

A Study of the Speech Act of Islamic Awakening Discourse in the Poetry of Ahmad bin Hilal al-‘Abri in Light of Searle's Pragmatic Theory

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Introduction

In recent decades, the study of language within its context, meaning, and communicative intention has become a cornerstone of text analysis. Pragmatics asserts that language is not merely a formal structure but a social, meaning-oriented action employed in real-life situations. One of the foundational theories in this field is Speech Act Theory, first introduced by John Austin and later systematized by John Searle. Searle classified illocutionary acts into five main categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. He demonstrated that language is a means of performing actions such as promising, warning, and expressing emotions. The Islamic Awakening refers to the intellectual and social transformations of Muslims over the past two centuries, rooted in adherence to the fundamentals of Islam. The discourse of Islamic Awakening is one of the most significant ideological movements in West Asia, having established itself as a challenging force by offering alternatives to hegemonic discourses. This discourse has emerged powerfully in literature, which has always been a tool for influencing individuals. Ahmad bin Hilal al-‘Abri is a prominent figure in contemporary Omani poetry and a pioneer of resistance and awakening poetry. In his poetry, the word becomes a linguistic action through which the poet reveals truth, cries out against suffering, and awakens the collective conscience. This study seeks to answer: what is the frequency and function of speech acts in al-‘Abri's poetry.

Methodology

The present research adopts a descriptive-analytical method. The data consists of selected excerpts from Ahmad bin Hilal al-‘Abri's poetry collection *Fi Adna al-Qalb* (2020), focusing on the theme of Islamic Awakening. Excerpts were chosen through purposive sampling. Each utterance or speech segment is treated as an independent semantic unit. The type of speech act is identified and explained based on Searle's five-fold classification. Assertives commit the speaker to the truth of a proposition and include stating, describing, and reporting. Directives attempt to get the hearer to do something and include commanding, warning, and urging. Commissives commit the speaker to a future action and include promising, swearing, and vowing. Expressives express the speaker's psychological state and include praising, lamenting, and thanking. Declarations bring about a change in reality by the utterance itself and include declaring and condemning. The analysis considers both the linguistic context (co-text) and the broader socio-political context of the Islamic Awakening discourse, including references to the suffering of the Palestinian people and the call for Muslim unity. Frequency of each speech act type was calculated, and qualitative analysis was performed to understand how each type functions within the poetic discourse.

Results and Discussion

The analysis revealed that assertives are the most frequent speech acts, appearing predominantly as reports of political realities, descriptions of the Muslim nation's suffering, and representations of the pain of Gaza. These function as documentation and legitimation of resistance. Directives are the second most frequent, having a rhetorical and mobilizing nature. Through imperatives and vocatives, the poet calls the Muslim nation to unity, jihad, and return to faith. Expressives convey inner states and collective emotions such as anger, sorrow, mourning, and pride. The frequent use of present-tense verbs conveys continuity of pain and resistance. Commissives, though statistically less frequent, are ideologically significant. Through oaths and vows, the poet commits himself to continuing resistance and preserving the nation's dignity. Declarations play a decisive role in establishing new realities; the poet announces victory, awakening, or martyrdom, thereby transforming language into a tool for creating social reality. Overall, al-'Abri's poetry contains a balanced combination of these five speech acts. The findings also confirm that speech acts are embedded in rich rhetorical and metaphorical structures, allowing meaning to ascend from description to performance and actively engaging the audience in the process of awakening.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Ahmad bin Hilal al-'Abri's poetic language possesses a performative and strategic function in service of the Islamic Awakening. Based on John Searle's speech act theory, the analysis demonstrates that his poetry is not a passive reflection of political or religious ideas but an active intervention in the socio-political reality of the Muslim world. Specifically, assertives construct a shared reality of suffering and divine promise. Directives mobilize the reader toward resistance and spiritual vigilance. Expressives shape communal emotions, elevating grief into honor. Commissives bind the poet and community to future action and loyalty. Declarations redefine reality, turning loss into meaning and struggle into victory. The seamless integration of speech acts with rhetorical and metaphorical devices enhances the perlocutionary effect, making the poetry a powerful tool for collective awakening. Al-'Abri's poetry successfully transforms words into actions, awakening sleeping consciences, fortifying collective identity, and advancing the cause of justice in the name of Islamic values. This research contributes to the field of Islamic Awakening studies by offering a systematic, linguistically grounded model for analyzing committed poetry. It also invites further cross-cultural comparisons between Arab, Persian, and other resistance poetries through the lens of pragmatics.

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