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A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected English Caricatures on Covid-19

A Thesis

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Abstract

Most world countries have recently witnessed the emergence of covid-19 which has influenced different aspects of people's life and led to different types of political tension among which is between America and China. The two parties have started a new type of media war accusing each other of the responsibility for the spread of the virus. Many devices have been used in this war including political caricatures which have recently increased in number. This increase in the use of political caricatures in everyday media gives rise to some controversies over their ideologies and the linguistic and extra-linguistic strategies employed to convey these ideologies. This creates an obvious need to critically investigate these caricatures to find out these ideologies and strategies.

The study is based on the hypothesis that both American and Chinese political caricatures draw heavily on extra-linguistic devices to convey their intended messages which involve claiming good things and innocence on self-part, and claiming bad things and blame on the other part. It is also hypothesized that American and Chinese caricatures manifest similarities and differences in terms of employing linguistic and extra-linguistic elements.

To achieve the aims of the study which are finding out the linguistic and extra linguistic elements, exploring the ideologies conveyed by each party, and verify its hypotheses, two types of procedures have been adopted: theoretical and practical. The theoretical procedures consist of presenting a theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) including its principles, approaches, models of analysis, and some related previous studies. On the other hand, the practical procedures consist of selecting ten caricatures. Five caricatures are selected from American newspapers: *The Orange County Register*,

Newsday, Daily News, The Press-enterprise, and The Columbian, and the other five caricatures are selected from Chinese English newspapers: *China Daily, CGTN (China Global Television Network), and Global Times*.

The selected caricatures have been analyzed in the light of an eclectic model based on Fairclough (1989) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). The obtained results have been analyzed using suitable statistical tools.

The results of the selected caricatures have shown that both American and Chinese caricatures aim to accuse each other of being responsible for the virus spread. The results have also shown similarities and differences between the two groups of caricatures in terms of the employed devices, and their tendency to draw on extra-linguistic devices more than linguistic ones. These results verify the hypotheses adopted in the study.

The study ended up with a number of recommendations and suggestions for further research based on the study findings.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Problem

There are some controversies about the emergence and the cause of coronavirus. America and China have repeatedly accused each other of being the source of the virus. China claims that Covid-19 is manufactured by the American army. On the contrary, America considers the virus as a part of the Chinese reaction toward the trade war due to the tariffs imposed on Chinese imports by Donald Trump. China responds to the American accusation by indicating that American administration is weak and could not face the crisis, so they blame China (Christensen, 2020: 2).

These verbal and non-verbal media conflicts between America and China have been a theme for more than one genre of texts among which are political caricatures with which the present study is concerned. An increasing number of caricatures has been employed by each party to defend itself, and blame the emergence of the virus and its consequent miseries on the opponent part. This increasing employment of caricatures in the American-Chinese media war raises some critical questions about the way each party uses linguistic and extra-linguistic devices to affirm its claims and deliver its intended message. Being still rare, this kind of studies is urgently required.

The problem addressed in this study can be represented by the sort of uncertainty that may exist over the answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the main elements employed in American caricatures?
2. What are the main ideologies conveyed in American caricatures?
3. What are the main elements employed in Chinese caricatures?
4. What are the main ideologies conveyed in Chinese caricatures?

5. What are the similarities and differences between American and Chinese caricatures in terms of the employed elements and conveyed ideologies?

1.2 The Aims

This study aims at:

1. depicting the American-Chinese media war about covid-19 in political caricatures from a CDA perspective.
2. finding out the linguistic and extra-linguistic devices employed by each party.
3. exploring the ideologies conveyed by each party in the selected caricatures, and
4. finding out whether or not the linguistic and extra-linguistic devices have complementary roles.

1.3 The Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

1. Both American and Chinese political caricatures draw heavily on extra-linguistic devices to convey their intended messages.
2. The ideologies conveyed in political caricatures involve claiming good things and innocence on self-part, and claiming bad things and blame on the other part.
3. American and Chinese caricatures manifest similarities and differences in terms of employing linguistic and extra-linguistic elements.

1.4 The Procedures

To achieve the aims of the study and verify its hypotheses, the following steps will be followed:

1. Presenting a theoretical framework of CDA including its principles, approaches and models, etc.
2. Selecting samples of caricatures from American and Chinese newspapers.
3. Adopting a suitable model for the analysis of the selected data.
4. Analyzing the selected caricatures in the light of the adopted model and,
5. Drawing conclusions based on the study findings, providing recommendations and suggestions for further research.

1.5 The Scope

The present study is limited to:

1. A CDA study of selected political caricatures on Covid-19 according to an eclectic model based on Fairclough (1989) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006).
2. The selected caricatures involve (1) five caricatures published by American newspapers, namely *The Orange County Register*, *Newsday*, *Daily News*, *The Press-enterprise*, and *The Columbian*, and (2) five caricatures published by Chinese English newspapers, namely *China Daily*, *CGTN (China Global Television Network)*, and *Global Times*.

1.6 The Value

The findings of the study are hoped to be useful for those interested in linguistics in general and in CDA in particular. The findings can also be useful for the researchers in the area of semiotics and visual analysis. The study can also be regarded as an area of interest for those interested in studying the power of media.