

**RESEARCH TITLE**

**SPEECH ACT OF ADVICE IN SOME IRAQI RELIGIOUS FIGURES' SPEECHES**

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**Abstract**

This paper investigates the speech act of advice in the religious sermons delivered by Ayatollah Al Sistani's representatives. Religious sermons encompasses speech act of advice to direct the community to overcome the different difficult dilemmas on different aspects of life. In order to achieve the aim of this study, it has been hypothesized that congregational sermons have a great impact on societies in all aspects of life, particularly the Islamic societies .This study follows Searle's model to speech act theory represented by his classification of speech act types (1975).

**Key Words:** speech act, sermons, advice, religion, religious figures

## 1. Introduction

People can communicate via language. Their communication is often performed among various social gatherings. Language is considered to be the means through which a variety of subjective activities are made. It is clear that there is not any set of formal or pragmatic features to diagnose the language of religion in opposition to other languages of pragmatic manipulation. There can be clear that miscellaneous religious treatments are to be picked up from a pile of entire range of linguistic possibilities (Sherzer, 1990).

The application of this means of communication, that is to say language, is termed as discourse. This field, namely discourse, is taken to be a form of socially analyzing practice. It is evident then that language is responsible for transforming and exchanging ideas as well as being in charge of shaping various elements of social surroundings. The religious practices are regarded to be one of the basics that help organize and regulate a large number of social activities for most of the religious directions are seen to have as powerful effect as law (Fairclough, 1992).

## 2. The Theory of speech acts.

The theory of speech act is attributed to philosophy of language which is originated by J. L. Austin as he presented various and important lectures on this theory at Harvard in the mid-1950s. This theory comes later to raise a wide interest as he published his 'How to do things with words' in 1962. He explains that a speaker does an act in making an utterance in a specified context. This leads to the fact that there is a difference between the grammatical concepts of a sentence and the concept of utterance. Therefore, sentences are regarded to be the linguistic units which can have formal element whereas utterances considered as pragmatic units of interaction and communication. This theory makes clear that sentences can have one solo statement, a part of information, recommending chunk or event and advice (Trosborg, 1995).

### 2.1 J. Austin Categorization of Speech Act

Austin presents two essential observations concerning this theory. Firstly, it is clear that all sentences are incorrect to be considered as statement. The conversations that happen between participants can have a variety of questions, exclamations and command as in:

A: "Are you serving?"

B: "Excuse me!"

A: "Give me the dry roasted ones."

These sentences are not considered to be merely descriptive ones or they can denote true or false conditions. The second observation shows that sentence of declarative types cannot merely be designed to form statement. There are sentences that are uttered to do thing rather than saying things such as;

A: "I promise to take a taxi home."

B: "I give my word."

According to Austin (1962) these sentences are actions. The speakers utter them to

make promise rather than describing what he wants. As a result, he proposes a dichotomous classification of performatives and constatives. The action utterance goes under performative action whereas descriptive statements come under the constative conditions.

### 2.1.1 Constatives vs. Performatives

These terms are presented by Austin in (1962). He states that constatives are related with those utterances that describe to be true or false declarations. The performatives, derived from the verb 'perform' are mainly concerned with those utterances that reflect action or acts.

Austin goes on to set up clear features for the performative and constative and utterances by stating that "The constative utterances under the name so dear to philosophers, of statement, have 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). There are utterance-instances that can help clarify these opinions as in

"I name this ship 'Liberté'.

"I apologize"

"I welcome you"

"I advise you to do it"

He also deals with further possible performative utterance that can have passive form formulated with either the second or third person as in;

- "You are hereby authorized to pay..."

### 2.1.2 Explicitness and Implicitness of Performatives

In addition, Austin makes clear cut between explicit and implicit types of performatives. Explicit performative is considered as a speech act which is clear. The explicit performative is that the act which has explicit performing verbs denotes specific actions. This explicit performative clause can be different from the non-performative clause in that they have certain common properties as in the following examples;

A: 'I promise that I shall be there'.

The utterance above is an example of explicit performative act as the type of the speech act is made clear by the grammatical mood and the use of the modal function, voice tone as well as the intonation (Austin, 1962).

However, Austin presents four methods to make decision about the utterance to be either performative or constative which can be explained as follows;

1. The performative act of the utterance can be tested by "Does he really?" as being applied to the act of saying.

2. The second method is related to the question which states that "Could the action be performed without uttering the words?" It is clear that one is to be sorry is just as one who repents without saying anything.
3. The third way is concerned with the deliberate and the voluntary process of doing an action. This makes clear that fact that "one can be willing to apologize", on another hand, "One can't be willing to be sorry".
4. The fourth method is related to the consideration of utterance as being literally false. In the sense, Austin makes up clear that the constatives are to be either false or true whereas performative are either to be happy or unhappy. The utterance saying "I am sorry" doesn't require to be true that 'one is sorry', while saying the utterance 'I apologize', can't be false that "one has apologized"

### 3. Speech Act of Advice

Advice is considered as a direct speech act by with the speaker that constructs the hearer to do some actions in the future. This action often carries the hearer's interest. When the speaker advice the hearer to an action, he/ she suggests that the hearer performs that actions while supposing then it will be good for him/ her. Thus, advising someone to, for example, read, includes the presupposition to let him/ her succeed. The verb act of advising issues the illocutionary act. The utterance of advising may be misunderstood with other acts such as urging or requesting, however, the act of advising is characterized by informing the hearers to do what is the best for him (Searle, 1969).

Furthermore, the speaker has to be sure that the advice can produce positive consequences to the hearer. The hearer whether she / he have to be certain of the positive consequences. Thus, the act of advising is hearer based and it is related to the interest of the hearer. The hearer is sure that doing an act of advice can provide him with benefit (Rintell, 1979).

The speech act of advice has a general structure that makes it distinct from other types of acts. It has two clauses which are the performative ones that convey that force plus the prepositional clause that makes clear the meaning of the action, Thus, for example, 'I advise you to study hard' is of two clause 'I advise' is the performative clause which is the speech act of advising and the prepositional clause 'to study hard' which expresses the meaning of the utterance. The act of advising is concerned with present simple tense since the action denotes the time of speaking onward. The subject of the act of advising is either first person singular or the first person with the use of the 'royal' 'we'. The use of royal 'we' is to reflect power. The speech act of advice is applied for act and passive performative verbs. The speech act of advice can be either explicit or implicit. The explicit one must have the performative verb such as 'advise', whereas the implicit one has no performative verb. Latter can be a sentence such as "if you want to pass the examination, you must study hard". The grammatical analysis of the sentence is 'if clause', yet, semantically speaking, it is considered as speech act of advice (Allen, 1986).

Additionally, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), speech act of advice is a face-threatening act as it places the hearer in a condition to be limited by the choice of

the speaker and as a result his freedom is limited then. These conditions arise as a result of the power or authority of the speaker to choose what is good for the hearers.

#### 4. Religious speeches

There is an evident fact that the expansion of religion has helped, in one way or another, the process of expanding many phenomena such as trade, language, and colonizing intentions. At the early beginning, the scholars who are specialized in language didn't give value the fact that religion and beliefs can impact communities and so do the scholars' opinions (Spolsky, 2003).

According to Olanrewaju (2004), the religious sermons are regarded as distinguished structures of the spoken formula. This spoken language includes specific features of structures such as the implication of religious references from Quran, theological expressions, speeches of prophets. Impersonal declarations, metaphorical uses, repetitive structures, paralinguistic codes, paradoxical denotations and so on.

Furthermore, Netton (2001) declares that no one can completely comprehend the role of importance of the religious sermons with relating it to major origin or source, especially in Islam such as the Holy Quran or Sunna (speeches of the prophet). The spoken formula of Quran can be the complete reality for the audience and the khatibs (religious orators in Islam). Khatibs tend to manipulate bold-faced analysis to Quranic quotations or Hadiths so as to gain the attention of the listeners or the audience involved in the case being raised. This technique is considered as the main method to grasp the attention for khatibs. This can be accomplished by shifting intonation or sonority of the verse from the normal flow of the khutba (religious sermon). It is clear that Quran is the supreme religious book in Islam that is why the importance of Quranic quotation is to comply with this fact.

However, Mattock (2001) states that the mosque has a divine incarnation in Islam. Mosque is generally considered to be intersection and reflection of the divinity in earth. It is also personified the great and perfection of God. There are hadith that show the importance of mosque as being the best place on earth.

Fishman (2006) discovers that there is mutual interplay and connection between language and religion. He states that the importance of religious domain is essential for the language studies. In addition, Sawyer (2001,) declares that fact that religious is deemed to be among the ten-top language functions. It is clear that the swear word is one example of the importance of the religious field in language function. Moreover, Jay (2009) points out that swearing words is essential portion of human speech that helps reduce that pain and anxiety because it has an emotional link in its use.

The most famous Khutba of Islam is weakly talk or the Friday khutbas which is delivered on Friday very week. This religious practice dates back the era of the Prophet Mohammad who is regarded as the first imam in Islam. The prophet used to speak out his khutbas in the mosque in Medina. In his khutbas, the prophet delivered his instructions, commands, advices and clarification to a gathering of people as part of the Islamic religious activities at that time and after then. The first activity on Friday is to call for pray then followed by the khutba , after that , the noon prayer is performed . The sermons are always delivered or written to be delivered by highly religious figures

that is to say, imams. Imam has a highly advanced religious knowledge in the first part. The Friday khutbas are often considered to treat issues of the great importance for Muslim community such as political, social and economic aspects (Juliastui, 2012).

Liman (2018) makes clear that Friday texts are considered to be fully loaded with urgent and significant facts to the worshiper and their beliefs and life as well. The general orientation of the khutbas seems to have pragmatic power that can help to persuade and convince the audience as well as grasping the attention and interest for the listeners.

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1 Data Collection and Description**

The researchers try to investigate the speech act of advice in some selected sermons collected from the Grand ayatollah Al Sistani's official website that is (<http://www.sistani.org/arabic/archive/24925/>). The study is limited to the sermons delivered by the High Religious Authorities in Najaf (Al Sistani) that are spoken out by his accredited representatives in Holy tomb of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) in Karbala.

### **5.2 The Model**

The model to be applied in this study is the updated version of speech act theory that is presented by Searle (1975). This version is selected as model because it has come to be sufficient and ample for the process of investigating the pragmatic (illocutionary act) for the chosen extracts, Searle (1975) comes to suggest five types for speech act. These types are classified on the basis of the types of the verb relying on the illocutionary act or in term of the cooperation of the participants in using these speech act categories as follows;

#### **1. Assertive (representative)**

These asserting acts are considered to convey the meaning of the truth values. They have made under the criterion where words fits world. They often convey the speaker's belief in truth condition or proposition such as statements. These acts aim at committing the speaker to be doing something. Verbs that are mostly related with the expression of the directive acts are such: state, conclude, report, complain, assert.

#### **2. Directives**

The directive speech acts are set forth to make the hearers to perform or do something. These acts are made to help the world to be befitting with the words. These acts manifest that the hearer does what the speaker wishes or desires. Directives can be constructed by verbs such as request, demand, warn, order and ask.

#### **3. Commissives:**

Commissive speech act are directed towards the process of committing the speaker to perform some action in the future. These acts reflect world to word alignment and the speaker expresses his intention that he does certain action. The verbs that are mostly connected with this type of speech acts are threaten, vow, pledge and commit.

#### 4. Expressives:

These expressive acts are related to the intent or the psychological content as expressed in the affair in particular propositional content such as saying "I apologize for stepping on your toe". The speaker's psychological conditions can have states such as sorrow, pleasure, dislike and so on. Verbs that are concerned with such expressive acts are like, thank, condole, welcome and so on.

#### 5. Declaration

Declaratives acts are concerned with bringing about some sort of correspondence between the proposition and the world. Therefore, these acts have dual direction fit where sometime world fits words and other the words fit world. Verbs like quit, appoint, nominate, declare are listed to be used with this type of act.

#### 6. Data Analysis

##### Extract 1

(اجعلوا قصدكم ونيتكم ودافعكم هو الدفاع عن حرمت العراق ووحدته وحفظ الأمن للمواطنين وصيانة المقدسات من الهتك ودفع الشر عن هذا البلد المظلوم وشعبه الجريح)

*(Make your will , your intention and your motivation is to defend the sanctity of Iraq and its unity and to protect the security of citizens and the preservation of sanctities of your hatred and the pushing of evil away from this country and its wounded people) 13, June , 2014.*

In this extract, Al Sistani's representative addressed Iraqi people to advise them to keep the intention of protecting and defending Iraq and its sanctity. He also advised the congregation to maintain the unity and the national security of Iraq and its holy places from the most ferocious attack that Iraq faced at that time. He makes clear the fact that the security and peaceful atmosphere form all Iraqi has to be kept as a sacred duty. This extract has speech act of advice. The illocutionary act of this speech is meant to be directed toward the advising Iraqi people to defend them and their country and stand fast and steady inform the barbaric attack of ISIS group. He advised them to take this dilemma to prove the unity and solidarity of Iraqi society. The act of advising goes one to make the all Iraqis to participate in saving Iraq and Iraqi community for the danger at that time.

##### Extract 2

(هذه الجماعة التكفيرية بلاءٌ عظيمٌ ابتليت به منطقتنا والدعوة إلى التطوع كانت بهدف حثّ الشعب العراقي بجميع مكوناته وطوائفه على مقابلة هذه الجماعة التي ان لم تتم اليوم مواجهتها وطردها من العراق فسيندم الجميع على ترك ذلك غداً ولا ينفع الندم عندئذ) *(This extremist group is a great affliction plagued by our region and the call for volunteering was to urge the Iraqi people in all its components and sects to face this group, which if not met today and expelled from Iraq will regret everyone to leave it later and it does not benefit regret then) 20, June , 2014.*

In this excerpt, Al-Safi, the representative of Ayatollah, the Grand religious Al Sistani, assured that these groups of barbarists have their own false religious instructions. This barbaric attack is like agony and tribulation that Iraqi has come to face. Then he advice the Iraqis to follow the call for enlisting in volunteer mobilization

to fight the savage group of ISIS. The speaker also stressed the Iraqis have to maintain unity and solidarity among their own sects and groups of different religious and belief. The speaker, Al Safi, declared the savage attack has to be removed as soon as possible for the body of Iraq. The negligence and indifference for the presence of these groups can later lead to regret when the regret is not easily amended. This extract presents a speech act of a device. The illocutionary act in this extract advice the Iraqi to go in their cooperation and unity. The process of maintain cooperation and unity can definitely result in eradicating of these barbaric group that aimed at destroying the unity and coexistence of Iraqi people. The act of advice is meant to enrich the Iraqi unity to fight these groups.

### Extract 3

(اهم ما تمس الحاجة اليه هو وحدة الصف ونبذ الفرقة والاختلاف)

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

In his above caption, the speaker, Al Safi, went on to make clear the need of enriching the unity at this time. He also stressed the fact that the division among Iraqis has to be severely rejected. He also called up the political parties to leave anything that led to segregation and separation. These parties had to focus on the current issue that Iraq faced. This extract is considered to have a speaking act of advice. The illocutionary acts aims here to focus on the security conditions and leaving the sectarian or political division. The religious authority advised the parting group and political parties to make unity against the barbaric attack against the country.

### Extract 4

(الاسراع في انتخاب الرئاسات الثلاث وتشكيل حكومة جديدة تحظى بقبول وطني واسع لتضع الحلول الجذرية لمشاكل البلد وأزماته المتراكم)

*(The rush to elect the three heads [top political offices] and form a new government which enjoys the wide national acceptance and puts forward radical solutions to the problems of the country and its mounting crises) 9, July, 2014.*

The above extract stressed the fact the electoral operation has come to end. The responsible staff had to take for building up the new government as well as taking the country to the safe side. The speaker states that the new government should have an analytical view of the condition or Iraq at that time. The newly formed government should have a give responsive to the security condition of Iraq and made it its priority. There is a speech act of advice in this act. The illocutionary act is meant to direct the attention to the process of forming new government. The act of advising is made to make the leading staff to hasten the process of making up the new government to take up the condition now and asked them to leave their personal interest and profits.



## Conclusion

It is concluded that congregational sermons of Saiyid al Sistani is highly affecting, it is full of speech acts in spite of its implicitness. The language of sermons were characterized by speech acts of advice to focus on the illocutionary force of advice. All extracts analysed contain implicit speech act of advice and that evidences that the religious language of the selected sermons is a distinctive language by the messages it conveys. Religious figures such as Saiyid al Sistani and his congregational sermons can widely impact on the behaviour of individuals to convey purposes. They have a great impact on inspiring, directing, guiding and instructing the individuals not only in the religious issues but also in all aspects of life such as those moral, social, political ones. Societies are concluded to be highly affected by congregational sermons and religious figures in particular the Islamic societies, religion and the religious figures can even participate in all aspects of their life as well as they can even change systems in governments.

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