

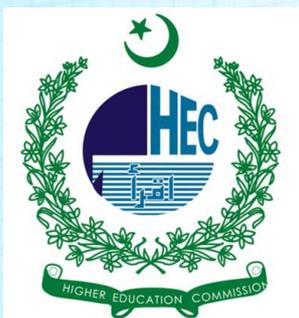
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**Lamenting, Questioning, and Longing: A Speech Act Approach
to Farzana Aqib's Poetry**



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Abstract

This research applies Speech Act Theory to examine the contemporary Pakistani poet Farzana Aqib's two poems such as *Where Is My Farmer* and *Chase* (Aqib, 2021). The chief objective is to show how poetic language does actions rather than only expressing emotions. Using a qualitative method, the poems were divided into meaningful sections based on shifts in emotion and meaning. Each section was first interpreted literarily and then analyzed through Searle's (1969) classification of speech acts, focusing on appropriate contextual conditions. The analysis uncovers that the poems mainly employ expressive speech acts, including lamenting, questioning, longing, and reflecting. Hence, the findings claim that poetry functions as an active form of communication that shapes and moulds readers' understanding. The study also signals that Speech Act Theory offers a clear and practical framework for analyzing modern poetry, particularly within the field of literary pragmatics and Pakistani poetry in English.

Introduction

Poetry has frequently been seen as an artistic and literary genre. The analysis of literature often puts stress on themes, visual signs, emotions, and the historical setting. These methods enable readers to appreciate the intricate nature and skill of poems, but they primarily rely on individual interpretation, where interpretations are subjective rather than objective. Hence, the same poetry might be interpreted differently by various readers.

In linguistics, especially pragmatics, language can be seen as a tool for action. According to this theory, people are communicating more than just explanations when they write or talk; they are also making promises, posing queries, expressing their ideas, and expressing their emotions. The first person to effectively describe this concept was Austin (1962), who claimed that language performs actions in everyday situations. In addition, Searle (1969) developed this idea through introducing forward Speech Act Theory, which describes how words serve as communication acts. The foundation of Speech Act Theory is the following idea: Action usually follows the expression of something.

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When someone says, "I promise," for example, they are actually making a commitment. In the same way, a speaker participates in the questioning process when they ask, "Where are you?" In everyday speech, legal jargon, political speeches, and classroom discussions, the concept of assumption has been utilized a lot. Its application in poetry, especially contemporary poetry, is still scarce.

Poetry is a creative medium that also serves as a communication tool. A poet addresses the reader, expresses feelings, offers questions, recalls memories, or mourns loss. Poetry can therefore also be seen as conducting verbal acts. From this perspective, a poem does more than simply convey emotions; it also affects the reader by expressing grief, condemnation, longing, or inquiry. Because literary language functions in communicative contexts, pragmatic academics like Levinson (1983) and Yule (1996) believe that it can be studied through practical approaches. The following poems were chosen because they are very direct, have a fascinating human story, and are genuinely concerned with longing, absence, memory, and pursuit. The current study looks at these poems as acts of communication rather than just imagery or symbolism, asking what the poet is trying to say with her words.

The study uses favorable settings as a validation method to ensure that identified speech activities are independent of assumptions. The requirements that must be met for a speaking act to be effective are known as felicity conditions (Searle, 1969). For example, a promise needs to have a commitment regarding a future action in order to be enforceable. In order to thoroughly evaluate whether a poem truly performs a particular act, such as lamenting, questioning, or yearning, the study uses the factors mentioned above.

Hence, this study seeks to bridge the gap between linguistics and literature by applying a linguistic framework to literary works. It demonstrates how poetic content may be communicated both logically and emotionally. By offering a precise, thorough framework for comprehending poetry as a kind of significant human action, the investigation promotes literary practice.

Research Methodology

The process for applying Speech Act Theory to evaluate the two chosen poems by Farzana Aqib is explained in the section that follows. It describes how the data

(poems) were created, the requirements for analysis, and the structured process for recognizing and verifying the speech actions included in them.

Research Type

In simple terms, the research currently being conducted is qualitative. It has nothing to do with statistics or numbers. Rather, it carefully considers and analyzes the language of two poems in order to completely understand the "actions" that the words do. The study examines the poems to demonstrate how they convey feelings, raise issues, and create meaning using Speech Act Theory as an original framework (Austin, 1962).

Data Collection

Where is My Farmer and Chase, two poems by contemporary Pakistani poet Farzana Aqib, served as the data for this study. These poems were selected because they are ideal for studying and examining the acts that poetic language performs including grieving, questioning, and promising. This specific study does a thorough analysis of speech acts in a post modern context which is something novel about this study.

Unit of Analysis

The poem's text served as the primary source of information. Each poem was broken into logical exer based on changes in thought, emotion, or action. A collection of memories or a recurring search, for instance, was treated as a single component. Each fragment was assured to have sufficient information to perform an identifiable speech act.

Speech Act Framework

The study followed Searle's (1969) hierarchy of speech acts. This consists of five basic types:

1. Representatives (expressing a belief, such as affirming)
2. Directives (attempting to have the hearer do something, e.g., requesting)
3. Commissive (promising to a future action).
4. Expressive (expressing feelings, such as thanking and lamenting).
5. Declarations (changing reality with words, such as declaring)

Because poems often engage in expressive and commanding acts, this framework was design to categorize the emotional and logical actions seen in Aqib's poetry (Yule, 1996).

Validity Tool: Felicity Conditions

In order to verify that a fragment effectively achieves a given speech act, the felicity conditions instrument was taken into consideration. These are the parameters that must be followed for a speaking act to be effective.

Process:

1. For common acts (e.g., promising, inquiring), acknowledged scholars' (e.g., Searle) felicity requirements were explicitly applied (Searle, 1976).
2. Conditions for poem-specific activities (e.g., desiring, searching, lamenting) were coherently determined from the poem's framework and emotional logic.
3. Each portion was contrasted to these contexts to determine whether the act was effectively accomplished.

Example for a Deduced Act, Searching (from *Chase*):

Condition 1: The speaker suspects something is lacking.

Condition 2: The speaker actively searches for it continually.

Condition 3: The search has not been completed.

Check: The poem states that the heart "halts on every corner" and seeks "any glimpse," which validates all conditions. Thus, the act of searching is permissible.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis follows the following steps:

Step 1: Fragment Assessment: Each poem was divided into relevant thematic parts.

Step 2: Textual Interpretation: Each passage was explained in simple words to help readers figure out both the surface and more profound meaning.

Step 3: Speech Act Identification: The scholar gathered a speech act was according to its meaning including regretting, questioning, remembering.

Step 4: Integrity Condition Check: The specifications for that act (derived or standard) were stated and compared precisely to what unfolded in the snippet.

Step 5: Resolution: If all of the conditions were satisfied, it concluded that the extract successfully did the speaking act, verifying the poetic intent.

Scope and Delimitation

This research is only delimited to two poems by Farzana Aqib. The primary focus is on showing how Speech Act Theory may be applied to postmodern, deeply personal poetry to figure out how poems "do things with words." The conclusions are

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interpretative, but they are empirically confirmed and checked using felicity conditions (Levinson, 1983).

Discussion & Analysis

Speech Act Analysis of *Chase* by Farzana Aqib

Summary

The poem itself conveys an inner emotional quest taking place in a busy metropolis. The speaker is not merely seeking someone; rather, she is emotionally and mentally looking for a feeling, a connection, or a presence. The poem is serene, agitated, and ambiguous. The main speaking act in this poem is not a single act. Instead, the poem performs a series of related activities, including:

Searching and confessing

Longing Questioning

As a result, the poem can be best comprehended by separating it into different parts.

Excerpt 1

It halts on every corner

In every nook

In every cranny

At every turning

On every door

At each junction

Literary Interpretation

In this section, the speaker addresses something that comes to a halt at every corner, intersection, door, or crossing. This "it" is not an actual object. It expresses the speaker's unsettled heart or feeling. The recurring usage of *each* indicates constant pause, continuous searching, and no peace or final destination. The city becomes a symbol for life, as the speaker repeatedly pauses in search of anything valuable.

Identified Speech Act

The Act of Searching

Felicity Conditions for the Act of Search

The speaker fears something vital is missing.

The speaker is relentlessly searching for it.

The search is conducted periodically and without interruption.

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The speaker has yet to search what she is looking for.

.What Happened in the Excerpt?

1) Because something is "stopping" her, the speaker feels lonely. She looks everywhere, including doorways, corners, and streets. The recurrent occurrence suggests that the search is still going on. There is only movement and a pause, no word of discovery. The aforementioned example successfully conveys emotional discomfort and confusion while carrying out the language act of searching.

Excerpt 2

Any glimpse

Any shadow

Any wisp

Literary Interpretation

The speaker puts stress on little and vague details including a fleeting glance, shadow, and wisp. These words convey ambiguity, confusion and irrationality. The speaker is so eager to discover relevance or connection that every little detail attracts her eye. This indicates mental fragility and sensitivity.

Identified Speech Act

The Act of Longing

Felicity Conditions for the Act of Longing

The speaker desires for something that is no longer accessible.

The yearning is emotional, not materialistic.

Even minor indicators inspire faith.

The speaker feels uncomfortable and restlessness with the current state.

What Happened in the Excerpt?

The speaker is searching a hidden presence. It is not only sensational but also emotional. Hope can be seen even in swings and shades. Similarly, there is very little satisfaction at this very moment. Because of this, the passage skillfully expresses the verbal act of longing, expressing sentiments of fullness and hope mixed with uncertainty.

Excerpt 3

I don't know in the

Rustling bustling of

The whole city

Literary Interpretation

The speaker acknowledges his own confusion in this passage. The speaker is lost in the middle of the crowded, busy city. Her emotional turmoil is reflected in the chaos of her surroundings. "I don't know" is a very important sentence. It expresses purity and emotional transparency.

Identified Speech Act

The Act of Confessing

Felicity Conditions for the Act of Confessing

The speaker is honest about their uncertainty.

The apology is profound.

The speaker expresses inner feelings.

There is no attempt to hide confusion.

What Happened in the Excerpt?

The tone is simple and non-dramatic as the speaker simply says, "I don't know." Uncertainty throughout is observed. There is no explanation or response given. This section demonstrates emotional sincerity and skillfully executes the speech act of confessing.

Excerpt 4

To whom my heart is

Finding every day

Literary Interpretation

The speaker acknowledges that she explores her heart daily, but she is unsure of who she is looking for. This implies a highly personal battle, emotional distance, and a need for belonging, love, or self-worth. The act becomes emotional rather than rational when the word "heart" is used.

Identified Speech Act

The Act of Questioning (Existential Questioning)

Felicity Conditions for the Act of Questioning

The speaker seems confused about an intensely felt issue.

Instead of being asked out loud, the query is inside of you.

Rather than knowledge, the speaker is looking for meaning.

There is no clear response.

What Happened in the Excerpt

The speaker lacks compassion. It's a personal and connection are foremost topics. There is no conclusion to the poem. The speech act of exploration is effectively performed in this passage, leaving the reader feeling confused and emotionally exposed. In conclusion

Chase uses a number of related speech acts in the poem:

Looking for

Desire

Admitting Questions

Farzana Aqib turns the poem into an emotional activity rather than just a narrative by using simple language and repetition. Speech Act Theory demonstrates that the poetry is having an impact by creating feelings of anxiousness, ambiguity, and emotional longing in the reader.

Speech Act Analysis of

***Where is my farmer* by Farzana Aqib**

This poem reflects a profound emotional loss and affection for a farmer, who represents roots, promises, country life, emotional connection, and a person. The tone of isolation and suffering is established shortly thereafter as the speaker asks, "Where is my farmer?" repeatedly. The poem uses a number of speech acts, primarily remembering, questioning, regretting, accusing, and lamenting, all of which are linked by the concept of unfulfilled vows.

Excerpt 1:

Where is my farmer

Where is my countryman

Where is my salt of the earth

The speaker continues to ask where her farmer is in this first passage. These are not honest inquiries that call for responses. Rather, they indicate loss and emotional shock. The speaker portrays the farmer as a sincere and pragmatic by addressing him as "my countryman" and "salt of the earth." The repetition conveys the intensity of the feelings and the surprise of his absence.

Here, the poem utilizes a speaking act that incorporates lamentation with questioning.

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The speaker comes across someone who is emotionally noteworthy, expresses pain rather than seeking knowledge, and experiences an intense void, all of which fulfill the felicity requirements of this act. In reality, the speaker reveals her emotional dependence on the farmer and creates a sensation of loss instantly.

Excerpt 2:

Who promised me once

To let me taste

The salt of his corny fields

Sweetness of his ripening orchards

And a cold sip of his

Deep well waters

The speaker recalls the farmer's promises in this passage. Taste, sweetness, and water are sensory and natural promises that represent confidence and unspoiled country existence. At one point, the farmer promised care, intimacy, and sharing.

The speech act of recalling and recollecting is performed in this passage. Because there was a previous obligation, the speaker can still clearly recall it, and the memory is deeply personal, the felicity prerequisites are met. Here, remembrance becomes painful; the promises emphasize the difference between hope in the past and absence in the present.

Excerpt 3:

Who promised me

To make me suckle

The fresh warm milk

Direct from the teats

Of his bovine

Sensitivity is increased in this section. The picture of fresh milk straight from the animal conveys purity, caring, and trust. The farmer is portrayed as a nurse who provided natural, life-sustaining nutrition rather than extravagance.

This speaking act, which is remembered through memory, is encouraging. Because the promise included future attention, the speaker trusted the promiser, and the promise had emotional importance, the felicity requirements are met. The speaker amplifies the feeling of betrayal because the promise was loving and now unfulfilled

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rather than because it was corrosive.

Excerpt 4:

Who promised me to

Burn the oaks

And some wood logs

To make me tea

On his earthen oven

In his clay pots

This part highlights the comfort and welcome of the countryside. Tea prepared in clay pots in an earthen oven reflects ease, tradition, and community. The speaker desires human connection rather than wealth.

This excerpt portrays the speech act of romanticizing the past. The speaker emotionally appreciates these deeds, sees them as significant, and compares them to the present reality, which is why the felicity requirements are applied. Hence, here, an emotional residence is being constructed that does not exist anymore.

Excerpt 5:

Where is my farmer

My countryman

My salt of the earth

The repetition comes back, but it is harsher now. The analysis hurts harder after remembering promises. The speaker is now entirely conscious of its absence.

The speech act of lamenting is shown in this passage because the loss is genuine, emotionally substantial, and openly recognized, the felicity requirements are met. The speaker goes through an emotional breakdown and shifts from remembrance to sorrow.

Excerpt 6:

Today I am tasting

All those promises

Yet alone

At my own

In this excerpt, the speaker is living in the natural world, experiencing the fields, breeze, sunset, and everything the farmer had promised, all by themselves. Strong

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absurdity exists: the promises are kept, but the person who made them is missing.

The speech act of ironic recognition is performed in this passage because expectations exist, reality contradicts them, and the speaker acknowledges this contradiction, the felicity requirements are applicable. In the absence of companionship, fulfillment becomes worthless.

Excerpt 7: Nature vs Absence

Everything in best place

But not thee

The anguish in the poem is summed up in one brief yet impactful statement. The main presence is absent from nature, despite its completeness, order, and beauty.

The oral act of blaming absence is carried out in this way. The speaker's comparison of emotional emptiness with perfection satisfies the felicity requirements. The result is that the absence becomes more noticeable than the presence.

Excerpt 8:

My eyes are wet

And my lips are pursed

The speaker willingly acknowledges showing signs of mourning. Tight lips and tears are signs of repressed grief.

The verbal act of admitting suffering is performed in this passage. Because the emotion is true, clear, and involuntary, the felicity requirements are met. Emotional weakness is the result.

Excerpt 9

Just like your remembrance

So vivid yet obscure

Today your reminiscence is

Hurting fast

It is said that memory is both inaccessible and clear. The farmer is not real, but he is vivid in recollection. Psychological distress results from this.

Here, grieving through remembering is the speech act. Because the memory is painful, involuntary, and emotionally potent, the felicity requirements are met. Instead of being comforting, recollection turns into a source of pain.

Excerpt 10

Like a moth

Against a speeding vehicle

Hitting and go all flesh

The poem concludes with an appealing sight. The speaker compares her suffering to an impulsive, destructive, and unavoidable butterfly crashing into a speeding car. This demonstrates the seriousness of emotional trauma.

In this final chapter, the linguistic act of expressing suffering has been carried out. The felicity conditions have been achieved since the suffering is severe, uncontrollable, and clearly stated. The poem concludes with an emotional disaster and unsolved grief.

Findings

Through the examination of Farzana Aqib's poems "Where is my farmer" and "Chase," it has been proven that poetic language performs unique speech acts. Speech acts that are most frequently used include: Expressing loss and absence through lamentation
Posing queries: searching for a person or item that is absent
Expressing a desire for prior relationships or commitments is known as longing. Seeking meaning, love, or emotional fulfillment. Similarly, felicity conditions were used to confirm that each paragraph successfully carried out its intended act. Instead of merely expressing feelings, the poetry actively evokes memories, engages the reader in the poet's experience, and conveys emotions. This analysis suggests that it is possible to analyze modern poetry as a language of use rather than merely as an aesthetic.

Conclusion

A logical and objective approach to poetry analysis is provided by Speech Act Theory. Farzana Aqib's poems demonstrate how words can stay longer, search, ask questions, and cry. Poetry is therefore not only a means of expressing feelings but also an art form that has an impact on the reader. Applying felicity standards ensures that interpretations are valid and not just subjective. This approach offers a precise way to analyze contemporary poetry by bridging the gap between linguistics and literature, particularly when it comes to Pakistani English poetry.

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