

## Speech Acts of Expressions, Directions, and Assertion in Al Burdah Ode by Al Busiri

الأفعال الكلامية المستخدمة في قصيدة البردة من تعبيرية- وتوجيهية- وإخبارية

الباحثة: شاهيناز حسين احمد

باحثة دكتوراة بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية

### المخلص:

ان المنهج الذى سيتم تطبيقه بالرسالة يسمى التحليل الاسلوبى التداولى، سيتم القاء الضوء على اختيارات الالفاظ التى قام بها البوصيرى من بين العديد من الاختيارات الاخرى المتاحة والتى تحمل نفس المعنى فهذا المنهج يهدف الى توضيح كيف ان الطرق المختلفة المتاحة للتعبير عن نفس الشيء (الاسلوب) يعتمد علي العوامل التى تشكل الموقف (العوامل التداولية)، فهو يتضمن اعتبارمستخدمى اللغة و العلاقة التى تربط بينهم والموقف الذى يتواصلون فيه وما المعنى المقصود الذى يهدفون اليه باستخدام اللغة. فان الافعال الكلامية والمعاني الضمنية ومفاهيم السياق المتبادله تعتبر هامه لتفسير معنى النص المراد دراسته. لذا سيتم تحليل الاختيارات الاسلوبية التى قام بها الشاعر ضمن سياق النص. تتبنى الباحثة الاطار النظرى الذى يتضمن "علم التداولية" Pragmatics الذى يتناول دراسة الاستخدام اللغوى في الاتصال من خلال نظرية الافعال الكلامية Speech Act Theory التى تطورت على يد الفلاسفة من امثال اوستن، وسيزل وتشير الباحثة الى اهمية نظرية الافعال الكلامية في فهم المعاني الضمنية للقصيدة والتي يقصد الكاتب من ورائها تحقيق هدف لغوى معين. كما تعرض الباحثة الافعال الكلامية الاكثر شيوعا واستخداما بالقصيدة وهى **Expressives** التعبيرية حيث انها تعبر عن مشاعر الحب والندم الخاصة بالكاتب.

### Abstract

This study is meant to be a Pragma-Stylistic analysis of Al Burdah Ode by Al Busiri, where the meaning of the text will be investigated in relation to the context of situation. The study also assesses three English translations of the Burdah, and pinpoints the different problems that translators of

different culture encounter during the process of translation. Moreover, the study shows whether the translators managed to convey a similar perlocutionary effect on the target language reader.

Key words: pragma-stylistic- context of situation- perlocutionary effect- target language reader.

### **Introduction**

The present study is a Pragma- Stylistic analysis of Al Burdah Ode. Verdonk and Weber (1995, p13) believe that a pragmatic model of meaning, applicable in stylistic analysis will investigate "the meaning of language in relation to a context of use and users". The meaning studied within the text is the one created in a flow of communication that is within a discourse between the author and the reader. Accordingly, the present study will focus on analyzing the different stylistic effects in Al Burdah Ode by using different pragmatic insights such as Speech Act Theory and Implicatures. Those features will be analyzed in relation to the context of situation.

### **Aim of the study**

This study aims at providing a pragma-stylistic analysis to Al Burdah Ode, paying a special attention to those features which a writer has chosen from a range of acceptable forms in the same language, but which might perform or achieve different functions. The study tries to investigate those functions and presents an analysis of those functions within the framework of "Speech Act Theory". The study shows the importance of context in reaching a better understanding of texts. In order to show the meaning of words, we should give the pragmatic context in which they are uttered.

## **Research Questions**

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the most frequently used speech acts in the Ode?
- 2- How can a "Speech Act Theory" help in reaching a better understanding of the meanings of the text and the poet's implied meaning?

## **Sources of the Data**

One of the most popular poem of Al Busiri titled "Al Burdah" is selected and three of its translations by Thoraya Mahdi Allam, Shahid Gill, and Muhammad Jamiu are being selected.

## **Method of research**

The following procedures are followed:

- Definition of Terms
- Analyzing and Discussing Data

## **Significance of the study**

In Al Burdah Ode, we can observe that literal meaning is different from the implied meaning. The study aims at interpreting both meanings within the pragmatic framework of "Speech Act Theory", which helps to reach a better understanding of the text.

## **Theoretical Framework**

According to Cutting (2002, p1), pragmatics is an approach that studies language's relation to the contextual background features. Pragmatics studies context, text, and function. As for context, Cutting(2002, p2) believes that

pragmatics studies the meaning of words in context, analyzing the parts of meaning that can be explained by knowledge of the physical and social world, and the socio-psychological factors influencing communication, as well as the knowledge of the time and place in which the words are uttered or written. He adds that pragmatics focuses on the meaning of words in interaction and how interactors communicate more information than the words they use. The speaker's meaning is dependent on assumptions of knowledge that are shared by speaker and hearer: the speaker constructs the linguistic message and intends or implies a meaning, and the hearer interprets the message and infers the meaning.

As for text, Cutting (2002, p2) states that pragmatics looks at the use of language and text, or pieces of spoken or written discourse, concentrating on how stretches of language become meaningful and unified for their users. Pragmatics, according to Cutting, is also concerned with function, the speaker's short term purposes in speaking, and long term goals in interacting verbally. Pragmatics studies social interaction, and attaches importance to context, function and social norms, conventions and principles. Cutting (2002, p3) asserts that pragmatics takes a socio-cultural perspective on language usage, examining the way that the principles of social behavior are expressed, which are determined by the social distance between speakers.

Hickey (1993, p575) believes that pragmatics is directly interested, not in language, but in what people do with language: its uses and users. The discipline and the term in its modern sense are usually dated from 1938, when Charles

Morris defined language in the semiotic sense as a use of signs governed by syntactic, semantic and pragmatic rules, a distinction taken up in 1959 by Rudolf Carnap, who explained that pragmatics refers to the relationships between signs and their users.

However, it was the publication of Austin's "How to do things with words" in 1962 that made the basic principle of pragmatics become accessible to a large public by showing that language-users do not merely speak or write to one another, but that they perform acts, they do things. Speech acts, as they are called, may be performative, if the words used actually name and constitute the act (as in: I apologize, I forgive you.....). They may directly perform some action without naming it (as a request for information: Where is John?), or they may indirectly do one thing while appearing to do something else (as when a question functions as a request: Can you pass the salt?). Hickey (1993, p576) states that pragmatics studies the conditions, methods, and consequences of facilitating or impeding the fulfilment of a speaker's objectives: it investigates what language users mean, as distinct from what their language means, what they do and how they do it in real situations.

So Hickey (1993, p578) asserts that pragmatics coincides with stylistics in that both are directly interested in speaker's choices from among a range of grammatically acceptable linguistic forms, although pragmatics looks primarily at choice as the means chosen to perform actions (e.g. request), and stylistics studies choice with particular interest in the consequences on the linguistic level (formality

or informality) and the effects produced on the hearer (e.g. aesthetic, affective).

As literary discourse is an imitation to normal discourse, speech act theory has been applied to literary works as to ordinary discourse. Thus, the usefulness of pragmatic theories has been first emphasized by Pratt (1977), who concentrated in "Towards a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse" on exploiting speech act theory in pragma- stylistics.

The concept of speech acts, as introduced by the British philosopher J.L. Austin (1962), is one of the ingredients of pragmatics. Austin develops the first systematic theory of utterances as human actions. Following Grundy (2008, p53), a speech act is the "act or the intent that a speaker accomplishes when using language in context, the meaning of which is inferred by hearers". Accordingly, speech act theory concerns the language user's intention to attain certain communicative goals by performing acts through the use of language.

According to Black (2006, p17), the term speech act does not refer simply to the context of the utterance, and paralinguistic features which may contribute to the meaning of the interaction. Black asserts that our concern is with contextualized speech which is according to Leech (1983, x) and Yule (1996, pp3-8), the concern is not so much whether or not an utterance is grammatically correct, but whether or not the speaker achieves his communicative purpose, hence Austin's title "How to do Things with words". For example, to say "Cold, isn't it" out of doors on a winter's day may be no more than a phatic utterance. If the speaker is addressing

her hostess indoors, it may be interpreted as a hint to turn up the central heating. If the interlocuters are looking at a house with a view to purchase, it may be interpreted metaphorically and so be tantamount to rejecting the possibility of buying it.

Cutting (2002, p48) adds that in making a promise one is not describing an existing state of affairs, but rather creating a new one. More specifically, one is creating a new social relationship. Accordingly, the philosopher J.L.Austin (1962) argued that for a better understanding of language we need an explanation of the way language is embedded in social institutions and of the various actions it can be used to perform. In other words, we need to view language as a vehicle for social action rather than as a vehicle for thought.

Cutting (2002, p48) stresses the fact that the assumption underlying this view is that when a speaker communicates, he communicates the fact that he is performing an act of a certain type, and communication is successful only, if the hearer identifies the type of act being performed. Cutting remarks that when a speaker makes a promise, he communicates the fact that he is making a promise, and the hearer will understand his utterance only if the hearer recognizes that he was making a promise. Cutting asserts that the classification and identification of speech acts plays an essential role in communication.

Chapman (2011, p61) believes that Austin had demonstrated why in the study of language it is important to be able to distinguish between the form of a particular expression and its function. Austin claimed that any time someone says something it is possible to identify three different acts that take place. Locutionary, illocutionary and

perlocutionary. A locutionary act is the production of well-formed utterance in whatever language one is speaking. An illocutionary act is the meaning one wishes to communicate, whereas, the perlocutionary act is the effect of the speaker's utterances on the hearer. In other words, perlocutions are acts of causing certain effects on the hearer, such as convincing, misleading, and persuading.

Chapman (2011, p63) adds that Austin pointed out that both Locutionary and Illocutionary acts are dependent on conventions. Locutionary acts are dependent on the basic conventions of the language; the meanings of the words chosen and the significance of the way they are put together grammatically. Illocutionary acts are determined by the conventions of language use within a society. For instance that when we say "I wish you would ....." we are often trying to get someone else to do something.

But unlike Locutionary acts; illocutionary acts are not defined entirely in relation to conventions; they depend also on the intention of the speaker. Chapman (2011, p63) remarks that something else also happens when a speech act is performed; what is said has, or fails to have, a particular effect on the hearer, whether that be in terms of the hearer's subsequent actions or in terms of his emotions or thought processes. The effects or consequences of a speech act, according to Austin, make up the perlocutionary act. Chapman adds that Austin made it clear that for him the illocutionary act was by far the most interesting. It was the one most centrally concerned with why and how people use language. Chapman points out that Austin's account of speech acts was based on the premise that the literal meaning



of words, determined by the rules of the language, might often be distinct from what the speaker meant by those words in particular context.

Saeed (2015, p229) believes that part of the meaning of an utterance is its intended social function, such functions of language are called speech acts. Saeed (2015, p230) adds that communicating functions relies on both general knowledge of social conventions and specific knowledge of the local context of utterance, which means that hearers have to coordinate linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge to interpret a speaker's intended meaning.

Saeed (2015, p231) classify sentence types as:

1- Declarative 2- Interrogative 3- Imperative 4- Optative.

These sentences types perform the speech act as follows: assertions- questions- orders- wishes.

Black (2006, p19) states that Searle differentiates between two kinds of acts; direct speech acts and indirect speech acts.

#### **Direct speech acts:**

These occur when there is a direct correlation between the grammatical form of an utterance and its illocutionary force (shut the door, for example). As for the cases, where there is no direct mapping between form and function, we have what is known as indirect speech acts.

#### **Indirect speech acts:**

Black (2006, p 19) believes that when we use one speech act rather than another, and leave the hearer to work out the meaning we intend, we are dealing with indirect speech acts. Black adds that they are often used for reasons of politeness. Black points out that in English, for example, the speaker

normally avoids the imperative except in specific circumstances. So “Can you turn the radio down?” addressed to an adolescent is certainly a polite way of avoiding the imperative. Without that context, we can’t be certain: if addressed to a paraplegic, it may be a question about physical capacity, and thus a direct speech act. In short, questions according to Black have many different functions according to context; Black believes that it is up to our pragmatic experience to interpret them appropriately. Accordingly, indirect speech acts means using one speech act rather than another and leaving the hearer or reader works out the intended meaning.

However, Chapman (2011, p64) adds that there are five classifications of speech acts developed by John Searle during the 1970’s. Searle’s categories are: “Assertives”, “Directives”, “Commissives”, “Expressives”, and “Declaratives”. Searle’s five separate categories are each illustrated in examples (1-5) below:

- 1- The Earth is surrounded by a gravitational field.
- 2- Please come to my party.
- 3- I’m sorry for standing on your toe.
- 4- Well done on winning that race.
- 5- You are fired.

- Assertives are acts which state what the speaker believes to be the case or not, they are statements and descriptions. Examples include asserting, concluding, stating, and so on.

- Directives are attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something, these are essentially positive or negative

commands expressing the speaker's wants. They include command, request, suggest, advice and so on.

- Commissives for Searle, as for Austin, commit the speaker to some future course of action. They indicate the intention of the speaker acts such as promise, threat and offer.

- Expressives express a psychological state of the speaker towards some state of affairs in statements of pleasure, pain, dislike, praise, joy or sorrow. These are acts that reveal the speakers feelings and attitudes. Examples are thanking, apologizing, welcoming.

- Declarations bring about some change in the world. Declarations are performed appropriately if the speaker has a specific institutional role in a special context. Declarations include sacking a worker, performing a marriage, and sentencing a criminal. Declarations hardly occur within literary discourse.

According to Chapman there are a rather limited number of basic things we do with language: we tell people how things are, we try to get them to do things, we commit ourselves to doing things, we express our feelings and attitudes and we bring about changes through our utterances. Searle (1975, p29) believes that we often do more than one of these at once in the same statement. Chapman (2011, p67) adds that the idea that people are capable of doing more than one thing within the same statement, underlies one of Searle's most important contributions to speech act theory: his account of "Indirect speech acts".

According to Yule (1996, p 37), Grice's Cooperative Principle describes how people interact with one another. It reads as follows " make your contribution such as is required,

at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchange in which you are engaged". The Cooperative Principle is supported by four maxims called Gricean Maxims.

- Quantity maxim: make your contribution as informative as is required, don't make it more informative than is required.

- Quality maxim: don't say what you believe to be false, don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

- Relation maxim: be relevant.

- Manner maxim: avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief, be orderly.

Cooperation is important for the continuation of human interaction. Therefore, the CP. and the Gricean Maxims are not specific to conversations but to verbal interactions in general. Black (2006, p 24), mentions that in literary texts the maxims are not always observed, and the failure to do so can take a number of forms; opting out, violating a maxim, a clash, and flouting a maxim, which will be our main concern. Flouting a maxim is the most interesting way of breaking a maxim. The maxim of manner for example, is flouted through the use of metaphor or irony. The writer may flout a certain maxim to prompt the reader to look for some implicit meanings of the text. That is he exploits a maxim or maxims to generate implicatures. Implicatures are rooted into the situation in which they occur, and must be interpreted taking the context into account. As Leech (1983, p79) argued "interpreting an implicature is the responsibility of the hearer".

The following part will provide an example of the Expressive, Directive, and Assertive speech acts which are used in Al Burdah Ode.

### 1-An Example of an Expressive speech act in the Ode:

In the following verse, the poet expresses his deep love to Prophet Muhammad, and his failure attempts to hide such love.

4- ايجسب الصب ان الحب منكم ما بين منسجم منه ومضطرم

According to Al Zarkashi (2017, p90) and Al Hanafi (n.d, p 50), the poet still addresses the lover who thinks that he can hide his love, stressing the fact that all your attempts will fail, due to the tears flowing from your eyes and your heart which is burning with love. Both are eyewitnesses of your deep love.

The pragmatic function of this Expressive speech act is affirming the futile attempts of hiding his love. In this verse, we have an instance of antithesis between "منسجم – مضطرم", the first is used to denote tears and the latter is used to denote fire. Antithesis is concerned with the semantic contrast between two words, phrases or sentences, it achieves the pragmatic function of strengthening and affirming the meaning, and making the message well established in the reader's mind. Moreover, we have an instance of metaphor where the poet likens the heart which suffers, and is on fire, due to his deep love, to the burning of "العود" /?alæuud/ (a name of a tree), which gives out nice scent. The metaphor is an implicature which implies the deep sorrow and suffering of the poet. Besides, we have an instance of personification,

where the poet likens the eyes and heart to two eyewitnesses of his deep love to Prophet Muhammad.

The verse is rendered as follows:

**Thoraya:**

Oh does a lover e'er believe  
That he his love conceals  
When streaming eyes and heart aglow  
Declare the love he feels?

**Muhammad Jamiu:**

Does the ardently in love think that love can be hidden,  
despite his obvious tears and burning heart?

**Shahid:**

Does the lover think that his love can be concealed,  
while he is (constantly) shedding tears and his heart is  
(constantly) glowing.

An important point related to this study is the connotation of a word, which according to Lyons (1977, p176) is the emotive or affective component additional to its central meaning. Leech (1990, p12) defines the connotative meaning as "the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it refers to, over and above its purely conceptual meaning". Leech adds that the language reflects the personal feelings of the speaker. Moreover, Barwell (1983, p60) believes that connotation includes the emotional response which the word arouses in a person because of his attitude to the object referred to.

This verse reflects the beauty of the Arabic language, that no equivalent word can uncover the different layers of meaning embedded in the two words "منسجم- مضطرم" /munsajim/ (flowing tears like rain) , and /mudṭarim/

(burning fire). Thoraya had to add the words "eyes and heart" accompanied by the two adjectives that suit rain and fire for clarification, whereas Shahid preferred using within the text notes to produce a similar perlocutionary effect on the target language reader.

### **An Example of a Directive Speech Act used in the Ode:**

The following verse is an example of a directive speech act where the poet advises the reader not to follow the desires of the spirit, accordingly, he uses a directive speech act to serve his intentions; the form is imperative but the function is giving advice.

19- فاصرف هواها وحاذر ان توليه ان الهوى ما تولى يُصم او يصم

As mentioned before, sentences in Arabic are classified into reporting and informing. The first Directive speech act starts with an informing sentence, it begins with the imperative verb "اصرف" /ʔiʃrif/ (curb), which serves the pragmatic function of guidance, besides, warning man from following his whims, for the poet orders man not to give power to his whims, otherwise, if his whims overpower him, it will cause his death or it will defame him.

The second speech act is affirmed by the affirmation tool "ان", which is employed by the poet to serve the pragmatic function of asserting the fact that lust could cause the death of man or could defame him. We can also notice the repetition of the word "هوى" /hawa/ (whim), which is a method of foregrounding, it calls the attention of the reader to the key- word of the utterance. In addition to this, we have an instance of pun between "يُصم- يصم" /yuʃam/ (kills) and /yaʃim/ (defame). Pun is a foregrounded lexical ambiguity, it

expresses two meanings through the same occurrence, and it adds to the poem's density and richness of significance.

Leech (1969, p210), Badawi (1978, p182), Gray (1992, p237), Abdul Raof (2001, p124), and Zagloul (2002, pp15-20), have all agreed on the definition of pun as a play on the dual meanings of a word or words that sound alike, or the use of such a word in two different contexts to indicate two different meanings. Puns are used for witty purposes or to create irony.

The verse is translated as follows:

**Thoraya:**

So curb love's passion,  
And from its supremacy beware,  
For love's supremacy doth kill,  
Or honor doth impair

**Muhammad Jamiu:**

So control the ego's desires, and beware of its overpowering; when the ego overpowers, it destroys and defiles.

**Shahid:**

So, control its (self), inclination (towards desires) and beware, it may not overpower it (yourself). Verily, lust whenever it overpowers (yourself). Verily, lust whenever it overpowers (it) kills or makes (your character) spotted.

By reviewing the translations, it is apparent that Thoraya was not successful in choosing the appropriate word for "هوى النفس", which she literally rendered as "love". I



believe that words like "whim, inclination, desires", are more appropriate choices, implying the poet's intention. The pun mentioned in the verse shows the beauty of the Arabic language, and how two words having the same letters are used differently.

### **An Example of an Assertive Speech Act in the Ode:**

The following verse is an example of an Assertive speech act, where the poet here describes the blessings of the birth of Prophet Muhammad, accordingly, he uses an assertive to serve his intentions.

62- والنارخامده الأنفاس من أسف عليه والنهر ساهى العين من سدم

The poet in this Assertive speech act continues relating the events that took place on Prophet Muhammad's birth. He likens the fading of the fire of Persia, which implies the remorse of the fire for being worshipped by infidels, to a person who has gone out of breath, which is considered one of the creative metaphors by the poet. The poet also uses another beautiful metaphor in the second speech act, where he likens the river Sawa that flooded and lost its spring (current/ course), which implies the river's grief for being away from Prophet Muhammad, to a person who is crying out of sorrow.

The verse is translated as follows:

#### **Thoraya:**

The sacred fire\* abated was  
From sorrow and from woe.  
Likewise, the river as it grieved,  
Its course forgot to flow\*

\*this fire has been alight for a thousand years in Persia, but on the birth of the Holy Prophet, its flame flickered and subsided.

\*the river Euphrates.

**Muhammad Jamiu:**

And their sacred fire faded and died from remorse, while their river forgot its source and dried up from sorrow.

**Shahid:**

And the fire (of the Persians) was extinguished out of regret; and the rivers (of Persia) dried up with wonder (and excessive sorrow).

By reviewing the three translations, it is obvious that the first metaphor was only maintained in the rendering of Muhammad Jamiu. Accordingly, the other two translators failed to create a similar perlocutionary effect on the target language reader.

**Findings and Conclusion**

Meaning is the result of interpretive processes, and a deviant interpretation may signal problems with the reception of the text. Pragmatics is the study of language in use, and stylistics can use the insights it can offer. The researcher shows the importance of studying the meaning of words in context, and how meaning can be explained better by knowledge of the physical, and social world, and the socio-psychological factors influencing communication.

The researcher also shows how the speaker constructs the linguistic message, and intends or implies a meaning. The thesis focuses not on language, but rather on what people do with language "its uses", which is the main interest of pragmatics.

The study shows that in a pragma-stylistics study of poetry, context plays a very important role, and it shows how the knowledge of all the contextual features is important to understand the message of the poem. It is not what is said but how it is said that matters.

As previously mentioned, the researcher takes into consideration how the readers interpret the translation, their response to the target text, and whether the translated version has a similar perlocutionary effect on the target language reader. To achieve this, the researcher compares the reader's response to the target text, with that of the source text reader's to the source text.

The pragma- stylistic analysis of the Qasidah reveals the following:

- As it is apparent that the Expressive speech act, is the most frequently used in the Qasidah. For it serves best the aims of the poet, for this Ode is a long poem written in praise of Prophet Muhammad, besides repenting committing sins. Moreover, this Ode is written due to an intensive emotion a poet felt due to his severe illness. Accordingly, Expressives serves the poet's aims well.

With respect to a pragma- stylistic analysis of the Qasidah, the following suggestion can be drawn:

- The classification and identification of speech acts play an essential role in communication, so it is important to be able to distinguish between the form of a particular expression and its function, in order to create properly a similar perlocutionary effect on the target language reader.

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