



Speech Acts of the Congregational Sermons of the Grand Ayatollah AL-Sistani (2014-2016)

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Abstract

This study investigates the speech acts of the congregational sermons of the Grand Ayatollah Al:Sistani 2014-2016 , by using a pragmatic analysis. It aims to investigate how these sermons are influential and affective in the society reformation . In order to achieve this study, there are certain hypotheses that have been hypothesized to get a clear idea about the study presented. One of these hypotheses is that congregational sermons have a great impact on societies in all aspects of life , particularly the Islamic societies .This study is carried out by using Searle's contributions to speech act theory presented by felicity conditions (1969) and the classification of speech act types (1975).

المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة تأثير خطاب آية الله العظمى السيد السيستاني على المجتمع العراقي ٢٠١٤-٢٠١٦ ، دراسة تداولية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح كيفية تأثير وفعالية هذه الخطب في إعادة بناء وتوجيه و إصلاح المجتمع من خلال ماتحمله من افعال الكلام، وكذلك الطرق التي تنتقل بها هذه الخطب وتوجيه رساله إلى المجتمع العراقي لمواجهة ظروفهم الصعبة خلال تلك الفترة. من أجل تحقيق هذه الدراسة ، هناك بعض الفرضيات التي تم افتراضها للحصول على فكرة واضحة عن الدراسة المقدمة. واحدة من هذه الفرضيات هي أن هذه الخطب لها تأثير كبير على المجتمع في جميع جوانب الحياة ، وخاصة المجتمعات الإسلامية. تم إجراء هذه الدراسة باستخدام نظرية افعال الكلام لسيرل (١٩٦٩) و (١٩٧٥) وتصنيفه لأفعال الكلام.و كانت هناك بعض النتائج التي مفادها أن اللغة الدينية فعالة للغاية وملينة بأفعال الكلام . كما تم التوصل الى ان الخطب الدينية ممكن أن تكون أفضل دليلاً لقيادة المجتمعات.



1.Introduction

Language is a means by which activities of beings are done subjectively among people as social groups. There are no sets of formal or pragmatic characteristics that are diagnostic of religious language as opposed to other uses of language, such as poetic or those ceremonial uses. Rather, different religious practices are to select from among the entire scope of linguistic possibilities (Tedlock , 1983 ; Murray,1989; Sherzer ,1990) . Language in its social context may be called discourse, which is for discourse analysis a form of 'social practice'. It is in fact through language that ideas are kept or transformed and it is the element from which social environments are shaped. therefore, a reciprocal relation between discourse and society. They are dependent: discourse influences social practices as well as social practices influence discourse .Religion has stood as a regulator of actions in the same strength as has law (Fairclough, 1992), The main difference between them is in relation to the sanctions that concern spiritual and physical punishments respectively.

The spread of religion has accompanied the trade , colonization and language spread through history rationalized the relevant studies between language and religion contacts . scholars who are interested in language contacts themselves did not easily become aware of the religious beliefs and life . This shows the great impact of scholars' opinions on communities , Spolsky (2003).

Olanrewaju (2004) observes that the language of sermonic discourse is a distinct form of the spoken language as it is noted to be marked with some peculiar features such as the use of Quranic quotations, theological terms, prophetic utterances , impersonal statements, interruptions, paralinguistic codes, repetitions, metaphors, paradox and euphony.

Fishman(2006) explores the interplay between language and religion showing the importance of religion as an essential factor in the studies of language. Sawyer (2001, cited in Spolsky, 2003, p. 81) states that religious language is now listed among 10 language functions , These functions are : "(1) official language, (2) provincial language, (3) wider communication, (4) international language, (5) capital language, (6) group language, (7) educational language, (8) school subject language, (9) literary language and



(10) religious language It is worth mentioning that 'swearing' or what others call 'foul language' is also considered as an important function of religious language" . (Jay, 2009) Although swearing is a natural part in human speech for reducing tension . It is found that one could use swearing as an emotional way to reduce pain and anxiety.

Netton (2001) points out that one cannot fully understand the role and the significance of the khutba without refering to the role of the major sources of Islam, particularly the Quran and the Sunna . The Quran in its spoken form , not only the written one , is the full reality for the listeners and the khatib. To achieve the goal of gaining attention and involving the audience with the issues raised , khatibs usually tend to bold face the Quranic verses , and the Hadith , by changing the intonation and loudness of these verses to be distinguished from the rest of the khutba . the khutba is an imitation to the Prophet and make his voice heard again. Probably this importance of the Quranic recitation in khutbas was originally taken from the importance of Quran. A Muslim's ritual is performed five times a day. Mattock (2001) As for the mosque, it represents the intersection of the the earthly divine , the personification of God's greatness . The Hadith illustrates that the best places on earth are the mosques .

There has long been argument among Islamic scholars concerning which language to be used in Friday sermons (Ibn-Qudamah, 1983) that there has been two main opinions. One opinion is that only Arabic language should be used in sermons and the justification for this is that Arabic language was the language the Prophet Mohammed peace upon him used in his sermons. The second opinion argues that sermons have to be delivered in the language understandable to the community. this view refutes the former argument, stating that the Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him delivered his sermons in Arabic since it was the language of his community .

A weekly talk is called the Friday sermon (khutbah) is usually delivered in mosques . This is originated from the practice of the Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him , who presented himself as the first Islamic imam . The prophet 'used to deliver words of instruction, or command when gathering for worship in the mosque that is the courtyard of his house in Medina (Juliastui, 2012). These sermons are as part of other religious

activities. The first activity is to call to prayer and followed by the sermon then the noon prayer (dhuhr). Sermons are usually delivered by imams , who have sufficient religious knowledge. The role of imams gives them significant social , political and cultural status in Muslim communities.

The Friday khutbah was established to bring Muslims together for Dhuhr (noon) prayers, to help them understand Islam in detail, to deal with major problems in society, and to deliberate and pray to Allah. (Juliastui, 2012) .Accordingly Liman (2018) sets that Friday sermon texts as fully loaded are designed to call the worshippers to factual action on their belief system . their language are expectedly to have the pragmatic force of persuasion that can captivate the interest of listeners.

2.An Overview of Speech Act Theory

The philosopher who is most associated with speech act theory is J.L. Austin, who gave many of important and influential lectures on the topic at Harvard in 1955, and he was the first philosopher who begins speech act theory and aroused a wide interest in this theory. In his work "How to Do Things with Words", which was first published in 1962, he states that a speaker performs an act in making an utterance in a certain contexts.

A distinction has been made to distinguish between sentence and utterance is that Sentences are linguistic units that consist of formal elements, whereas utterances are regarded as situated sentences, pragmatic units of communication. It is possible that two or more sentences uttered to make a single illocution . A number of sentences can form one single statement or a piece of information , a recommendation, or even a piece of advice that can be so complicated and difficult to express in one single sentence (Trosborg, 1995). "An utterance is a spoken word or string of spoken words. At the simplest level, to utter is simply to say a word with no particular forethought or intention to communicate a meaning (Searle ,2002)."

2.4 Austin's Speech Act Theory

Austin (1962) makes two important observations. The first observation is that not all sentences are regarded as statements and that



much of the conversations taking place among people is made up of questions, commands, and exclamations :

Example: (2.1) Are you serving?

Example: (2.2) Excuse me!

Example: (2.3) Give me the dry roasted ones.

These sentences are not descriptive and they cannot be true or false .the second observation is that even sentences with grammatical forms of declaratives, are not all used to make statements. The following sentences are therefore, different because they are not uttered just to say things, but they are rather to do things.

Example: (2.4) I promise to take a taxi home

Example: (2.5) I give my word.

Austin (1962) claims that these sentences represent a kind of action. Thus, by uttering (2.4) and (2.5) the speaker makes a promise and gives his word . he does not only describe what he wants. he calls these sentences Performatives in contrast to those descriptive statements that he calls Constatives .

2.4.1 Constatives vs. Performatives

Austin (1962) introduces two terms: Constatives and Performatives. He introduces Constatives to describe the true or false statements and Performatives , whose 'name is derived from 'perform', the verb with the noun 'action' for the utterance performing an action.

In explaining the properties of constative versus performative utterances, Austin makes the following statement: "The constative utterances under the name so dear to philosophers, of statement, has the property of being true or false. The performative utterance, by contrast, can never be either: it has its own special job, it is used to perform an action. To issue such an utterance is to perform the action...an action, perhaps, which one scarcely could perform, at least with so much precision, in any other way "(1963 p 22) . Here are some examples:

I name this ship 'Liberté'.

I apologize

I welcome you

I advise you to do it

then he shifts into other possible performative forms as the passive form with a second or third person. Example: (2.6) You are hereby authorized to pay....

2.4.2 Explicit and Implicit Performatives

Austin (1962) distinguishes between 'explicit' and 'implicit' performatives. In a case of explicit performatives, a speech act that is performed is specific and clear. An explicit performative clause has to contain an explicit performative verb that its function is to point a specific speech act. Those clauses have certain properties, which specify them apart from the non-performative verbs:

Example: (2.7) I promise that I shall be there. (Explicit)

In implicit performatives, the speech act is indicated by grammatical mood, modal verbs, intonation, tone of voice, adverbs, and even connectives accompanying the utterance.

Example: (2.8) I shall be there. (Implicit)

Austin (1962) suggests four ways for deciding whether an utterance is realized as a performative or constative as by Coulthard (1985):

1. Does the saying of the words constitute the performing of an act? This can be tested by asking 'did he really'.
2. Could the action be performed without uttering the words? One can be sorry just as one can repent without saying anything but one cannot apologize silently.
3. Is the action something that can be done deliberately and voluntarily? One can be 'willing to apologize' but not 'willing to be sorry'- one is either sorry or not.
4. Can the utterance be literally false? Austin sees this as a crucial distinction between constatives, which can be true or false, and performatives, which can only be happy or unhappy. Despite saying 'I am sorry' it needs not be true that one is sorry; if one says 'I apologize', however, it cannot be false that one has apologized.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

The data used in this research collected from the Grand ayatollah Al Sistani's official website (<http://www.sistani.org/arabic/archive/24925/>). The data are restricted to the sermons presented by the Marja 's representatives in the holy Shrine of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) in the holy Karbala'a from 2014 to 2016 since this period, in particular, the Iraqi society faced highly dangerous conditions that is why the sermons which are delivered in this period are highly significant and they were regarded as a very useful guide for the society to overcome that dilemma.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

The adopted model of analysis in the current study is presented by Searle's (1969) and (1975) contributions to the speech act theory. This model is chosen since it is seen sufficient to investigate the illocutionary act of the specified extracts. Searle states that the understanding of the speaker's intention is an essential factor to capture the meaning. Without the speaker's intention , It is impossible to understand the words as a speech act. Saeed (1997) declares that to understand language, one must understand the speaker's intention since "part of the meaning of an utterance is its intended social function. hearers have to coordinate linguistic and non-linguistic (social) knowledge to interpret a speaker's intended meaning.(p.204)"

Since the intention in this study is to investigate the illocutionary acts of the sermons depending on understanding the speaker's intention, which is essential for capturing the meaning , the researcher prefers to adopt Searle's felicity conditions and speech acts classification as a model for this study.

Searle' (1969) sets out a significant contribution to the SAT represented by FCs . For Searle , felicity conditions are a group of conditions necessary for the performance of any act . If those conditions are all present , the act will be performed successfully. He classifies the FCs into four types:

1.Propositional Content Conditions (PCCs): These conditions can express the proposition of the sentence . They are regarded as the expressions of the psychological state.



2.Preparatory Conditions (PCs): They indicate the intention and knowledge of speakers and hearers. They show what speakers imply in the performance of an act . In the performance of the illocutionary act , the speaker denotes that the preparatory conditions of that act are satisfied.

3.Sincerity Conditions (SCs): They tell about what the speaker believes , intends, and desires in the performance of the act . For instance , one cannot greet another person insincerely, but one can state or give a promise insincerely.

4.Essential Conditions (ECs): They are the constitutive rules that determine the type of IA. For example; in making a promise, the speaker intends the utterance to 'count as' a promise, etc., and the hearer should know that intention of the speaker.

Searle finds that these conditions are more or less crucial to the successful performance of any act . They are collectively important for the performance of an IA . they enable the speaker to achieve the force of the utterance to the hearer.

In his contribution of FCs to SAT, Searle gives abbreviations to the items required for every utterance in order for that utterance to be a speech act .He abbreviated them as follows:

- A act
- E event
- H hearer
- P proposition
- S speaker

Searle (1975) classified speech acts into five classes, each class includes certain type of verbs depending on the illocutionary force or how the participants cooperate in terms of using those types of speech acts.

1.Assertives (Representatives) :

They have a truth value , show words-to-world fit, and they express the speaker's belief in proposition. e.g., statements. The goal of this class of the speech acts is to "commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition" (p.12). Assertives have a word-to-world direction that the speakers fit their words to the world



to express a belief throughout the established proposition .Verbs such as state, assert, complain, report, conclude are classified under this class.

2. Directives :

They are attempts to get hearers to do something . they show world-to-words fit , and they express speaker's wish or desire that hearer does A. The illocutionary force is to direct the hearer forwards doing (or not doing) something, thus they choose a world-to-words direction of fit. A speaker wishes or wants a hearer to do (or not to do) something .Verbs such as; request, ask, order, demand, warn and advise are classified under this class .

3. Commissives :

They commit the speaker to some future action . they show world-to-words fit , and the speaker expresses the intention that Speaker do A. Commissives are speech acts by which a speaker is committed to some future action. The promiser tries to make the world fit to his words. The promiser intends to do an action or something by uttering his words that. The speaker commits himself to a certain course of action:. Verbs such as promise, threaten, vow, commit, pledge are classified under this class.

4. Expressives :

They express the speaker's attitude to a certain state of affairs specified in the propositional content (e.g., I apologize for stepping on your toe). There is no direction of fit ; a variety of different psychological states and propositional content must be related to the speaker or the hearer . e.g., congratulations.Expressives are regarded as speech acts that express the psychological state in the sincerity condition about the state of affairs in the propositional content. In other words, expressives express the speaker's psychological state such as sorrow, pleasure, likes, dislikes or , pain. There is no direction of fit by which a range of feelings and attitudes is expressed through the propositional content .Verbs such as thank, apologize, condole, congratulate, welcome are classified under this class.

5. Declarations :

They bring about the correspondence between the propositional content and the world ; thus direction of fit is both words-to-world and world-to-words. Searle recognizes no psychological state for declarations. e.g., an excommunication. This class of speech act brings into existence a

state described in a proposition. They have both a world-to-words direction of fit and a words-to-world , therefore, they change the world via their utterances. There is no psychological state to be expressed by a declaration. Verbs such as declare, quit, appoint, nominate, name are classified under this class.

4. Data Analysis

Extract 1

في سبيل إصلاح مؤسسات الدولة ، فيسعى في تعيين الشخص المناسب في المكان المناسب وإن لم يكن منتمياً إلى أيّ من أحزاب السلطة وبغضّ النظر عن انتمائه الطائفي أو الأثني **In order to reform the institutions of the state, seeking to appoint the right person in the right place, if not belonging to any of the parties of power and regardless of sectarian or ethnic affiliation."** 7 , August , 2015.

In this extract , al Safi from the holy shrine of Imam Hussein(peace be upon him) in al Dhuhur prayer in the holy Karbala asserts that in the process of reforming the new government , there must be district rules for choosing the persons who occupy the sensitive positions in the government. The prime minister has to be away from the sectarian and ethnic quotas in the appointing. He must remove those not suitable to the position they are in even if they were supported with political forces . the speaker asserts the prime minister to appoint the right person in the right position regardless the sectarian and ethnic affiliation . there is a speech act of assertion in this speech. the illocutionary force is that the speaker asserts that in the new government , there must be no place to those who make use of their political and sectarian force for their personal benefits .

Here we can apply rules of assertion by (Searle, 1969) .

1.The Propositional Content Rule: Any proposition P

2.The Preparatory Rules:

a-S has evidence (reasons, etc.) for the truth of P.

b-It is not obvious to both S and H that H knows (does not need to be reminded of, etc.) P.

3.The Sincerity Rule: S believes P.

4.The Essential Rule: Counts as an undertaking to the effect that P represents an actual state of affairs.

The felicity conditions in this speech are the following :-



1.Propositional Content Conditions (PCCs): The Marja' expresses the proposition of assertion. He states that the government must choose the right person in the right position

2.Preparatory Conditions (PCs): The Marja' is quite confident of the truth of this proposition and has reason for this confidence.

3.Sincerity Conditions (SCs): The Marja' believes in this proposition.

4.Essential Conditions (ECs): The Marja' expresses an actual state of affairs.

The type of speech act in this extract is referred to as Assertive speech act. Assertives have a word-to-world direction that the speakers fit their words to the world to express a belief throughout the established proposition. Here, the speaker expresses his belief that the new formation of the government must be free from the sectarian or ethnic affiliation. He stresses that they have to choose the right person in the sensitive position.

Extract 2

المطلوب أن يحث الأبُ ابنه والأُمُ ابنها والزوجة زوجها على الصمود والثبات دفاعاً عن " **The father is required to urge his son and the mother her son and the wife her husband to maintain their steadfastness in defense of the sanctity of this country and its citizens**" 13, June , 2014 .

In this extract , al Karbalai from the holy shrine of imam Hussein(peace be upon him) in al Dhuhur prayer in the holy Karbala informs the individuals to urge each other for defending their country. The father is required to urge his son , the mother to urge her son and the wife is required to urge her husband in order for all to be one hand in facing their difficult situation till they get victory .There is a speech act of order. The illocutionary force in this speech is to make Iraqi families courage each other for fighting the enemy . The speaker wants to tell the fathers and mothers to send their sons to fight and the wives to also send their husbands to go fighting in order to maintain the unity and security of the country and its citizens.

Here we can apply Searle's rules (1969) of order are:

1.The Propositional Content Rule: Future act A of H.

2.The Preparatory Rules:

a.H is able to do A. S believes that H is able to do A.



b.It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do A in the normal course of events of his own accord.

c.S must be in a position of authority over H.

3.The Sincerity Rule: S wants H to do A.

4.The Essential Rule: the utterance counts as an attempt to get H to do A by virtue of the authority of S over H.

The felicity conditions in this speech are the following :-

1.Propositional Content Conditions (PCCs): The Mrja'a expresses the proposition of his order that members of families have to urge their fathers and son to fight the enemy.

2.Preparatory Conditions (PCs): Hearers are believers in the speaker's proposition and they have a reason to believe in this order and it will be in hearers' interest.

3.Sincerity Conditions (SCs): The Marja' wants hearers to defend their country .

4.Essential Conditions (ECs): The Marja' intends to make hearers to take the order and join the army.

The type of speech act in this extract is referred to as directive speech act. It attempts to get hearers to perceive something. The speaker orders the hearers to courage each other for joining the armed forces . The speaker wants the hearers to seriously deal with the utterance as an order to defend their country. The speaker intends the hearers to realize the utterance as a speech act of an order.

Extract 3

The most important need is for the unity and rejection of division" 9,July , 2014.

In this extract , al Karbalai from the holy shrine of imam Hussein(peace be upon him) in al Dhuhur prayer in the holy Karbala confirms the need for unity and the rejection of division. He wants to approve that all have to resist to keep the unity of Iraqis regardless of their races and sectarians. He also asks the politicians and the parties to leave the sectarian discourse that adds nothing but increase the complexity and confusion. He stresses also that this way of differentiating between the Iraqis will negatively influence the components of the society. There is a speech act of advice. The illocutionary



force the speaker asks figures who are responsible for the security of the country and its people to resist the division, keep unity of the country and to leave the language of the distinction.

Here we can apply Searle's rules of advice , (1969) .

1.The Propositional Content Rule: Future act A of H.

2.The Preparatory Rules:

a.S has some reason to believe A will benefit H.

b.It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do A in the normal course of events.

3. The Sincerity Rule: S believes A will benefit H.

4.The Essential Rule: Counts as an undertaking to the effect that A is in H's best interest.

The felicity conditions in this speech are the following :-

1.Propositional Content Conditions (PCCs): The Marja expresses the proposition of advice to his audience that they must keep their unity.

2.Preparatory Conditions (PCs): Hearers are ready to respect this advice and will actually obey it.

3.Sincerity Conditions (SCs): The Marja believes that in respecting this advice, his followers will benefit a lot.

4.Essential Conditions (ECs): The Marja believes that this piece of advice will benefit his followers and it is in their interest.

The type of speech act in this extract is referred to as directive speech act. It attempts to get hearers to perceive something. The speaker advises the hearers to keep their unity and to resist division. The speaker intends the hearers to realize the utterance as an advice.

Extract 4

إنّ القوى السياسية من مختلف المكونات التي كانت ولا تزال تمسك بزمام السلطة والقرار " من خلال مجلس النواب والحكومة المركزية والحكومات المحلية تتحمل معظم المسؤولية عمّا مضى **The political forces of various components that have been holding power and decision through the parliament, the central government and local governments bear most of the responsibility**" 7 , August , 2015.

In this extract , al Safi from the holy shrine of imam Hussein (peace be upon him) in al Dhuhur prayer in the holy Karbala Declares that the political

figures and parties who have a control on the current decision making and they also have a power to take decisions. They have to put a radical solution to the current crises that the society suffers from particularly those financial and economic corruption that has plagued the various department and institutions. There is a speech act of warning in this speech. The illocutionary force is that the speaker warns the political figures and parties to stop the sufferings of citizens since they face a dangerous economic and financial corruption. They have to find a radical solution to these crises.

Here we can apply the rules of warning, (Searle, 1969).

1.The Propositional Content Rule: Future event or state, etc., *E*

2.The Preparatory Rules:

a. H has a reason to believe that *E* will occur and is not in H's interest.

b. It is not obvious to both S and H that *E* will occur.

3.The Sincerity Rule: S believes that *E* is not in H's best interest.

4.The Essential Rule: the utterance counts as an undertaking that *E* is not in H's best interest.

The felicity conditions in this speech are the following :-

1.Propositional Content Conditions (PCCs): .) The Mrja'a expresses the proposition of warning that powerful political figures must realize the danger of corruption.

2.Preparatory Conditions (PCs): Hearers are believers in the speaker's proposition and they have a reason to believe that this warning is true and will not be in hearers' interest.

The speaker knows that hearers are able to obey this warning.

3.Sincerity Conditions (SCs): The Marja' wants hearers to obey him.

4.Essential Conditions (ECs): The Marja' intends to make hearers recognizes that disregarding this warning is going to be harmful to them.

The type of speech act in this extract is referred to as directive speech act. It attempts to get hearers to do something. The speaker warns the political figures and the parties that they are responsible for the problems that the country faces and they have to find clear radical solutions to all the crises that the society is suffering from. The speaker intends the hearers to realize the utterance as a warning.

5. Conclusions

Societies are concluded to be highly affected by congregational sermons and religious figures particularly the Islamic societies , the religion and the religious figures can participate in all aspects of their life and can even change systems in a government. , it is also concluded that religious sermons and figures can widely take part in reforming societies from all aspects of life , for instance , in Iraq , when invaded by the savage militant groups named Daaish , the sermon of al Jihad Fatwa played a great positive role in that period and on . It made thousands of volunteers to join the military forces to defend their country , holy sites and families. , it is concluded that the language of congregational sermons of sayid al Sistani is highly affective, it is full of speech acts in spite of its implicity. The language of sermons were characterised by different speech acts particularly those commissives , directives and assertives to focus on the illocutionary force of advice, assertion, promise, order and warning. All extracts analysed contain implicit speech act and that proves that the religious language of the selected sermons is a distinct language by the messages it conveys.

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