## Adab Al-Rafidayn

# Conveying Empathy and Compassion in Mahmoud Darwish's Poem "Think of the Others": A Speech-Act Study

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| Information | Abstract |
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| <br><br>*Correspondence:*<br>***Nawar Basil Mahfoudh ALobaidy.***<br>nawar.basilmahfoudh@uomosul.edu.iq | Speech acts, a fundamental component of pragmatics, involve specific intentions beyond the literal meaning of words. These acts are associated with the actions conveyed through spoken words, enabling individuals to perform actions through their utterances. The statements are intrinsically linked to the actions they describe. This paper examines speech acts within Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Think of the Others." Utilizing the qualitative description method and employing John Searle's (1979) classification of illocutionary acts, the paper seeks to identify the types and functions of these acts in the poem. These speech acts effectively convey the poet's underlying message through predominant directives supplemented by assertions and emotional expressions. They function as catalysts, prompting the audience to transcend personal preoccupations and consider others' necessities and journeys. By emphasizing the interconnected nature of humanity, this study posits that our actions have consequences for those around us. Through an analysis of the poem, a more profound understanding emerges regarding the utilization of speech acts in poetry, elucidating their capacity to evoke empathy and compassion within the audience. |

## نقل التعاطف والرحمة من خلال اللغة الشعرية في قصيدة محمود درويش "فكر بغيرك" : دراسة في أفعال الكلام

**نوارا باسل محفوظ**

**المستخلص:**

لأفعال الكلامية، وهي عنصر أساسي في علم التداولية، تتضمن نوايا محددة تتجاوز المعنى الحرفي للكلمات. وترتبط هذه الأفعال بالإجراءات المنقولة من خلال الكلمات المنطوقة، مما يمكن الأفراد من تنفيذ أفعال عبر أقوالهم. فالتصريحات ترتبط ارتباطًا جوهريًا بالأفعال التي تصفها.

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تبحث هذه الدراسة في الأفعال الكلامية ضمن قصيدة "فكر بغيرك" لمحمود درويش، معتمدةً على المنهج الوصفي النوعي، ومستخدمةً تصنيف جون سيرل (1979) للأفعال الإنجازية. سعى الباحث إلى تحديد أنواع هذه الأفعال ووظائفها في القصيدة، حيث تنقل الأفعال الكلامية رسالة الشاعر الأساسية بفعالية من خلال الأفعال التوجيهية السائدة، مدعومةً بالإقرارات والتعبيرات العاطفية. وتعمل هذه الأفعال كمحفزات تحث الجمهور على تجاوز انشغالاتهم الشخصية والتفكير في احتياجات الآخرين ورحلاتهم.

ومن خلال التأكيد على الترابط الإنساني، تفترض هذه الدراسة أن أفعالنا تحمل آثارًا تمتد إلى من حولنا. ومن خلال تحليل القصيدة، يتجلى فهم أعمق لاستخدام الأفعال الكلامية في الشعر، مما يوضح قدرتها على إثارة التعاطف والرحمة لدى المتلقي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** الأفعال الكلامية، علم التداولية، التعاطف، محمود درويش، جون سيرل

## Introduction:

Communication is a fundamental aspect of human existence, facilitating the exchange of ideas and enhancing the quality of life. Interpretation and comprehension of communication influence subsequent actions. This process occurs through both verbal and non-verbal cues. In this context, pragmatics examines how speakers convey words and statements within a particular context. As articulated by Leech 1983), pragmatics is concerned with the dynamics of communication situations.

According to (Taylor,1978, p.357), language possesses the power its users use to communicate with each other. This ability is frequently referred to as the Speech Act Theory, which focuses on the role of communication in the functions and actual acts performed by individuals. Every utterance a speaker makes is to execute an action, as per speech act theory (Allan, 1986, p. 164; Yule, 1996, p.47). (Cook, 1989, p. 35) contends that certain requirements must be met to accomplish an action through speech, which he refers to as "felicity conditions." Buck (2002) distinguished between verbal and nonverbal forms of communication. Verbal communication involves conveying messages through words, whereas nonverbal communication involves utilizing gestures, body language, eye contact, facial expressions, and overall appearance to transmit messages.

Furthermore, the concept of "Speech Act" encompasses more than the mere act of communication. Effective communication requires that both the speaker and listener share a common language and comprehend how that language is utilized in the communication process (Putri et al., & Fajri,2020, p.1886). The theory of speech acts is situated within the domain of pragmatics, a field that investigates the meaning of expressions that may deviate from the literal meanings of words or sentences due to contextual factors (Cumming, 2005; Thomas, 1995; Yule, 1996).

## 2. Speech Acts Theory

Speech Acts theory was initially introduced by Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein and subsequently refined by Oxford philosopher J. L. Austin in the mid-twentieth century. Austin developed the fundamental principles of speech acts theory in the late 1930s, which were articulated in his lectures at Oxford between 1952 and 1954, and further elaborated upon in his William James lectures at Harvard in 1955. These lectures were subsequently published in 1962 as "How To Do Things With Words," which exerted a significant influence on linguistics (Huang, 2007, p.93; Mey, 2001, p.92).

Seale (1969, p.16) posits that "Speaking a language is performing speech acts." This means that making assertions, giving commands, asking questions, and making promises are all considered speech acts. These behaviors are facilitated by specific rules governing language use. Linguistic acts are integral to communication because any form of linguistic communication serves a specific intention under certain conditions (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Chen, 1993).

Speech act inquiry plays an essential role in identifying the social and cultural rules that govern the realization of speech acts within a given speech community. Crystal (2008, p.424) defined speech as statements that serve various functions, such as requesting, welcoming, counseling, complaining, warning,

and persuading. In linguistics, these acts are used to construct a theory that examines the role of utterances in the behavior of speakers and listeners in interpersonal communication.

Austin (1962, p.101) classifies speech acts into three types: Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary.

Locutionary Acts refer to the actions of producing distinct sounds and words that form spoken language, following the grammatical structures of a specific language, and conveying precise meanings and references (Sadock, 2006, pp. 54,55).

An illocutionary act is accomplished by the communicative strength of a statement, such as making a promise, expressing regret, or extending an offer, which is also referred to as acting while speaking. Among the various levels of action in a speech act, the illocutionary act is of utmost importance as it is shaped by the intended meaning of the speakers and the specific force they wish to convey. Yule, 1996, p.48).

Perlocutionary Acts: Perlocutionary Acts are the results of speaking. These are acts performed through speech. As a result, they signify the consequence of an illocutionary act, such as convincing someone of the truth of a proposition or of the necessity of doing something (Sadock, 2006, p. 55).

### 3. Classification of speech acts

By speaking, the speaker can execute a specific action, such as informing, asserting, guessing, warning, threatening, or requesting. In other words, an illocutionary act (The Act of Doing Something) is an utterance that is utilized to do something in addition to saying or informing something (Levinson, 2001; Wijana, 1996). In this context, John R. Searle (1979:p.12) divides illocutionary acts into five functions: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative.

Assertives (or representatives)

The intention behind assertive speech acts is to bind the speaker to the truth of the statement. All forms of assertive speech acts can be evaluated based on whether they are 'true' or 'false.' Consequently, this category is defined by alignment with the concepts of truth and falsehood. The purpose of this class is for the speaker's words to match the state of the world, ensuring that the speaker accurately describes reality Assertive can be identified through specific speech act verbs such as remind, tell, assert, deny, correct, state, guess, predict, report, describe, inform, insist, assure, agree, claim, believe (Searle, 1979, p. 12).

### Directives

This category involves illocutionary intention, in which the speaker aims to persuade the listener to perform a certain action. The alignment is from the real world to spoken words. The core idea is that the listener will undertake a future action, and the condition of sincerity lies in expressions of 'want,' 'wish,' or 'desire.' Within this category, certain verbs belong, including 'ask,' 'order,' 'command, ' 'pray,' 'entreat,' 'permit," 'request,' 'beg,' 'plead, 'advise,' 'invite,' 'dare,' and 'challenge.' As they all represent the speaker's endeavor to prompt a response from the listener, questions are a subset of directives. (Searle, 1979, pp.13, 14).

### 1. Commissives

Commissives serve the purpose of causing the speaker to personally commit to accomplishing forthcoming actions. The essential message conveyed is that the speaker will perform a specific action in the future. The alignment between reality and expression is such that it is the world that influences words, and the underlying requirement for genuineness is the speaker's genuine intent. Instances in this category include promising, threatening, offering, refusal, and pledges (Searle, 1979, p.14).

### Expressives

The purpose of the expressive is to convey the speaker's emotional or mental state as mentioned in the content of the statement. In this category, there was no requirement for words to align with the reality of the world. Verbs that belong to the expressive include 'thank,' 'congratulate,' 'apologize,' 'condole,' 'deplore,' and 'welcome' (Searle, 1979, p.15).

### Declarations

The key to the effectiveness of this category lies in aligning the ideas expressed with actual reality or the real world, essentially bringing about changes in different situations. Excommunication, war declarations, christenings, and job termination are examples of such speech acts. "You are dead to me," for instance. (Searle, 1979, pp.16, 17)

### 4. Previous studies

Previous studies related to speech acts in Mahmoud Darwish include:

"The speech of peace"(1994) by Mahmoud Darwish. This article discusses the speech acts used in Darwish's poetry, particularly in his poem "The Speech of Peace." This article analyzes how Darwish uses speech acts to convey his message of peace and social justice.

"Reflecting on the Life and Work of Mahmoud Darwish" by Munir Ghannam (2009). This lecture discusses Mahmoud Darwish's life and work, including the use of speech acts in his poetry. The lecture analyzes how Darwish's speech acts contribute to his message of empathy and social consciousness.

"Darwish's 'Indian Speech' as Dramatic Performance: Sacred Space and Transformation" by Urban, J. K. (2006, February 15). The chapter analyzes the use of speech acts in Darwish's poem "Indian Speech." This chapter explores how Darwish uses speech acts to create a sense of sacred space and transformation in the poem.

"AN ANALYSIS OF SPEECH ACTS BY WOODY PRIDE IN THE MOVIE TOY STORY 3" by ISNANIAH (2015) found that Directive plays a significant role as the dominant type of illocutionary act within the film.

"A Study on the Use of Speech Acts" by Bayat, N. (2012). A Literature Review on the Research Progress of Speech Act Theory and Its Applications" by Leilei ZOU and Chunfang WU. 2023) These two articles comprehensively overview the speech act theory and its applications. While not specifically focused on Mahmoud Darwish's poetry, this review provides a useful background for understanding speech acts and their use in language.

### 5. Main corpora

"Think of the Others" by Mahmoud Darwish serves as the main corpus for this study, Mahmoud Darwish, a renowned Palestinian poet, authored this impactful piece, which has been translated into English by many translators, each with their    style of translation, the most famous translations are Hassan Hegazy's translation, this translation is distinguished by its fidelity to the original text while preserving the beauty of the Arabic language and was published on the Opera Egypt website (Opera Egypt, 2023,p. 3)

The poem holds significant weight, as it delves into the themes of compassion, humaneness, and cohabitation. Within its verses, Darwish prompts individuals to expand their perspective beyond self-concern and contemplate the needs and journeys of others. He advocates acknowledging the pain and ordeals faced by others, fostering empathy for challenges, and acknowledging our shared human identity. This poem underscores the value of solidarity and comprehension among individuals, surpassing barriers and distinctions.

### Research problem

This study seeks to address the gap in understanding how Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Think of the Others' employs linguistic strategies, particularly illocutionary acts, to convey its powerful message of

empathy, social responsibility, and justice. While much attention has been given to the thematic and emotional aspects of Darwish's work, there has been limited exploration of the specific types and functions of speech acts within his poetry. This study aims to fill this gap by systematically analyzing the illocutionary acts in "Think of the Others" based on John Searle's (1979) classification.

### 7. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to explore the speech acts used in Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Think of the Others" and to analyze how they contribute to the poet's message. This study aims to identify the different types of speech acts used in the poem, such as directives, assertions, and expressions of emotion, and to examine how they are used to encourage the listener to think beyond their concerns and consider the needs and experiences of others. The study also seeks to highlight the interconnectedness of all people and to explore how the use of speech acts in poetry can evoke empathy and compassion in the listener.

### 8. Research questions

1. What categories of illocutionary acts are found in Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Think of the Others" in terms of Searle's (1979) classification?

2. What specific functions do these illocutionary acts have in the poem context?

3. How does the interaction of several illocutionary acts improve the poem's overall effect on raising readers' awareness of social and ethical issues?

### 9. Method

Following a qualitative descriptive method, the content analysis technique was used to evaluate the data, which involved analyzing the content of the text and identifying patterns, themes, and meanings. Content analysis and Searle's (1979) taxonomy could be used to determine the different types of speech acts (representatives, directives, commissives, expressions, and declarations) used in the poem and to examine how they contribute to the poet's message.

### 10. Data Analysis

Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Think of the Others' employs a variety of speech acts to convey a strong message about social awareness, empathy, and responsibility. We applied John Searle's (1979) taxonomy of illocutionary acts. John Searle distinguished five categories of illocutionary acts: assertions, instructions, commissive acts, expressive acts, and declarations. An in-depth investigation of each stanza using an illustrative table is as follows:

**Table 1.** Illocutionary act analysis of Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Think of the Others"

| NO | Stanza | Type of illocutionary act | Category | Function |
|----|--------|---------------------------|----------|----------|
| 1 | When you prepare your breakfast, Think of the others | Directive | Advising | Encourages the audience to regard others in their daily lives. |
| 2 | do not forget the food Of the pigeon | Directive | Reminding | Emphasizes the significance of caring for all living beings. |
| 3 | When you wage your wars Think of the others | Directive | Advising | Encourages people to consider the implications of war on others. |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | do not forget who call for peace | Directive | Reminding | Highlights the importance of remembering peace advocates. |
| 5 | When you pay off The water bill Think of the others | Directive | Advising | Encourages empathy for individuals who do not have access to fundamental necessities. |
| 6 | do not forget who are sucking the clouds | Directive | Reminding | Focuses on the emphasis on the hardships of the less fortunate. |
| 7 | When go home …. your home Think of the others. | Directive | Advising | Encourages empathy for people without a place to call home. |
| 8 | do not forget the people in tents | Directive | Reminding | Identifies the situation of refugees and the destitute. |
| 9 | When you sleep and count the planets, Think of the others | Directive | Advising | Promotes mindfulness of others even in moments of peace |
| 10 | Some do not Find a place to sleep. | Assertive | Informing | Provides accurate information on the difficulties endured by others. |
| 11 | When you free yourself by metaphors and images Think of the others | Directive | Advising | Encourages consideration for individuals who do not have the freedom to express themselves. |
| 12 | who lost their right to talk | assertive | Informing | Highlights the injustice suffered by individuals who are silenced. |
| 13 | When you are thinking aboutThe others who are distantThink of yourself | Directive | Advising | Encourages self-reflection and interconnection. |
| 14 | say: I wish I were a candle In the darkness | Expressive | Wishing | Expresses a personal desire to spread light and hope to others. |

**Table 2. Statistical Distribution of Speech Acts**

| Type of illocutionary act | Number of Sentences | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Directives | 11 | 78.57% |
| Assertive | 2 | 14.29% |
| Expressive | 1 | 7.14% |

## 11. Findings

1-Predominance of Directives (78.57%):

- Building Empathy: Phrases like "think of others" and "do not forget" encourage readers to reflect on the struggles of others and promote a sense of social responsibility.

- Call to Action: The poem urges readers to not just reflect, but take proactive steps to consider the well-being of others.

- Raising Awareness: Directives such as "do not forget those who seek peace" draw attention to social and political injustices, encouraging readers to recognize the suffering around them.

    2-Presence of Assertives (14.29%):

- These provide factual grounding and reinforce the poet's message by illustrating real-world suffering, such as "some do not find a place to sleep," which emphasizes the urgency of Darwish's call for empathy.

    3- Inclusion of an Expressive Act (7.14%):

- The line "I wish I were a candle in the darkness" introduces an emotional layer, expressing the poet's desire to bring light and hope to others, fostering a deeper emotional connection between the poet and the reader.

### 12. Conclusions

This research examined Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Think of the Others' through the framework of Searle's (1979) classification of illocutionary acts, focusing on the types and functions of these acts within the poem. The analysis revealed that the poem predominantly employs directive acts (78.57%), supplemented by assertiveness (14.29%), and a single expressive act (7.14%). These findings highlight Darwish's strategic use of language to engage readers in moral reflection and social responsibility. Directives serve as powerful tools to prompt readers to consider the plights of others in various situations, fostering a sense of empathy and ethical awareness. The assertive statements provide the necessary factual grounding, making the directives more persuasive by highlighting real-world injustices and hardships. The expressive element adds emotional depth, allowing the reader to connect on a personal level with the poet's vision of hope and positive changes.

Overall, this linguistic analysis underscores the effectiveness of Darwish's communicative approach in "Think of the Others," demonstrating how the interplay of different types of illocutionary acts can enhance the poem's impact. By urging readers to think beyond their immediate experiences and consider the struggles of others, Darwish not only crafts a poignant piece of literature, but also contributes to a broader discourse on compassion, empathy, and social justice. This study illuminates the enduring relevance and power of Darwish's poetic voice in advocating for a more humane and conscious society.

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