

APPLYING SPEECH ACT THEORY:- “MY SON THE FANATIC” PEDAGOGICAL PURPOSE

Sana Nawaz*

IqraSaeed*

SehrishIjaz*

AroojArshad*

Abstract:-

This paper applies a speech act theory on a short story my son the fanatic by HanifKurishi. It has pedagogical purpose. The main purpose of applying speech act on the story is that if the story is taught by applying the acts and classification of speech act theory by teachers then it becomes more understandable by the students instead of reading a story and translates it into the native language. We clarify that by using these instruments of speech act one can easily understand and teach any literary art or any other thing.

* Department of English, University of Sargodha, Pakistan

Introduction:-

Overview of speech act theory:-

Speech act is a technical term in linguistics and the philosophy of language. The contemporary use of the term goes to J.L Austin development of performative utterances and his history of locutionary and perlocutionary acts. Speech acts are commonly taken to include such acts like promising, ordering, greeting and congratulating. (J. L. Austin's development of performative utterances).

The action which is performed when a performative utterance is issued belongs to what Austin later calls a speech act (J.L. Austin, How To Do Things With Words, Second Edition (1976, Oxford University Press). pp40)

In speech act actions which follow the speech are our main concern. Every word from our mouth do not follows the actions. If a speech follow any action then there is a speech act if there is no action then there is no speech act. Through speech act we can change the world.

We take a common example of 'snatching a purse' if a common man ask to punish that man then nobody follow his speech so there is no speech act if these words are spoken by any Judge or a person in power then his speech follows the action so there is a speech act. A speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication and a speech act might contain just one word for example sorry to perform apology. This thing requires not only knowledge but also requires culture.

The term social act and some other theories of this type of linguistics action are to be found in the fifth of Thomas Ried essays on the active powers of human mind. There are also some solitary acts but they have a clear distinction in the social operations the expression is essential.

The term speech act used by Austin and Searl long before it also been used by Karl Buhler.

Introduction of writer:-

Hanif Kureishi (born December 5, 1954) is an English play writer, screen writer, film maker, novelist and a short story writer. The themes of his work have touched on topics of race, nationalism, immigration, and sexuality. In 2008, The Times included Kureishi in their

list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945".(The 50 greatest British writer since 1945, 5 January 2008.The Times.Retrieved on 2010-02-20.)

Kureishi started his career in the 70s as a pornography writer, under the pseudonyms Antonia French and Karim.(The New York Times, 10 August 2008.).(Interview with Hanifkurishi, The Book show, Episode 18, Sky Arts)

My Son The Fanatic:-

The story is about the conflict between father and son.Parvez is a Pakistani immigrant who is living in London with his wife and his son.He earns his money by driving a taxi.He drinks alcohol and does not pray and his son also grown up in England.He makes a training program for accounting and his father has been working hard to finance his family and provide all the things which the boy needed.When his son grow up he changed and become religious person and pray five times a day.Even he gives his things for charity. But he condemns his father's way of living.At first the father is prepared to pray together with his son.But later he hit his son. At last Parvez become violent and son says who's the fanatic now. That's an exchange of the roles.

Dimensions of Speech Act:-

In speech act we have to follow three dimensions. Through these dimensions speech act fulfills its requirements.These three dimensions are:

Locutionary Act:-

It means the actual words spoken by the speaker which the speaker want to be acted and in any novel the real utterances come under the locutionary act for example the real words spoken in the story my son the fanatic are locutionary act.

Illocutionary Act:-

If any word or sentence is spoken from the mouth then it must have some purpose behind that the purpose behind the speech is illocutionary act.When we start to read a story then first we come to know about the purpose of the story.The actual concept of illocutionary act is central to the concept of speech act.The usage of JohnR Searle speech act is often meant just to something as

the term illocutionary act which John Austin had originally introduced. Illocutionary forces also make itself strong and these forces also tell us about a statement's types.

Perlocutionary Act:-

The actual dimension of speech act is perlocutionary act which is actually the effect of speech on the listener. It is mainly the purpose against the speech. In the story there are many utterances of Bettina and Pervez are fulfill whatever they utter there is an action in the story but there are also some speeches which do not follow the actions. Speech act can change the worlds and it can change the identity of a person and it is also used in model conversation. Beside these dimension of speech act there are some classifications which are more helpful in understanding the text or sentence or any other utterance.

Classifications of speech act:-

Searl in 1975 has set up classification of speech act. (Searle, John R. (1975), "A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts")

1-Declaratives:-

Speech act that change the reality in accordance with the proposition of declaration is called declarative speech.

2-Representatives:-

Express the believes about truth of a proposition like earth is round are called representative speech.

3-Expressives:

Speech act that express the speakers attitudes, emotions, congratulations and thanks etc are expressive speech.

4-Directives:-

Speech act that cause the hearer to take a particular action, request or advice is called directive speech.

5-Commissives:-

Speech act that commit a speaker to some future action e.g promise is known as commissive speech.

We can apply all these classifications of speech act on the story. Through applying these classifications it is become easier to understand the story.

Data analysis

Short Story:-

My son the fanatic

Speech act:-

In this story the utterances of Ali are fulfilled the requirement of speech act. For example, if he said he gave up his study in accounting than he practically gave up his studies.

Locutionary act:-

The whole narration of the story comes under the umberella of locutionary act, these are the actual words spoken by the narrator. These are the pure utterances.

Like

“Surrepttiously, the father began going into his son’s bedroom. He would sit there for hours, rousing himself only tidier. The room, which was usually a tangle of clothes, books, cricket bats and video games, was becoming neat and ordered; spaces began appearing where before there had been only mass”

“Parvez began his virgilgreatfully. Now that he knew wtat the problem might be, he felt better. And surely, he figure, things couldn’t have gone too far ?”

Illocutionary act:-

The utterances in this story have some purpose. Each line has a specific meaning. The starting lines of the story reveal the depression ofParvez, it is a story of a father and a son. A father is a Pakistani immigrant and a taxi driver for twenty years.

“Surrepttiously, the father began going into his son’s bedroom. He would sit there for hours, rousing himself only tidier. The room, which was usually a tangle of clothes, books, cricket bats

and video games, was becoming neat and ordered; spaces began appearing where before there had been only mass”

He thinks why all these happening, he is disturbed by the unusual manner of Ali. In these sentences:

“Parvez had been a taxi driver for twenty years. They preferred to work at night when the roads were clearer and the money better.”

The purpose of these lines is to tell us how Parvez works for the betterment of his family specially his son, Ali. He works at night to earn more money.

The purpose of speeches in the very beginning of the story to highlight the things by seeing that Pervaiz was upset, that the Ali was getting tidier and his room which was always the tangle of things was becoming neat and clear. There is a speech,

“Pervaiz had been unable to discuss the subject of Ali with his friends.”

The purpose behind this speech is very vast. Almost all the children of the families of Parvez friends were doing the wrong deeds and Parvez always blamed their fathers on the wrong turns of their children and now he was afraid of being blamed.

All the speeches in the story carried a specific purpose which comes under the head of illocutionary act. When we deal with the illocutionary act in speech act we deal with the purposes only.

“I can't understand it! he burst out”.

In this part of speech the purpose which is hidden is very natural. Through this sentence writer want to tell us that there is some capability to bear the things when these are over filled with depression then a man cannot be able to maintain its balance same is the case with Parvez he bursts out everything.

The purpose of writer behind all these speeches was to encounters the conflicts of generation. He want to tell us about the clash of two cultures. Pervaiz was in his dreams to well settle his family in England and to adopt their culture but Ali in the passion and zeal of a friendly anti-western strain of islam. He began to turn away from his father dreams. Through Ali we can realize how bad the western society is? We can also say that there is not any sense or worth in living with western culture.

Ali simply needs a perspective in his life and he has found that one in his own religion. He starts following the strict rules of religion. Once in a hotel Parvez drink alcohol then Ali spoke,

“Don’t you know it’s wrong to drink alcohol”?

Parvez had explained that for years he had work more than ten hours a day, few enjoyments and never gone on holiday. Surely it wasn’t a crime to have a drink when he wanted one? But it is forbidden, the boy said and made a fastidious.

The delivering of these speeches have a purpose to follow the Muslim values, Ali urges his father to follow those values which belong to them. By living in a new society they lose their own moral values, their fundamental family values disturbed there family happiness. There generate an eastern and western conflict between them.

The religion has its great role in the lives of people. There were inborn values and capabilities of Islam who attracts the attention of Ali toward itself.

Illocutionary Force:-

Illocutionary forces are also used in the story. Like, at a time when Parvez burst out in front of his friends they said:

“Tell me what is happening!”

After telling them Parvez question:

“What must I do, then?”

Perlocutionary act:-

Perlocutionary act it is the response of listener. In perlocutionary act we now analyze either the utterances are acted physically or not. Is the listener acts as the speaker says or not. In this story we find speech act at some places but there are some speeches which do not follow the action.

In the story when the friend of Parvez and Bettina told him that his son start taking drugs and advise him to keep eye on him and he do the same as they said to him. Bettina asked him to observe the eyes of Ali, that if he suspected to drug addicted then there might be bloodshot, the pupil might be dilated, Ali might look tired, he could liable to sweats or sudden mood changes, and said him to notice the boy in response of this, Parvez do the same as she said, he watched the boy and sat beside him at every opportunity and looked into his eyes, when he was not at home, Parvez also inspecting his room on the advice of Bettina. Once Bettina asked him (Parvez) to search a drug type things in his room, Parvez fulfill the speech act but he never found any type of drug.

In the scene of restaurant where Ali refuses his father to drink alcohol but he still drink, these speeches are not said to be the speech acts.

When the Pervaiz's eyes filled with tears, Ali argued him to mend his ways and offer prayer but we have't saw Parvez anywhere offering the prayer. While going to home from restaurant Parvez asked Ali to why you have gave up your studies and requests him to join again and he refuses to do so, in this case also there is no speech act.

When Ali was coming from mosque in poor district, Bettina was sitting in Parvez's taxi and they passed through that town, she wished to talk Ali, Parvez turned the cab round and Ali here follows the speech of Pervazand act on it.

At the end of the story Parvez do as he said he put the prayer mat of the boy, dragged him and kick him. This action of Parvez is also following the speech act because he do as he said.

Classifications:-

1)Declarative:-

Speech act which change the world or through which position or a status of a man changes. In this story we see that speeches of Ali regarding to Islam or religion changes his world when he act upon that speeches his status is change before that he was a Muslim just by name but now he became a real Muslim.

At the end of the story when Parvez hits Ali, his this act change him from a loving father to a cruel man.

2)Representative:-

Speeches which generally describe the facts. There is a facts spoken by Ali, "The laws of Islam would rule the world; the skin of the infidel would burn off again and again; the Jews and Chrislers would be routed".

This is the facts describe by Ali.

3)Expressive:-

Expressives are the exclamatory sentences, it express the feelings. One night, sitting in the taxi office Parvez suddenly burst out and said,

"I can't understand it! Everything is going from his room."

These sentences show the feelings of Parvez, he was very worried about his son, this also showing his surprising nature. Many speeches of Ali are surprising for Parvez when both of them spent sometime together. It was a shock for Parvez when his own son asking him that he will go to hell.

“Is being told by my own son that I am going to hell!”

Expressives doesnot only express the sadness or melancholy but also happiness.

4)Directives:-

Speeches which give imperative expression like ordering, requesting and commanding. Just like in the story Ali requests to his father to offer prayer and he urges his father to leave the western civilization and come back toward Islam. He gave his father suggestion to follow the rules of Islam.

“Get in, get in!he says.”

This dialogue is utter by the Parvez to Bettina when he offered him to join him in his taxi. This shows his request in a sense because he wants to share his thoughts with her, we can also conclude it as a suggestion because Bettina was standing in the rain.

On another occasion Ali says to his father to mend his way

‘Pray’, urged Ali. ‘Pray beside me’.

Ali requested him to offer prayers he also suggested his father to pray beside him. At the end of the story there is a request of Parvez to Ali and Bettina to sit in the car.

Ali says: ‘Now let me out’.

‘Never’, Parvez replied

‘Don’t worry. I’m getting out, Bettina said

No, don’t saidParvez.

Ali sit in the car on the request of his father while Bettina throw herself out of the car.

5)Commissive:-

Speech which shows any promise or any type of claim as Parvez promised with Bettina that he suspect in the room of Ali and told her whatever he got.

“The boy explained that Parvaiz had not, infact, lived a good life. He had broken countless rules of koran”.

Ali claim him about the life of his father.

Conclusion:-

At the end we conclude that the pedagogical purpose of study can be fulfill through studying any literary art by applying speech act. By applying speech act, we can easily understand the deep meanings of the text and also the purpose behind that text. If we just translate the literary art then it is not sufficient specifically for the student of literature.

References:-

“Die Axiomatik der Sprachwissens-Chaften”. *Kant-Studien* 38(1933)43, where he discuss a *theorie der speech haondlungen*.

[http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellibst/il23,html1-2](http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellibst/il23/html1-2)

John Langshaw Austin: *How to do thingswith words*. Cambridge(Mass) 1962- Paperback:Harvard, Uni Press, 2nd edition,2005,ISBN0-674-41152-8

John Searle(1975),*speec act*, Cambridge uni press 1969,ISBN0-521-09626-X

John Searle,A *taxonomy of acts,icGunderson,k(ed),Lang,Mind and knowledge*, (Minneapolis studies in the philosophy of sci,vol.7), Uni of Minneapolis press, P.344-69

Jarrett Brock *an introduction to Peiree’s theory of speech act* “in *Transaction of the Charles S.Peirce society*,17(1981) 319-326”

Karl Schuhmann and Barry Smith “*Element of speech act theory in the work of Thomas Reid*”

Mulligam,K.Promising *and other acts-Their constituents and structure in Mulligam,K.editor Speech act and SacheverhaltReinch and the foundations of Realist Phenomenology.NijhoffDordecht/Boston/Lameastor for 1987,Quote from Reid 1969,437438 Speech act theory to model conversation for automated classification and Retrieval.*

Sprachtheorie(Jena:Fischer,1934)where he uses Sprechh and lund and “Theorie der Sprechakte.”