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## A Pragmatic Analysis of Acceptance in English Sermons

Maryam Hashim Tahreer<sup>1</sup>, Asst. Prof. Lihadh A. Mubarak<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

*The current study investigates the speech acts and the types of acceptance in English sermon. The current study aims to determine the acceptance types used in English sermons. It also tries to identify the most common types of speech acts used in the sermons. To achieve the study's aims, there are some texts taken from English sermons to be the current study's data. The data were analyzed following a model designed by the researchers. At the end of the study, it was found that the representative speech act was the most dominant one. It was also found that social and conditional types of acceptance are used in the English sermons.*

**Key words:** *Speech act theory, Searle's Speech Acts Classification, Acceptance, Types of acceptance.*

### **Pragmatics**

Understanding what people mean in a specific situation and how the circumstances affect their communication is the goal of pragmatics, which is the study of contextual meaning. (Yule,1996,3)

#### **1- Speech Act Theory**

According to Yule (1996:48), "speech act" refers to actions carried out via utterance. Therefore, individuals do things in words that are comparable to the activities that they perform physically. There are a few different categories of speech acts. The researcher uses the classifications of speech acts based on Searle's beliefs of speech acts.

#### **2-Searle's Speech Acts Classification**

Speech acts are divided by Searle (1969) into five major categories. Representatives, Directives, Expressives, Commisives, Declarations. The researcher will use this categorization to analyze the selected data as follows:

##### 1-Declarations

Searl(1969)" Declarations are kinds of speech acts, which change the world via their utterance". The acts of declaratives are" agreeing, betting, blessing, christening, confirming, cursing, announcing, rejecting, dismissing, naming, and resigning". For example, "I met him yesterday." In this case, the speaker tells the listener that he/she met him yesterday and means it literally.

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<sup>1</sup> MA Candidate, University of Babylon, College of Education for Human Sciences, Department of English  
Email: [maryam.tahreer.humh27@student.uobabylon.edu.iq](mailto:maryam.tahreer.humh27@student.uobabylon.edu.iq)

<sup>2</sup> (PhD).University of Babylon, College of Education for Human Sciences, Department of English  
Email: [hum.lihadh.abdula@uobabylon.edu.iq](mailto:hum.lihadh.abdula@uobabylon.edu.iq)

## 2- Representatives

Searl(1969)"*Representatives* are kinds of speech acts, which state what the speaker believes to be the case or not". This type includes" arguing, asserting, bragging, claiming, complaining, criticizing, denying, describing, informing, demanding, reporting, suggesting, swearing, and saying", "I met him yesterday." In this case, the speaker informs by telling the listener that he or she met someone yesterday.

## 3-Expressive

Expressives are ways of speaking that show how people feel. The acts are "apologizing, complimenting, consoling, congratulating, criticizing, blaming, complaining, deploring, praising, regretting, thanks, etc". For example, "I like your style."By saying so, the speaker shows that he or she likes how the listener talks.

## Directives 4-

Directives are a type of speech act that people use to tell someone else to do something. The acts are ordering, demanding, asking, and suggesting. For instance, "Could you pass me the salt?" In this line, the speaker asks the hearer to give him the salt.

## Commissives 5-

Commissives are speech acts that people use to promise to do something in the future. The actions are "committing, guaranteeing, giving, promising, refusing, threatening, volunteering, vowing, etc". For instance, "I will be back at 2 o'clock." In the act of commissives, the speaker promises the listener that he or she will be back at 2 p.m.

## 3-Acceptance

Acceptance is defined by Marvin(2001) as" an express act or implication via action that exhibits acquiescence to the terms of an offer in a way requested or needed by the offer for there to be created a legally binding contract", The performance of a particular act to exercise the power that was granted by request. When someone accepts something that has been offered to them or given to them by another, they act in a way that displays their intent to keep it and carry out the behavior that has been suggested by the offer.

## 4-Types of Acceptance

### 1-Self –Acceptance

An agreement with oneself to respect, validate, and support oneself in one's current state is necessary for self-acceptance. To accept yourself, you must stop rejecting who you are. Rejection is harmful to one's physical and mental well-being. Feelings of isolation, loneliness, and rejection that last for an extended period of time tend to coincide with a decline in one's physical health.Goff(2010)

### 2-Social-Acceptance

Tolerating and accepting other people's unique characteristics and perspectives is one way to conceptualize what it means to be socially accepted. According to the findings, people with higher self-acceptance levels also have an easier time accepting others. Having a buddy who accepts you and who is there for you when you need support are both things that can be beneficial to your mental health and give you a good sense of who you are. Wüstenhagen.,et al (2007)

### 3- Conditional –Acceptance

When two parties are required to accept the terms of a contract, the terms of the contract can be amended or modified to be satisfactory to both parties. An individual has been offered an offer, which they are willing to accept, provided that certain modifications are made to the deal's conditions. The term for this kind of acceptance is conditional acceptance, also known as qualified acceptance. Richards(1995)

### 4-Expressed Acceptance

Expressed acceptance refers to clearly and overtly accepting the existing facts. Take, for example, the practice of formally and expressly accepting an offer. They consent to the terms in their current form without any changes. Grover.,et al(2012).

### 5-Implied Acceptance

Through one's actions, it is clear that they intend to abide by the conditions outlined in the statement. Acceptance can be demonstrated through any behavior that gives the impression that a person supports the proposed agreement. When a customer selects an item from a store department, pays the cashier for it, and says, "I accept the offer to sell me the item for the amount that is listed on the price tag," the customer is indicating that they accept the offer to sell them the item for the amount that is listed on the price tag. Bowerman( 1973).

## 5-Methodology

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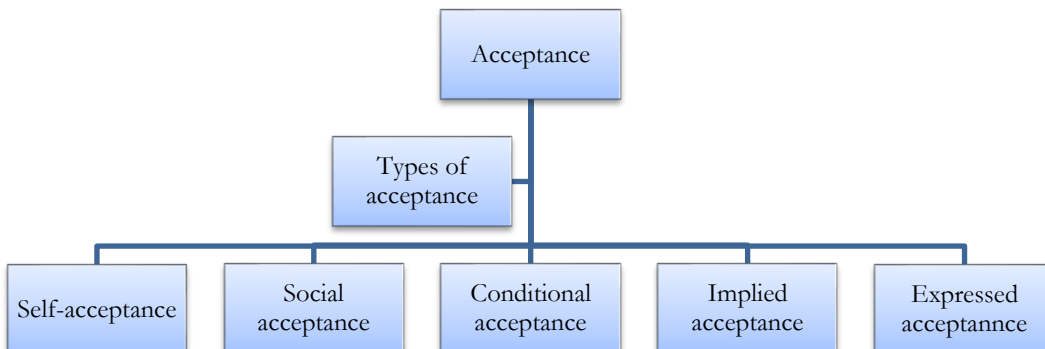
This part is concerned with data collection, the model of analysis, the analysis of the English data, and the analysis of the Arabic data.

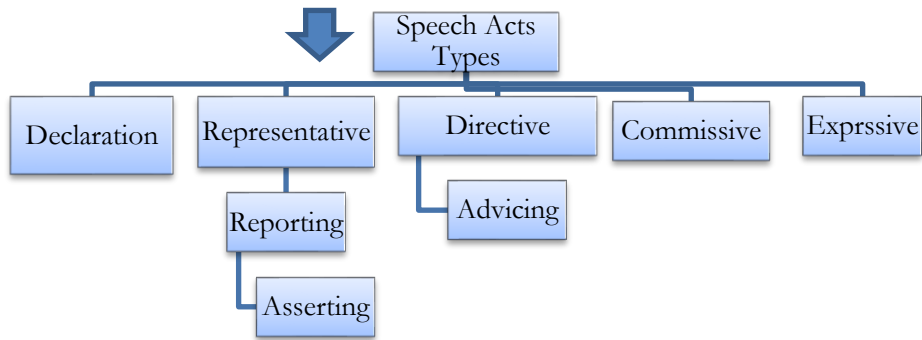
### 5-1data Collection

The present study's data consist of texts taken from English sermon and the sermons are taken from the internet.

### 5-2 Model of the Analysis

A model is designed based on the Searle model of speech acts (1969), furthermore, the model covers the types of acceptance, namely: self-acceptance, social acceptance, conditional acceptance, expressive acceptance, and implied acceptance, which is induced in the model (Goff, 2010; Richard, 1995; Grove et al. (2012); and Bowerman, 1973).





### Text 1

*"Collazo says that the Gospel of Matthew puts it this way: "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matt.7:3 NIV). Scripture warns us about being quick to judge others in light of our own opinions and closed off ways."*

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael L. Gregg

Date:9/13/20

Passage: Romans 14:1-12

<http://royallane.org/sermons/a-spirit-of-acceptance/>

### Speech Acts

#### Representative (Reporting)

The representative speech act is used here. The preacher reports what is being written in the scripture, " "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your eye?". He carries the words of the scripture and explains them to the people to make them understand. According to the scripture, people should accept other people's beliefs and opinions, even if they differ from theirs.

### Type of Acceptance

#### Social Acceptance

The text explains and clarifies how social acceptance or acceptance of others is essential and is even referred to in the Bible, as explained by the preacher in the extract above "All people are accepted at the table, and even more than that, maybe we need to get up from our tables and join and sit at tables of folks in the world who are unlike us and experience the world differently". The Bible urges us to accept others even if their opinions and beliefs differ from ours and try to understand and respect their beliefs.

### Text 2

*"God's acceptance is the foundation of our acceptance, central to the gospel and Jesus' mission. Judgment Day is about our standing with God, not our destination. Jesus' words, "Depart from Me, I never knew you," symbolize the eternal rejection from God, the greatest torment of hell".*

Speaker: Allen Snapp.

September 24, 2017

Series: Life Together in Community

Topic: Church Life Passage: Romans 14:1–12, Romans 15:7

<https://www.gracecorner.org/sermons/sermon/2017-09-24/an-atmosphere-of-acceptance>

## A-Speech Acts

### Representative(Asserting speech act)

The writer acknowledges that acceptance of each other or our acceptance is based on God's acceptance of us. The question is whether God will accept or reject us, which is unrelated to the Day of Judgment. Where will we go, Heaven or Hell?

The text makes it clear that our acceptance of each other, or our acceptance in the absolute, is conditional on God's acceptance of us, so that is a conditional acceptance. If God accepts us, we are the winners and will enter heaven; if God rejects us, we will perish and enter hell. Therefore, our acceptance is conditional on God's acceptance of us. God's acceptance means accepting our actions in our lives, and these actions must be sincere for the sake of God. Moreover, God is most merciful to His servants, and He also forgives our sins, even if they are significant, on the condition that we repent to Him sincerely.

### Text 3

*"Jesus got us accepted by God and this acceptance gets us access to all that the Father. Ephesians 1:3-7 - 3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ."*

The speaker: Marvin Cherry on

The date: Nov 24, 2015

Denomination: Church Of Go

<https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/you-are-accepted-marvin-cherry-sermon-on-accepted-in-christ-198232>

## A-Speech Act

### Representative (Asserting speech act)

The speaker asserts and insists that accepting God means accepting Christ and exaggerates by insisting and explaining that Christ is the way to God and that appearance, thinking, or good deeds do not matter; all that matters is faith in Jesus.

### E-Type of Acceptance

Christian people believe that Jesus is the way to God. They believe it is a fixed condition and an item that God has set for Him to accept us. Therefore, the speaker says, (Praise be to God that we are from God's family because we believe in Jesus). This is implied acceptance, which means acceptance of something while knowing its conditions implicitly.

### Text 4

*"The CEV translates it, "God treats everyone alike. He accepts people because they have faith in Jesus Christ." Acceptance in the face of holy God belongs to all who believe in Jesus Christ. The present tense suggests a*

*continuing reliance on Christ rather than a momentary acceptance of His work on our behalf. To experience the spirit of acceptance you must continue to believe in Jesus as your agent of acceptance."*

The speaker: John 1:12, John 8:44, Romans 3:21-31

Sermon Topics: Assurance Of Salvation

<https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/god-s-way-of-accepting-people-bruce-willis-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-114746?page=2&wc=800>

## A-Speech Act Theory

Directive(advising speech act)

The preacher tries to advise people to believe in Jesus and continue to believe in him because he is the agent of your acceptance of God and also to be righteous. The only way to be accepted by God is to be righteous.

## E- Type of Acceptance

Here, acceptance is conditional. The speaker says that God treats everyone equally and that He accepts people for the reason of their faith in Christ and their continued faith in Jesus instead of temporary faith, and also that you must become righteous in order to be accepted by God, so God's acceptance is conditional on faith in Jesus and also that you are righteous.

1- According to Table, the most used type was representative in percentage 75%, followed by directive in percentage 25%. The speeches of the preachers were all inspired by the Bible or religious stories, and also about things they believed to be accurate and from the Bible, so it was representative at most.

**Table (1)** Result of the Type of Speech Acts in the English Sermons

Percentages%	Frequency	Type of speech acts
0%	0	Declaration
75%	3	Representative
0%	0	Expressive
25%	1	Directive
0%	0	Commissive
100%	4	Total

2- Several types of acceptance were present in the texts, including conditional, social, and implied acceptance. The results also showed that the most common type is social acceptance in percentage 50%, conditional acceptance in percentage 25%, and implied acceptance in percentage 25%. English preachers explained the types of acceptance that were most important and used in their religion. Accepting other people is very important in their religion, as is conditional acceptance. God's acceptance of us depends on many things, including believing in Jesus.

**Table (2)** Result of the Types of Acceptance in the English Sermons

Percentages%	Frequency	Type of the acceptance
0%	0	Self-acceptance
25%	1	Social acceptance
50%	2	Conditional acceptance
0%	0	Expressed acceptance
25%	1	Implied acceptance
100%	4	Total

## Conclusion

1-In the English sermon, the social type of acceptance is used. The sermon focuses on the social acceptance, and explains and clarifies how social acceptance or acceptance of others is essential and is even referred to in the Bible. The Bible urges us to accept others even if their opinions and beliefs differ from ours and try to understand and respect their beliefs. The sermon, in general, focuses on the importance of accepting each other and accepting differences in us, and thus this leads to God's acceptance of us.

2-In the English sermon, the preacher used a representative speech at most. He believes his words are correct and closer to the truth because he has evidence for them: the Bible, stories, etc.

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