Updating Communicative Events: From Qur'anic Discourse To Didactic Discourse

Dr. Assia Sayad

Faculty of Letters and Languages, Badji Mokhtar University – Annaba (Algeria)

Email:**assia.sayad@univ-annaba.dz**

ABSTRACT:

Our goal is to construct speech acts and develop communicative competence in the learner. The problem here is: How can a preschool child transform the values in the Quranic text into speech acts? we observed some visions that describe the teaching of the Quranic text. We concluded that literary problems must be solved in a linguistic environment based on the speech act derived from the Quranic text. To this end, we proposed some applications in an educational project aimed at constructing speech acts and performing them linguistically.

Keywords: Linguistic system; speech acts; Quranic discours; communicative competence ; Quranic schools

1. Introduction

Educational linguistic research is a directed effort aimed at solving problems that accompany the language teaching process; it aims to provide alternatives and new perspectives. It also studies reality in order to reshape it, and strives toward improving linguistic and social (al-Omrani, 2013, pp. 23-33)competence. The objective of this study is to design a linguistic-educational project in order to invest the contents of Quranic texts in constructing speech acts; in a form that aligns with the child's desire to comprehend the extent of their experiences at school. We proceed here from the hypothesis that "what children love most about school is for it to become a place where they live in reality, and from which they acquire life experience in which they find joy and meaning (Dewey, 1978, pp. 69-71)". Qualitative linguistic expressions hold a value that exceeds their quantitative value. Linguistic capacity alone is insufficient if it does not indicate the accomplished actions the child possesses; because the quality of expression depends on achieving the goal of speech (Ibrahim, 1992, p. 52). Therefore, we find it problematic that the subject of teaching Quranic texts be confined to memorization without comprehension, accomplishment, and impact.

The problem is highlighted in the following question: How can a preschool child internalize the speech acts they need? What is the method for developing communicative competence in this targeted age group?

2. Speech Act Theory:

Pragmatics focuses on investigating how language is used in contexts close to everyday life, analyzing speaker intentions, and the communicative dimensions of speech; for example, saying "I am thirsty" may mean "bring me a glass of water" (Nakhla, 2002, pp. 12-13). Meaning is thus the product of interaction between linguistic text and the situation in which it is produced; there are complex relationships that connect elements of the linguistic situation to form the primary purpose of speech production, and understanding the correct communicative goal through expectations imposed by context (Stephen, 1983, pp. 226-278).

Perhaps achieving complete understanding and reproduction represents the highest aims of pragmatic research in language, especially since discourses are filled with indirect utterances (Lang, 2012, pp. 95-97), even though direct utterances are the more common (george, 1996, pp. 40-45).

John L. Austin founded speech act theory in his work "How To Do Things With Words," according to a different perspective on language, in which language was not confined to description and reporting; rather, language became a means of performance and accomplishment, through which we perform actions that change situations in reality (Austin, 1962). Based on this premise, speech acts were classified as follows (Austin, 1962, pp. 94-118):

The Locutionary Act: The production of a sentence through the speech apparatus, encompassing phonetic representation; as in our statement: "The Qur'an is a cure." The components of the locutionary structure begin with minimal phonetic units, then phonetic segments, then the complete utterance unit: "The Qur'an is a cure."

The Illocutionary Act: The purpose of received speech becomes apparent; as in our statement: "The Qur'an is a cure"; the purpose of informing the recipient of this news is to urge them to engage in reading the Qur'an and benefit from it. This is what the listener accomplishes if they succeed in understanding the purpose of receiving the information.

The Perlocutionary Act: This is represented in the effect of speech on the recipient, and can be measured by the degree of change in behavior. Our statement: "The Qur'an is a cure," may exert such influence on the recipient as to achieve persuasion, which makes the Qur'an their refuge at all times, convinced that it contains complete healing.

John Austin emphasized the completeness of context for the occurrence of speech acts, as completeness is the path to achieving understanding that leads to accomplishment and effect; it is the source of power in producing the expected speech acts. Austin's perspective shifted the focus of attention from attempting to know the predicates of speech as meanings, to knowing speech's capacity to impel the recipient to action forcefully within a specific, realistic contextual framework. From this perspective, language through a set of speech acts is able to reconstruct reality in its various components (Austin, 1962).

3. From Linguistic Competence to Communicative Competence

Noam Chomsky presented the model of linguistic competence, which was defined as innate knowledge of the components of language grammar, such as syntax, morphology, and semantics, among others. Through this, an individual is capable of producing an infinite number of sentences they have never heard before. Chomsky's focus here on the general grammatical structure of human language is evident, within a nativist perspective dominated by abstract conceptualization that presents language in fixed forms isolated from its function and various uses (Chomsky, 1986, pp. 1-14). Therefore, "linguistic competence" developed based on critical perspectives; which presented radical changes.

Dell Hymes added to the previous components the social component, making language a tool of interaction in a living environment (Midas, 2019, pp. 11-12), as it is insufficient to know the structures of speech alone; rather, one must understand the following considerations: When do I speak? How do I speak? Where do I speak? With whom do I speak? What is the role of each speaker?; for example, our statement: "There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God" gains higher acceptability if the recipient is Muslim.

Accordingly, the model that Hymes presented builds the intended communication through achieving alignment between language and context, a model summarized in the term "Speaking"; and this comprises the following components: setting (place and time), participants, ends (purposes), act sequence (ordered events), key (tone or manner), instrumentalities (linguistic means), norms (of interaction and interpretation), and genre (ray, 2011, p. 35) (type of discourse). From this perspective, linguistic thought turned toward the alternative: "communicative competence," which gave the social factor the largest space in the construction of language and understanding its purposes and principles of use. (Hymes, 1972, pp. 269-293)

4. Levels of Action and the Formation of Communicative Events

Action is a series of actions that form an impactful event, and has several levels; these are:

Visible Action and Implicit Action: A system of transformations embodied in the actions of characters, based on which psychological and moral modifications occur or the expected effect takes place.

Action Organized in a Series of Actions: That is, investigating the questions: How was the action carried out? What is its structure? How were actions gathered and combined in a particular situation?

Action as a Controlling Force in Event Balance: It is the transformative and vital element through which the process of transition from one state to another occurs logically and temporally (Pavis, 2015, pp. 63-64).

Pragmatics sees in dialogue "performative actions and a play around assumptions and the implicit concept of conversation, as if it is, in short, a way of behaving that has an effect on people through the use of speech" (Pavis, 2015, p. 68). Discourse is a "way of operating" or "way of behaving," because speech means "action" or "conduct," and it is a "center of presence"; thus "spoke" means "acted," and it substitutes for it in practical applications (Pavis, 2015, p. 66). Based on this reality is Austin's question: "In what sense can saying something become an action (Malook, 2021, p. 90)?"

5. Building Communicative Events: From Quranic Discourse to Educational Discourse

Quranic discourse, from a pragmatic perspective, encompasses both making a statement and performing an action, and not as the general public has directed it within the framework of "the descriptive fallacy" toward the force of description alone; considering it the speech of God the truthful which admits no falsehood, which has deprived them of the gains of accomplishment and the effects that follow it in the external world. Therefore, this required beginning in building speech acts from Quranic discourse from the very beginning of initial learning, to connect the locutionary structure, the illocutionary structure, and the perlocutionary structure—this is the extent and optimal goal of the Quranic text, without which its benefit is incomplete (Nakhla, 2002, pp. 42-43). We chose the linguistic context of Surah "Al-Fatihah" as a model of Quranic discourse through which we will propose an educational project by which we build a set of speech acts in a linguistic context that serves the child in their early learning stage. Our perspective on this Quranic discourse unit will be a preliminary one with which we explore the content and orientations of the surah; in order to invest it in building educational projects aimed at constructing communicative events that intersect with some contents of this discourse unit. Surah Al-Fatihah contains the following seven verses:

[1]بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. [1]

[2]ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ

[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds [2]

[3]الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, [3]

[4]مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. [4]

[5]إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

It Is You We Worship And You We Ask For Help. [5]

[6]اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us to the straight path [6]

[7]صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray [7]

After textual analysis, we found a small group of the linguistic element "verbs" that shaped and formulated the discourse linguistically, compared with the linguistic element "pronouns," which are: (we worshipwe seek helpguide usYou have bestowed), while apparent nouns were represented in: (praiseAllahLord of the worldsthe Most Compassionate, the Most MercifulMaster of the Day of Judgmentthe Straight Paththose who have earned angerthose who are astray).

We proceeded from this linguistic system in order to build speech acts in the proposal of a "language learning project" according to the general intent in the discourse unit "Al-Fatihah" as a complete linguistic sample, which serves as a linguistic event occurring temporally in the present, whereas the system of language is outside time (Ricoeur, 2001, pp. 79-80). In other words, "the Quranic text says something, and ensures communication or transmission, and stimulates thought, regardless of the general situation of discourse, this situation in which the reader is positioned" (Arkoun, p. 115), and this linguistic project is embodied as follows:

📁 **Project "Educational Theatrical Performance"**(Abd al-Hadi, pp. 143-144)

Its subject is "Praise and Gratitude"; it takes place in a hypothetical linguistic communicative context; such as expressive acts: (I acknowledge, I thank, I am grateful); which perform the function of linguistic representation of a state occurring outside time, which is "bestowed" in the past tense, while requiring the occurrence of the expected action "gratitude" to follow in the present tense. The distinguishing differences between similar speech acts must also appear, such as "I praise" and "I thank," and between the pattern of speech act that takes varied forms according to different contexts and according to the choices of individuals. The theatrical context and representation of situations make the child perform what must be performed linguistically in a manner appropriate to the situation. Among models of utterances that lead to different actions, we mention: "I was pleased by your standing by my side" (gratitude for support), and "I thank you for your time" (gratitude for attention), and "I am grateful for your presence" (gratitude for bringing me joy), and "I praise God for our meeting" (gratitude to God), and "Your cooperation is kind of you" (gratitude for effort), and "I acknowledge your role" (gratitude for help). (Searle, 2015, pp. 52-53)

📁 **Project "Volunteer Campaign"**

Such as organizing a nursing home; and includes speech acts in a context characterized by procedurality; such as: I help, I support, I show mercy, I respect, I show affection, I love,... and others. Where they all occur in an interconnected linguistic pattern that resulted from the transformation of the noun "the Merciful" into similar verbs. The accomplishment of these acts entails a set of mental states that require performing the action with growth in the communicative event; such as: "I arrange the breakfast table at the nursing home" contains the act "I arrange," in addition to events such as "I help," "I cheer someone," "I show mercy to the helpless," "I gladden a heart," "I plant hope," and other communicative events, which prove that the illocutionary speech act is a complex act, considering that some subsequent events may be purposes or results of acts considered among the primary premises of a series of illocutionary acts. (Dijk, 2000, p. 236)

📁 **Project "Designing a Personal Task Schedule"**

Where the learner connects with fixed commitments to themselves, and entails speech acts in the manner of present tense verbs: (I worship, I purify myself, I supplicate, I pray, I remember), which are speech acts connected to whom we must direct ourselves with the act of worship and asking for help, which appeared in "Al-Fatihah" in the separate pronoun "You alone." The speech acts in the "personal task schedule" require textual coherence when performed; for the occurrence of an act requires fulfilling its purpose in itself; therefore the act "I purify myself" requires completing its performance to move to the subsequent act that in turn awaits fulfilling itself, such as "I pray"; this act is not a result of the act "I purify myself" but rather is texturally coherent with it. In the sequence "I remember God," we find another separation from the previous act, yet we find with it a textual connection necessitated by the process of performing coherent acts. For he who "prays" does not "steal," and he who "remembers God" does not "become angry"; this coherence stems from the unity of purposes with the difference of goals. In the educational project, we find preparation for the learning child when beginning with some preliminary acts, which makes them capable

of continuing performance in their actual daily life within a series of new illocutionary acts with shared intent. (Dijk, 2000, p. 237)

📂 **Project "Mind Map"**

It contains the fixed pillars in Islam, which are: (I testify, I pray, I give alms, I fast, I pilgrimage). It requires procedural clarifications that help improve the mental representation of these speech acts, to move them from the sphere of speech act to performative action. Any act we perform is a result of prior mental representation of it, and this representation may be reflected in a "successful act" or an "unsuccessful act"; if the successful act occurs, we say the performative action has indeed occurred. An example of this: the act "I fast" has a mental representation, which is "abstaining from food and drink from the break of dawn to sunset," and the act may occur but its occurrence is "unsuccessful" when the faster exceeds their limits with others through wrongdoing. The act "I fast" occurs as an event, but it is an unsuccessful event; because it has not been transformed into performative action. If success is achieved in building partial effects, we arrive at building the overall purpose, which is "the Straight Path." Thus, performative action requires a construction plan consisting of a set of composite acts in which the success of the act in producing the expected effect is required. (Dijk, 2000, pp. 239-240)

📂 **Project "Composing a Song"**

It contains characteristics of a class of people, which is the class of "the believing youth," precisely defined in the linguistic structures in Surah Al-Fatihah, (Arkoun, p. 127) and includes some speech acts such as: (I draw near, I hold fast, I stand up, I desire) and others. It targets correct locutionary act performance and distinguishing between speech act and other language elements. Building communicative events alongside fundamental speech acts requires a set of auxiliary speech acts (Dijk, 2000, pp. 240-241), performed by a participating party, such as their linguistic performance: "O you" (act of address), "Repeat" (act of command), "Do not despair" (act of prohibition), and other linguistic aids.

📂 **Project "Telephone Conversation"**

It focuses on a different class of people who have been precisely defined in the definite expression "those who have earned anger" and "those who are astray," which is the class of (the disobedient youth) (Arkoun, p. 127). In it we build exhortatory speech acts directed at the group that stands outside the Straight Path, proceeding from the principle that nominal construction equals verbal construction (Arkoun, p. 132), such as: (I will avoid, I will abandon, I will forsake, I will distance myself). It requires arousing the element of "imagination" in accordance with the intended communicative event, in order to reshape reality according to the highest levels of action. (Ricoeur, 2001, pp. 170-173)

The process of building a section on "telephone conversation" requires complex textual sequences, such as:

⚘ "Muhammad is at the hospital." **(Act of Event)**
⚘ "Why is he at the hospital?" **(Act of Observation)**
⚘ "Because he is ill." **(Act of Perception)**
⚘ "What is wrong with him?" **(Act of Understanding)**
⚘ "A motorcycle hit him; because he did not obey his mother and went to the street after sunset."
(Preparation of Act Force)
⚘ "Therefore, I will abandon playing outside the house at late hours." **(Perlocutionary Act)**

Knowledge of the "event" led to the act of "observing the situation," knowledge of the cause led to the act of "seeking perception," knowledge of the reason led to the act of "seeking understanding," and understanding the situation led to "reshaping actions" so that the overall purpose finally occurs, which is the "act of abandonment." In the dialogue, each act influences the recipient by producing successive speech acts, and the overall purpose is reaching the goal of the "speech act". (Dijk, 2000, pp. 297-298)

Following these educational linguistic projects, the learner comes to perform the perlocutionary act that combines communicative competence with their Creator by connecting it to the overall event "I praise Him"; which came after a series of illocutionary acts such as: "I am grateful for blessings," "I worship God," "I show mercy to the weak," "I adhere to the Straight Path," and "I distance myself from error." Considering that these events came as a result of divine guidance, which makes "praise" its natural result. Our saying "All praise is due to God" is a magnificent and noble statement; therefore, a reasonable person must honor this statement such that they only mention it in response to religious blessings, not worldly blessings. Rather, it should only be mentioned when achieving blessings of faith. Then the blessings of faith are of two types: actions of the limbs and actions of the heart (Arkoun, p. 140), and the second type is more noble. "Praise" falls within the noble work that must be pursued through a series of illocutionary acts; where the "act of the heart" is considered its culmination.

6. Conclusion

No one denies that the contemporary linguistic project is a far-reaching project with complex structure (Beaugrande, 1998, p. 559). It becomes clear through this educational conception that the nature of linguistic communication through components of Quranic (al-Shibili, 2023, pp. 87-96) discourse for the purpose of building desired speech acts has taken two paths: the first comprises direct discourse units represented in building acts through direct communicative events; such as: pray, abandon, show mercy, do not approach, do you disobey? O heedless one! They were represented in forms of command, prohibition, interrogation, and others. The second comprises indirect discourse units represented in building speech acts through a suggestive communication medium; such as stories, artistic theatrical performances, songs, conversations... and others. Among examples of speech acts: I will praise God, I will worship God, I will seek God's help, I will adhere to the Straight Path, I will draw near to the righteous, I will distance myself from the disobedient... and so forth.

We concluded that Quranic discourse units must not be pronounced in a pressuring or unclear pragmatic linguistic system, as they are discourse units employed to build mental representations in the recipient, develop linguistic communicative competence, and then build future linguistic acts in the reality of everyday life at a later time. (Beaugrande, 1998, p. 557)

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