

The Speech Act of Blame :

A Pragmatic Analysis of Some Selected Biblical Texts

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Abstract

The concept of “Blame” generally expresses the speaker negative attitude or criticism to the state of affairs which is described in the proposition for which the speaker holds the (listener) addressee directly or indirectly responsible. The speech act of blame has both an assertive and an expressive use. This research tries to analyse the speech act of blame in English religious texts. It deals with the problem of how the speech act of blame could be recognized in religious language and how it could be identified in the religious context. As a result, it tries to accomplish the following goals: (i) explaining pragmatically, the speech act of blame in English religious text, (ii) putting the felicity conditions which could be utilized as a linguistic method to analyse the speech act of blame in English religious texts. To accomplish these goals, the following hypotheses have been conducted.

- i- The suggested felicity conditions can be applied to nearly all English religious texts.
- ii- The explicit formations utilized to explain the speech act of blame in religious texts are expected to be more than the indirect or implicit formations.
- iii- There isn't obvious differences between the speech act of blame and other acts such as criticism, reprimand etc.

Key words: blame, Functions, speech, Analysis, pragmatic

Introduction

The concept of blame is expressing annoyance and bad feelings toward past or present situations whose consequences are of the addressee's concern. (Williams, 2006: 12). According to Trosborg (1995:318) the action of blame presupposes that the person being blamed has committed and something wrong. Moreover, Duff (1986: 40) states that we need to construct a personal judgment on someone's behaviour, or have specific attitude of anger for acting wrong to give exact meaning of blame. Thus, blame is the type of action that shows the speaker's (blamer) anger or bad feeling against a specific situation so the blamer holds the addressee responsible directly or indirectly. In order to test the validity of these hypotheses, specific procedures have

been followed: (i) a theoretical and literature survey is presented about the speech act of blame, (ii) putting specific felicity conditions to analyse the selected religious texts from the Holy Bible. The findings of this research prove the validity of the first and third hypotheses, while refute the second hypothesis.

1. Pragmatic types of Blame

Philosophers and pragmatists treat the concept of blame differently. They also differ in the class they relate the act to, that is, some treat it as an assertive act while others consider it as a behabitive, expressive or verdictive:

1.2 Behabitive

Austin (1962:159) expresses that there is a clear relation between expressing our feelings and expressing those feelings through behaviour. He presents a group of behabitive verbs as follows:

NO	The purpose	Behabitive verbs
1.	For apologies	'apologize'
2.	For thanks	'thank'
3.	For sympathy	'deplore', 'commiserate', 'felicitate' and 'sympathize'
4.	For greeting	'welcome' and 'bid you farewell'
5.	For attitudes	'resent', 'don't mind', 'pay tribute', 'criticize', 'grumble about', 'complaint of', 'applaud', 'overlook', 'command', 'deprecate' and the non-exercitive uses of 'blame', 'approve' and 'favour'
6.	For wishes	'bless', 'curse', 'toast', 'drink to' and 'wish' (in its strict performative use).
7.	For challenges	'dare', 'defy', 'protest' and 'challenge'.

Furthermore, Austin (1956: 83) classifies blame in the class of 'Behabitive' which is a type of performative that is concerned with behaviour with others and with relations of behaviour. It shows feelings, attitudes and social behaviour. Also, he (ibid:151) discovers that behabitives are the most difficult to classify, and argued that they are vague and require a new categorization. Blame as a behabitive is a

dubious verb because it is too diverse and appears to be included in other classes.

1.2 Assertive

Downes (1998:378) states that assertives are essential to language use because they are used to express ideas and beliefs, and things. Furthermore, blame, criticize, accuse, and complain are considered assertive acts. Because they share the same illocutionary force. Vanderveken (1990:179) adds that the act of blaming someone is the same as criticizing him with emphasizing that he is responsible for something bad (preparatory condition).

Furthermore, Searle (1979:12) illustrates that the main function of assertive class is to commit the listener on different levels to the truth of the uttered proposition. He goes on to say that all assertives are assessable on the evaluation dimension, which includes true and false. Finally, Searle and Vanderveken (1985:85) find that all assertive illocutionary forces must have the preparatory condition in which the speaker has an evidence or proof that confirms the truth of the uttered proposition.

1.3 Expressive

Partridge (1982:101) considers blame as an ambiguous verb. Its ambiguity comes from the idea that blame refers to a both mental and communicative speech act. When it is a communicative speech act, it means hold responsibility or accuse as in the example (1) and when it is a non-communicative speech act, it means censure as in the example (2):

(1) Someone cut my dress, and I blame you for it / it on you. (Means Hold responsibility, accuse of).

(2) You cut the dress, and I blame you for it / it on you. (Means Censure).

2. Functions of Blame

Meal (1993: 40) finds that blame is a social evaluation. It includes the capacity of the people to recognize and evaluate the cognitive states of

the speaker and the listener. The main goal of blaming is to change the addressee's motivations so that he would avoid engaging in similar behavior in the future. The issue presented here is how holding someone could guarantee desired change in him. According to Duff (1986: 45), there are three options.

1. The main function of blaming is to improve specific behaviors and to persuade the receiver to evaluate his previous attitude and, in turn, use those moral principles to guide his future behavior. Thus, the speaker either causes the receiver to comprehend and care about moral standards that he has not been previously affected by, or the receiver is persuaded of ideals for which the receiver already cares.

2. The receiver considers the speaker's criticism to be so irritating or uncomfortable. Thus, he will make an effort to avoid it in the future by acting or appearing in ways that he knows the speaker believes that the receiver should act or behave in. However, the prudential considerations (that prompt him, the addressee, to judge his past actions as "wrong" and to modify his future conduct) are very different from the moral considerations that justify the addresser's blame and criticism of those actions. The speaker's blame still gives the receiver a reason for acting in a different way.

3. Blaming the receiver uses non-rationality to change his motivations and attitudes without his understanding and approval of the justifications for rejecting his previous behavior or altering his future attitude. (ibid).

3. The Influence of Blame

Blame entails making judgements on someone's behavior, or having specific point of view as a result of his wrongdoing; or condemning him to others when he is not there. It may also be aimed towards present actions or omission. In addition to previous actions, as well as prior attitudes. There is not a specific form of blame to consider an utterance as an act of balm, but the speaker's judgment that the receiver behaved in a bad way; a judgment both on his behavior, as acting wrong, and on him as its agent.

Virtuously, the act of blaming must be seen as an effort to get the receiver to acknowledge and apologize for their wrongdoing. When a

person blames anyone, he must have a set of moral criteria by which he could evaluate another person's behaviour, also he thinks the recipient should adopt (Duff, 1986: 47).

Finally, Meal (1993: 80) asserts that blame motivates people to avoid engaging in socially harmful behaviors. Someone would have strong motivations to avoid them if they knew they will be accused of being for example, harsh or greedy. Contrarily, assigning blame entails evaluating people's weaknesses, which is crucial for determining who should be given specific responsibilities and duties. For example, a person could be an excellent banker, but a terrible social event planner.

4. Methodology of Research:

The researcher has adopted an eclectic model for the analysis of the selected Biblical texts, as follows:

1. Analyzing the text pragmatically, the analysis is based mainly on the approaches of speech acts as discussed by van Eemeren and Grootendorst's felicity conditions (1992) to specify which utterance can predict blame. The felicity conditions are as follows:

Proposed felicity conditions		
1	Comprehensive conditions (CCs):	The sender must be identified the receiver.
2	Propositional content conditions (PCCs):	(i) A bad proposition P has been realized; (ii) Someone is to blame for the current situations.
3	reparatory conditions (PCs):	(i) The sender has proof or a cause to blame (he receiver) (ii) a negative effect has been received by the sender.
4	incerity conditions (SCs):	The sender is unsatisfied and feels that the situation is terrible and blameworthy.
5	<u>Essential</u> conditions (ECs):	The utterance is expression of blame to the degree that P is considered as the actual state of affairs

2. Also, this study will present the situational context since it is crucial to understand the act of blaming in these texts. Furthermore, the purpose of the communication of the selected texts is described based on Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible by Charles J. Ellicott.

3. The analysis has done depending on different types of blame explained in the previous section. It will focus on the message, and on the situational context of the conversation.

5. The Analysis

This part of the study analyzes the act of blame in specific religious texts selected from the Holy Bible.

Text -1-

Why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us in to this wretched place? It is not place of of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink.” Numbers 20:5

	Proposed felicity conditions	
1	Comprehensive conditions (CCs):	Israel contends are a addressing Moses and Aaron
2	Propositional content conditions (PCCs):	(i) Contentions against Moses and Aaron have been realized; (ii) Moses and Aaron are blamed for their thirst and many other things.
3	Preparatory conditions (PCs):	The people of Israel have proof to blame, which I is the lack of water in the new land. (i) Moses and Aaron were annoyed by their unfaith and bad attitude. (ii)
4	Sincerity conditions (SCs):	The people of Israel are unsatisfied and feels that the persuading them to leave Egypt is terrible and blameworthy.
5	EEssential conditions (ECs):	The blame in this text considered as dissatisfaction.

In this biblical text, the people of Israel are blaming Moses and Aaron because of thirst, they start their blame through using rhetorical question “*Why have you made us come up from Egypt*” they even blame them for persuading them to go out to Egypt and describe the new place (Kadesh) as “evil”. They also say that they were “the Lord's people” in Egypt and he brought them and their animals here to die. They used many rhetorical question to express their blame. They also state some evidence to support their blame process as “You should not have brought us to this very bad place” and “When we were in Egypt, we had grain, figs, grapes and pomegranates”. “There is no food like that here!” “And there is no water to drink!” they said that in this place there is no water and the land is not suitable for cultivation.

Text-2-

They came to the sons of Reuben and to the sons of Gad and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them saying, “Thus says the whole congregation of the Lord, ‘What is this unfaithful act which you have committed against the God of Israel, turning away from following the Lord this day, by building yourselves an altar, to rebel against the Lord this day? Is not the iniquity of Peor enough for us, from which we have not cleansed ourselves to this day, although a plague came on the congregation of the Lord (Joshua 22:15-18)

	Proposed felicity conditions	
1	Comprehensive conditions (CCs):	Phinehas is addressing the eastern tribes.
2	Propositional content conditions (PCCs):	(i) Contentions against Moses and Aaron have been realized; (ii) Eastern tribes are blamed for their rebellion against God
3	Preparatory conditions (PCs):	(i) Phinehas has proof to blame, which is building an altar which considered as a rebel against god. (ii) Eastern tribes were annoyed by their bad attitude. And said that we are misunderstood, and God knows what is in our heart.
4	Sincerity conditions (SCs):	Phinehas knows that rebellion against God is blameworthy.
5	EEssential conditions (ECs):	The blame in this text considered as dissatisfaction in the way they behaved.

In this text, Phinehas is blaming eastern tribes for taking treachery (alter) as place of sacrifice and worship, which he told them that this is against the will of the God. He expresses the reasons behind his blame. He states that if they rebel today against God as a result God will be angry with the whole people of Israel and will punish them. Also, to support his reasons of blame Phinehas reminds the eastern tribes that Israel has been punished for rebellion against God before, using the rebellion at Peor as an example. .(Israel's men who orders his people to worship the Moabite gods) as a result God sent a plague that killed 24,000 people. Phinehas warned eastern tribes that this sin will affect the whole people.

Text-3-

Also there were those who said, “We have borrowed money for the king’s tax on our fields and our vineyards. Now our flesh is like the flesh of our brothers, our children like their children. Yet behold, we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters are forced into bondage already, and we are helpless because our fields and vineyards belong to others.” Nehemiah 5:4-5

	Proposed felicity conditions	
1	Comprehensive conditions (CCs):	the people are addressing Nehemiah
2	Propositional content conditions (PCCs):	(i) The people cried out because of a shortage of food (ii) Nehemiah is blamed for they had no food to feed their families.
3	Preparatory conditions (PCs):	The people have proof to blame, which is (iii) the lack of enough food for their families. Nehemiah was angry greed on the part of (iv) the rich.
4	Sincerity conditions (SCs):	The people of unsatisfied and felt totally helpless because they could see no prospect of relief and blameworthy
5	Essential conditions (ECs):	The blame in this text considered as dissatisfaction.

In this text, Nehemiah is blamed by his people for many reasons. They deal with many external threats, opposition, and problems. Actually, they support their blame in many satisfied justifications the first thing is the shortage of food and even they gave themselves to the work families and had sacrificed to contribute to rebuilt the country. The second reason is that they had to mortgage their houses and belongings in order to buy food. The third reason is that they were suffering under a heavy burden of taxes. Finally, they had to sell their children to slavery in order to pay off their debts. They felt totally sad and helpless because they can't see no prospect of relief.

Text -4-

When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is this you, you troubler of Israel?” He said, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and you have followed the Baals. (Kings 18:17-18)

	Proposed felicity conditions	
1	Comprehensive conditions (CCs):	Ahab is addressing Elijah.
2	Propositional content conditions (PCCs):	(i) Contentions against Elijah. has been realized; (ii). Elijah is blamed for following the Baals
3	Preparatory conditions (PCs):	(i) Ahab has proof to blame, forsaken the God’s order (ii) Elijah was annoyed because Ahab was the worst, king in Israel ever
4	Sincerity conditions (SCs):	Ahab knows that following the Baals is blameworthy.
5	EEssential conditions (ECs):	The blame in this text considered as dissatisfaction in the way they think of.

In this text, Ahab is blaming Elijah, in the beginning, its worth mentioning that Ahab was the worst king of Israel ever who did not hesitate to blame the kindest prophet Elijah for the problems of Israel. Ahab believed in Baal, that is he supported Baal worship and persecuted the worshippers of Yahweh..Here, in this situational context Ahab supports his blame with the following reasons, he thought that Elijah had angered the sky-god Baal and thus Baal withheld rain. Also,Ahab thought that Baal would hold back the rain until Elijah was caught and executed.

Text -5-

Ten times now you have meant to insult me. You should be ashamed of dealing with me so harshly. And even if I have sinned, that is my concern, not yours. You are trying to over-come me, using my humiliation as evidence of my sin
(Job, 19:4-5)

	Proposed felicity conditions	
1	Comprehensive conditions (CCs):	Job is addressing his people.
2	Propositional content conditions (PCCs):	Convicting Job of committing deliberate crime is the proposition that is achieved. i) His people are responsible for the convicting directed to him. ii)
3	Preparatory conditions (PCs):	i) He blames them because they accused him, while they should have been supporting and encouraging him. ii) Job is greatly disappointed and frustrated by their actions.
4	Sincerity conditions (SCs):	Job thinks that convicting him to be a sinner is blameworthy.
5	EEssential conditions (ECs):	The blame in this text considered as dissatisfaction criticism of their way of thinking.

In this text Job is blaming his people Zophar, Eliphaz and Bildad. He is blaming them because they convinced him of crime although they don't have any evidence. Job was a very good person, he had big problems and he was suffering from them. His friend thought that god would not let a good and an innocent person to suffer. Thus his people thought and guessed that he had done many evil things and this is why he is suffering. They did not accept that he was a good man. Though he was innocent, they accused him and considered him guilty. They upset Job because their thoughts were not correct. They believed that Job was an evil man and blamed him without any reason. They treated him cruelly. Despite the fact that they lacked proof, they still accused Job.

Text-6-

“Won’t you ever understand? Don’t you remember the five thousand I fed with five loaves, and the baskets of food that were left over? Don’t you remember the four thousand I fed with seven loaves, with the baskets left over?”

(Matthew, 16:9-10)

	Proposed felicity conditions	
1	Comprehensive conditions (CCs):	Jesus is addressing his people.
2	Propositional content conditions (PCCs):	The people were worried about their food. i) Their lack of trust prevented them from learning the lessons Jesus wanted them to learn. ii)
3	Preparatory conditions (PCs):	i) I Failing to understand Jesus served as proof of their lack of trust, on which he blamed them. ii) Jesus is disappointed that his followers didn't learn the principles he tried to teach them.
4	Sincerity conditions (SCs):	Jesus thinks that his followers' lack of faith and consciousness is bad behavior and deserving blame
5	EEssential conditions (ECs):	The text expresses frustration with their way of thinking.

In this text, Jesus is blaming his followers for their misunderstanding and for their untrue faith. He was warning his followers Pharisees they thought that he believed that he is talking about food because, in this day, they forgot providing food. Many sentences are used to illustrate the act of blame. In the first one, Jesus shows his astonishment of their way of thinking. Then he utilizes interrogative questions whose answers were known. He keeps reminding them of the miracles as if he was saying: 'haven't you realized the lessons yet'

Text -7-

"I would love to treat you as my own children!" I wanted nothing more than to give you this beautiful land -the finest inheritance in the world. I looked forward to your calling me 'Father,' and I thought you would never turn away from me again. ²⁰ But you have betrayed me, you people of Israel! You have been like a faithless wife who leaves her husband," (Jeremiah, 3: 20)

	Proposed felicity conditions	
1	Comprehensive conditions (CCs):	Prophet Jeremiah is addressing the people of Israel..
2	Propositional content conditions (PCCs):	People of Israel were believing and i) worshiping gods other than Allah. ii) The government and The judges are responsible for the sins.
3	Preparatory conditions (PCs):	The reason behind God blame is that many i) people turned against Him, and they spoke in the name of Baal, and worship him. they break their relationship with God ii) because of their evil deeds. Thus, God will never forgive them.
4	Sincerity conditions (SCs):	God thinks that their deeds are evil and blameworthy.
5	EEssential conditions (ECs):	The speech considered as a dissatisfaction of people's behaviours.

On the tongue of His Prophet Jeremiah (ﷺ), Allah (ﷻ) is addressing the people of Israel. He (ﷻ) is reminding them of their sins. He (ﷻ) is blaming them because He (ﷻ) is hurt by their sins. Sin is painful to all who are touched by its perversion, yet no one grieves over sin's devastating consequences more than Allah (ﷻ). He (ﷻ) wants people to turn to Him for deliverance from the grip of sin in their lives; He (ﷻ) wants to set people free from the painful consequences of what has been created by their sins. People of Israel were worshiping gods other than Allah (ﷻ). He compares their worship to prostitution. They are acting like a well-loved wife who runs about, searching for others to satisfy her desire for pleasure instead of remaining faithful to her loving husband. The people of Israel were refusing to see the truth and took their sins lightly since the consequences of the sins, sometimes, do not come immediately (Arterburn and Merrill, 2004: 865).

The main topic in the speech is warning that is presented in a form of blaming. Allah (ﷻ) is telling them that they betrayed Him and then there is a warning that the consequences for sinful behaviour will inevitably come sooner or later. He wants people to see the truth, admit their guilt, and confess that they have been following someone or something other than Him.

Conclusions

Blame is portrayed as a technique; as something the addresser does to someone in order to modify his action or behaviour. Though it focuses, necessarily, on an alleged moral offence, it warns the audience that its agent may behave in similarly undesirable ways in the future. Therefore, people may need to modify the addressee's conduct by blaming him. Blame is the type of actions that shows the speaker's (blamer) anger or bad feeling against a specific situation. It expresses the speaker negative attitude or criticism to the state of affairs which is described in the proposition for which the speaker holds the (listener) addressee directly or indirectly responsible. The speech act of blame has both an assertive and an expressive use. The explicit blame is rarely used in religious texts. It is more affected when conveyed by using implicit forms. That is by expressing implicit accuse, criticize, rebuke, scold, and reprimand. That is why it seems that there is no clear-cut line between blame and this bundle of negative acts. This refutes the second

hypothesis while validates the third hypotheses of this study. Moreover, the analysis of the data shows that the proposed felicity conditions can be applied to nearly all English religious texts and this prove the validity of the first hypotheses.

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الخلاصة:

يعبر مفهوم "اللوم" بشكل عام عن الموقف السلبي للمتحدث أو نقده لحالة معينة حيث يحمل المتكلم الشخص الملام المسؤولية بشكل مباشر أو غير مباشر. أضافه الى إن فعل اللوم له استخدام حازم وتعبري .

يروم هذا البحث الى تحليل فعل اللوم في النصوص الدينية الإنجليزية. إنه يتعامل مع مشكلة كيفية التعرف على فعل اللوم في النصوص الدينية وكيف يمكن تحديده في السياق الديني. حيث يوم البحث تحقيق الأهداف التالية: (1) شرح عملية تحقيق اللوم في النص الديني الإنجليزي بطريقة براغماتية ، (2) وضع شروط تحقيق عملية اللوم التي يمكن استخدامها كوسيلة لغوية لتحليل فعل اللوم الكلامي. في النصوص الدينية الإنجليزية. لتحقيق هذه الأهداف ، تم وضع الفرضيات التالية:

أ- يمكن تطبيق شروط تحقيق عملية اللوم المقترحة على جميع النصوص الدينية الإنجليزية تقريباً.

ب- من المتوقع أن تكون الصيغ الصريحة المستخدمة لشرح فعل اللوم في النصوص الدينية أقل من الصيغ غير المباشرة أو الضمنية.

ج- لا توجد اختلافات واضحة بين فعل اللوم وأفعال أخرى مثل النقد والتوبيخ وما إلى ذلك ومن أجل اختبار صحة هذه الفرضيات ، تم اتباع الإجراءات الآتية : (1) تم تقديم نبذة نظرية وأدبيه حول فعل اللوم الكلامي ، (2) وضع شروط تحقيق عملية اللوم لتحليل النصوص الدينية المختارة من الكتاب المقدس. . تثبت نتائج هذا البحث صحة الفرضيتين الأولى والثالثة ، بينما تم تدحض الفرضية الثانية.

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