A Pragmatic Analysis of Social Justice in the New Testament

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Abstract

This paper attempts to analyze five texts of social justice in the New Testament from pragmatic point of view .It attempts to achieve the following aims: (1) Finding out the kinds of speech acts used in the selected texts. (2) Finding out the kinds of deixes used in social justice texts. (3)Showing how Grice maxims are flouted in such texts. A model of analysis is adopted to investigate the social justice texts of the New Testament as far as speech acts, deixis and floutings of cooperative maxims are concerned. The findings of analysis illustrate that the Prophet Jesus and his disciples in the New Testament use these pragmatic strategies to clarify the best ways that the inhabitants of society and their leaders should follow to create and sustain social justice with.

Introduction

The ways of decreasing social injustice are needed to save the dignity of people in a society. The Prophet Jesus, disciples are regarded as callers of social justice in the New Testament. They use different pragmatic strategies to deliver their messages in efficient way. These messages are valuable to create a society in which everyone receives genuine equality, fairness, and respect. The study is concerned to discuss pragmatic strategies in such texts.

1. Finding out the kinds of speech acts used in the social justice texts.

2. Finding out the kinds of deixes used in the selected texts.

3. Showing how Grice maxims are flouted in in texts of the study.

1. Many kinds of speech acts as assertion, warning, command and advice are employed in social justice texts of the New Testament.

2. All kinds of deixes are used in the selected texts.

3. The cooperative maxims are frequently flouted in texts of the study.

The current texts investigate, pragmatically, five texts which imply the theme of social justice in the New Testament to lead the addressee to the ways in which he can sustain justice in a society.

The study benefits students and scholars who are interested in pragmatics. It has crucial value for those who are interested in social sciences.

1. Surveying the literature review that clarifies the concepts social justice, pragmatics, speech acts, deixes and cooperative maxims.

2. Analyzing the pragmatic strategies identified in the New Testament.

Social Justice and Pragmatics

This section presents a theoretical background of social justice, pragmatics, speech acts, deixes, and cooperative maxims.

The Concept of Social Justice

Social justice is initiated in the Old Testament. It consists of the noun '*Mishpat*', a Hebrew word. meaning justice, and the adjective ' *tzedakah*' which means '*charity*' and '*fairness*'. When these words combine together, they are used to refer to the relations among people (Cahill, 2001; Corson, 1993; Fantin, 2010; Hemphill, 2015; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; Sands, 2007; Segovia & Sugirtharajah, 2009; Swart, 2005).

According to (Badley, 2016), social justice means all workings to build a balance society in which the structures are fair to everybody without exception such as constructing a society that the minorities, the poor, and woman are not discriminated in law and practice.

Pragmatics

According to (Huang, 2009), pragmatics is a contemporary branch of linguistics which is described as a systematic study of meaning in connection to the language use. It deals with focal topics such as speech act, deixis and implicature.

Speech Acts

The basic idea of the speech act theory is foreshadowed by Wittgenstein and ascribed to Austin who makes a distinction between constative and performative. (Huang, 2009) Constatives denote statements or utterances that describe or depict facts or states of affairs and so may be either true or false. (Folger & Chapman, 1978; Hafifah, 2020; Horrell,

2000; Setton, 1999; Zupnik, 1994) Performatives "change or create a state of affairs" (Chilton & Schäffner, 2002).Searle's universal types of speech acts can be stated as follows:

1. Assertives are those kinds of speech act that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, and thus carry a truth-value. They express the speaker's belief.

2 .Directives are those kinds that represent attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something. They express the speaker's desire/wish for the addressee to do something.

3. Commissives commit the speaker to some future course of action. They express the speaker's intention to do something.

4. Expressive acts are those acts which express a psychological attitude or state in the speaker.

5. Declarations are those acts that affect immediate changes in some current state of affairs. In performing this type of speech act, the speaker brings about changes in the world (Huang, 2009).

Deixis

Deixis can be defined as a technical term used to refer to linguistic items such as personal pronouns, tenses and place adverbials such. It deals with ways of the interpretation of utterances that depend on context. Its importance looks clear when deictic information is lacking. (Levinson, 2011).

Several categories of deixes are presented to explicate how language designates features of context in the interpretation of utterances:

1. Personal deixis which is used to localize the role of the participant in the speech event. The speaker uses first person pronoun (*I, we*) when the speaker refers to himself and he uses second person (*you*) in his reference to the addressee (ibid., 62).

2. Place deixis   which is used to localize the location of the participants that engage in particular speech event (ibid: 62-3).

3. Time deixis which makes ultimate reference to participant-role. It is important to distinguish the moment of utterance from the moment of reception. (ibid.,)

4. Discourse deixis which concerns the use of expressions within some utterance to refer to some portion of the discourse that contains that utterance. One may include in discourse deixis a number of other ways in which an utterance signals its relation to surrounding text (Ibid.,85).

5. Social deixis that deals with aspects of sentences which reflect or are determined by certain realities of the social situation in which the speech act occurs (ibid., 89).

Implicature

Implicature as a term is initiated by Paul Grice who makes a distinction between what is said and what is implicated in his article "Logic and Conversation" (Mey & Brown, 2009). The most important characteristic of implicature can be illustrated in that it does not have an impact on the truth conditional part of an utterance. There are two types of implicature: conversational implicature which depends on context and conventional implicature which does not rely on context but linked to linguistic expressions such as *but, therefore* (Hedberg, 2013).

Conversational implicature can be represented in flouting one or more of the cooperative principles which are the following:

1. Quantity. This maxim of quantity relates to the quantity of information to be provided,

and under it falls the following submaxims which are: make your contribution as informative as is required. And, do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. Quality .It has a supermaxim-attempt to make your contribution one that is true-and two more specific maxims: First, do not say what you believe to be false. Second, do not say for which you lack adequate evidence

3. Relation: Be relevant.

4. Manner .It has various submaxims such as: Avoid obscurity of expression avoid ambiguity be brief and be orderly (Grice, 1989).

The Model of Analysis

The data of analysis consists of five texts .The theme of them deals with social justice. The model of analysis consists of the following items: The first item deals with speech acts according to Searle's theory such as assertion, advice, and warning. The second item deal with deixis as presented by Levinson (2011) categories of deixis such as personal, time, place, social and discourse deixis. The third item deals with flouting of Grice's maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner.

Data Analysis

Text 1

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [thou] that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee. how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under [her] wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Carroll & Prickett, 2008).

Speech Act

Criticism speech act is seen in the text. Jesus expresses his sadness because people kill prophets. He attempts to save their life by making them unified on justice side. But people are cheated by worldly matters as money. These things are temporary since they will vanish one day. The felicity conditions (henceforth, FCs) of criticism in the text:

Propositional Content conditions (henceforth, PCC): Inhabitants of Jerusalem kill the prophets. They refuse to cooperate with each other on justice side.

Preparatory Condition (henceforth, PC): Jesus dislikes their unwillingness to follow his commandments. They kill prophets who are sent by God to save them. They refuse to be under his protection. Their wrong doing has brought to him bad result *'your house is left unto you desolate'*.

Sincerity Conditions (henceforth, SC): Jesus is dissatisfied with their actions because they do not want to change their bad behaviors.

Essential Conditions (henceforth, EC) display the prophet's intention to change the bad behaviors of people in Jerusalem. But he fails to achieve this aim. So, he says they are about to live a miserable life because of their actions.

Deixis

The personal deixes: ' Thou ,*thy and ye'* are used in the text to direct the addressee's attentions (people of Jerusalem) to their biggest faults .The place deixis in the text is "*Jerusalem*". He localizes the place where many prophets were killed because they intend to save them from going astray.

Implicature

Both quantity and quality maxims are flouted in this text. Jesus employs repetition, simile,

rhetorical question and synecdoche in his speech .The quantity is breached because of repetition of the word "Jerusalem". He repeats it to improve the sense of disapproval of their action. His repetition shows psychological state (his deep sadness and his compassionate). Simile can be observed in *as a hen 'gathereth her chickens under [her] wings'*. He attempts to protect them from their own selves as well as from their enemies through gathering them. Rhetorical question can be observed in '*how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under [her] wings, and ye would not*!. It gives the sense of condemnation. He condemns them for destruction that happened in society. Synecdoche can be observed in "*O Jerusalem,*" Actually, he addresses the people of Jerusalem" .These flouts display the deep sadness because they do not submit to his will although his commandments are on their interest. Manner maxim is flouted as a result of passivization in the text.

Text 2

For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church …Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (Carroll & Prickett, 2008).

Speech Act

John performs an act of praise in the Epistle of John to Gaius. He aids strangers as well as his friends. He does his best to help them. John again called Gaius his dear friend. Then, he praised Gaius for his good deeds. Gaius saw it as his duty to help other Christians. It does not care whether he has known them or not. He helps them even if they are strangers to him. Christian love is the reason that he helps them. He has helped whoever come to him. The FCs of praise in the text are the following:

PCC: Gaius is praised because of his good actions. He helps those who are in need. His actions is good according to the evaluative criteria of John.

PC: John holds that the impartial treatment of Gaius toward people might enhance the sense of solidarity in society.

SC: John sincerely believes that Gaius conducts good work.

EC: The speaker thinks that his praise encourages Gaius to exert more efforts to help others. It also installs the desire in people to follow his steps.

Then, act of advice is used in "*Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God*". According to the FCs of advice in the text are:

PCC: John addresses Gaius. He wants him to continue his good doings.

 PC: John says that doing good works (as fairness) will be in his advantage since God is the origin of all that is good.

SC: He sincerely advises Gaius to let him gain the great reward of God.

EC: John intends to sustain justice in society through performing good works.

 Then, John performs speech act of warning. The FCs of warning in the text are the following:

PCC: John addresses Gaius. He wants to set him away from doing bad things.

PC: He believes that bad actions as discrimination that will not be in the advantage of the hearer.

SC: He sincerely wants the addressees in general (Gaius in particular) to be away from

doing bad things .Otherwise, God will not pity him. So, it is the consequences of his bad action will not be in the hearer's interest.

EC: The speaker tries to save the addressee's good relations with others.

Deixis

The personal deixis is the first personal pronoun (*I*). He uses this pronoun to indicate his position as a person who can distinguish bad from a good things. He indicates his happiness with his work. Social deixes are seen in '*thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;*' these social deixes indicate his justice because he is not partial in his treatment to people. Therefore, his works are accepted. ' *Beloved*' as social deixis creates intimacy with addressee to encourage him to do the right thing. Discourse deixis is the phrase "*For I rejoiced greatly*". He attracts addressee's attention to his speech. It indicates he is very happy with his state of living. Another discourse deixis is seen in '*but*'. It is used to clarify the right thing that the addressee should do.

Implicature

Synecdoche can be seen in "*my children walk in truth*" .He means that they are just people. Thus, he flouts quality maxim. Repetition is used in the text. The speaker repeats "*thou doest , walk in truth*" to emphasize the good work of Gaius to encourage others to follow his steps. Foregrounding is seen in, '*thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers'*. It is used to clarify the reason that he deserves praise.

Text 3

go [and] sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come [and] follow me. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (Carroll & Prickett, 2008).

Speech Act

The speech act of command is performed in this text. Jesus points to the important concern of social justice which can be used as an instrument to redistribute the resources. The redistribution can guarantee each member's dignified life. He states that man lacks an important matters which is 'being generous'. He might be prevented to enter paradise because of it. He wants them to be generous and think about others. There is a positive impact of being generous in both worlds. Generosity of person grants him a sense of being connected with others in this world. The FCs of command are:

PCC: Jesus expresses the proposition that he should go and sell the possessions and then give their wages to poor people.

PC: The speaker believes that the man can submit to this order .Jesus wants to eradicate poverty in the society. He wants that each one meets his needs in society.

SC: He sincerely wants that the addressee submits to this order.

EC: He believes that this order is on the society advantage as a whole. This command makes it possible for the poor to live a dignified life. This order encourages the volunteering sense in the addressee.

Another speech act of assertion is used in this text: "*Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" The FCs of assertion are:

 PCC: Jesus addresses disciples. He expresses his belief saying that it is impossible for rich men to have position in the kingdom of God.

PC: He is a prophet. He can do such assertion according to his evaluative criteria. He says that the rich do not feel other's suffering. It is not obvious that the addressee knows the

proposition.

SC: He believes that the proposition is correct.

ECs: He intends to carry people to be generous to eradicate poverty in community.

Deixis

The personal deixes are "*He*", "*thou*", "*I*". They are used to refer to the speaker who is Jesus as a prophet who knows the way to save people. While 'thou' is a deictic expression, it is used to attract the addressee' awareness to the importance of the social rules. Social deixes are the rich and the poor. The poor are supposed to be helped by the rich to have social balance. And temporal deixis "*shall hardly enter*" is used in the text referencing to the future time. All people, especially believers, know that this current world will last .So they attempt to do good works to avoid punishment and to gain the rewards from God. But the rich man believes that he will live forever, so he refuses to aid the poor. Place deixis localizes the place of fulfilling his wish. He wants to have a good place in heaven. But the man (to whom Jesus has asked) cannot enter kingdom of heaven because of his selfish character.

Implicature

Jesus flouts the maxim of quantity and quality. He uses overstatement and metaphor to show how it is impossible for the rich men to enter the kingdom as it is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of needle. Jesus uses repetition for emphasizing his point. He repeats the clause "*I say unto you*" to indicate the impossibility for such man in having good reward from God because they do not have good works .Relation maxim is flouted. Jesus's speech hints that the addressee will not do the important order (giving his money to the poor) .Thus, he will not be glorified in the promised kingdom. The manner maxim is flouted in '*Then said Jesus unto his disciples*'. Matthew intends to direct the attention to Jesus's comment.

Text 4

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (Carroll & Prickett, 2008).

Speech Act

Moses' law comprises many rules that people should obey. Some priests and teachers of the law have interpreted these rules. They add to them. Then, they accuse Jesus that he is not obeying the laws. However, Jesus obeys all the laws that God gives in the Old Testament. But he does not accept their interpretation that they added to the law. Law is a tool to regularize life in society .So, Jesus highlights its significance. There is an act of assertion whose FCs are:

PCC: Jesus asserts that his duty is to complete the law. This represents divine justice. The prophet does not accept that one is harmed by another.

PC: Jesus is confident to assert the proposition. It is not obvious that people know the proposition.

SC: Jesus believes that the proposition is true.

EC: The prophet intends to express the actual state of affairs. God rewards and punishes people according to their work.

He performs threatening act .He says "*Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments… he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven*". It is performed to make people get away of unpleasant action .He attempts to install the fear in those kinds of people who exceed their limits. It is used as a way to reform the social behavior of people in society. The FCs of threatening in the text are:

PCC: Jesus addresses the crowd on the mount. The addresser says the person is punished in case he breaks one of the commandments.

PC: Jesus says that each one will be judged. The prophet has been granted the authority from God. So the punishment will be accomplished if they do not leave their bad actions .The threatening act is indicated because the unfavorable thing will happen to the one who breaks commandments.

SC: He sincerely intends to punish them on behalf of God.

EC: Jesus wants to build a just society. Each one should respect the other. He knows that bad actions ruin their relationship. He wants to regulate people's behavior to save their relations from collapsing.

Deixis

 The personal deixis   is used to refer to Jesus by the pronoun "*I*". This pronoun is used by him to attract the addressee's attention to what he will say .Jesus performs his duty as a guide   or a messenger who has been sent from God. Other personal deixes are "*thou*" ,and "*ye*". They are used to direct the addressees to his message that each smallest work will be asked about whether the work is good or bad. "*whoever*" as a social deixis is used to identify each one with the text as if he addressed each one of them. This generic form raises the force of threat to the public. It denotes God's impartial treatment to his slaves. There is no one excluded from punishment if he commits wrong doing. Thus, people should imitate God's action to secure their life. They should not treat people according to their status. Temporal deixis is seen in the phrase *"Till heaven and earth pass"*. He means that God shall not leave the criminal without punishment. Each smallest work will be recorded whether it is good or bad. The place deixis can be noticed where people receive their punishment as in kingdom of heaven.

Implicature

Repetitions of phrases such as "*I am not come to destroy*" are used many times in the text. He wants to attract the addressee's attention to the importance of the law in organizing people's life. It is a tool that is used to designate duties and rights among members of the society. Thus, the quantity maxim is breached. He gives more information for emphasis.

Overstatement in describing situation breaches the quantity maxim. He exaggerates in the illustration of the consequences to stop criminal people. He says "*one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law". "That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire"*. He overestimates these simple matters because he does not want them to exceed their limits. They are spoken for exaltation to the bad consequences of harming people.

Jesus flouts the maxim of manner in employing foregrounding:" *jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law"*. He wants to direct their attention to his message. He does not want to destruct the society. He calls for forgiveness and love. He wants to enforce their cooperation. But, the significance of law cannot be neglected.

Text 5

"Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man

by false accusation, I restore [him] fourfold". (Carroll & Prickett, 2008)

Speech Act.

Zacchaeus performs declare act .He tells him that he gives half of his money to people. He also pays for everything that he had taken from other people by force. He wishes others forgive him to have the full repent. Zacchaeus's doings have proved that he turns a good person. The FCs of declare in the text are:

PCC: Zacchaeus addresses Jesus. He tells him of his future doings to display his fairness. He will give back the rights to the owners.

PC: Zacchaeus has the right to give the property because it comes under his control.

SC: He intends to better the conditions of the poor through his action. He says *"the half of my goods I give to the poor"*. He also tries to relieve the oppressed.

EC: His propositional content corresponds to the world because he betters the state of the poor through giving them half of his property. In addition he attempts to relieve those who are oppressed by getting rights back to them.

Deixis

Lord as social deixis encodes the relation between the collector of taxes(Zacchaeus)and the prophet (Jesus). Jesus comes to stop such wrong doers. He intends to make each one get his right. Personal deixes are represented by the personal pronoun (*I*) and (*him*). The first person pronoun (*I*) refers to Zacchaeus . And the objective case of the third person pronoun refers to the one that Zacchaeus has taken his right.

Implicature

Maxim of manner is flouted because of foregrounding in "*the half of my goods I give to the poor*" to emphasis his work

Conclusions

The conclusion of the study can be summed up by the following:

1.   Many kinds of speech acts are used in the selected texts .They are assertion, command, advice, warning, threatening, criticism, praise, and declare. Their aims can be stated as advising the inhabitants of society to do certain things to enhance their unity and cooperation, criticizing the bad behavior that leads them to go astray. Assertion is the dominate act in social justice texts of the New Testament. It records   22.22%. All other acts have the same percentages throughout the texts.

2. All kinds of deixes are used in the texts of analysis. Deixes are used as a means to attract addressee's attention to significance of justice in a society. They are personal, social, time, place and discourse. The most common type of deixis that can be observed is personal .It marks 35.71% in the New Testament. Place deixis marks 20%. Social deixis is employed in the New Testament. They are used to indicate impartiality and mutual responsibility as the use of *whoever*. Jesus and his disciples use temporal deixes to reform the personality of the corrupters .They mention the Day of Judgment to install fear in the addressee. It records 11.11 %. Discourse deixes have been employed for clarification of the intentions in the selected texts.

3. There are many floutings of cooperative maxims are employed to make the speech more effective on the addressees throughout the texts in the New Testament. Foregrounding is employed to flout the manner maxim. It marks 29.41 % in such texts. The quantity maxim is flouted because of the deployment of repetition and overstatement in the selected texts. Repetition occupies 23.52% and overstatement marks 11.76 % .Jesus and his disciples use such device in the New Testament to emphasize the significance of law and mutual respect between members of society. A rhetorical question, simile, and

metaphor prompt the addressee that the addresser's speech is right. They record 5.88 % in the New Testament. The occurrence of metaphor, simile, and rhetorical question have major contribution in flouting the quality maxims of the New Testament texts. Hint as a rhetorical device flouts relation maxim. It marks 6.25%.

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