

*A Pragmatic Analysis of Political Meaning in Abdullah Pashew's
'Poem 'Meeting*



التحليل التداولي للمعنى السياسي في قصيدة (الاجتماع) لعبدالله بشيو

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Abstract

The current paper analyzes the political meaning of Abdullah Pashew's poem "meeting" based on pragmatics perspective. The aim of the study is to investigate the used language of the poem and analyze the codes and hidden messages that the poet wants to convey based on the shared knowledge, background, and common understanding. The study attempts to verify the fact that the poet targets the two main political parties in



Kurdistan Region; besides, the paper tries to shed light on the calls for awareness by the poet to the Kurdish people through focusing on some pragmatics elements' analyses, particularly Implicature. Descriptive qualitative method is used through depending on the pragmatic components, shared knowledge of Kurdish people and Pashew's background of writing, particularly: Implicature, Explicature, Entailment, Inference and Presupposition. The study concludes that Pashew criticizes the two major parties by being corrupted and opportunist for power and finance, the two main reasons of disagreement between them. Besides, the poet also tries to encourage people to refuse those phenomenon and claim for their rights from the official figures.

Pragmatics is one of the branches of linguistics which deals with meaning in context according to the situation that semantics fails to analyze. Pragmatics briefly is the study of the language use by the speaker that cannot take place only through the linguistic knowledge. On the other hand, pragmatics solves the point of meaning or the message that the listener receives. Pragmatics generally deals with the principles that are followed by both speakers and listeners in their communication. Hence, it is referred as 'the waste-paper basket of semantics'

ملخص

هذا البحث بحث الدلالي لمعنى السياسي في شعري (كؤبونتهوة = الإجماع) لعبدالله تةشيو . هدف البحث هو البحث عن اللغة الشعرية استُخدمَ في القصيدة ، وتحليل لرموز و الرسائل الخفية شاعر لمواطنه . البحث يحاول لثبوت هذة الحقيقة وهدفه الحزبين حاكمين في الكوردستان وهدفه استقاظ المواطنه من الحكامه . وطريقة التحليل استخدم في التحليل القصيدة باعتماد على نظرية علم الدلالة ، ولذا يعتمد على المعلومة عامة لدى المواطنه و خليفية الكتابات تةشيو . مصطلحات الدلالية في التحليل و تحليل بها هي : التلميح ، المنطوق غير الصريح ، التابع ، الاستدلال ، الافتراض المسبق بشكل الخاص في العمل التحليلي اعتمد عليها . يظهر في نتجية البحث أن تةشيو ينتقد عن الحزبين الحاكمين وسبب فساد في الحكم و مستغلي فُرص لنفود و الحكم هما سببان رئيسيان لإتفاق بينهما . وفي الجانب الآخر حاول أن يدفع المواطنه يطلبوا حقوقهم من الحُكام .

علم التداولية هو أحد فروع اللغويات الذي يُعنى بالمعنى في سياقه، وفقاً للموقف الذي يعجز علم الدلالة عن تحليله. باختصار، التداولية هي دراسة استخدام اللغة من قِبَل المتحدث، وهو ما لا يمكن فهمه من خلال المعرفة اللغوية وحدها. من جهة أخرى، تُعنى التداولية بفهم المعنى أو



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الرسالة التي يتلقاها المستمع. وتتناول التداولية عمومًا المبادئ التي يتبعها كل من المتحدثين والمستمعين في تواصلهم. ولذلك، يُشار إليها أحيانًا بـ"سلة المهملات في علم الدلالة".

Introduction

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is one of the branches of linguistics which deals with meaning in context according to the situation that semantics fails to analyze. Pragmatics briefly is the study of the language use by the speaker that cannot take place only through the linguistic knowledge. On the other hand, pragmatics solves the point of meaning or the message that the listener receives. Pragmatics generally deals with the principles that are followed by both speakers and listeners in their communication. Hence, it is referred as 'the waste-paper basket of semantics' (Atchison, 1999, p. 97).

Levinson (1983, p. 1) states that the term pragmatics is taken from the philosopher, critic and linguist **Charles Morris** (1938) as the general science of signs or **Semiotics** as **Morris** preferred. **Morris** also distinguished three distinct branches of inquiry: **syntactic** as the relation among the signs, **semantics** as the relation of the signs to the objects, and **Pragmatics** as the relation of the signs to the interpreters.

Birner (2013, p. 2) defines pragmatics as the study of language use in context, which differs from semantics, the study of the literal meaning. For example, the sentence "My day has been a nightmare" shows that the day is terrible, but the speaker does not want the listener to intend the meaning literally, i.e. the speaker does not have a bad dream about the day. semantically 'nightmare' means 'a bad dream', and it differs from the pragmatic meaning which is the intended meaning in the context. On the other hand, some people may confuse in interpreting the meaning, due to their understanding to the sentence as the sleeping of the speaker during the day and had a bad dream.

Generally, the concept of pragmatics can be defined as the use of language in human communication depending on the context, communicators and linguistic background including culture, social codes, and literacy; apart from the literal meaning of the sentences which are not completely enough for the success of the communication alone (Yule 2010; Mey 2001).



Implicature

One of the **Grice's** most important contributions to the development of pragmatics is the notion of 'Implicature'. **Grice** was first to propose the key ideas of implicature in (1967) (Levinson, 1983, p. 100). According to **Horn** and **Ward** (2004, p. 3), implicature is a term which is used to describe something that is conveyed beyond the semantic meaning of the words in a conversation, something that adds an extra level of meaning.

Mey (2001) points out that the word 'implicature' is derived from the verb 'to imply' as is its cognate 'implication'. Originally, 'to imply' means 'to fold something into something else' (from the Latin verb *plicare*, 'to fold'); hence, what is implied is 'folded in', and has to be 'unfolded', in order to be understood (45).

Brown and **Yule** (1983, p. 31) believe that implicature is used to explain what an interlocutor can transfer, suggest, or mean, as different from what the interlocutor literally says. Implicature in **Grice's** definition (1975, p. 43-44) implies that unstated information is conveyed to an audience and s/he is able to work out what is being said by reference to the maxims of conversation that are being blatantly flouted. (also see Davis, 1998, p. 5; Devitt & Hanley, 2006, p. 155; Kearns, 2011, p. 12; Lyons, 1995, p. 169; Thomas, 1995, p. 57)

Grice (1975, p. 50) states some conditions of how implicature is reformed and targeted. He believes that the listener has to take the following points into consideration so as to comprehend the implicature:

A. The listener should know the usual literal or linguistic meaning of what is said.

B. S/he ought to have some contextual information, shared or general knowledge.

C. S/he has to assume that the interlocutor obeys the CP.

Grice's theory of implicature includes two main types of implicature which he calls conversational and conventional implicatures. They have in common the property that they both convey an additional level of meaning beyond the semantic meaning of the words uttered (Grice, 1975, p. 50). (see also Davis 1998; Al-Sulaimaan 2011). Consider the example below from **Davis** (1998; p. 5):

Ann: Where can I get gasoline?

Bob: There is a station around the corner.

In the above example, the question is not 'Is there a station?' and it is not 'Do you know where is the station?', so as to be answered as 'there is a station around the corner'. **Bob** can answer **Ann** as 'you can get gasoline in a gas station', but **Bob** does not give such a reply since we are human beings and we are cooperative; thus, we try to decode what is beyond the





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words, beyond the words is that **Ann** does not want to know where she can get gasoline, she wants **Bob** to show her the way to the nearest gas station. Here, **Bob** implies that **Ann** can get gasoline at the station, he does not actually say that Ann can get gasoline there. So, **Bob** replies to **Ann** by using implicature.

Explicature

Explicature is assumptions which are explicitly communicated. There is an intermediate level of understanding between what is said and the implicatures that are entirely inferred. Explicature can also be defined as propositions that are explicitly communicated. In other words, explicatures are what are said. They entail the literal content of the expression uttered. For example,

- The center is closed in January.

This explicature requires a further specification of which 'center' is one talking about, whether 'January' is meant to be January of a specific year or of every year, and of whether 'closed' means closed for every living creature or simply for people who would otherwise come in to use the center for its usual purposes. Confusion can be avoided if we remember clearly that explicatures in this sense are simply representations of implicit forms of meaning (Al-Sulaimaan, 2011).

Entailments

Entailments are inferences that can be drawn solely from our knowledge about semantic relationship in a language. This knowledge allows us to communicate much more than what we actually said. It is a logical relationship between two sentences such as the truth of the second sentence necessarily follows from the truth of the first. For example:

- Sara is tall.
- Sara is not short

The first sentence entails the second one or it is possible to say the second sentence is the entailment of the first. When the truth of the first sentence is established, the second one automatically becomes true. Other examples:

- Annie baked a cake.
- Annie baked something.

The first sentence entails the truth of the second sentence. That is, since **Annie** baked a cake, she has baked something. Further, entailment in semantics is different from entailment in pragmatics. In semantics, you mean what you say or you communicate what your words express. But entailment in pragmatics is to communicate more than what you actually say, based on your knowledge about language (Al-Sulaimaan, 2011).



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Inference

Inference is the listener's use of additional knowledge to make sense of what is not explicit in an utterance. It is based on shared and general knowledge or background. For example:

- Where are my books?
- Have you looked in the cabinet.

The Inference: the books are in the cabinet (Yule, 1996).

Presuppositions

What a speaker or writer assumes is true or already known by a listener or reader can be described as presupposition. It is based on the information that is associated with lexical items or syntactic structures. When we use a referring expression like '*this, he or Shakespeare*', we usually assume that our listeners can recognize which referent is intended. In a more general way, we design our linguistic messages on the basis of large-scale assumptions about what our listeners already know. Some of these assumptions may be mistaken, of course, but mostly they are appropriate. If someone tells 'your brother is waiting outside', there is an obvious presupposition that 'you have a brother'. If you are asked 'why did you arrive late?', there is a presupposition that 'you did arrive late'. Besides, if you are asked the question 'When did you stop smoking?', there are at least two presuppositions involved. Thus, the speaker presupposes that 'you used to smoke and that you no longer do so'. Questions like this, with built-in presuppositions, are very useful devices for interrogators or trial lawyers. If the defendant is asked by the prosecutor, 'Okay, Mr. Buckingham, how fast were you going when you ran the red light?', there is a presupposition that 'Mr. Buckingham did in fact run the red light'. If he simply answers 'how fast' of the question, by giving a speed, he is behaving as if the presupposition is correct (Yule, 2010). One of the tests used to check for the presuppositions, through underlying sentences, involves negating a sentence with a particular presupposition and checking if the presupposition remains true. Whether you say 'my car is a wreck' or the negative version 'my car is not a wreck', the underlying presupposition "I have a car" remains true despite the fact that the two sentences have opposite meanings. This is called the 'constancy under negation' test for identifying a presupposition. If someone says 'I used to regret marrying him, but I don't regret marrying him now', the presupposition "I married him" remains constant even though the verb regret changes from affirmative to negative. (See also Mey, 2001)





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Methodology

Research design

The study utilizes qualitative descriptive method to analyse the data. The qualitative approach is found to be suitable to analyse such data since the study aims to interpret and identify the political meanings embedded in this poetic discourse rather than measuring numerical linguistic data. The analysis focuses on unfolding implicit and context-dependent meanings conveyed in the poem via pragmatic interpretation.

Data

The data of the study is the poem 'Meeting' written by Abdullah Pashew, a Kurdish poet. The poem is originally written in Kurdish and is presented in appendix through using a Latin transliteration, based on IPA system taken from (Reswl, 2015).

Data Analysis

This study is conducted within the framework of pragmatics. The data is analysed by using basic pragmatic concepts including implicature, explicature, entailment, presupposition and inference. The analysis work heavily relies on the theory of implicature proposed by Paul Grice, which explains how speakers communicate more than what is said by using implicature, which is going beyond the literal meaning.

Abdulla Pashew

Pashew is one of the famous Kurdish poet. He was born in (1946) in Hawler, Kurdistan Region-Iraq. He studied at the Teachers Training Institute in Erbil. In (1973), he went to Russia where six years later, he earned a Master of Arts in pedagogy, specializing in foreign languages. In (1984) the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences awarded him a PhD in Philology. From (1985 to 1990), he lectured at Alfatih University in Libya. (Ebrahimi and Sajady, 2017, p. 230). he has lived in Finland since (1995). His first poem was published in (1963) and his first collection was in (1967). Since then he has published eight collections, the latest 'Baraw Zardapar (Towards the Twilight), which was published in Sweden in 2001. He has also translated many distinguished writings and poems. (see also Borakay, 2008)

Analyzing the Poem 'Meeting'

This is a political poem, and the poet speaks about the political situations in Kurdistan Region. It is particularly about the political parties in the Kurdistan Region during 1990s, especially two major parties, after a civil war. The writer wants to show that the two parties hold repeatedly a lot of meetings to reach an agreement. However, that numerous number of meetings have not led them to any tangible results. As the number of



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meetings get increased, the two main parties go under pressure to end the civil war and solve their conflicts on the meeting tables. Yet, as the nature of most of the political parties, the meetings are useless and remain without happy results; that is because the great officials do not agree about power, position, money and other beneficial sources. The only victims are people, because they do not get benefit from the conflict between the parties. The writer uses many symbols and signs in the poem to convey and express people's feelings towards political parties. Hence, using pragmatic competence, there are several implications in the poem.

- *ta prteqal w moz w sêw mabn*
- *kobwnewekan qet tewaw nabn*

In the first two lines of the poem, the meetings are continuously held with the presence of fortune and money, but they are useless and without any consequences. They are held only for joy and having a nice time rather than solving the issues of Kurdish people. The meetings are held because the parties disagree with each other, and the only reason is that the parties want best for themselves and they put party's benefits ahead of the nation. The poet uses irony since in almost every official meetings and gatherings fruit are severed, therefore, he implicitly indicates that the two parties hold the meetings for the sake of another. In other words, it means that they do not make an agreement as usual, but their meetings are only to last longer and mislead people.

- *ger detanewê aw sysarkane wek kew kewy ken*
- *le beghda conn le Kurdistanish sery seqetyan wa pê newy ken*

In the next two other lines, the poet describes the characteristics of the main members of these two parties. He metaphorically portrays them as being negative people with negative characteristics, and he uses metaphor that those members are like Vulture bird. The poet also suggests some solutions for people to do them, in order to warn the official figures to be on the right path. The writer wants people to protest against the parties and ask for their rights; he also wants people to share the power and be aware of everything. The poet also asks people to think that those official figures are just normal people like them and they should not be afraid of them; besides, they can decide who they choose for the high positions.

The poet wants to show that our official figures are not the same in Baghdad; they do not have that power there, so they are brave only in Kurdistan, while they are afraid in **Baghdad**. Handicapped head, is a sign for bad use of power and selfishness; those officials only do what is good for their fortune and few other people. The poet also wants to clarify for people that the absolute power is under the control of people not few officials. People's power is much stronger than the individuals; hence,



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they can choose who they want and dismiss. The main message of the poem is that the poet wants to warn the people, in order to make a complete reform in the political and power process.

- *twxwa amçare ke kobnewe cerezw mêwey ser mêzekanyan hemw welanên*
- *Hêsk w prwsky anfalekanyan leberdem danên*

In the final lines, the poet asks people something. He asks in a begging way for more emphasis and importance, which is removing the fruit and other kind of food on the meeting's table for some purposes: preventing the waste of general fortune of people by few officials, forcing the official figures to hold the meetings in a proper way with good results, forcing the great two parties to come to an agreement on meetings, and make good decisions in dividing the power between themselves based on logic and people's benefit not the individual and parties' ones. They should have the national slogan ahead of parties'.

Bones and genocide are some signs used in the poem to represent the Kurdish nation oppression by the Iraqi dictator regime, which made a disaster in Kurdistan by killing and bombing more than (180) thousands of civil people. We have suffered a lot from our past bloody life; thus, the poet wants to remind the corrupted officials that this **little** peace and freedom has not been achieved very easily, it costed thousands of souls and blood of Kurdish youths, **elderly**, women and children. It is really **shameful** for those **corrupt** officials to forget **Kurdish bloody past, and they are in conflict because of the nations' fortune**. They should remember our martyrs always and serve this poor nation and people as much as possible, at least to decrease a little of people's pain. They should also make people to worth the soul of our martyrs and do not feel that their souls are waste for nothing.

- *ta prteqal w moz w sêw mabn*
- *kobnewekan qet tewaw nabn*

There are also some entailments in the poem. The continuances of the meetings are related to the presence of fruits and mixed nuts. So the truth of the second sentence depends on the truth of the first sentence.

In other words, inference can be also found in this poem. The poet uses the Vulture bird in the poem. Pashew uses this kind of animal as a metaphor to show the bad characteristics of official figures. Thus, it is a general knowledge shared by both speaker and hearer. 'kew and kewy krđn' (partridge and taming process) is another inference, because it is clear that (partridge can't be tamed easily). 'Sery seqet' (the handicapped head) can be another inference to show the bad behaviors and wrong decisions of the parties and officials. The poet uses that sign to declare



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that what officials do is not correct and intentionally they do it for their benefit rather than public's. Another inference is Kurdish power in Baghdad; it is clear to Kurds that Kurdish officials are not in full power in Baghdad like they are in Kurdistan, which means they have limited authority and Kurds are the third nationality in population; Sunnis and Shias are more in number. Hence Kurds are also the third in power. The last inference is Anfal and bones, which we all know they refer to the terrible oppressing life happened to Kurdish people during the bloody past centuries.

The final pragmatic **element** that can be seen from the poem is presupposition. In the meetings, fruits and mixed nuts or some kind of food is available for eating. From the poem, it is clear that there are many meetings, and in the meetings there is food. It is clear that (Palture can be tamed) and (Valture can be tamed), this also can be another presupposition. Another presupposition is that Kurdish people have two kinds of responsibilities, which is clear from the poem that Kurdish authority have power in both places **Baghdad** and Kurdistan. It can be clearly seen that Kurds have been murdered in groups as it is known by genocide, so it is another presupposition.

- *ta prteqal w moz w sêw mabn*
- *kobwnnewekan qet tewaw nabn*

In the first two lines of the poem, we can say the four pragmatic terms, which are explained before, can be seen. There is implicature, that the poet wants to show that the parties do not agree with each other; however they hold a lot of meetings, that's because of money and power which they both want better shares than the other; hence, the meetings are without results. There is also entailment that the truth of the second sentence depends on the truth of the first sentence. The continuance of the meetings depends on the presence of fruit and mixed nuts. Inference is also existing in these two lines, the meetings are continuously holding because it is known that these parties do not agree with each other easily, so the poet tells something about the political crises in Kurdistan that we have all also shared knowledge. It is clear from the first two lines, that there are many meetings, and in the meetings there are fruit or food in general, so it can be considered as the fourth pragmatic term which is presupposition.

Conclusion

Pashew's poem is a political one, and the poet criticizes the two major parties in the Kurdistan Region. The poem wants to offend the parties ironically and indirectly by using several symbols. The writer wants to convey that the officials do not agree on the stipulations between



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themselves, however they hold many meetings without any happy outcome.

The writer **encourages** the people to have a kind of reaction towards the two parties, and he tries to concentrate on the **corrupt** officials, in order to be dismissed from the power and find good solutions for the political process in the Kurdistan Region. The poet's main request is to tell that people are the most powerful member of the community not the officials, so he wants people to ask for their rights.

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Appendix One

List of Kurdish and Latin Alphabets and the IPA Phonemic Symbols

NO	KURDISH	LATIN	IPA
1.	ا	a	/a/
2.	ب	b	/b/
3.	ت	t	/t/
4.	ح	h	/h/
5.	ة	e	/ə/
6.	ث	p	/p/
7.	ض	c	/tʃ/
8.	ج	ç	/dʒ/
9.	خ	x	/x/
10.	ع	u	/ʉ/
11.	غ	gh	/y/
12.	د	d	/d/
13.	ر	r	/r/
14.	ز	z	/z/
15.	ذ	j	/ʒ/
16.	س	s	/s/
17.	ش	sh	/ʃ/
18.	ف	f	/f/
19.	ظ	v	/v/
20.	ق	q	/q/
21.	ك	K	/k/
22.	ط	g	/g/
23.	ل	l	/l/
24.	م	m	/m/
25.	ن	n	/n/
26.	ه	h	/h/
27.	و	w	/u/
28.	ؤ	o	/ɒ/
29.	ي	y	/i/
30.	يَ	ê	/e/

**Appendix Two/ The Poem
Kobwnewe**



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ta prteqal w moz w sêw mabn
 kobwnewekan qet tewaw nabn
 ger detanewê aw sysarkane wek kew kewy ken
 le begbda conn le Kurdistanish sery seqetyan wa pê newy ken
 twxwa amçare ke kobwnewe cerezw mêwey ser mêzekanyan hemw
 welanên
 Hêsk w prwsky anfalekanyan leberdem danên
Meeting
 Since the oranges, bannas and apples are existing
 The meetings never end
 If you want to tame these Vultures like Paltridges
 How they look in Baghdad, and lower their handicapped head in
 Kurdistan
 Please, if they meet again this time, remove the mixed nuts and fruits on
 the table
 Offer them the bones of Anffals

