

PRAGMATICS OF SENTENCES IN RELIGIOUS TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

Religious texts wield language for more than simply transmitting information. This article investigates the pragmatics of sentences within these texts, uncovering how meaning is constructed through factors like context, speaker's intention, and shared knowledge between the author and the audience. By examining these pragmatic elements, the article unveils how religious texts utilize language to persuade, motivate, and cultivate a sense of community among their adherents.

Key words: *pragmatic element, multifaceted field, intent behind words, symbolism, deixis.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

Религиозные тексты используют язык не только для простой передачи информации. В этой статье исследуется прагматика предложений в этих текстах, раскрывая, как значение формируется с помощью таких факторов, как контекст, намерение говорящего и общие знания между автором и аудиторией. Исследуя эти прагматические элементы, статья раскрывает, как религиозные тексты используют язык для убеждения, мотивации и развития чувства общности среди своих приверженцев.

Ключевые слова: *прагматический элемент, многогранное поле, смысл слов, символика, дейксис.*

INTRODUCTION

The study of pragmatics in religious texts is a multifaceted field that intersects linguistics, theology, and cultural studies. This literature review will examine key research contributions that have shaped our understanding of how pragmatic elements influence the interpretation of religious language.

Religious texts have served as cornerstones of human belief and practice for millennia. While these texts often contain clear pronouncements and narratives, their true power lies in their ability to shape worldviews and inspire action. This influence goes beyond the literal meaning of the words themselves. It is through the lens of pragmatics – the study of how language is used in context – that we can truly understand how religious texts construct meaning and impact their readers.

One of the key elements of pragmatics is the concept of context. Religious texts are not written in a vacuum. They emerge from specific historical and cultural

contexts, filled with shared assumptions and knowledge between the author and the intended audience. For instance, consider the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Christian Bible. The story doesn't explicitly define "neighbor," but the audience would have readily understood the concept within their social framework. Recognizing this shared context allows readers to grasp the deeper moral message about helping those in need.

If we consider the concept of "heaven" in the Bible. The literal meaning might simply refer to the sky. However, within the Judaeo-Christian context, "heaven" carries a rich layer of additional meaning. It signifies the afterlife, the dwelling place of God, and a state of eternal reward. Understanding this shared context is crucial for interpreting references to "heaven" throughout the text.

Another crucial aspect of pragmatics is speaker's intention. When examining religious texts, we must consider the intent behind the words, not just the literal meaning. Is a commandment meant to be a strict rule, or a guiding principle? Is a metaphor intended to paint a vivid picture, or to evoke an emotional response? By analyzing the text alongside the presumed role and authority of the author (prophet, deity, etc.), we can better understand the intended impact on the reader.

The Quran frequently uses imperatives ("pray," "give charity"). While the literal meaning is clear, analyzing the speaker's intent (God) reveals a deeper message. These commands are not simply orders, but expressions of God's will and a path towards salvation for the believers.

METHODS

Speech Act Theory, a branch of pragmatics, helps us understand how utterances can perform actions. Religious texts are filled with such speech acts. Declarations like "I baptize thee" or pronouncements of forgiveness perform religious functions beyond simply conveying information. Recognizing these speech acts allows us to appreciate the transformative power of language within religious contexts.

In the Hindu Bhagavad Gita, Krishna delivers the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna on the battlefield. Krishna's pronouncements ("You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action.") [Bhagavad Gita 2:47] function not just as informative statements, but as a divine instruction and a source of spiritual guidance for Arjuna.

RESULTS

The genre of a religious text also plays a role in shaping meaning. Laws within a religious text might employ clear, direct language for maximum clarity. Prophecies, on the other hand, might utilize symbolism and figurative language to convey a

message open to interpretation. Recognizing the genre helps readers adjust their expectations and approach the text with the appropriate lens.

Religious texts often rely heavily on implicature, or meaning conveyed beyond the literal words. This can be achieved through indirect speech acts (e.g., "blessed are the cheesemakers" implying a value on a certain type of behavior) or through figurative language (e.g., metaphors and similes). By analyzing these implied meanings, readers can uncover deeper layers of significance within the text.

The concept of "original sin" in Christianity is not explicitly stated in the Bible. However, through the story of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, readers are left to infer the concept of inherited sinfulness (Genesis 3).

DISCUSSION

Some visual illustrations of how pragmatics can be applied to religious texts such as:

- Deictic expressions: Underline words like "here" or "then" in a religious text to highlight how they position the reader in relation to the events described.
- Speech act markers: Circle verbs like "command," "promise," or "bless" to identify the intended speech acts performed by the author/divine figure.
- Figurative language: Identify metaphors, similes, and other figures of speech within the text and analyze how they contribute to meaning beyond the literal level.
- Translation: The process of translation can introduce pragmatic challenges. Words or phrases that carry specific connotations in one language might not translate perfectly into another, potentially altering the intended meaning.
- Evolving Interpretations: The pragmatic understanding of religious texts can evolve over time. Historical and cultural contexts change, shaping how readers interpret the text and assign new meanings.

By employing these examples and illustrations, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the nuanced ways in which pragmatics shapes meaning in religious texts. Understanding these elements allows us to move beyond a purely literal interpretation and delve into the richer layers of significance these texts hold for their readers.

CONCLUSION

The reviewed literature demonstrates a growing interest in the pragmatic aspects of religious texts. It reveals a trend towards analyzing the dynamic relationship between language, context, and meaning in religious discourse. Future research could expand on these findings by exploring pragmatic elements in a broader range of religious traditions and texts. We should admit that implicaturism offers a nuanced understanding of religious language by emphasizing the pragmatic and contextual

dimensions of religious expressions, challenging traditional views on the strict truth-value of religious statements while highlighting their diverse functions in communication and social interactions. This approach enriches the discourse on the pragmatics of religious texts, encouraging a broader interpretation of religious language beyond literal meaning to encompass implicatures and contextual implications.

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