that's the Chinese position that they wanted us to keep Bagram? You think the Chinese are celebrating us? You think the Chinese are celebrating us abandoning an airbase, the largest air base on their border? Come on". (Sanford, 2021).

The Republican congressman, Andy Barr, in these utterances, was asking Blinken and addressing other members during the September 13, 2021, congressional session which discussed the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Also, in these utterances, Barr responded to Blinken's testimony, which indicates that the Chinese government was satisfied with the US being busy with the Afghanistan war and spending a lot of money on that war. As a result of that testimony, Barr responded by citing an incongruity between reality (according to the speaker) and Blinken's expectations.

In his utterance, *"Is it your testimony that the Chinese wanted the United States to remain in the only air base in the country with a physical border with China?"* Barr paraphrased Blinkent's testimony to create more discrepancies. In other words, Barr asked Blinken, "Is it true that you said that the chain was satisfied with the US having a base on their border?" But in reality, no country wants its enemy on its borders. That's why the war between Ukraine and Russia was initiated as a result of Russia's objections to potential Ukrainian membership in NATO. Meanwhile, Russians react to the potential existence of the US army on their border. The same idea here, (according to the speaker) China doesn't like that US troops remind on their border and create a potential threat to the former.

This indicates there will be incongruity within the linguistic context of the utterance between *"Chinese wanted"* and *"the country with a physical border with China"*. Depending on such a discrepancy and the environment, an ironic rhetorical utterance will be understood. same thing in *"You think the Chinese are celebrating us? You think the Chinese are celebrating us abandoning an airbase, the largest air base on their border? Come on"* the speaker also creates a discrepancy between *"celebrating us"* (which means China dislikes the US withdrawal from Afghanistan) and *" abandoning an airbase, the largest air base on their border".* Depending on such a discrepancy, an ironic rhetorical question will, also, be employed. Moreover, people use the expression *"Come on"* to encourage someone to be sensible or reasonable or to make a gentle remark (Hornby & Sydney, 1995). In this event, the speaker asks the victim to be more sensible and reasonable in his testimony.

In the meantime, the speaker's presence as an unwise person asks such rhetorical questions to attain his communication goals. In this case, the speaker (Barr) wants to blame the victim (Blinken) for leaving Afghanistan and persuade the listeners (other members). Furthermore, such utterances will be labelled as canonical ironic utterances since they were a reaction to the false testimony of the victim (Blinken).

"I was very upset when President Trump announced that he had secretly invited the Taliban to come to Camp David, and then the smiling pictures that we saw… And I hope you don't do this, the smiling pictures that we saw with Pompeo and the Taliban, saying that he looked into their eyes, and he could see that they were telling the truth and all that kind of crap. I hope you don't do that. I hope you have wide eyes open, and not those starry eyes of Mr. Pompeo looking into the eyes of Taliban and saying, oh, yes, they're going to be good boys this time." (Sanford, 2021)

In this situation, the Democratic member, Juan Vargas, criticises Trump for his invitation to Afghan leaders and the Taliban at Camp David on September 8, 2019. Vargas blames Trump for inviting such terrorist organisations to the historic presidential retreat (Camp David) to seek peace with them. Vargas, also, criticises the secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, for his smiling (a kind of respect) at them and believing in them (the Taliban).

In his utterance *"saying that he looked into their eyes, and he could see that they were telling the truth"*, Vargas blames Pompeo in an ironic way. According to the discrepancy between the reality that the terrorist organisation is comprised of dishonest people and the easy way that Pompeo used to believe in them just by looking into their eyes, this understatement is an ironic one. The purpose behind this understatement is to blame the victim (Pompeo) for his behavior. In his other utterance, *"Oh, yes, they're going to be good boys this time."* Vargas quotes Pompeo's utterance by changing the tone of his voice. The speaker uses such a technique to indicate that there is an intention of ironic meaning behind his changes in prosodic features (intonation and voice quality). To pretence theory, the speaker (Vargas) adapts the victim (Pompeo) tone of the voice to be foolish man how believing in people just by looking in their eyes. The speaker utilises this sarcastic utterance to mock the victim in a canonical way.

5-4-   *The result of the study*
This part offers a brief overview of the findings from the previous analysis of the chosen speeches. The fallowing results are sited after analyzing the speeches of 38 Congress members (17 are republican and 21 are Democratic). Table 1 and 2 are representing the Democratic member's findings and table 3 and 4 are representing Republican's findings.

Table 1

pragmatic strategies	frequencies	Percentages of uttering
Rhetorical questions	4	36.36%
Sarcasm	6	54.54%
Understatement	1	9.09%
Jocularity	0	0%
Hyperbole	0	0%

Table 2

pragmatic functions of irony	frequencies	Percentages of the frequencies
Blaming	7	46.66%
Persuasive	5	33.33%
Mocking	3	20%
Humor	0	0%
Praising	0	0%
Evaluative	0	0%

Table 3

pragmatic strategies	frequencies	Percentages of uttering
Rhetorical questions	12	40%
Sarcasm	11	36.66%
Understatement	7	23.33%
Jocularity	0	0%
Hyperbole	0	0%

Table 4

pragmatic functions of irony	frequencies	Percentages of the frequencies
Blaming	30	65.21%
Persuasive	11	23.91%
Mocking	5	10.86%
Humor	0	0%
Praising	0	0%
Evaluative	0	0%

6-   Discussion and conclusion

At this event, the Republican members use irony more than the Democratic members. The Republicans seem to be criticising either the Democrats or Biden's administration. They achieve that not only through sarcasm but also through rhetorical questions in order to blame and persuade other members. It was found that 40% of their ironic utterances are rhetorical questions and 36.66% are sarcastic ironies. Regarding their ironic purposes, 65.21% of their ironic functions are to blame on either Biden or other Democratic members. Also, 23.91% of their ironic purposes are to convince the listener that what happened during the withdrawal was flair. On the other hand, Democratic members use 36.36% of their ironic utterances as rhetorical questions and 54.54% as sarcastic. They utilise these pragmatic strategies to achieve 46.66% blaming and 33.33% persuasion. This shows that Democrats in this session use irony to blame the Republican members for not supporting the way in which US troops withdrew. Also, the Democratic members use irony to persuade the other members that what Biden did was done according to the schedule.

We can conclude from this study that the rate of ironic expressions will be affected by the disappointment of the speaker. The more he is disappointed, the more ironic expressions will be employed. Additionally, almost all ironic remarks were shown to be canonical in political speech discourse. They are either negative or positive reactions to a negative situation. Furthermore, the most prevalent pragmatic strategies for issuing irony are rhetorical questions in political speeches, which are generally employed to convince, blame, or both. It was also observed that irony is not one type of figurative language, but rather a collection of them, each driven by somewhat distinct cognitive, linguistic, and social causes to convey different pragmatic meanings. Sarcasm and irony are used interchangeably in literary works, but they differ in certain ways that make them distinct strategies in their own right. Sarcasm differs from irony, linguistically and literarily. Furthermore, it has been observed that sarcasm is the crudest form of irony. In this investigation, it is found that there are many markers of irony to help the listener understand the ironic meaning other than linguistic expressions. Those markers could be paralinguistic features, such as facial expression, and prosodic features, such as intonation and ironic tone of voice. Besides, it was found that in some cases, those markers could be used to be ironic themselves. Moreover, the results show that not all ironic expressions depend on

echoic mention or pretence theories to be understood. Some ironic expressions have nothing to do with either of these variables. Instead, they depend on the ironic environment, as implied by implicit display theory.

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