

THE REFLECTION OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES AND MAXIMS IN SACRED TEXTS

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Abstract: This article examines the linguo-pragmatic manifestation of politeness strategies and Gricean maxims in sacred texts. The study is based on the theoretical frameworks proposed by Brown and Levinson, Leech, and Grice, and explores communicative styles in religious discourse with particular emphasis on their representation in translations. Furthermore, through the analysis of sacred texts in typologically diverse languages, the research highlights the application of politeness principles in intercultural contexts and their communicative effectiveness.

Keywords: lingua-pragmatics, religious discourse, politeness strategies, Gricean maxims, sacred texts, Theo linguistics.

In contemporary linguistics, the in-depth pragmatic study of text and communication is considered one of the most essential research areas. Religious texts, in particular, possess distinctive linguo-pragmatic features, as they reflect spiritual, moral, and cultural interactions among individuals. Religious discourse represents a form of expression of social, ethical, cultural, and divine values, where communicative elements such as politeness, respect, advice, and warnings play a crucial role. Therefore, analyzing the linguistic means used in sacred texts from a linguo-pragmatic perspective remains a relevant scientific issue.

The theory of politeness strategies developed by Brown and Levinson, along with Grice's Cooperative Principle, serves as a fundamental framework for analyzing communication in linguistics. Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguish two main types of politeness strategies:

Positive politeness

Negative politeness

Positive politeness is aimed at maintaining the addressee's positive face or social image. It includes expressions of solidarity, friendliness, and attempts to avoid conflict or offense through compliments and supportive language.

Negative politeness, on the other hand, reflects the social distance between the speaker and the addressee. It emphasizes respect for the individual's personal freedom and autonomy. Unlike positive politeness, negative politeness is typically indirect. According to Brown and Levinson, any utterance containing subtext may be considered

a form of indirectness. Indirect speech acts, particularly conventional indirectness, represent one of the most significant areas of linguistic analysis. In communication, negative politeness is realized through a variety of strategies.

Leech conceptualizes politeness as a social principle based on maxims such as tact, generosity, approbation, agreement, modesty, and sympathy.

Lingua-pragmatics emerged as an independent field in linguistics in the second half of the 20th century. J.L. Austin’s work Speech Act Theory marked a turning point by emphasizing the communicative function of language beyond its semantic properties. Subsequently, Grice introduced the Cooperative Principle, which became a central concept in pragmatics.

In his seminal work *Logic and Conversation*, Grice outlines four fundamental maxims that participants in communication are expected to follow:

Maxim of Quality: provide truthful information

Maxim of Quantity: provide sufficient, but not excessive information

Maxim of Relevance: provide relevant information

Maxim of Manner: ensure clarity, brevity, and orderliness

According to Grice, adherence to these maxims ensures communicative effectiveness. In religious texts, however, these maxims often appear in complex and multilayered forms, demonstrating a strong rhetorical and pragmatic impact.

Religious discourse inherently combines social and divine meanings. In the Qur’anic verses, politeness is expressed not only as an ethical norm but also as a divine command. The theolinguistic approach enables the analysis of semantic, pragmatic, and stylistic functions of language in sacred texts. In such texts:

Language often has a normative character (commands, advice, prohibitions);

Communication is typically unidirectional (speaker – God, addressee – human);

Politeness is expressed through warnings, arguments, repetition, and lexical choices.

Religious texts are defined as texts associated with religious traditions. They differ from literary texts in that they encompass beliefs, mythology, rituals, commandments, laws, ethical guidelines, and spiritual aspirations. These texts, also referred to as sacred scriptures, hold central significance within religious traditions.

Both positive and negative politeness strategies are employed in religious texts. Negative politeness is often realized through warnings and recommendations. For instance, sacred texts discourage behaviors such as suspicion, spying, and backbiting, thereby urging individuals to exercise caution in interpersonal relationships.

From the perspective of the Cooperative Principle, effective communication in religious texts can be analyzed through the following maxims:

Relevance: The verses address socially significant issues such as suspicion, spying, and backbiting, making them contextually appropriate.

Quantity: The information provided is sufficient without unnecessary elaboration.

Quality: The statements are presented as truthful and authoritative, often as divine commands.

Sacred texts represent a rich and complex system of communication from a lingua-pragmatic perspective. Politeness strategies and Grecian maxims not only shape communicative styles but also convey spiritual and moral values. The way these principles are reflected in translations across different languages plays a significant role in evaluating translation quality and intercultural communication.

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