

PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF UNITS EXPRESSING CURSES

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Annotation.

This article gives information about main focus of pragmatics, levels of speech acts such as declaratives, commissives, expressives, representatives and directives and linguists views about these terms. Besides, differences between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts are explained after which some information is presented about curse words with examples extracted from Uzbek literary works and phraseological units defining anathema in English.

Key words: anathema, speech acts, pragmatics, levels, locution, illocution, perlocution, curse words, etymology, origin, meaning.

Pragmatics in linguistics has already been an important branch of investigation and studying literary and intended meanings of utterances always draws scientists` attention, speech acts theory highlights problems related to meaning of utterances however, we are left with several unanswered questions yet.

According to J. Cuttings (2002), pragmatics focuses on studying firstly the meaning of words in context, factors contributing to communication, time and place. The speaker`s success depends on how the listener understands and interprets the message. The next aspect of pragmatics is relevance investigating how utterances are unified meaningfully, the term is referred as coherence in discourse analysis, cohesion also plays an important role in connecting words in a text. Relevance theory conducts an investigation whether texts are logically made or not. Finally, function is the subject of survey in pragmatics, which is concerned about speaker`s short-term purposes while communicating and long-term aims



while interacting verbally. Such units are considered as speech acts depicting speaker`s intentions by using specific utterances such as promise, apologies, threaten, swear, and others.

Austin writes that speech acts perform an action when a person says something and three levels are categorized as locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts. In locution a person says something, specific purpose of speakers like invitation, order, apology, promise are analysed in illocutionary level, the effect of utterances on listener is studied in perlocutionary analysis, this is the force making a hearer do something after he/she interprets the meaning of the utterance.

Another well-distinguished linguist Searle divides speech acts in macro-classes as declarations, representatives, commissives, directives and expressives.

Utterances having power to change the world are included in declarations, for example, in the church a priest announces partners as a husband and wife, or the judge sentences a person to imprisonment. Representatives show that the speaker considers to be the case like “describing”, “insisting”, “predicting” and so on. Utterances describing speaker`s future action are in commissives, they mean promise, offer, threat, refusal, vows and volunteering. Directives aim at making the hearer do something, those are the words meaning commands, requests, forbids, suggestions, invitations. Units showing the speaker`s feelings such as apology, praise, congratulations and deploring are in the group of expressives.

As J. Cuttings says, there are limitations in speech acts theory where the same utterance can be in two or three macro-classes. Curse words express speaker`s feelings: hatred and can be considered as expressive, while in some cases they may commit speaker`s future action as in commissives. (3.16)

Curse words are called anathema in linguistics and as a speech act they express insulting, cursing, wishing ill, hatred and evil attitudes towards receivers.



The level of hate depends on the situation, a person or a group of people doing something wrong or unsuitable for social and cultural norms of society.

Anathem units can especially be seen in the form of slangs, informal words used in oral and everyday speech, however, curse words are also used in the Bible and Koran against heretics, devils, and people doing evil things. Writers also utilize such utterances to provide authenticity of the situation and make characters livelier and show their feelings to readers.

As I mentioned in my article “The usage and significance of anathema in society” in spite of not having strong opinion whether curse words have any influence on receivers or not, people try not to be directed to curses, whereas not everybody attempts to eliminate them in their speech. (4.37)

While observing literary works by Uzbek and English writers you can notice that there are plenty of anathemas used in different purposes and they can be categorized into following classes according their topics as follows:

1. Units in English giving the meaning “jin ursin” in Uzbek:

Damn all, the deuce (devil) and all, how (what, when, where,...) the blazes (in blazes), damn it (all), . well, I am (I’ll be) damned, by all that`s blue, what in Cain, dash it/dash it all/dash my buttons, hell’s delight, gee whiz(z) and so on.

Examples:

- What is the State doing for the Theatre? Damn all. (S.O’Casey, “The Flying Whasp”, “England”, “Say When”)
- But those attachments for old women are the deuce and all. (W.Thakeray, “Pandennis”, vol 1, ch.XXX)
- Why, what the blazes is in the wind now! Growled a deep voice. (Ch.Dickens, “Oliver Twist, ch. XIII”)
- Damn it, I love you.... (W.Thakeray, “Pandennis”, vol 2, ch.XXVII)
- Well, I’ll be damned, my watch has stopped again. (ECI)



- The black cat, by all that's blue! Cried the captain. (Fr.Marryat, "Poor Jack", Ch, XXIII)

- He didn't know what in Cain to do with it (OED)

- Mrs.Bridgeworth, Reginald's in London, and wants to come to the wedding

The General....Well, dash my buttons! (B.Shaw, "Getting married")

- You take what you said just now – a girl can't love you or something Hell's delight! Anybody who talks like that must think women only fall for wrestlers like that bloke. (A.Marshall, "This is the Grass", book 3, ch.5)

- I've been a bad woman. I want to repent! Gee Whizz, said the trader. (W.S.Maugham, "Complete Short Stories", "Rain")

The etymology of the phrase **by all that's blue** is from French euphemism "parbleu" for "Par Dieu", "Gee" in Gee Whizz abbreviation of "Jesus". (1)

2. English Phrases meaning "la`nat bo`lsin" in Uzbek:

The best of the British luck to you, wish somebody at the bottom of the sea, call down curses (from Heaven) upon somebody (somebody's head), the curse of Cain, the curse of Scotland, curses like chickens come home to roost, damn your eyes, (I'll be) damned if..., I'm a Dutchman if (unless I'm a Dutchman), curse one's stars, a plague on it

Examples:

- If you are set on this mad idea of leaving home, you better do it at once and the best of the British luck to you.

- ... She crouched at the boiler while the water ran slowly into her lading can. "I wish this boiler at the bottom of the sea", she exclaimed, wriggling her hands impatiently. (D.H. Lawrence, "Sons and Lovers", ch.5)

- He told how murderers walk'd the earth beneath the curse of Cain (OED)



- Their injustice will return upon them. Curses like chickens come home to roost. (P. Selver, "English Phraseology")

- I'll be damned if I'll go (ALD)

- "I'll have a glass of wine", said Kit, pickling up a bottle and smelling it. "Good stuff or I'm a Dutchman". (J. Lindsay, "Lost Birthright", ch,3)

- A plague on it! I've dropped my papers somewhere (DEI)

The origin of the phrase "the curse of Cain" is the Bible, referring to Adam and Eva`s son killing his own brother, while "the curse of Scotland" indicates people`s hatred towards a county under the reign of earl Stair with English policy.

(1)

3. Units meaning "to die":

Be called (gone) to one`s account, join the angels, lead apes in hell, bite the dust (the ground), die with one`s boots off, go to the (demnition) bow-wows = go to the dogs, draw one`s last breath = breathe one`s last breath, kick the bucket, check (crush/nip) in the bud, go for a Burton to somebody

Examples:

- "We have come too late", he said steenly, "whether to save or punish". Hyde is gone to his account and it only remains for us to find the body of your master" (R.L. Stevenson, "The Strange Case of Dr.Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", "The Last Night")

- I shall continue to write until the time comes to join the angels. (M. Twain, "Speeches", "Dress Reform and Copyright")

- Katharina... she is your treasure,
she must have a husband.

I must dance bare-foot on her wedding day,

And for your love to lead apes in hell. (W. Shakespeare, "The Taming of the Shrew", act II, sc.I)



- This well-worn racial theme is exploited for a whole series of meaningless assassinations with Injuns and Whites biting the dust in roughly equal quantities. (Daily Worker, February 11, 1962)

- It is all up with its handsome friend! He has gone to the demnition bow-wows. (Ch. Dickens, "Nicholas Nickleby", ch.LXIV)

- He did not talk to them, they had already been told exactly what each of them was to do, and who was to do what in case the first choice man kicked the bucket or was otherwise out. (S. Heym, "The Crusaders", book III, ch.8)

- "Barton, may I trouble you for a potato", interrupted the master of the house hoping to nip his guests story in the bud. (Ch. Dickens, "Sketches by Boz")

- There was gloom in the bar when it was realized how many of our friends had gone for a Burton during the night`s raids. (ODCIE)

According to the ancient ideology, an irony "lead the apes in hell" indicates the girl who has not married in her lifetime and she is ordered to look after monkeys in hell, "go to the demnition bow-wows" was first developed by Ch. Dickens.

There are other groups of phrases meaning "to kill", "death", "be in at the death", "devil", "very bad", "be in a difficult situation", "hate", "be rude", "another world", "hell", "dark days", "enemy", "to cause harm", "go away with you", "a bad character" and others. (1)

Such phrases can be seen in the Uzbek language as well and they be categorized as English ones. For example,

-Ha, tavqi la`natlar! Toshkanniyam olibdimi-a? (5.15)

In this example the phrase "tavqi la`natlar" is used to call down curses.

-Ha, oshingni yeyin, sen tentakni, oshginangni yeyin! deydi (onamiz) (5.43) - here an indirect anathema is used by a mother who actually does not wish evil to her son, it is just only a fixed expression in her speech, a type of weak carpeting,



“oshingni yeyin” means when a person dies, people eat something on the funeral ceremony and this hospitality is believed to help deceased person be in peace after death, it also means that I will enjoy eating something when you die, I wish your death.

*Ko'sa maddoh: “Xudoyi taolo va taborak dushmanimizni yer bilan yakson qilsin, ig`vogarlarning, fitna-fasodchilarning o`g`ziga tosh!”- “God make our enemies **bite the dust**, let intriguers and instigators swallow stones!” (2.127)*

Hoji bobo charchagan kishilarday uh tortib, supa dahanasiga o`tirdi:

- *Xayriyat, arzon qutulibman! Qani, menga javob bergil, bu hunar sendan chiqdimi?*

- *O`lib ketay!... (2.132-133)*

“O`lib ketay” – “let me die” – is used when a person denies doing something.

In conclusion, we can say without a doubt that all nations use anathem words and phrases in order either to explain their strong hatred towards people or situation or just to show their attitude towards the wrong events as they are accustomed to utilizing them in everyday speech without any special reason.

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