

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF ILLOCUTIONARY SPEECH ACTS IN HOLY BIBLE

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Abstract

This article analyzes the illocutionary speech acts found in the biblical texts from a pragmatic perspective. Based on the theory of speech acts, categories of speech acts such as command, promise, warning, prayer, judgment, and notification in the Bible are examined. The results of the study indicate the communicative and axiological function of speech acts in religious discourse.

Keywords: speech acts, illocutionary act, religious discourse, Holy Bible, pragmatics, communicative competence.

Introduction

The theory of speech acts is one of the key domains of pragmatics and linguistics (Yule, 1996; Levinson, 1983). This theory was first coined by J. Austin (1962) and later developed by J. Searle (1969). Speech acts serve to study not only the semantic, but also the communicative and social functions of language units on pragmatic surface (Searle, 1979).

Religious texts, particularly the Holy Bible, have a high level of communicative and axiological content, in which various illocutionary speech acts are widely implemented. Studying biblical texts on the basis of speech act theory makes it feasible to analyze the pragmatic aspects of religious texts.

Theoretical bases of speech act theory

J. Austin (1962) divides speech acts into three categories:

- Locutive act - grammatical and semantic content of speech
- Illocutive act - communicative purpose of the speaker
- Perlocutionary act - impact on the listener

J. Searle (1969, 1979) divides illocutionary acts into the following categories:

1. Representatives - giving information or confirmation
2. Directives - order, request, advice
3. Commissives - promise, obligation
4. Expressives - expression of feelings
5. Declaratives - speech acts that bring about social change

This taxonomy is an important methodological foundation for the pragmatic analysis of biblical texts.

Analyses of Illocutionary speech acts In the Holy Bible with the frame work of J. Searle.



Representative speech acts in biblical texts

Representative speech acts serve to convey information about reality and to express religious truths. For example:

“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

Pragmatic feature: In this sentence, Jesus Christ confirms his religious status. This speech act serves to express religious doctrine and express a faith truth to christians.

Directive Speech Acts

Directive speech acts are one of the most common speech acts in the Holy Bible. They indicate moral and religious norms and values.

For example:

“Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39).

Pragmatic feature: This sentence is a command and applies a moral precept. Social and moral values are formulated in a religious context through directive speech acts.

Commissive Speech Acts

Commissive speech acts denote a promise or command. Divine promises are common place in the Holy Bible.

For example:

“He who believes in me will have eternal life” (John 6:47).

Pragmatic feature: This speech act shows a belief and a commitment to reward and serves as a religious intention.

Expressive Speech Acts

Expressive speech acts denote an emotional and mental state (Yule, 1996).

For example:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...” (Matthew 23:37).

Pragmatic feature: This speech act expresses a feeling of sadness. According to christaian belief, Jerusalem is a holy city and this act enhance the emotional impact of a religious verse.

Declarative speech acts

Declarative speech acts are used to express a social or spiritual state.

For example:

“Your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5).

Pragmatic feature: This speech act indicates important communicative aims in the process of religious ceremony and spiritual purification.

The axiological importance of illocutionary speech acts in biblical texts are as follows.

Speech acts in the Holy Bible play a key role in applying religious sources (Thiselton, 1992).

They:

- support moral values
- make religious beliefs stronger
- police and monitor social relations
- serve as a means of spiritual upbringing

Therefore, illocutionary speech acts in religious discourse serve not only a communicative, but also an axiological function on pragmatic level.



Conclusion

The development of the domain indicates that illocutionary speech acts are widely used in different directions. Representative, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative speech acts formulate the semantic and pragmatic framework of religious texts. With the help of these speech acts, religious values, moral norms and religious doctrines are exercised. Speech act theory is one of the effective ways in the pragmatic analysis of biblical discourse.

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