

Illocutionary Speech Acts in the Poem Ayyuha al-Nas by Tamim al-Barghouti

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the act of illocution speech in the poem "Ayyuha al-Nas" by Tamim al-Barghouti with a pragmatic approach based on Searle's speech theory theory. This poem is an important representation of contemporary Arab socio-political poetry that is loaded with messages of leadership, social criticism, and affirmation of cultural identity. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with text analysis, covering five categories: directive, expressive, representative, commissive, and declarative. The results of the study show that this poem is dominated by assertive (representative) and expressive illocution, which functions as a moral invitation, collective awareness, and the formation of social identity. This research expands the pragmatic study of Arabic literature and affirms the position of poetry as a medium of public discourse.

Penelitian ini menganalisis tindak tutur ilokusi dalam puisi "Ayyuha al-Nas" karya Tamim al-Barghouti dengan pendekatan pragmatic berbasis teori tindak tutur Searle. Puisi ini merupakan representasi penting dari puisi social-politik arab kontemporer yang sarat dengan pesan kepemimpinan, kritik social, dan afirmasi identitas budaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan analisis teks, mencakup lima kategori: direktif, eskpresif, representative, komisif, dan deklaratif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa puisi ini didominasi tindak ilokusi Asertif (representative) dan ekspresif, yang berfungsi sebagai ajakan moral, penyadaran kolektif, dan pembentukan identitas social. Penelitian ini memperluas kajian pragmatic sastra arab dan menegaskan posisi puisi sebagai medium wacana public.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Arabic poetry (الشعر العربي المعاصر) has transcended the boundaries of traditional aesthetics, evolving into a very powerful and influential medium of social and political discourse (Allen, 2006). In the context of modern Arab history and culture, poetry often serves as a collective voice (*voice of the collective*), recording turmoil, hope, and criticism of existing political, social, and cultural realities.

Modern Arabic poetry has developed into a powerful medium of political and social discourse (Badawi, 1992). One of the most influential modern poets is Tamim al-Barghouti, who is widely known for his ability to blend the heritage of classical Arabic rhetoric with a modern touch, producing a style that is sharp, straightforward, and filled with a strong moral message (Allen, 2006). His works have a high power of emotional mobilization, effectively arousing collective consciousness and directly responding to the political conditions, issues of dignity, and identity challenges faced by the Arab world (El-Ariss, 2013).

The poem "Ayyuhā al-Nās" is one of Tamim al-Barghouti's works that is considered monumental. This text is not just a series of beautiful words, but a poetic declaration full of meaning. The poem contains a moral appeal, a profound social critique of injustice, and a burning appeal for the restoration of human dignity and sovereignty in the midst of distressing conditions (Harlow, 1987). The strength of this text lies in how it effectively articulates the feelings of frustration and hope that are widespread in society.

In the context of linguistic studies, poetry is a very rich platform for exploring layers of meaning that go beyond lexical and syntactic aspects (Yule, 1996). Specifically, pragmatic studies offer an ideal framework for analyzing how language is used in contexts to achieve specific goals. Pragmatics focuses on the act of illocutionary speech acts (*illocutionary acts*), which is the function or intention behind speech, which in the case of poetry aims to influence the reader emotionally, politically, or morally (Levinson, 1983).

Austin (1962) introduced the concept of speech acts as part of pragmatic studies, Austin stated that when a person speaks not only expresses information but also performs actions. He divides the action into locution, illocution, and perlocution (Austin, 1962). Searle (1976) developed the categorization of illocution into five: representative, directive, expressive, declarative, and commissive (Searle, 1976). Searle's categorization provides a clear framework for analyzing how language acts as a tool for social interaction and the implementation of intentions.

According to Allen (2006), modern Arabic poetry is a powerful medium in constructing public consciousness (Allen, 2006). In the frequently turbulent political and historical context of Arab world, poetry becomes an alternative space in which collective identities, criticisms, and aspirations can be broadly expressed. Al-Barghouti is known as a poet who uses simple language but full of political rhetoric. He managed to load it with sharp and transformative political rhetoric. The simplicity of its language allows its message to penetrate various walks of life, from intellectuals to ordinary people.

Literary pragmatics emphasizes the analysis of the function of language in literary works, including speech power and implication (Black, 2006). Tamim Al-Barghouti's work, which is often rooted in his personal experiences as a Palestinian refugee, draws on the emotional appeal of individual narratives to reflect the suffering and resilience of the nation more broadly. Within the framework of speech introduced by Austin and Searle, Al-Barghouti effectively employs the illocution of the Representative type (expressing the bitter truth about occupation and exile) and Directive (directing the reader to reflect on and act on injustice) through easy-to-understand metaphors and narratives. Thus, poetry is not only expressive (locution) but also moving (perlocution), transforming individual consciousness into a public force.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore in depth the functions of illocution manifested in the poem "Ayyuhā al-Nās". This analysis becomes the fundamental basis for uncovering how Tamim al-Barghouti creates meaning, conveys criticism, and formulates highly persuasive moral-political messages. Through the identification of speech actions (such as assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative), this study can outline the poet's rhetorical strategies in an effort to encourage changes in awareness and action in their audience.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach by utilizing a combination of content analysis techniques and hermeneutical reading as the main method (Krippendorff, 2018), where the main data is the text of the poem "Ayyuhā al-Nās" by Tamim al-Barghouti obtained from official publications and reliable sources. The analysis of the illocution is carried out systematically in two phases:

- a. Descriptive Phase (Content Analysis): Analyze the text of the poem per verse to identify the dominant speech. This speech was then classified based on the category of illocution acts by Searle (1976), including Representative, Directive, Expressive, Commissive, and Declarative (Searle, 1976). This classification is carried out through the mapping of each speech to its communicative function, which is what the poet actually does through his words.
- b. Interpretive Phase (Hermeneutical Reading): The determination of the main illocutionary function in each stanza is based on a profound interpretation of the poet's most powerful pragmatic intentions (illocutionary force). This reading is carried out in the socio-political context of Palestine and the history of Arab resistance poetry (Adab al-Muqawamah).

The power of this illocution is judged from the poet's primary goal of influencing the audience, which in turn will produce a specific perlocutional effect (e.g., encouraging awareness, mobilizing support, or fostering a sense of solidarity). The technique of hermeneutical reading is crucial to ensure that the interpretation is not only literal, but also contextual and capable of capturing the implications (meanings suggested but not explicitly stated) and the poet's political rhetorical strategies. Thus, this study not only records the types of speech actions used, but also describes how the manipulation of these pragmatic functions successfully induces changes in awareness and action in its audience.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In general, this poem functions as an Expressive and Assertive speech act that has a strong Directive purpose (Pratt, 1977). Tamim al-Barghouti not only conveys information (Assertive), but also intensely expresses respect and adoration (Expressive) to move his audience (Directive).

a. Results

This section analyzes the speech actions in each stanza according to the function of the illocution.

Bait	Arabic	Illocutionary act	Pragmatic Function
1	أَهْبَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمْ بِكُمْ / الْأَمْرَاءُ الْأَرْضُ وَالسَّمَاءُ سَوَاءٌ	Assertive (Representative)	Affirming: The poet officially states the claim of reality: that the people are the true leaders. This statement serves as a powerful and empowering declaration of identity.
2	يَا نُجُومًا تَمْشِي عَلَى كُلَّمَا أَظْلَمَ / قَدَمَيْهَا الرِّمَانُ أَضَاءُوا	Expressive	Praising: Using the metaphor of "walking star" to express deep admiration for the role of people as a source of light and resilience in difficult times.
3	قَدْ عَلَا فِي شَرْقِي مَا / الْجَزِيرَةَ صَوْتِي بِي الْمَالِ لَا وَلَا الْأَسْمَاءُ	Assertive & Commissive	Stating Motive: The poet asserts that his actions (speaking out loud) are not driven by personal motives (property/name), which is implicitly a commitment to sincerity.
4	بُعَيْتِي أَمْرِكُمْ يُرِدُّ فَلَكُمْ فِيهِ / إِلَيْكُمْ بَيْعَةٌ وَبِرَاءٌ	Commissive	Committing: Declares its main purpose as a mission: to restore sovereignty to the people. This is a promise to fight for the rights of the people in democracy (bai'ah and bara'ah).
5	لَا يَحُولُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ عِنْدَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ / هَوَاكُمْ أَمْرِكُمْ وَكَلَاءُ	Assertive & Directive	Demanding Condition: Affirming that there should be no intermediary (representative) who obstructs the will of the people. Although assertive, this statement pragmatically serves as a harsh demand on the political system.
6	نُمِّ إِيَّيَ أَحْكِي حِكَايَةَ لُغَةِ اللَّهِ / قَوْمِ خُبْرُهُمْ وَالْمَاءُ	Assertive	Directing Narrative: The poet shifts his focus to declare that he will tell the stories of the people, affirming the sanctity of their lives ("the language of God is their bread and water").
7	وَحُطَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ / تَرَسِمُ شِعْرًا هَدَّبَتْهُ السَّرَّاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ	Expressive	Appreciating: Stating that the struggle of the people's life is the purest and most beautiful form of poetry, forged by the experience of joy and sorrow.
8	فَإِذَا مَا قُلْنَا / الْفَصِيدَ فَإِنَّا لِللَّيْلِ يَكْتُبُونَهُ قُرَاءُ	Assertive & Expressive	Denying Authorship: The poet states that he and his fellow poets are only readers of "poems" that were actually written by the people's struggle. This is a strong expression of humility.
9	وَإِذَا مَا سُبِلْتُ مَنْ / شَاعِرُ الْقَوْمِ غَدًا قُلْتُ أَنْتُمْ الشُّعْرَاءُ	Assertive & Expressive	Concluding Status: The peak of the illocution, where the poet unequivocally states that the people are the real poets. This act of speech is a reaffirmation of verse 8 with a high dramatic value.

10	وَأَرَى أَبْلَغَ الْقَصِيدِ أَنْتَانِي / جَمِيعًا زَمَانِنَا أَحْيَاءُ	Assertive & Expressive	Stating Judgment: The poet expresses his opinion that the greatest achievement and the most profound "poem" is the survival of the people in the midst of difficult conditions.
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Poetry Analysis:

This poem highlights moral leadership directed at the masses (al-nās). The poet reversed the structure of authority: the people were made "الأمرء" (leaders). Directive illocution arises in the form of a call to self-awareness and action. Expressiveness is seen in expressions of hope, admiration, and respect for human dignity. The commissioner was present in the poet's declaration of solidarity with the people.

Analysis verse shows that Assertive and Expressive Speech are the most dominant in this poem.

Assertive as Identity Update: The Assertive function is used strategically to change the status of an audience from "citizen" to "leader" (الأمرء) and "poet" (الشعراء). This is not just a description, but a statement that aims to instill a new political consciousness (Searle, 1976).

Expressive for Mobilization: Expressive speech acts (praise, admiration) are not used to lull, but to mobilize the audience's spirit. By glorifying their struggle (Verses 2, 7), the poet reinforces the belief that they deserve to reclaim power (Verse 4).

Commissions as Moral Commitments: The presence of Commissioners (Verse 4) shows that this poem is a poet's moral pledge. He tied himself to the fate of the audience, reinforcing the message that he was not an observer, but part of the movement.

Overall, the analysis of the stanza-by-stanza illocution reveals that "Ayyuhā al-Nās" is a literary work whose main pragmatic function is to empower, adore and mobilize political consciousness through a series of affirmations and expressions that have an implicit directive purpose (encouraging the audience to act in accordance with their new status).

b. Discussion

The descriptive qualitative approach shows that this poem is composed with an illocution strategy that aims at mass empowerment and mobilizing spirit.

1. Assertive and Expressive Dominance

Most of the poems are in the Assertive and Expressive categories.

Assertive Function: The poet establishes a new set of "truths" that are highly political and empowering. He does not ask for or rule (the Directive), but states who his audience is "أنتم الأمرء" and "قلت أنتم الشعراء". This statement serves as a powerful declaration of identity, which pragmatically carries more weight than just advice or command.

Expressive Function: The use of the metaphor "نجوما" (star) and the comparison of the earth/sky is a remarkable act of praise. This compliment is not personal, but aims to increase the audience's collective self-esteem.

2. Commissive Power as a Mission

The Commissive speech "يغيتي أمركم يرد إليكم" shows that the role of the poet is more than just a reader of poetry; He commits himself to the political/social mission of the audience. This creates a bond of trust between the poet and the people, making his poetry not just entertainment, but a pledge (commitment).

3. Implicit Implications of Speech

Although this poem rarely uses the explicit act of Directive speech (e.g., "Act!"), the whole series of Assertive and Expressive Directives that elevate the audience serves as a very effective Implicit Directive. In Austin's framework, Assertive and Expressive Illocution are used as indirect *speech acts* to achieve the goal of directive perlocution.

By stating, "أيها الناس أنتم الأمرء" the poet pragmatically does not merely provide information (Assertive), but implicitly instructs the audience to start acting like a leader, i.e. take back command and abandon political passivity. The main intention of this poem is to change the ontological status of the people through Language so that they feel entitled and obliged to act (perlocution), affirming that even the dominant illocution can be mastered by perlocutionary goals oriented towards consciousness and action.

4. CONCLUSION

The poem "Ayyuhā al-Nās" uses sophisticated illocutional speech strategies. Instead of lamenting or directly demanding, Tamim al-Barghouti chose to glorify and re-declare the identity of the people. Searle's

analysis of the illocution reveals that this poem is an act of re-shaping reality (through the Assertive) driven by deep respect (through the Expressive) and bound by the promise of service (through the Commissive). The end effect is the creation of a powerful Implicit Directive Speech Act, a call to action that is embedded in honor, not in compulsion. This poem affirms the function of literature as a socio-political discourse. Further research can examine aspects of readers' perlocution and reception.

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