

A PRAGMA-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF ECCLESIASTES 12:1

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Abstract

The study presents the pragma-stylistic analysis of Ecclesiastes chapter 12 verse 1. The aim of the study is to find out the graphological tools used in Ecclesiastes chapter 12 verse 1 and the objective is to find out the speech act of the Bible verse. The graphological tools that were used in the Bible verse include; the use of capitalization, punctuation marks, and repetition of words. Other stylistic instruments used in the texts were pronouns, reference and conjunctions. Speech acts were used to bring out the meaning of the text which shows that the Bible verse has both declarative and directive act. The study has helped in shedding light to the various graphological tools that are being used in writing a literary text and also with the study of pragmatics and stylistics, the intended meaning and the style used in writing a literary text or Bible verse can be examined. Further studies are recommended in the study of pragma-stylistics analysis of Bible text or verse.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Stylistics, Speech Act, Solomon and Graphology

Introduction

Language is a medium of communication. Each speech community has a specific language for mutual intelligibility (that is to understand each other). Every language user has a unique mode of expression or communication that is different

from other users. Adebayo et al (2020:4) sees language as an instrument of thought which binds human society together in communities and linguistic groups.

Dada & Omoregbe (2013:301) opine that 'language has a powerful influence on people and their behaviour. Religion is one social activity where language is employed and utilized in very creative ways'. This background brings us to the study of this research that finds out the pragma-stylistic analysis of Ecclesiastes 12:1 which states: "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, I have no pleasure in them."

The book of Ecclesiastes is one of the few books of the Bible that was written by King Solomon. King Solomon was said to be a wise King of Israel because he was gifted by God and all his books in the Bible are full of words of wisdom. We are going to discuss the concepts of pragmatics, stylistics and graphology for the development of this article.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a context-based meaning and the aim of pragmatics is the speaker's intention of the language use. Siobhan and Billy (2014) sees pragmatics as the study of language usage and how users of a language communicate interact and interpret linguistics behaviour. Kepa and John (2011:82) state that pragmatics deals with the study of how language is used for communication and also what we use language for. Pragmatics deals with the formation of the speaker's intention and the discovery of the hearer's intention. According to Leech (1983) pragmatics is the study of meaning in context. The various definitions by pragmatics scholars have shown that pragmatics deals with language use, speaker's intention and the context of the language use in order to derive meaning.

Speech Act

Another concept of pragmatics that will be discussed for the relevant of this paper is the speech act. According to John Austin (1962) speech act is divided into three which are locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is the process of making grammatical and meaningful sentence. Illocutionary act is the most important of the speech acts and it is the intention of a statement or utterance to bring out an act of question, command, request, fear etc. Perlocutionary act is the effect of an utterance on the hearer such as embarrassment, anger, happiness etc. Searle (1976) also proposes his own aspect of speech acts which are:

- i. Representative act: these are acts that describe processes and events.
- ii. Declarative act: these are acts that change the situation of things being referred to.
- iii. Directive act: these are acts whereby instructions are being carried out with actions. It can be in form of command, question etc.
- iv. Expressive act: these are acts that show emotions or feelings towards a situation.
- v. Commissive act: this is an act that deals with commitment towards an upcoming action.

This shows that all human statements or utterances are made up of the speech act.

Stylistics

Stylistics basically deals with the study of style. Style is an individual's mode of expression and it comprises of characteristics that differentiate it from others. Abuya (2012:1916) opines that stylistics is the theory of effectiveness. Leech (1969) defines stylistics as simply the study of literary style, or to make matters even more explicit, the study of the use of language in literature. Lyons (1981) states that stylistics is the study of stylistic variation in languages and of the way in which this is exploited by their users. Stylistics acts as a bridge between literature, criticism and linguistics. This allows readers to comprehend, interpret and thus appreciate literature through linguistic analysis. Stylistics has opened the literature world to everybody in critics and appreciation of literature (Anthony 2018;48).

Graphology

Graphology is the study of the system of writing. It is the description of the physical representation of a text. It includes analysis of punctuation marks, shapes of words, types of sentences, nature of verse paragraphs and foregrounding (Samuel 2012). Graphology is a linguistic aspect of analysis that involves the study of graphic aspects of language (Anthony 2012). Wales (2001) sees graphology as the study of graphemes and other features associated with the written medium, such as punctuation, paragraphing or spacing. Simpson (2004;6) opines that graphology accommodates the systematic meaning encoded in the written medium of language.

Aim and Objectives

The main aim of this article is to find out the various graphological tools used in Ecclesiastes chapter 12 verse 1. The specific objectives of the research are:

- I. To examine the speech act content of the Bible verse,
- II. To investigate the speech act emebded in the Bible verse,
- III. To further confirm the connection between pragmatics and stylistics.

It is our hope in this research that the study of stylistics will help in showcasing how various styles are used in writing a literary text.

Research Methodology

The data was extracted from Ecclesiastes chapter 12 verse 1 of the *New King James Version* of the Holy Bible. The present study shuns a superficial analysis of the text because it can only be understood using a pragma-stylistics analysis. Pragmatics which is meaning in context was used for our analysis in order to bring out the intended meaning of the text. A stylistically written text can only be analyzed and interpreted pragmatically in order to bring out the intended meaning which the writers hope to convey and may not necessary be found in the text.

Findings and Discussion

The data and analysis of this study are in two sections which are data presentation and discussion of the data.

The Data Presentation

The present data were sourced from Ecclesiastes chapter 12 verse 1 of the *New King James Version* of the Holy Bible:

Remember now your Creator in the days of
your youth,
Before the difficult days come,
And the years draw near when you say,
I have no pleasure in them".

The Discussion

The graphological tools we are discussing in this text are the use of Capitalization, Punctuation marks and Repetition of words.

Capitalization

Capital letters were used in the first letters of some of the words in text. Capital letters R (in Remember), C (in Creator), B (in Before), A (in And) and I (personal pronoun) was used in the Bible verse. Christians usually use capital letters in writing the first letter of the word 'God' or 'Creator' to show that He is a supreme being and a sign of respect.

Punctuation marks

The Bible verse makes use of limited punctuation marks which are the use of 3 commas (,), 2 quotation marks (") and 1 full stop (.). The text makes use of appropriate punctuation marks and this punctuation marks were used to make it easy to read and meaningful. The punctuation marks make the text to have both the linguistics and syntactic agreement and these promote continuity and also break down into units of thought which makes the text to have cohesion.

Repetition of words

Only two words were repeated in the Bible verse which is the word 'your' (Remember now *your* Creator in the days of *your* youth). The word 'your' was repeated in the first clause of the text for emphasis purpose and also for reference.

Other stylistics instruments used in the text is the use of pronouns, reference and conjunction.

Pronouns

Pronouns are used instead or in place of a noun. The pronouns used in the text are personal pronoun 'I', 'them', 'you' and 'your'. The personal pronoun 'I' is referring to the youths being talked about in the Bible verse while the personal pronoun 'them' is referring to the difficult days and years ahead. The personal pronoun 'you' is also referring to the youth in the text while the first and second personal pronoun 'your' is referring to God and the days of the youth in the text respectively. Pronouns were used to create cohesion within the text.

Reference

Reference is the relationship between an expression and what they are standing for in the expression. We have two major types of reference which are anaphoric and cataphoric reference but the anaphoric reference was used majorly in the text. Anaphoric reference is when an expression refers back to another expression in the same expression or statement. The personal pronouns 'I' and 'them' were used as the anaphoric reference in the text. The personal pronoun 'I' refers back to the youth being talked about in the text while the personal pronoun 'them' refers back to the difficult days to come and the years ahead that were mentioned in the text.

Reference is also substitution and is usually used to avoid repetition. The pronoun 'them' is used as substitution of the difficult days and years ahead as mentioned in the text. References were also used in the text in order to create grammatical cohesion within the text.

Conjunction

Conjunctions are used to bind elements such as words, phrases and clauses. The conjunctions 'and' 'when' were used to connect the main and subordinate clauses in the text.

In the conclusion, we will highlight the pragmatics meaning of the text which is based on Searle (1976) model of pragmatics. The speech act that is apparent in the Bible verse in analysis is directive and declarative acts. The directive part of the Bible verse is: "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say."

Directive act tend to make the hearer act in accordance with what is being said by the speaker. The directives act part of the Bible text tends to instruct and this suggest advice and admonition.

The declarative part of the Bible text is: *I have no pleasure in them*. Declarative act is used to make something happens or it's declaring a particular phenomenon.

The illocutionary acts of the Bible verse are as follows:

- i. Direct illocutionary act: The first part of the Bible verse is a directive act which tends to make the hearer performs some actions. The second part of the Bible verse is a declarative act which is stating something.
- ii. Indirect illocutionary act: The indirect illocutionary act of this Bible verse is that the speaker is directing or advising majorly of the youth to believe and serve God so as not to perish in difficult days or years to come. This shows that it is an indirect 'directive act'.

Conclusion

This study has been able to show the various stylistic tools that are been used in a literary text. Bible verses usually bring out the deep meaning than their literary or basic meaning so pragmatics and stylistics can be used to bring out the intended meaning and the style used in writing a particular Bible verse.

Readers are better equipped with the various speech acts and stylistic tools used in analyzing Bible text or verse. Further study is recommended on the pragma-stylistics analysis of Bible verse or text.

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