

Trump's "Chinese Virus" Stigma: A Critical Pragmatic Analysis

¹Fareed Hameed Al-Hindawi, ²Siham Mohammed Hasan Alkawwaz, ³Maha Al-Mohammed

¹Department of English/College of Education/Islamic University/Najaf/Iraq, fareedhameed3@gmail.com

²Department of English/College of Languages/University of Kufa/Najaf/Iraq, siham.alkawwaz@uokufa.edu.iq

³Department of English/College of Arts/ Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University/Najaf/Iraq,
maha_alm12@yahoo.com

Abstract

A language can easily degrade individuals, societies, and even nations with no more than an insulting label, in this case, a stigma. This paper deals with a special type of derogatory language, which takes social power and control to a whole new level of aggression, mainly through shaming and belittling others. Subsequently, when such a language is used by those in power it can lead to marginalizing and isolating via discourse-destruction. The language of stigmatization is targeted from a pragmatic perspective by taking into account its usage value in societal discourse. Donald Trump's coronavirus-related terms "Chinese virus", "Wuhan Virus", and "Kung Flu" unfairly smear Chinese people. His creation of negative stigmas at a time of global crisis is racist and endangering particularly to power-oriented discourses, thus, raising critical language awareness to power assignment and exercise. The analysis is rendered in light of a critical pragmatic approach with the aim of providing a mechanistic and naturalistic method to apprehending the usage of stigmatizing discourse. Granted, it is hypothesized and proven that certain pragmatic functions and strategies are utilized to manifest stigmatization, and it is through critical pragmatics that the unveiling of the ideological aspects of stigmatized discourse is a possibility.

Keywords: stigmatization; critical pragmatics, power; ideology; racism; Chinese virus.

1. INTRODUCTION

In any society, language use gives birth to communicative events. Granted, special types of relationships emanate between such events and those who communicate them. More importantly, these relationships are governed by certain contextual factors in all societies alike. Power, inequality, and dominance are among the most prevailing contextual factors that camouflage in any language and represent a rich source for pragmatic and linguistic investigation. Moreover, language ideologies play a leading role in any communicative event and represent pivotal concepts in the linguistic arena. In essence, stigmatization is one such ideology linked to the broader social and cultural

systems characterizing a certain communicative encounter. In any case, the strong connection between ideology, language, and discourse is a central concern of critical linguistics, and more significantly in critical pragmatics.

Given its intensive importance, stigmatization in political discourse has rarely been a target of systematic inquiry from a pragmatic point of view, let alone a critical pragmatic perspective. As far as political discourse is concerned, the former President of the United States, Donald Trump, is famous for his contentious political comments, which have attracted a large body of research. Even more provoking, are his latest racial stigmas in light of the expediting COVID19 pandemic. Most of the linguistic

studies have tackled explicit and straightforward pragmalinguistic features, functions, presuppositions, implicatures, and communicative effects, while they have not touched upon implicit or unexplored discrimination and vulgarity that result from stigmatization. In terms of critical orientation, there exists insufficient research attention on the critical study of political stigmas. Hence, this study sets itself the task of investigating it from this seemingly unique angle.

The lack of enough research surrounding the linguistic role of stigmatized discourse in societal conduct motivates this study to bridge the gap and eliminate any paucity by attempting a critical pragmatic analysis of former President Trump's most prominent stigmas said during the coronavirus outbreak. For this reason, the paper seeks to pragmatically answer the following three questions: what are the pragmatic functions of stigmas in Trump's speech? What are the pragmatic strategies exploited in the manifestation of stigmas? And most importantly, how does critical pragmatics contribute to deciphering the ideological aspects of stigmatization in the context of Trump's speech?

Accordingly, the endeavor of this paper is to study stigmatization in the context of political comments made by Donald Trump during the expediting COVID19 pandemic. With that in mind, the paper seeks to construct a new framework based on pragmatic theories and then critically investigate some major issues and problems of stigmatization (such as discrimination, racism, dehumanization, incivility, personalization, subjectivity) in political discourse. More importantly, the study aims to demonstrate the importance of critical pragmatics in its assignment as a tool for discourse analysis by revealing the ideological aspects of stigmatization in Trump's speech.

Accordingly, and in light of present readings, it is hypothesized that certain pragmatic functions and strategies are utilized to manifest stigmatization, and it is through critical pragmatics that the unveiling of the ideological aspects of stigmatized discourse is a possibility. To prove this hypothesis correct, first and foremost, the theory of critical pragmatics is thoroughly studied and understood for the purpose of applying it in the analysis. After theorizing about the topic of stigmatization from

a strictly linguistic perspective, a qualitative critical pragmatic analysis is conducted on stigmatized discourse affiliated to former US President Donald Trump. This is achieved by developing an eclectic and modified critical pragmatic model. The findings are then compared to the hypothesis and tested for precision in detailment.

2. Theoretical Overview

This section represents a modest endeavor to investigate the notions of 'critical pragmatics' as well as 'stigmatization' in order to pave the way for a critical analysis of Trump's stigmatized discourse.

2.1. Critical Pragmatics

At the outset, the term 'critical' in pragmatics surfaced with (Mey, 1979) article entitled "Toward a Critical Theory of Language". Concurrently, the notion of 'critical linguistics' emanated (Fowler et al., 1979) with determination to place great emphasis on the relationship between social power and language use. The initial appropriation of the concept of 'critical pragmatics' as a brand new and original theory can be acknowledged to Mey who stressed the importance of critically examining how language functions in society so as to understand its various uses and manifestations (Mey, 2001: 320).

As a theory of action and mind, critical pragmatics sheds light on the subject of critical language awareness. Suffice it to say, once power and control are amalgamated into language, they mediate representations of the world in different linguistic usages, be it syntactic phrases, lexical choices, or even dialectal varieties. More specifically, critical pragmatics tackles "the problems of social language use" when people "word the world" by focusing on "those areas where language use was critically determined by the relations of power in society" (Mey, 1993: 316).

The cornerstone of CP is its focus on the ideological orientations and value judgements reflected by language use in its sociocultural context. To accomplish this, (Xinren, 2009) suggests advocating appropriate manners of social discourse and criticizing those social problems embedded in language use, such as

power imposition, social discrimination, and the like. Furthermore, critical pragmatics develops three ideas: language is a way of doing things with words; meanings of phrases and contents of utterances derive ultimately from human intentions; and language combines with other factors to allow humans to achieve communicative goals (Korta & Perry, 2011: 3-7).

2.2. Stigmatization

Conceptualizing the notion of stigma, which is the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance, from a linguistic frame of reference is a fairly fresh advancement since all previous attempts were more or less in the fields of psychology (B. Wright), sociology (E. Lemen), and even clinical studies (F. Macgregor et al, 1953). In Ancient Greece, a stigma was a brand burned into a slave or a criminal's skin to symbolize disgrace. In the 1500s, the word 'stigmatize' meant literally "to brand or tattoo." But nowadays, to stigmatize is to shame or brand a person in a more symbolic way. Likewise, Jacoby et al. (2005: 171-178) claim that stigma may also be described as a label that associates a person to a set of unwanted characteristics that form a stereotype. It is also affixed. Once people identify and label one's differences, others will assume that is just how things are and the person will remain stigmatized until the stigmatizing attribute is undetectable.

It is commonly believed that to be stigmatized means to bear a negative moral scar on yourself which as a result of prejudice makes you different from the majority. Although this is the usual case, uniquely and in a general classification, stigmas are seen as either positive stigma (socially legitimized stigmatization) or negative stigma (socially discriminating stigmatization). Consequently, the phenomenon of stigmatization is apprehended differently by Parker and Aggleton (2003: 15), who propose that Goffman's (1990) theorizing suggests that stigma is a 'static attribute' rather than a 'constantly changing (and often resisted) social process', in their opinion.

Among the most common types of stigmas outspread is the social stigma. By all means, social stigma is the disapproval of, or discrimination against, a person based on perceivable social characteristics that serve to

distinguish them from other members of a society. By all means, social stigmas can occur in many different form with the most common dealing with culture, gender, race, intelligence, and health. Those being stigmatized usually feel different and devalued by the society.

Generally speaking, social stigma in the context of health is the negative association between a person or group of people who share certain characteristics and a specific disease. Notably, the link between stigmatization and public health came to the fore in the context of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s (Bayer, 2008: 463). Recently though, in the outbreak of coronavirus, this may mean people are labelled, stereotyped, discriminated against, treated separately, and/or experience loss of status because of a perceived link with a disease. Such treatment can negatively affect those with the disease, as well as their caregivers, family, friends and communities. People who do not have the disease but share other characteristics with this group may also suffer from stigma (ibid).

Most notably, the current COVID19 outbreak has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviors against people of certain ethnic backgrounds as well as anyone perceived to have been in contact with the virus. Those in authority will usually take this opportunity to exercise dominance and discrimination through their discourse which is most likely shaped by relations of power and ideologies. Consequently, the study investigates stigmatization as an ideology through which certain pragmatic effects are achieved either to suppress or maintain power relations and certain conventions.

2.2.1. A Working Definition

It is necessary to provide an axiomatic working definition of prototypical stigmatization, rather than explore the complexity of the intuitive notion attached to the word. Thus, we need to address stigmatization as a phenomenon, and not concern ourselves with the semantic content of the lexical item 'stigmatization'. The following working definition of stigmatization is set within a hypothetical deductive framework:

A working definition: A stigmatized discourse is a discourse produced in order to limit or label an addressee using a set of generalized propositions with appropriate strategies.

With regards to the characteristics of the propositions conveyed by stigmatized discourse, they are posited as truth-conditionally or, better, truth-functionally defective. The latter implying that they are roughly wrong in some way: false, unlikely, doubtful, inaccurate, inconsistent with the common ground; and therefore, should be rejected or ignored by the hearer under normal circumstances.

2.2.2. Stigmatization as a Type of Language Use

Any researcher approaching the field of stigmatization, be it in linguistics, discourse analysis, psychology, sociology or political science, is aware of the semantic complexity and the lack of clear-cut definition for the concept stigmatization. This is especially true when it applies to a specific behavior towards other individuals, and to a type of linguistic and communicative behavior in particular.

Literally, to stigmatize is to shame or brand a person in a more symbolic way (to characterize or brand as disgraceful or ignominious according to the American Heritage Dictionary), and sometimes to label a person to a set of unwanted characteristics that form a stereotype. By comparison, the word stigmatization, when applied to stigmatized discourse, seems to be a kind of lexicalized metaphorical derivation. It is about using a device or strategy without which the speaker would not be able to change the addressee's or listener's beliefs and behavior.

Therefore, stigmatization of an individual or group is directly related to applying labeled constraints, particularly those which one is not directly aware of. These constraints act on the process of information treatment and are built up with more or less efficient and sophisticated strategies and which aims at alienating the target in a way or another. In effect, the commitment of the addressee to the propositions conveyed by the stigmatized discourse must be sincere, while in fact the propositions expressed are problematic at several levels. Likewise, freedom of thought, or at least the illusion of it, is a necessary condition for stigmatization.

2.2.3. Stigmatization as an Ideology

It should be noted that stigmatization as an ideology is used to sustain relations of power and maintain dominance and control in social settings, particularly on those who are relatively

powerless and socially vulnerable (Parker and Aggleton, 2003: 18). Moreover, it can also be employed to uncover people's beliefs, values, and opinions about certain situations, as in the case of Trump's political reactions to COVID19. So to speak, the phenomena is abusive, insulting, and degrading by all means, since it may lead to discrimination, racism, and even violence if it is not criticized and denounced (Stuber and Meyer, 2008: 351).

As an ideology, stigmatization puts under scrutiny those expressions and allegations which have been publicly accepted as normal and repeatedly used by public figures causing their enforcement as normative behavior. Therefore, various scholars have argued that power and control are essential in the production of stigma (Link and Phelan, 2001, 2006; Parker and Aggleton, 2003; Bayer, 2008). In other words, stigmatization is mostly exercised by those in positions of power who most probably have greater ability to dominate and impose stigma on those who are below them in rank, which is likely to reinforce inequalities (Phelan et al., 2008: 358).

Significantly, there are several key concepts affiliated to the notion of social stigmatization that are in need of elaboration. Such concepts are of great importance to any linguistic and pragmatic analysis of social ideologies.

a) Power

Significantly, Link and Phelan (2001: 363) emphasize the role of power (social, economic, and political power) in stigmatization. While the use of power is clear in some situations, in others it can become masked as the power differences are less stark.

b) Inequality

According to Victor & Paul (1990), philosophical questions about social ethics and the desirability or inevitability of inequality in human societies have given rise to a spate of ideologies to address such questions. We can broadly classify these ideologies on the basis of whether they justify or legitimize inequality, casting it as desirable or inevitable, or whether they cast equality as desirable and inequality as a feature of society to be reduced or eliminated. Stigmatization is most certainly related to the former type where it is ideologically legitimized by those in power and authority.

c) Dominance

As a result of discrimination and behavioral asymmetry, achieved via verbal or non-verbal (signaled) labelling, stigmatization may lead to dominance and oppression in any society. Needless, dominance is the result of power over others and can only be fought back through the resilience of empowerment (Shih, 2004).

2.2.4. Stigmatized Discourse

Even more complex is the notion of 'stigmatized discourse'. Concerning its definition, two options are available. First, stigmatized discourse can be a type of discourse, therefore identifiable through formal features. Second, stigmatized discourse can be a type of language use. If stigmatized discourse is a discourse type, like narration or description, then either some linguistic forms can be found only in stigmatized discourses, or stigmatized discourse may be sustained by a unique type of structure, for example specific argumentative structures. In both cases, these particularities would provide a formal ground for stigmatized discourse identification.

Although stigmatized discourse is not officially a discourse type according to purely linguistic criteria, yet some formal features may be more present in stigmatized discourses than in non-stigmatized discourses, none. One of the main criteria to judge by is the intention on the part of the speaker, an intention which is not cooperative in the Gricean sense (regarding the maxim of quality and quantity). The speaker aims at giving manifestness to a certain number of assumptions to the hearer and have him consent to them, provided that they would be rejected under normal conditions.

Therefore, stigmatized discourse is ultimately a pragmatic problem. It is a type of usage of natural language, and can be identified only through notions like goals, intentions, and broader aspects of pragmatic processing, which, in turn, explain the quantitatively and qualitatively high presence of some formal features (some types of argument schemes and fallacies, some semantically loaded expressions, some connotative words etc.) because they are of some help in achieving the speaker's goal. Accordingly, one of the core problems of stigmatization in language resides in the identification by the hearer of stigmatized intention through formal and non-formal

features; when this detection fails, stigmatization is rendered effective and influential.

2.2.5. Identifying Criteria of Stigma Language

Notably, any ideological attitude communicated via language, affiliated to certain people, and spread across societies is certainly a composite of distinguishable qualities. For an accurate classification of stigmas, it is important that they first possess the following properties:

- a. **Publicity:** the quality of being open to public view and serving to let people know about something.
- b. **Practicality:** concerned with actual use rather than theoretical possibilities and making good sense.
- c. **Directness:** the quality of being honest and straightforward in attitude and speech.
- d. **Boldness:** the trait of being willing to undertake risk as well as the quality of standing out strongly and distinctly.
- e. **Subjectivity:** referring to judgments and attitudes based on individual personal impressions, feelings, and opinions rather than external facts.
- f. **Biasness:** inclination to a particular side; one-sidedness.
- g. **Generalizability:** the capacity of being generalized to more people or cases.
- h. **Specificity:** the capacity of restricting to a certain group or case.
- i. **Concision:** the property of briefness or brevity; short and to the point.

2.3. Context

Characteristically, talking or using language expressively and/or communicatively consists of constantly making linguistic choices, consciously or unconsciously, for language-internal (i.e., structural) and/or language-external reasons. In order to make negotiable choices, competent language users must adapt their language use to the context involved. According to Verschueren, context is composed of the communicative context (including the physical world, the social world, the mental world, the utterer, and the interpreter) and the

linguistic context (Verschuere, 1999: 76). For the purpose of pragmatic analysis, it is advisable to discover the very ingredient of the context that some salient linguistic choice is forced to adapt to.

From the standpoint of critical pragmatics, there can be no context without the existence of the speaker's plan because it is this plan which determines the locutionary content of an act. Subsequently, it is argued that there are two types of context. The first type is the 'evidential context' which refers to the context created by the hearer when she/he makes use of all the available contextual factors in order to figure out the intention of the speaker and the actual saying. The second type is the 'role-filling' context where the hearer can get a full understanding of an utterance by figuring out the mental facts (the intentions) and the movements involved in its production. Accordingly, it is this type of intention which critical pragmatics seeks in any communicative situation (Mey, 2001).

The ideological assumptions behind the use of stigma in certain contexts is basically to sustain relations of power and maintain domination. With regards to its social domain, a stigma is first context-dependent, and then once it is firmly grounded it becomes context-free in the sense that it becomes a social generalization.

2.4. Pragmatic Perspective of Stigmatization

By basically understanding that words matter and that the choices one makes have a certain effect on the listener, there is no deny that stigmas are effective verbal ideologies that can be best studied within the realm of linguistics, the scientific study of language. More accurately, the matter is left in the hands of pragmatist who seek to analysis language in its context of use. Accordingly, the following subsections target the pragmatic strategies, functions, and theories which account for the usage value of stigmatization in societal discourse.

2.4.1. Pragmatic Strategies in Discursive Stigmatization

Admittedly, several pragmatic strategies can be fulfilled in using stigmatization as an ideology. The strategies used by the stigmatizer are of two general kinds: local strategies and global strategies. The former are those used to constraint the interpretation at the level of

utterance processing. The latter, global strategies, are those used to create adequate social and psychological conditions to obtain irrational consent. Both the local and global strategies can be linguistic and non-linguistic. The following table illustrates the two types of stigmatization strategies with the processes employed in each.

Table 1. *Stigmatization strategies*

Local strategies		Global strategies	
Linguistic	Non-linguistic	Linguistic	Non-linguistic
Blaming	Implying rudeness	Forcing domination	Implying fear
Belittling	Implying sexism	Indicating racism	Implying hate
Indicating irony	Implying narcissism	Indicating pride	Implying blame
Bullying	Implying embarrassment	Indicating prejudice	Implying shame

2.4.2. Pragmatic Functions in Discursive Stigmatization

Stigmas play a multitude of roles on the personal as well as social level. These roles occupy certain functions on the linguistic level some of which are classified and illustrated below:

Table 2. *Stigmatization functions*

Personal level	Social level
Self-esteem enhancement	Social oppression
Control enhancement	Social stereotyping
Anxiety buffering	Social threats

2.4.3. Accounting for Pragmatic Theories

The concept of stigmatization overlaps considerably with other social phenomena such as discrimination, stereotyping, and degrading, to list just a few. What entices these notions

under the general umbrella concept of social-exclusion or alienation is their negative connotations and the fact that they are all regarded as rude, racist, or impolite conduct. Moreover, they are on the most part expressed directly by the speaker without any mitigation or alleviation.

With that being clarified, stigmatization most assuredly involves the issue of impoliteness. According to (Culpeper, 2011), impoliteness may include the following (in order of predominance): patronizing, inconsiderate, rude, aggressive, inappropriate, and hurtful. Furthermore, he also finds that impoliteness has its own set of conventionalized impolite formulae. The issue of (im)politeness is crucial in critical pragmatics. Basically, it is argued that the proper use of politeness is an important indicator of pragmatic harmony and civilization, which is open to positive critical analysis; by contrast, the use of impoliteness deviates from pragmatic harmony and civilization and is thus amenable to negative critical analysis, as with the case of stigmatization.

Meanwhile, with regards to the truth value of a stigma, it is determined using its explicature. Introduced by Sperber & Wilson (1986) as a concept in relevance theory, explicature is defined as an “ostensively communicated assumption that is inferentially developed from one of the incomplete conceptual representations (logical forms) encoded by the utterance” (Carston, 2002: 377). Notably, explicatures contrast with implicatures, the information that the speaker conveys without actually stating it. Thus, only meanings of an utterance that are communicated can be explicatures. Information that can be inferred, but was not intended to be inferred by the communicator, is neither an explicature nor an implicature. Conversely, something that is communicated but not believed by the addressee is an implicature, as the responsibility for explicatures lies with the communicator (Sperber & Wilson, 1995: 197–200).

3. Methodology

In relation to the study at hand, investigating stigma from a critical pragmatic vantage point necessarily means approaching the phenomenon as an ideology for achieving certain pragmatic aims. As a discursive phenomenon,

stigmatization from the perspective of critical pragmatics follows certain procedures and steps. Moreover, a modified eclectic model is devised to account for the data, samples of verbal stigma in Trump’s bald speeches during the COVID19 outbreak.

3.1. Data

The data under critical pragmatic analysis is stigmatized discourse with negative social meanings. The expressions are stated by President Donald Trump as well as many of the president's top officials, supporters and political surrogates. The four main stigmas that have been created in relation to coronavirus are ethnic in nature, since they negatively stigmatized the Chinese. The most relevant contextual factors of the selected data are summarized below, following Hymes’ (1974) SPEAKING model.

Table 3. *Contextual factors of the stigma data*

Contextual factors	Description
Setting	White House
Participants	Speaker: Trump / White House officials
End	Press conference
Instrumentalities	Spoken and written
Genre	Presidential press conference

3.2. Data Collection

With regards to the practical part, the paper begins by collecting data for a critical pragmatic analysis. The data is exclusively selected samples of stigmatized discourse which has been narrowed down to one individual who currently represents the highest authoritative power in the world, Donald Trump, the President of the United States.

3.3. Data Description

The samples of stigma are described in accordance with Hymes (1972) SPEAKING

model. Following the description, the study poses a critique, stance, and reproduction of Trump's stigmatized discourse with the aim of uncovering the means by which stigmatized discourse functions in society. Such procedures are undertaken so as to understand the various uses and manifestations of stigmatized discourse as well as contribute to the construction of societal pragmatic civilization.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data under scrutiny will be subjected to questions of what, why, and how. In order to do so, the critical pragmatist makes recourse to three consecutive moves in any critical analysis of the ideology in question. Basically, it initiates by conducting a critique of what is said (those expressions referring to stigmatization), then in the stance phase, reference is made to the choice of expressions and the speaker's standpoint of

the stigmatized expressions, finally, in the reproduction stage, the study suggests expressions that reintroduce those standpoint expressions.

3.5. Methods of Data Analysis

Drawing on the aim of the study, this section provides a method to apprehending the usage of stigmatized discourse from a critical pragmatics perspective. The model of analysis adopted in this study is an eclectic and modified one that is based on pragmatic issues previously explained and linked to conceptualizing the notion of stigmatization both linguistically and pragmatically. In due course, the model will illustrate the effectiveness of critical pragmatics in unearthing stigmatized ideologies in the context of Trump's speech, as well as others promoting covid19 stigmas.

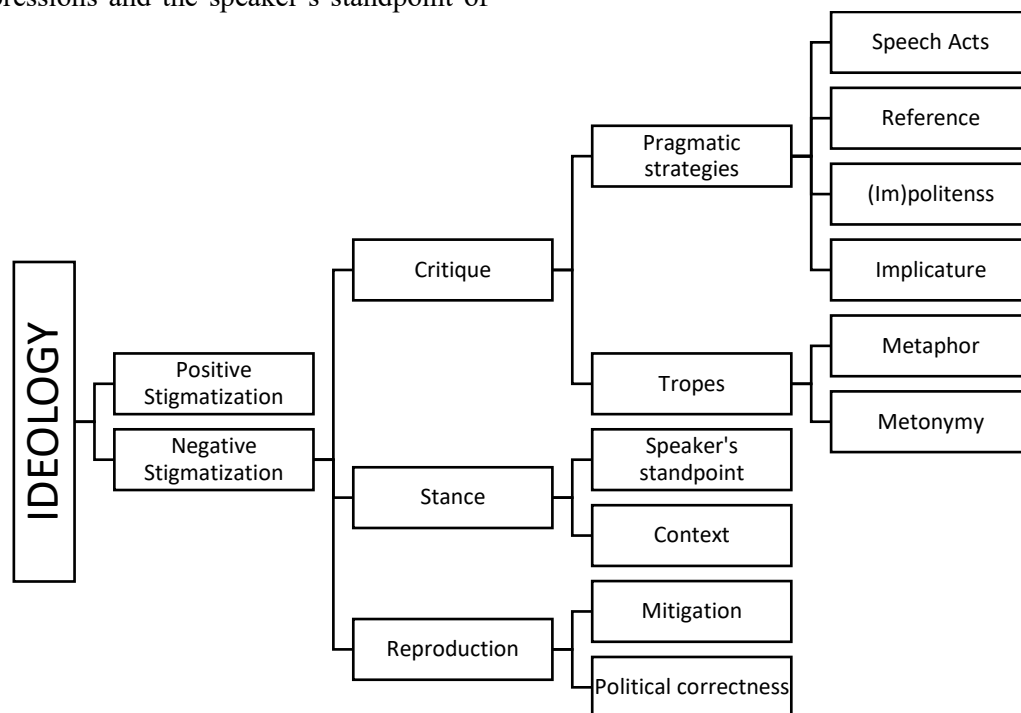


Figure 1. *Model of Analysis*

4. Analysis

By stigma, Goffman (1963: 13) refers to “an attitude that is deeply discrediting.” Of course, an attitude in language is ideological in essence, and is therefore neither credible nor discreditable as a thing in itself. More importantly, contextual factors that govern such ideologies are principally power and dominance. Therefore, it is the role of critical pragmatics to

analyze how such factors are pragmatically and linguistically expressed, through critique, stance, and reproduction.

4.1. Critique

Lately, there has been an uptick of rhetoric blaming someone for the coronavirus outbreak. Specifically, China and the Chinese people. Instead of using neutral and scientific language

like “coronavirus” and “Covid-19,” people are posting online about the “Chinese virus,” “Chinese coronavirus,” “Wuhan virus,” or the “Kung Flu.” Much of this ramping-up can be linked to public statements and social media posts by Republican politicians, including US President Donald Trump.

President Trump may not have had racist intentions in this case, but the intent matters less than the effect since many racist acts and harassment against Asians had already surged and they continued to spike not long after such expressions surfaced. Trump’s own Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a warning that white supremacists may exploit the crisis against Asian-Americans. While Donald Trump did not commit these terrible acts, elected officials and scientists have a responsibility for the way they talk about the virus – words matter. That is why the WHO has had a strict guideline since 2015 regarding the naming of diseases, a guideline followed by other world leaders.

The expressions “Chinese virus” and “Wuhan virus” personify the threat. Personification is metaphorical: its purpose is to help understand something unfamiliar and abstract (i.e. the virus) by using terms that are familiar and embodied (i.e. a location, a nationality or a person). But as cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have long shown, metaphors are not just poetic tools, they are used constantly and shape our world view. The adjective “Chinese” is particularly problematic as it associates the infection with an ethnicity. Talking about group identities with an explicitly medical language is a recognized process of Othering, historically used in anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy, including toward Chinese immigrants in North America. This type of language stokes anxiety, resentment, fear and disgust toward people associated with that group, therefore, exhibiting xenophobic language attitudes.

The most damaging aspect to using such stigmatized language, is the fact that it is being used by popular political officials and influential people in the government. Such figures are very likely to encourage others in referring to COVID-19 in such a stigmatized manner. Especially at a time where there is unstable unease expediting around the globe due to the deadly and rapid spread of COVID-19, people should be careful with how they use language

because certain words can have dire consequences.

4.2. Stance

“Stigma, to be honest, is more dangerous than the virus itself,” World Health Organization Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus specifically stated about the coronavirus outbreak. To many people’s resentment, anti-Asian attacks and other forms of xenophobia against Asian populations have increased in the U.S, U.K. and other countries affected by the pandemic.

President Donald Trump has knowingly created a negative stigma by referring to the coronavirus a “Chinese virus.” After using the expression at several press conferences, he was faced with accusations of racism, which he dismissed saying: “It’s not racist at all. No, it’s not at all. It’s from China. That’s why. It comes from China. I want to be accurate.” (March 18). Admittedly, this is a seemingly common-sense justification – after all, the virus did originate in China. This line of defense was eagerly taken up with by conservative media and Republican officials as another battle against “political correctness” in America’s culture war.

Furthermore, Trump defended his stance explaining that “China was putting out information that was false that our military gave this to them, that was false,” and he reverberates saying “I think saying our military gave it to them creates a stigma.” Similarly, at another press conference, Donald Trump insisted that calling the coronavirus the ‘kung flu’ was neither wrong nor racist. Basically, although SARS-CoV-2 probably originated in China, Trump’s argument that “Chinese” is merely linguistic shorthand for “it comes from China” ignores a very important point: word choice matters.

Memorably, US President Donald Trump while addressing the second ‘Salute to America’ on America’s 244th Independence Day, launched a hard-hitting attack on China using stigmatized discourse to blame them for the deadly outbreak of COVID-19 across the globe. Trump impolitely alleged “... we got hit by the virus that came from China”, and further made it clear that “It was almost exclusively made in foreign lands, in particular, China where ironically this virus and others came from.”

4.3. Reproduction

An atmosphere of hate and stigmatization is already having harmful consequences out in the real world. Incidents of racial hatred and violence toward Asians have been reported in several countries since coronavirus began spreading. It is only through collaborated work and awareness can such negative ideologies and attitudes be removed from our present society. Among those who can contribute through theoretical and practical research is the pragmatist. Case in point, criticality in pragmatics represents a key to solving the upsurging problems in today's society by aiming to identify negative ideologies expressed via language in an attempt to reproduce them in favor of the public.

The table to follow presents the stigmatized expressions used in the discrimination of Chinese people during the pandemic outbreak, and those which have been put under scrutiny.

Table 4. *Data samples of standpoint expressions*

Stigmatized expressions	Ideological tendency	Non-stigmatized expressions
Chinese virus	Discrimination	Coronavirus
Chinese coronavirus	Personalization	COVID-19
Wuhan virus	Dehumanization	Corona
Kung Flu	Incivility	Covid
Asian virus	Racism	Multiple severe acute

Table 5. *The linguistic expressions and pragmatic strategies before and after reproduction*

Reproduction				
Before			After	
No.	Linguistic Expressions	Pragmatic Strategies	Linguistic Expressions	Pragmatic Strategies
1.	Chinese virus	Inference	Coronavirus	Mitigation
2.	Chinese coronavirus	Explicature	COVID-19	Anti-stigmatized language

		respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)
Indian variant	Subjectivity	B.1.617.

As a popular arena of investigation, critical pragmatics may suggest several alternatives through which stigmatized discourse may be reduced or eliminated. Mitigation is one way people may recourse to before making direct and bald stigmas concerning the latest coronavirus outbreak. This does not imply that one needs to hide their true feelings or attitudes towards a certain topic or phenomena, it only means that they do it in a more polite manner.

Other methods include political correctness, which is the practice of being careful not to offend or exclude anyone, especially people who belong to groups that are frequently discriminated against. This is used in contrast to political incorrectness, which is the use of expressions or actions that can be perceived to exclude or marginalize or insult groups who are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against.

During times of global pandemic, it is crucial to remember that words matter and the language we use has power. The goal is tone down, not spike, politically driven discrimination which may lead to hostile interactions. Non-stigmatized language or anti-stigma is a remedy for the stigma associated with referring to an illness (COVID-19) in a way that deliberately creates unconscious (or conscious) bias. Therefore, to attain equity and inclusion in reference, the language to be selected should not exhibit any stigmatization, yet is to be mindful and accurate at the same time.

3.	Wuhan virus	Metaphor	Corona	Entailment
4.	Kung Flu	Word Play	Covid	Entailment
5.	Asian virus	Metonymy	Corona virus disease	Neutral politeness
6.	The virus that came from China	Assertive SA	SARS-CoV-2	Scientific acronym
7.	China where ironically this virus and others came from	Assertive SA	Multiple severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2	Scientific language

5. Discussion

In light of the aforementioned critique, the reintroduction of non-stigmatized language,

particularly in the case of the highly delicate subject of COVID-19, requires the following dos and don'ts to be taken into consideration:

Table 6. *The do's and don'ts of stigmatized discourse*

No.	DO's	DON'Ts
1.	Talk candidly about COVID-19 and educate oneself about the topic. <i>"We can better prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect those who may have it when we speak about it with accuracy, empathy, and care — something we should all be committed to."</i> Dr. Marietta Vazquez	Attach locations to the disease (location-based labels), as it creates stigma and could lead to racism. Donald Trump's "Wuhan Virus".
2.	Be geographically and politically neutral when naming the disease WHO - <i>"The 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak, first identified in Wuhan China"</i>	Attach ethnicity to the disease. Donald Trump's "Chinese Virus"
3.	Talk about people "acquiring" or "contracting" COVID-19, so as not to create stigmas.	Talk about people "transmitting COVID-19," "infecting others," or "spreading the virus" as it implies intentional transmission and assigns blame, therefore feeding stigma.
4.	Speak accurately about the risk from COVID-19, based on scientific data and latest official health advice.	Repeat or share unconfirmed rumors, and avoid using stigmatized language designed to mock others. Donald Trump's "Kung Flu".
5.	Talk positively and emphasize the effectiveness of prevention and treatment measures.	Emphasize or dwell on negativity or messages of threat.
6.	Use the scientific names or media-friendly terms for new variants (based on their generic sequence) to avoid stigmatization. Use lineage labels, such as B.1.1.7, every time except in the first instance, then say something like "first isolated in the UK".	Naming a variant of Covid after a country (geographical regions) can wrongly blame people from that place. "Chinese virus" is an inappropriate name for the SARS-CoV-2 species. Calling B.1.351 the "South African variant". Labels like "Indian variant" for strain B.1.617.

7.	Use factual and accurate language when talking of the disease.	Use racist language. Demonstrated by former US president Donald Trump, who referred to the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus as the "Chinese virus" and "Kung Flu", which was widely regarded as racist language.
8.	Challenge myths about the disease.	Use stereotypical language. Unconscious stereotypes are caused by associating a location with race
9.	Choose words carefully. Journalists need to balance ethical considerations with clear communication.	Blame and stigmatize 'Others'

6. Conclusions

This paper has taken a critical pragmatic inquiry into stigmatization as a negative language ideology, which necessarily involves context-dependent intentions or functions. The paper hypothesized that certain pragmatic functions and strategies are utilized to manifest stigmatization, and it is through critical pragmatics that the unveiling of the ideological aspects of stigmatized discourse is a possibility. This proved accurate in the analysis of Trump's recently popular negative COVID19 stigmas, thus, rendering critical pragmatics an effective approach to unveiling ideological aspects of stigmatized discourse. Although Trump was confronted with his stigma infected language use, he responded "I have to call it where it came from," in defense to claims that he has negatively stigmatized the Chinese.

The study proves that "Chinese virus" isn't an innocuous phrase and evidence suggests that it caused a dramatic rise in racial slurs and physical violence against Asian-Americans, inspiring the hashtag 'Stop Asian Hate'. Consequently, the problem with naming any germ or disease after a location apparently attaches a stigma to people from that place. Even worse, that stigmatization is then extended, mainly through racist stereotypes, to anyone who 'looks like' they come from the same location, which is probably how the phrase "Chinese virus" led to hate crimes against those who appear 'Asian', hence, the label "Asian virus". The expressions under scrutiny have exhibited several ideological tendencies, namely: discrimination, racism, dehumanization, and incivility, all of which result from publicized COVID19 stigmas.

The analysis proved that Trump's expressions "Chinese virus" and "Wuhan virus" personify a threat. Hence, a metaphorical personification is used to describe the virus in amalgamation with racist remarks towards the people of China. But as cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have long shown, metaphors are not just poetic tools, they are used constantly and shape our world view. The adjective "Chinese" is particularly problematic as it associates the infection with an ethnicity. Talking about group identities with an explicitly medical language is a recognized process of Othering, historically used in anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy, including toward Chinese immigrants in North America. This type of language stokes anxiety, resentment, fear and disgust toward people associated with that group.

Furthermore, it has been shown that several tactics can be used to avoid such negative ideologies in a time of global panic, where people are supposed to be uniting and working together in order to find a vaccine. The analysis provided methods such as mitigation and political correctness as remedies for stigmatized discourse. They may be effective if employed correctly and repeatedly with the aim of eliminating unequal power relations in society.

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