

Utterances of Husseini Rituals: Situation-bound Pragmemes

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Abstract: *The present paper deals with Husseini rituals as pragmemes in situations-bound utterances. The use of such pragmemes has its own pragmatic functions. Based on theories of pragmatic acts, arguments that maintain the connection of pragmatic acts to religious discourse and regarding funerary rituals as pragmemes; the paper addresses the issue of whether utterances used in Husseini rituals which represent pragmatic acts are only utilized in Husseini events and contexts or there are other contexts in which these utterances are employed, meaning that utterances that are used in Hussein rituals are usually used in other related ceremonies. However, some social and conventional constraints hinder such use and turn it peculiar to Hussein contexts. Following a communicative test and other procedures to verify what has been hypothesized in regards to the issue that this paper addresses, some conclusions are drawn after analyzing some commonly used Husseini utterances. In addition to other conclusions, utterances used in Husseini rituals are situation-bound ones that are employed for pragmatics functions called - after the present study- "Husseini Pragmemes".*

Keywords: Pragmemes, Situation-bound Utterance, Husseini Rituals

1. Introduction

Following Mey (2000, 2001, and 2006) theories of pragmatic acts, Capone's (2005, 2009, and 2010) connection of pragmatic acts introduced by Mey to religious discourse and Nodoushna's (2013) funerary rituals as pragmemes; the present paper addresses the issue of whether utterances used in Husseini rituals which represent pragmatic acts are only utilized in Husseini events and contexts or there are other contexts in which these utterances are employed, meaning that utterances that are used in Hussein rituals are usually used in other related ceremonies. However, some social and conventional constraints hinder such use and turn it peculiar to Hussein contexts.

As far as this issue is concerned, the paper aims at investigating utterance of Husseini rituals, their functions and frequencies of occurrences in related social contexts, taking into account all conventional conversational principles for which they are employed. Another aim is to find out whether such utterances are peculiarly performed in the Husseini rituals or other rituals such as other religious or funerary events in the Iraqi collective society who could utilize the utterances in question for double pragmatic goals with different standard based on the context or contextualizing the utterances accordingly.

Hence, it is hypothesized that the utterances used in Husseini rituals are pragmatic acts i.e. pragmemes that are functionally used in context-sensitive situation. Another part of the hypotheses is that situation in which utterances are employed is mostly connected to Husseini rituals or other events that are related to or that have some mention about Imam Hussein.

Concerning methodology of the paper, informants from a collective society having common intentionality are administered to a role play test which contains various questions within situations, i.e. MCQ, commenting and giving percentages questions. The test is shown to a statistician specialized in forming role play tests in order to

obtain validity and content leading to logical and accurate findings. The test is to be administered to a hundred of Iraqi people who are followers and lovers of Imam Hussein as well as they belong to the collective society whose context is taken into account in the paper. The testees almost belong to the same social class, same educational level and different genders. The responses of the informants are to be collected, categorized and analyzed eventually in accordance with the aims and hypotheses set out above.

2. Pragmemes

A new development and specification to the theory of speech acts is introduced by Mey (2001). Mey (2001: 214) attains that context is the most important factor in recovering the intended meaning of a speech act, for it is the only factor which could tell about the felicity conditions of speech acts. Based on context, Mey (ibid: 221) discusses the drawbacks of the theory of speech acts in terms of using language for intended meaning to come up with the abstract idea of "eme" to call this theory "pragmatic acts" whose smallest unit is "pragmeme": general situational pragmatic acts in which context and utterances play the greatest role (ibid).

The hypothesis of ordinary speech acts does not clarify human dialect which could utilize the words articulated by a solitary, one speaker. Instead, it concentrates on the interactional circumstance in which both speakers and listeners understand their aims of using language along with all its para-linguistics markers (Jubair and Al-Hindawi: 2016: 14). An obvious clarification to this is that the logical development is up down, rather than down up: instead of beginning with what is said, and searching for what the words could mean, the circumstance where the words fit, is summoned to clarify what can be (and is really being) said. In this line of thought, the accentuation is not on conditions and standards for an individual discourse act, but on describing a general situational model fit for being executed in the situation; such a summed up down to earth act is called according to Mey a "pragmeme". (Mey, 2001:221).

Another reflection to such pragmatic acts that could be institutionalized more specifically is that one discussed by Capone (2005, 2009, 2010). Apragmeme is a discourse demonstration – an expression connected with an objective. Its mere goal is likely to achieve a targeted impact, to adjust a circumstance and change the parts of members inside that circumstance or keep the parts the same while realizing different sorts of impacts (Capone, 2009: 379). Such reflection is to be put to use in as a significant part of the semantic practices to be examined via the use of language in particular situations where the pragmatics of language is highly sensitive (ibid). Capone (ibid) exemplifies the connection required in the grieving practices are, indeed, subordinated to offering comfort to the relatives of the diseased and to guarantee that they oblige to the new situation in order for the language used to mean the intention of the speaker which is comfort, a matter that is bounded to such type of situations.

Mey's theory of pragmatic acts goes hand in hand with the contextual factors which Hymes (1974) discusses and tested against the speech acts issued for the purpose other than the surface structure of meaning viz. pragmatic intended meaning, as mentioned by Jubair and Al-Hindawi (2016: 44) that for speech acts to have sincere felicity condition and to be interpreted in a way that the speaker expects, both social and interpersonal cues should be taken into account, not to mention the para-linguistic factors. This is applicable to the essence of the theory of pragmemes.

According to Nodoushan (2013:16), pragmemes are speech acts whose meaning can only be figured out through the combination of social situation and linguistics elements utilized for the sake of social considerations such as death, wedding, party, conviction, lecture... etc.

“Utterance are not born with meaning. Meaning is injected into them from outside and any given speech act inherits its meaning and interpretation from the social event in which the producer of speech act is engaged.” (Capone, 2010)

Based on the aforementioned opinion, it can be said that the intended meaning of a speech act is basically derived from the social context for which the utterances are issued. The meaning of the utterance, on the other hand, is derived from the semantic rules combined with social norms in order to serve a social function (Wierzbicka, 2006: 3).

Capone (2010: 5-11) discusses the pragmatic theory of pragmemes in the societal context of some rites in the Catholic community. Some of the funeral rites in Italy accompanied by the social intentionality are studied in detail. Another study of the same stream conducted by Nodoushan (2013: 17-19) on the Iranian death rituals.

In both studies, pragmemes are regarded as a staged communicative acts in which language is the raw material which leads to other socio-cultural forms of communication through different types of speech acts- as attested by Austin (1969), Searle (1979) and Backh and Harinsh (1978)- in

order to convey the speech act of condolences at the level of illocutionary force.

Capone (2010: 11) argues that there are two stages of such staged communicative act: vertical and horizontal. In terms of vertical stage, the speaker addresses a higher class listener to seek something such addressing God to seek grace and salvation for the diseased. Such stage has its own speech acts on the locutionary level. As far as the horizontal stage is concerned, it means that there are some utterances used to express social support, comfort, and commemoration, upon memorials ... etc. Speech acts used in such a stage are demonstrated on both locutionary and illocutionary levels aiming to convey a perlocutionary effect after they are combined with the socio-cultural context factors.

Accordingly, an operational definition to pragmemes that could fit the current paper could be drawn on both Capone's and Nodoushan's views of pragmemes – staged communicative pragmatic acts- in terms of using bounded utterances to convey particular pragmatic staged acts.

3. Situation-sensitive Utterances

There are some utterances that could be used in variety of situations, having very related social functions. However, these utterances, Mey (2001:214) argues, situated in social context in order to give the function that the speaker expects. In addition to situations, extra-linguistics factors such as gestures, intonation and the like are elements that could define the utterances utilized by the speaker to convey the pragmatic act: pragmeme.

Along with pragmatic act theory, Kecskes (2010: 2889) brings the socio-cognitive approach to unite societal and individual features of communication. Speakers and hearers are constrained by societal conditions, whereas individuals have their own goals and intentions. Accordingly, the approach of socio-cognitive is combined with the pragmatic act theory through relevance (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 607-632) and salience (Giora: 2003) in order to demonstrate the utilization of special utterances for special situations in special pragmemes (ibid: 2890).

Morgan (1978: 269) distinguishes two types of convention to the meaning of expressions used in language: convention of language and convention of use which is related to culture of a particular community. Such convention of use has pragmatic functions encoded in utterances and expressions that could only be decoded through the social situational context. Such utterances are referred to as situation-sensitive utterances (Kecskes: (2010: 2892).

The utterances that depend on their socio-cognitive context are not those of compositional ones that could function as idioms or expressions. Such utterances, representing idioms, contain fixed functions related to pragmatics in some concerned situations. These idioms are used for pragmatics ends and referred to as “idioms with pragmatic point”. (Nattingret et al, 1992:128).

Kecskes (2008: 388) mentions three degrees of the utterance in terms of motivation: plain, loaded and charged utterances. Plain situation-sensitive utterances are represented by the

compositional structure which is semantically transparent. This type contains a fixed conventional meaning according to Grice 1975. Loaded situation-sensitive utterances are related to idioms, meaning that in such utterances the semantic implications decrease and the pragmatic functions increase to the extent that the utterances are loaded with pragmatic intentions for the sake of the speaker more than the literal meaning of the composition of the utterance, a matter which is difficult to retrieve when the situation needs more transparency. Based on Sweet (1990: 1), the third type is proposed. This type is charged with pragmatic functions which could be only decoded through a highly viewed socio-cognitive contextual cues, *though such utterances lead to pragmatic ambiguity*, (my Italics).

To sum up, it can be said that some utterances combined with societal and socio-cognitive contextual factors are produced to convey pragmatic intentions which could only be manifested through occasions to which they (utterances) are use. These utterances are called situation-sensitive utterances. On the other hand, some utterances could be used in situations, yet they do not convey a pragmatic meaning bound to particular situation. They could lead to pragmatic-conventional meaning which - through time - turn to be idioms, a matter is concerned with lexical analysis. The first type of utterances is the one to be tackled in the current paper.

Situation-sensitive utterances are known to be the actual realizations of the pragmeme for it functions as socio-cultural manifestation to the utterances said by speakers. Situation-sensitive utterances could represent situational prototypes to which there may be several pragmatic access routes. As such, situation-sensitive utterances can have several possible pragmatic access routes to a pragmeme through the multiple speech acts used to issue the pragmemes, sometimes called strategies. Such strategies are referred to as "practs" Kecskes (2013: 2892). Consider the following examples:

(1)

Pragmeme: [inviting someone to take a seat]

Practs: Why don't you sit down?; Please take a seat; Sit down, please, etc.

There are several practs through which this pragmeme can be realized. All these expressions can be considered situation-sensitive utterances.

This is what Mey says about pragmatic acts:

„The theory of pragmatic acts does not explain human language use starting from the words uttered by a single, idealized speaker. Instead, it focuses on the interactional situation in which both speakers and hearers realize their aims. The explanatory movement is from the outside in, one could say, rather than from the inside out: instead of starting with what is said, and looking for what the words could mean, the situation where the words fit, is invoked to explain what can be

(and is actually being) said (Mey, 2006:542).“

Kecskes (2008) and Kecskes and Zhang (2009) find a problem with the definition for it focuses on the outside in movement. For Kecskes (2008) and Kecskes and Zhang (2009) argue that the direction of such movement is possible to be from the outside in and from the inside out (actual situational context –! prior context encoded in utterances used) and (prior context encoded in utterances used –! actual situational context).

Rather than a speaker-or listener focused pragmatics, there is the requirement for a questioner focus down to business approach that the socio-cognitive approach offers. A speaker dependably tries to utilize those expressions that s/he supposes will pass on his/her goal best in the given circumstance, and the other way around, a listener will dependably depend on those related involvements with the semantic strings heard that s/he supposes best match the speaker's articulation in the given circumstance (Al-Hindawi and Abukruze, 2016: 13).

So, articulations are not underspecified, and they don't get their full particular from the real situational setting in light of the fact that these etymological units generally bring as much into the circumstance as the circumstance gives them. What offers detail to articulation significance is neither the genuine situational setting nor the earlier setting encoded in the expressions but the transaction of both sides determines significance in a given circumstance (Kecskes, 2008: 2895). Mey is correct that discourse demonstrations ought to be arranged. Be that as it may, this does not imply that their semantic or potentially social load encoded in the phonetic units constituting the expression is the fate of auxiliary significance when they get arranged. Be that as it may, the topic of "to what degree" is dependably there. The degree of the commitment of earlier setting and genuine situational setting to importance development and perception continues changing during the time spent of interaction.

Mey (2006: 544) attains that citing outside of any relevant connection to the subject at hand is a notable method of manipulating an interlocutor. In view of what is said above we should be careful how we comprehend „quoting out of the actual situational context in which the given linguistic expression has been used“. What it truly means is „quoting out of the actual situational context in which the given linguistic expression has been used“. This manipulation does not imply that there is no setting in light of the fact that the phonetic expression will make a setting itself. Certainly, two unique implications are discussed here. The first one is made as the consequence of a transaction of the real situational setting and the given expression. In the second case, ("out of real situational setting") which means development is construct just with respect to earlier setting encoded in the phonetic expression. The accompanying case from a sitcom demonstrates this distinction, for example:

(2)

Ahmed: - Ali, I really am bored. I feel like I want to sleep with you.

Ali: - Well, Ahmed, this is not only my fault.

(3)

Ahmed said to Ali: „, . I want to sleep with you.“
If we take the expression „I want to sleep with you“ out of the original actual situational context, it will give a way to an entirely different interpretation that is based on the most salient meaning of the expression, which is the figurative rather than the literal meaning of „I want to sleep with you“. This happens because the context created by an expression without actual situational context relies on the most salient meaning that is the result of most familiar and frequent use of the expression.

Non-native speakers have trouble with such expressions because their limited prior experience with situation sensitive utterances do not give them enough background knowledge to move away from the literal meaning of the expression and acquire the meaning of the situation sensitive utterances that are derived from the symbiotic relationship of prior situational contexts and actual situational contexts of use. This is what Doi (1973:13) said about the expression in question: „The „please help yourself“ that Americans use so often had a rather unpleasant ringing in my ears before I became used to English conversation. The meaning, of course, is simply „please take what you want without hesitation“, but literally translated it has somehow a flavor of „nobody else will help you“, and I could not see how it came to be an expression of good will (Doi, *ibid*).“

Hence, one may conclude that pragmatic acts cannot be interpreted with the intended meaning without the existence of their context.

4. Imam Hussein

Before setting out with collecting and analyzing the data, it is vital to mention an introductory account on Imam Hussein and Hussein rituals.

Imam (leader) Hussein is the son of Imam Ali, the cousin and husband of the daughter of the prophet of Islam Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny). After the martyrdom of Imam Ali, his son Hussein took the leadership of Islam and Muslims though he was confronted with huge persecution by the leaders of people of Umia who have never embraced Islam wholeheartedly. As the situation in Iraq-Kufa then was so bad due to the tyranny of the governor Yazid who belongs to Banu Umia (people of Umia), true Muslims kept sending letters to Imam Hussein, as their legitimate successor of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny), to come to Iraq in order to rid the country of these corrupt rulers. Imam Hussein went to Iraq accompanied by his family members and seventy companions. At a place called Karbala – Iraq, Imam Hussein was faced and challenged by an over-numbered army of Yazid. There, Al-Taff battle was taken place between Imam Hussein who was calling for practicing the values and principles of true Islam such as love, forgiveness, brotherhood and all other human traits as well as freedom, and Yazid who claimed the leadership of Islam through falsehood and power (Al-Dainori, 2001: 21).

Due to different reasons as the shortage of supplies, water, number of soldiers and the like, Imam Hussein was martyred

along with his supporters and most of his family members. As for the rest of his family members, they were taken captives and all the women’s dignity was exposed (*ibid*).

Al-Shihristani (2003:176) and Al-Shabibi (1966: 45) say that it was a great battle between right represented by Imam Hussein and falsehood represented by Yazid bin Ubaiullah. Imam Hussein was immortalized through his rejection to submission to leaders of Banu Umia. However, his martyrdom had made a constant grief among all Muslims and especially his follower Shia. His principles represented a revolution against tyranny and persecution.

It was not only Shia Muslims who grieved on the day when Imam Hussein was martyred, it is clear that the whole world had grieved on the day of his martyrdom. His cause is not about Muslims or Shia, it is for humanity at large. The tragic events have many lessons and messages for mankind. For all lovers and followers of Imam Hussein, it is necessary to bring all these lessons into action. This is the most proper and real tribute to Imam Hussein (Ameen, 2004: 54).

Accordingly, the battle of Karbala was a confrontation between two different schools of thought: Imam Hussein and his followers were unique in their spiritual and moral values. On the other hand, Yazid and his followers were proud of weapons and military provisions. Imam Hussein and his followers were known to their eloquent. After the martyrdom of Imam Hussein in Al-Taff Epic, people have begun to think a lot to invent certain ways or special meaningful ways to revive this great revolution. So they have invented some rituals reflecting the sufferings of Imam Hussein and his companions. Moreover, these rituals have given more dimensions to this revolution; whether they are social, religious, or political dimension (*ibid*: 110).

This way shows the greatness of this Epic and its effects in the past and nowadays. Hussein rituals are peaceful ways used by people to express their loyalty and love to the prophet's household to be near to God, because the house of prophecy reflects the will of God. Based on Al-Dainori (2001:17-35), these rituals can be summarized as follows:

4.1. Walking

One of the prominent and expressive ways performed by Muslims is walking. People want to pass the same difficulty which Imam Hussein has passed for fourteen centuries ago. Walking reflects the suffering of Imam Hussein and his convoy. They want to undertake thirst and hunger in order to feel the great patience of this man and his followers. In such an event, pilgrims and people who serve pilgrims use a special kind of utterances interchangeable; the servants encourage and appraise the pilgrims.

4.2. Lamentations

They are special types of poems, poets usually write them to express their grief and sadness, and people listen to them to interact with these sad events. They reflect the suffering and patience of those people who sacrificed themselves to keep the message of God. Also, they show the moral decay of those people who killed the prophet's family and their

We offer our deep condolences to the Islamic nation on this tragedy.”

In this utterance, 70% of the informants preferred using it to express their sorrow in the tragic events of the Imams, mostly the martyrdom events which are celebrated through memorials or Hussein lectures and sermons. As for using the utterance peculiarly for Imam Hussein rituals, it is used in a frequency 27% in all the context in which Imam Hussein is mentioned, whether the speech event is about Imam Hussein or about other Imams. There is only 3% chosen for using the utterance in the funerary events.

Utterance 5

”تق بلالهي عك هي عظم اجركم“

May Allah accept and multiply your endeavor.”

This utterance shows a 63% rate in terms of using it in favor of Imam Hussein’s rituals. The rest ratio, 22% is used in the context of other religious events and funerals. A percentage of 11% is chosen by the informants in the context of funeral events, whereas 4% percentage is utilized for other purposes. Informants justify the purpose of such use of the utterance that it is employed either to ease, comfort the diseased relatives or commemorate the tragedies of the event of other Imams as well as Imam Hussein’s rituals.

Table 1: Frequencies of Utterances with Functions

No.	The Utterance	Speech event to which the utterance is used	Frequency Percentage	Its function
1	عظم له ه اجركم مذل جريدال ج م May Allah multiply our and your rewards for commemorating this tragic event.	a. It is used in Hussein rituals.	87%	a. To offer condolences to the Islamic nation and Hussein lovers. b. To seek salvation and mercy for the diseased. c. To pray for the dead to have salvation.
		b. It is used to commemorate Imam’s martyrdom.	9%	
		c. It is used for other funerary events.	4%	
		d. It is used for other events.	-	
2	م اجرون May Allah reward you for doing this.	a. It is used in Hussein rituals.	66%	a. To offer condolences to the infallible Imams and to renew the pledge of allegiance. b. To seek good from God for the good doers.
		b. It is used to commemorate Imam’s martyrdom.	18%	
		c. It is used for other funerary events.	13%	
		d. It is used for other events.	3%	
3	يربين لنا امك ج ه في فزا اعظم We wish that we were with you in order for us to have the glorious victory.	a. It is used in Hussein rituals.	91%	To offer condolences to the infallible Imams and to renew the pledge of allegiance
		b. It is used to commemorate Imam’s martyrdom.	8%	
		c. It is used for other funerary events.	1%	
		d. It is used for other events.	-	
4	نعز بالامه الاسلاميقت مذهب اجرة We offer our deep condolences to the Islamic nation on this tragedy.	a. It is used in Hussein rituals.	73%	To pray for the dead to have salvation.
		b. It is used to commemorate Imam’s martyrdom.	18%	
		c. It is used for other funerary events.	13%	
		d. It is used for other events.	3%	
5	تق بلالهي عك هي عظم اجركم May Allah accept and multiply your endeavor.	a. It is used in Hussein rituals.	63%	a. To ease and comfort the diseased relatives b. To commemorate the tragedies of the event of Imam Hussein
		b. It is used to commemorate Imam’s martyrdom.	22%	
		c. It is used for other funerary events.	11%	
		d. It is used for other events.	4%	

5. Discussions

This section is deemed to discuss the findings resulted from the data analyzed. Administering a test covering the five Hussein utterances spread on situations, analysis has yielded several findings.

In all the utterances, the highest percentage that the informants demonstrated is that the utterances in question are employed in Hussein events. The percentages are variously depicted: utterance 1 is 87%, utterance 2 is 66%, utterance 3 is 91%, utterance 4 is 73% and utterance 5 is 63%. These are considerable frequencies that such utterances are bound to the Hussein contexts, though they can be commonly utilized by the informants in other religious events such as tragedies of other Imams. In connection to the hypothesis that utterances used in Hussein rituals are bound to Hussein contexts, the findings go hand in hand with the hypothesis.

The analysis shows that such utterances which are used in such a context as illustrated above can represent a strategy that functions as a pragmeme of condolences to the Islamic nation, precisely Hussein followers and lovers. Such pragmeme can also function as vertical prayers to God for the purpose of seeking salvation or goodness for the departed one. It is a strategy than be employed as a pragmeme which implicates that the performer of such utterance and rituals are to renew the pledge of loyalty and allegiance. Pragmatically speaking, such utterances have got meanings only used for pragmatics functions in the Hussein context, i.e. whenever such utterances are used, first thing that can be relevant is that of the Hussein rituals, an intended meaning of the speaker [see Mmey 2001, Capone, 2009 & 2010]. This provides what is mentioned in the hypotheses regarding the contextsensitivity of the Hussein utterances.

The utterances in question – as analysis indicates – are used to commemorate other Imams’ tragic events, mostly martyrdom, meaning that they can represent pragmemes

which can function as condolences and/pledging allegiance in contexts other than Husseinis ones. The frequencies of these contexts are registered as follows:

Utterance 1 is 9%, utterance 2 is 18%, utterance 3 is 8%, utterance 4 is 18% and utterance 5 is 22%.

These utterances can be used as a strategy to ease and comfort the diseased. This strategy is a pragmeme used in funerary contexts utilizing such utterances. The frequencies are 4% for the first utterance, 13% for the second utterance, 1% for the third utterance, 13 for the fourth and 11% for the fifth one. The functions of the Husseinis utterances, as strategies of praying to God in favor of the diseased ones are intentionally used by particular group of collective society to convey special attitudes represent the pragmatic illocutionary and perlocutionary force of the speech acts used in such utterances [see Searle 1979].

6. Concluding Remarks

The current paper has come up with some conclusions concerning what has been hypothesized in the introductory section as well as other conclusions that are resulted from data analysis. Utterances of Husseinis rituals are bounded ones, meaning that they are only used in contexts in which Husseinis rituals are commemorated. Other rituals of religious events can employ utterances related to Husseinis utterances, but they are not used in as much as used in Husseinis events. It is also concluded that Husseinis utterances are pragmatic acts “pragmemes” that they are peculiarly used in Husseinis events.

The other part of the conclusion ... utterances used in Husseinis rituals pragmatically function as strategies of condolences, pledging allegiance and showing how much imam Hussein and all those who were involved in the tragic event of Karbala have suffered and tyrannized. Thus, Imam Hussein utterances are included with the strategies and be part of felicity conditions of the speech acts from which such utterances are produced such as speech act of condoling, pledging, stating... etc.

Another conclusion of this part is that some of Husseinis rituals are used in some death staged act rituals within the Iraqi collective society. Such utterances are used to convey what the speaker intends.

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