

A Psycho – Pragmatic Study of The Speech Act of Obsession

Ameer Ali Hussein

University of Kufa/ College of Arts

ameer.hu18@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper discusses a notion in psycho-pragmatics called "obsession". This notion is a specific kind of soliloquy, which is persistent preoccupation ideas or thoughts that tell a person to do something bad or shameful things, however normal soliloquy is a normal speech with oneself to express regret or happiness. It is proved that obsession is an actual speech acts.

A comparison is made between obsession and soliloquy in order to distinguish between these two similar notions. By doing this comparison, the paper shows the difference between the normal soliloquy and obsession.

Some examples are taken from Arabic, especially from the Holy Qura'an. When analyzing these examples, the paper explains that soliloquy and obsession meet the three levels of speech act.

Some verses (Ayas) explain the obsessive speeches of Satan to Adam for example and the perlocutionary act of these verses. Other verses (Ayas) show that soliloquy is a speech act but the speaker speaks to himself to express his thoughts and feelings or to do some actions as the perlocutionary act of his speech.

Keywords: obsession , soliloquy , speech act.

المخلص

يتلخص هذا البحث بتوضيح موضوع ضمن علم اللغة النفسي-التداولي وهو موضوع الوسواس. الوسواس كفعل كلامي وهو الايحاء الداخلي لفعل عمل مشين او غير مرغوب فيه، يكون هذا الوسواس اما طبيعي مثل وسوسة الشيطان او مرضي مثل الوسواس القهري.

الهدف من هذا البحث هو اثبات ان الوسواس الطبيعي و القهري هما افعال كلامية، لقد أخذت عدة امثلة من آيات القرآن الكريم لتوضيح و اثبات ان الوسواس الطبيعي او القهري هو نوع من الفعل الكلامي لانه يقال بقصد و يكون له تاثير على المتلقي ليستجيب له.

في الجزء الاخير للبحث، تمت مقارنة الوسواس مع حديث الروح حيث ان الوسواس يكون الموحى فيه خارجي (كان يكون الشيطان) ليس الشخص بذاته، بينما حديث الروح الطبيعي يحدث لاي انسان في الحياة اليومية للتعبير عن حالة من الفرح او الحزن او الندم، حديث الروح هو حديث داخلي من الشخص لنفسه دون تاثير خارجي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: حديث النفس ، الوسواس، الفعل الكلامي.

1-Introduction

This paper discusses the notions "obsession and soliloquy" as forms of speech act. The main questions of this paper are:

- 1- Is Obsession a speech act? If so, what are the locutionary and illocutionary acts of obsession which forces a person to perform the perlocutionary act of that speech act?
- 2- What is the difference between soliloquy and obsession?

Two hypotheses can be put here, firstly obsession is a particular form of speech act as somebody seems that he commands himself to do something but actually there is another one commands him but that one is not actually a human being, secondly soliloquy is that, sometimes somebody speaks to or commands himself to perform a specific action, if he performs what he thinks or commands, that performance would be a speech act. This paper aims to investigate two points; the first aim of this paper is to prove that obsession and soliloquy are speech acts and they maintain the three acts of a speech act which are locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts. The second aim is to prove that obsession is commanded or said by Satan while soliloquy is the speech of somebody with himself to think aloud, to command himself something or to express something.

Depending on certain references of the explanation or interpretation of the Holy Qur'an, the paper will discuss some verses (Ayas) which contain obsession and soliloquy. By analyzing these verses (Ayas) the paper will prove that obsession and soliloquy are speech acts and each one is distinct from the other.

2. Speech Act

Before discussing directly the speech act of obsession, let's state briefly the meaning of speech act theory, its acts and its main types.

Speech act is firstly proposed by Austin in 1962 and published by his students. This theory means that we are not just saying statements or negate others, but sometimes by using a specific type of verbs, we produce some sentences with an intention to convey certain message rather than what the sentence traditionally means, let's see the following pair of sentences:

- 1- There is a scorpion in the cabinet.
- 2- I warn you that there is a scorpion in the cabinet.

In (1) the sentence gives us a piece of information that there is a dangerous insect in the cabinet. In (2) the sentence communicates an additional message more than the message in sentence (1). The extra message is a warning not to come close or open the cabinet as it contains a poisonous dangerous animal. Any speech act performed by a special

type of verbs is called "performative verbs" such as promise, warn, bet, dare, fine, resign, declare. (Fromkin et al, 2007: 206)

2.1 Acts and Types of Speech Act

Leech (1983: 198) mentioned that any speech act should be performed by three acts: a locutionary act, an illocutionary act and a perlocutionary act.

The locutionary act is the process of uttering a correct meaningful sentence (spoken or written); any ungrammatical sentence would not be regarded as having a locutionary act. The intention of a speaker or writer to convey a communicative purpose is called the illocutionary force, the sentence which carries that force is said to have an illocutionary act. This illocutionary act has an effect on the speaker to do or react something in response, this reaction or effect is known as the perlocutionary act of the sentence, see the following example:

3- I apologize for my last rude behavior.

Being a correct grammatical sentence, number (3) has a locutionary act. The intention of the speaker to express his apology by using the verb "apologize" is the illocutionary side of the sentence. The reaction or the response of the hearer whether he/ she accepts the apology or not is the perlocutionary act of sentence (3). (Quirk et al, 1987: 804)

Before ending this theoretical brief account of speech act, it is important to mention that the speech act is categorized into two types: direct and indirect. The direct speech act is performed when the form of a sentence is equivalent to its discourse function, for example a declarative sentence to convey a statement as in sentence (4)

4- Give me that paper.

The form of the sentence is an imperative sentence, and the function of the sentence is to state that the speaker asks the hearer to give that paper. (Yule, 2010: 133-134)

On the other hand, when the form of a sentence doesn't match its illocutionary act (its function); in other words when a form of an interrogative sentence is used to perform a request (directive) not to seek a negative or positive response, this is called the indirect speech act, see example (5)

5- Can you pass the salt?

This utterance is interrogative in form, but its function is to request the hearer to give something (the salt) to the speaker. (Ibid)

3- Obsession

Obsession can be defined according to Kiloby (2012:2) as: "A persistent intense unconscious energy accompanied by a continuous involuntary preoccupation with a thought that cannot be removed by logic or reasoning".

3-1 Obsession as a Speech Act.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, obsession is a feature of humans and there is an evidence for this suggestion, it is Surat Al Nas.

٦- بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ (١) مَلِكِ النَّاسِ (٢) إِلَهِ النَّاسِ (٣) مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ (٤) الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ (٥) مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ (٦) سورة الناس

Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord and cherisher of mankind (1) The King (or Ruler) of mankind. (2) The God (or Judge) of mankind, (3) From the mischief of the whisperer (of evil), who withdraws (After his whisper) (4) Who whispers into the hearts of mankind (5) among Jinns and among men." (6) (Ali, 2001: 1718)

Verses (4), (5) and (6) refer that Satan obsesses to all people without any exceptions, but if the person mentions or warships Allah in such a way, that obsession will decrease and if the person forgets his warship the obsession will increase. (Al Tabrasy 2006:181-82)

Simply, obsession is that kind of thinking in the mind of any human which tells him to do bad things or unacceptable behavior, because the thinking which tells you to do good things is the normal being of humans. It is not necessary here to go deeply in this mysterious field but the paper will discuss some examples from the holy Qura'an to prove that obsession is a speech act.

Some of the verses (Ayas) in the Holy Qura'an which refer to obsessive commands are verses 168-169 in Surat Al Baqara.

٧- قَالَ تَعَالَى : يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ (١٦٨) إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (١٦٩) سورة البقرة

Ye people! Eat of what is on earth, Lawful and good; And do not follow the footsteps of the Evil one, For he is to you an avowed enemy (168) For he commands you what is evil and shameful, and that you should say of Allah that of which you have no knowledge. (169) (Ali, 2001: 67)

According to Al Tabrasy (2006:351-352) the interpretation of the verse 169 is that the devil or (Satan) commands the people to do aggressive or bad actions, to think and say shameful things such as pornographic or sexual ideas, and to say something which is not true about God or Allah or religion in general. So Satan actually does the locutionary and illocutionary acts of commanding and the human being performs these commands by doing these shameful things.

Verses (20, 21, and 22) of Al A'araf Sura state the obsession of Satan to Adam and his wife and the consequence of obeying that

obsession, see the verse below:

٨- قال تعالى:

وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ (١٩) فَوَسَّسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوَاتِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا
رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ (٢٠) وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا
لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ (٢١) فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوَاتُهُمَا وَطَفَفَا يَخْصَفَانِ
عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ
لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ (٢٢) سورة الأعراف

And O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in Paradise, and eat thereof as you both wish, but approach not this tree otherwise you both will be of the Zalimun (unjust and wrong-doers)." (19) Then began Satan to whispered suggestions to them, In order to reveal to them their shame that was hidden from them (Before): he said: "Your lord only forbade you this tree, least ye should become angels or beings as live forever." (20) And he swore to them both, that he was their sincere adviser. (21) So by deceit he brought about their fall: when they tasted of the tree, their shame became manifest to them, and they began to sew together the leaves of the garden over their bodies. And their Lord called unto them: Did I not forbid you that tree, and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy unto you." (22) (Ali, 2001: 348-49)

The interpretation of these verses in (Al Razy, 1968: 125-128) is that Satan has obsessed the prophet Adam and his wife to eat from the prohibited tree in Paradise that Allah ordered them not to eat from at any time and under any condition. Here is a controversial point, Adam already knows that Satan is his enemy, so how he follows his order and eats from the tree, the only explanation given by Al- Razy is that Satan obsessed and urged Adam and his wife so many times in different ways to do that shameful thing, he seduced them that they would be a king and a queen in the Heaven and they would live forever if they do eat from the tree. Going through the ways of obsession is not our concern, but what is important here is the perlocutionary act of the obsessive order that Adam actually committed the sin and ate from the tree. So it is so clear that Satan ordered Adam and his spouse to eat from the tree, so Satan has the locutionary and illocutionary acts and the response of Adam and his wife is the perlocutionary act of Satan's order.

Al Tabrasy (2006: 46-47) in his interpretation of these verses states that Satan obsessed to Adam in two ways. The first one is that when Satan obsessed to Adam it means that he imitates or whispers a hidden sound to the deep mind of Adam by using his supernatural force to eat from the tree, the second one is that obsessing to Adam means that Satan actually spoke to Adam and his wife and advised them to eat from the tree in order to be a king and a queen in the heaven and to be immortal. In both cases it is clear that Satan asked Adam and his spouse to do that action of eating and they finally responded to his request and the Almighty Allah regarded that obedience to Satan as a direct rebellion to his order as it is mentioned in the verses (120,121 and 122) of Surat Taha.

٩- قال تعالى:

فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْلَى (١٢٠) فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَصَى آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَى (١٢١) ثُمَّ اجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَى (١٢٢) سورة طه

But Satan whispered evil to him; he said, "O Adam, shall I lead thee to the tree of eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?"(120) In the result, they both ate of the tree, and so their nakedness appeared to them: they began to sew together, fir their covering, leaves from the garden: Thus did Adam disobey his Lord, and allow himself to be seduced. (121) But his Lord chose him (For His Grace): He turned to him and gave him guidance(122) (Taha) (Ali, 2001: 789)

The verses (120,121) state the obsession of Satan to Adam to eat from the prohibited tree as the whole story is explained in the previous example of Surat Al A'araf. Here again it is so clear that Satan exerted a strong directive speech act towards the prophet and his spouse and they finally responded. (Al Razy, 1968: 125-128) At the end of this part it is so clear that Satan has an influential speech act towards the human being by using his supernatural force to make any human commits sins and bad things and this is actually the meaning of obsession.

3.2 Pathological Obsession

As it is mentioned in (2 and 2.1), any speech accomplishes the three acts of speech act theory, (locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary act). It is actually a speech act. Concerning pathological obsession, the patients with such disorder feel that there is an internal speech or someone inside them tells them to do something repeatedly (locutionary, illocutionary acts) in spite of the fact that they know it is not normal to do so. For example some patients hear a sentence in their minds which is:

10- Wash your hands again.

They insist to wash their hands over and over, (this is the perlocutionary act of the sentence) in spite of the fact that they know their hands are clean. Because of these overwhelming ideas, the patient may feel uncomfortable or depressed because he is sure that these ideas are ridiculous. As a result of this obsession, the patient feel that he is talking to himself obligatorily in an abnormal way, that speech commands them to do repeated actions such as making sure of closing the door several times although the patient is certain it is closed (Murphy, 2011:4)

Hearing complete grammatical directive sentences and accomplishing these actions in the real life make it possible to say that these orders are real speech acts.

4-Soliloquy as a Speech Act

This term linguistically means that a person speaks to himself/herself to express his/her own feelings, thoughts rather than to the audience or listeners. Soliloquy is the normal speech to oneself as a tool to express thought aloud. As language is a device for communication, soliloquy is a device to speak to oneself expressing a thought or a feeling not communicating with others. (Yoko Hasegawa, 2010: 1) As soliloquy is defined as speaking to oneself, there are certain verses in the Holy Qura'an to express soliloquy by some characters to declare regret. Let's see whether the soliloquy in these verses is a speech act or not, the first verse is 31 of Surat Al Ma'ida.

١١ قال تعالى:

فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ كَيْفَ يُورِي سَوْءَ أَخِيهِ قَالَ يَا وَيْلَتَى أَعَجَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ
مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ فَأُوَارِي سَوْءَ أَخِي فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ. سورة المائدة ٣١

Then Allah sent a raven, who scratched the ground to show him how to hide the shame of his brother, "woe is me " said he; " was I not even able to be as this raven, and to hide the shame of my brother?" then he became full of regrets (31). (Ali, 2001: 256-57)

According to Al Tabary (2001: 340-41) when the son of Adam 'Cain' killed his brother Abel, he did not know what to do with his brother's corpse, so Allah sent a raven to bury its dead brother (dead raven) and inspired to him to scratch the ground in order to bury his brother. When Cain saw this process, he said to himself: Oh my God! Can I do like this raven to hide the shame of my dead brother? So he became full of regret of not doing like that, then he buried the dead body of Abel.

Al Tabary (Ibid) points out that Cain said that to himself because he regretted to kill his brother and he didn't know how to get rid of the body of his dead brother. Al- Tabary didn't indicate that there was somebody

with Cain when he expressed his regret so it is absolutely a soliloquy not a speech addressed to other addressees. It is clear that the soliloquy of Cain is a speech act that expresses regret; and this speech has a perlocutionary act which is the process of burying Abel's dead body, so it is obvious that Cain performs a speech act. It is not right to say that any soliloquy is a speech act but in most of the cases the soliloquy is thinking aloud or expressing a feeling and doing an act (a perlocutionary act) as a consequence of that soliloquy.

Other verses in the Holy Qura'an which express a soliloquy are the verses. 27, 28 and 29 of Surat Al Furqan.

١٢ قال تعالى:

﴿وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا ٢٧ يَا وَيْلَتَى لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا ٢٨ لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا ٢٩﴾
الفرقان

The day that the wrongdoer will bite at his hands, he will say " oh! Would that I had taken a (straight) path with the messenger (27) Ah! Woe is me! Would that I had never taken such a one of a friend! (28) he did lead me astray from the message (of Allah) it had come to me, Ah the Evil one but a traitor to man!. (Ali, 2001:895-96)

It is believed that these verses had been inspired to the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H) because of the murder of Uqba Bin Abi Ma'eed in Uhud Battle. They explained that in the doomsday all the disbelievers and wrongdoers, Uqba as an example, will bite their hands as they regretted of not following the messenger and followed their friends instead who led him astray. The soliloquy of Uqba Bin Abi Ma'eed is an expression which has a locutionary and illocutionary acts, it has also a perlocutionary act which is the regret of Uqba Bin Abi Ma'eed (Al- Tabrasy, 2006: 213). So a distinction must be made between obsession and soliloquy, obsession is a speech said or inticed by Satan to a person and this speech is a speech act, pathological obsession is also a kind of speech act due to psychological disorder, on the other hand, soliloquy is a normal verbal speech act said by someone but it is not addressed to anybody, it is just thinking aloud or expressing feeling as blaming oneself as a regret followed by a perlocutionary act as a result of that soliloquy

Conclusion

The following points can be concluded from this paper:

1- Obsession is a speech act having locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act.

- 2- The normal obsession happens to any person regardless of his religion; it is a natural human feature that accompanies any person.
- 3- The pathological obsession is a kind of psychological disorder and it is also a speech act.
- 4- Obsession is distinct from soliloquy as the former is a speech act done by Satan while the latter is a speech act of a person with himself to think aloud or to express a feeling, and then he does a perlocutionary act as a result of that soliloquy.

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