



Pragmatic Manipulation of Advisories in Biblical Proverbs

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Abstract -In enunciating advisories, the speaker attempts to transfer an idea that carrying out a certain act will be in the interest of the addressee and beneficial to him/her. Biblical proverbs are often observed to be rich of various advisory speech acts (such as *advice*, *warn* and *urge*) as they are employed as a means of persuading or influencing people. The present paper aims at the exploration of the pragmatic manipulation of advisories mentioned above in proverbs taken from the Bible. The study concludes that warning and advising speech acts are more common than that of urging, and that the most salient trait that advisories enjoy is beneficiality; by advisories, hearers are asked to do a set of actions towards something beneficial (i.e. advice and urge) or to avoid something not beneficial for them (i.e. warning). Structurally, most advisories are realized by the use of declarative sentences, i.e. particularly, those pertinent to the speech act of advising, whereas some cases of warning and urging are realized by imperative sentences, as they give more powerful tone to the addressee to perform the action. However, warnings are often expressed in negatively valued constructions to expound the unhappy consequences of the act warned against.

Key Terms : Pragmatic Manipulation, Proverbs .

I. INTRODUCTION

Advisories, viewed as a certain group of directive speech acts, determine the speaker's credence that implementing a certain act is a good idea that it is in the addressee's advantage. Hence, the speaker wants to convey the intention that his/her belief must be taken as a motive to be performed by the addressee (Bach and Harnish 1979:48-49). Various types of advisories are employed in religious (Biblical) proverbs to articulate numerous functions. In these types of proverbs, advisories are used as a means to influence and guide people towards the righteous path of life. Traditionally, scholars (particularly pragmatics) have suggested different treatments for the behavior and realizations for advisories in different genres. Yet, in Biblical proverbs, advisories seem to behave and be structurally realized different from that suggested by those pragmatics. Hence, this paper is intended to investigate the employment of the speech acts of advisory in most common Biblical proverbs (those that are often used by people in their everyday conversations), focusing on their pragmatic manner and structural realizations.

II. SPEECH ACT THEORY

The origin of the term 'speech act' is a translation of the German term *Sprechakt* of Bühler 1934 (Lyons, 1977:726). Speech act theory was a reaction to a philosophical doctrine of logical positivism, which considers a sentence to have a meaning, if it can be verified in terms of truth or falsity, otherwise it is meaningless. The first creator who gives the seeds of the theory of Speech Acts is Austin (1962). He contends that people do not use language just to 'say' things, but to 'do' things. This directed him to develop a theory which looks at "what we 'do' when we speak, how we do them and how these acts succeed or fail". For him, the essential element of his study is not the word or even the sentence, but the act which a person achieves through the use of words and sentences. Acts, such as, commanding, promising, advising, apologizing, and so on, are called speech acts (Cooper, 1973: 190).

Later on, this theory was codified and developed by the American philosopher, John R. Searle, Austin's student. He was able to generalize the notion of speech acts to "cover all the utterances of the English language" (Searle, 1971: 40). He (ibid) maintains that "speaking a language is engaging in a rule-governed form of behaviour". That is, speaking a language is performing a certain speech act such as, providing a command, building a statement, inquiring a question etc. In correlation with Austin's view, Searle (1969:16) also believes that "the units of linguistic communication are not words, or sentences, but rather the

production of words and sentences in the performance of speech acts". Therefore, he describes speech acts as "the minimal units of linguistic communication."

By the same token, Saeed (1997:204) adds that for a certain speech act to be performed felicitously, it must meet two conditions: "interactivity and context dependence". Interactivity indicates that "communicating functions involve the speaker in a coordinated activity with other language users". For instance, the speech act of 'betting' can be only attained happily, when the interactants interact with one another. The act of betting cannot be achieved successfully ("I bet you five pounds he doesn't get elected") unless the second party replies with "You're on". Context dependence indicates the social conventions employed to upkeep the enunciation of a certain speech act. For instance, the utterance

"I sentence you to hang by the neck until dead",

must be uttered in a law court by a judge, when "he directs his utterance towards the criminal in the cage". Importantly, this act is, too, determined by conventions and social regulations (ibid: 205). One group of speech acts is advisories (as so called by Bach and Harnish 1979) which are often performed to bring about a kind of interest to the addressee.

III. ADVISORIES

Bach and Harnish (1979:48-49) categorize advisories as a subdivision of directives. In advisories, "what the speaker conveys is the idea that carrying out a certain act is a good idea, as it is in the interest of the addressee". For example, in warning the speaker warns the recipient against the occurrence of risk for him/her. Put another way, the speaker carries the intent that his belief is seen as a reason to be performed by the addressee. The perlocutionary purpose could be carried, as "the speaker is taken by the addressee to believe that the speaker is really has the attitudes that he states, and the addressee will execute the action". Hereafter, this paper aims to pragmatically examine the practice of three advisories (*advice, warning and urge*) as observed in the proverbs drawn from the Bible.

3.1 Advice

Austin (1962:151) categorizes the speech act of advice under the group of exercitives which involve "the exercising of powers". Based on the classificatory values proposed by Searle (1979:12) to categorize different speech acts, advice is considered as a directive speech act, as it has "the illocutionary point of making the addressee do something; its direction of fit is world-to-words; and the conveyed psychological state is that of 'want'".

Advisories are based on the transported message, what the speaker transports is a kind of belief to infer that "performing an act is a good idea", and it is in the addressee's benefit. Moreover, the speaker's intent is that "the addressee takes his belief as a reason to execute the act" (Bach and Harnish, 1979:48). In taking an 'advice', the speaker presumes that his estimation would be wanted; nonetheless it will not be identified. It may "experience knowledge or his personal relationship with the addressee" (Wierzbicka, 1987: 182).

For any speech act to be performed happily there must be certain conventional procedures (or appropriate circumstances) that this act must obey (Huang, 2007:104). The term 'felicity conditions' is taken to represent the suitable circumstances required for the issuance of a certain speech act to be identified as meant (Yule, 1996: 50). The typical framework placed by Searle (1969: 57-60) will be assumed as a model for the analysis of the speech act of advising which could be construed as:

"When a speaker S utters a sentence St to the hearer H, then, in the literal utterance of St, S, sincerely and non-defectively, advises the H, if the following conditions are met":

1. Propositional Content Conditions:

- a) "The speaker conveys the proposition of the sentence(s), he utters."
- b) "He anticipates a future act of the hearer."

2. Preparatory Conditions:

- a) "The speaker should be in a position, lets him put his utterance into action."
- b) "The speaker believes that the hearer is capable of performing the act."
- c) "The speaker believes that what he says is in the hearer's interest, and advantageous to him."
- d) It is not clear to both the speaker and the hearer that the hearer will execute the act."

3.Sincerity Conditions: "The speaker intends to benefit the hearer."

4. Essential Conditions: "The speaker should make the hearer realize that the speaker's utterance is beneficial for the hearer".(Searle, 1969:67)

3.2 Warning

According to Austin (1962:154-5), warning is deemed as "a category member of the main class of exercitives, which puts influence into effect," carried by verbs that bounce a judgment in "favour of or against an action". For Searle (1979:12) warning is a directive speech act which has "the illocutionary point of making the addressee do something; its direction of fit is world-to-words; and the conveyed psychological state is that of 'want' ". However, Bach and Harnish(1979, 48) labels warning as a member of advisories which are based on the transferred attitudes, what the speaker delivers is a sort of belief to assume"that performing an act is a good idea and it is in the addressee's interest". Additionally, the speaker's purpose is that the addressee sees the "speaker's belief as a reason to execute the act". In order to account for the pragmatic use of speech act of warning, Searle's felicity conditions should be taken into account, which can be interpreted as: (Searle, 1969: 57-60)

"When a speaker S utters a sentence St to the hearer H, then, in the literal utterance of St, S, sincerely and non-defectively, warns the H, if the following conditions are met":

1. Propositional content conditions:

- a) "The speaker conveys the proposition of the warning in his utterance."
- b) "The speaker anticipates that a future event will occur."

2. Preparatory conditions:

- a) "The speaker believes that the event is not in the hearer's interest."
- b) "It is not evident to the speaker and the hearer that the event will occur."
- c) "The speaker believes that the hearer can execute the required action."
- d) "The speaker has reasons to believe that the required action will be advantageous to the hearer, if it is performed."

3. Sincerity conditions:"The speaker wishes that the addressee executes the required action to avoid the event."

4. Essential Conditions:

- a) "There is a change of state by the speaker from the unbeneficial event to the beneficial one, if the hearer carries out the needed action."
- b) "The speaker attempts to make the hearer distinguish the speaker's intention that a future event will occur and be detrimental to the hearer."
(Searle, 1969:67)

3.3 Urge

Austin (1962:151) categorizes 'urge' under the class of exercitives which are concerned with "exercising of powers". Based on the classificatory values of identifying speech acts proposed by Searle (1979:12), urge is viewed as a directive speech act which exhibits the illocutionary goal of "making the addressee do something; its direction of fit is world-to-words; and the conveyed psychological state is that of 'want' ". However, Bach and Harnish (1979:48) categorize 'urge' under the category of the advisory speech acts.

'Urge' is different from other speech acts in a manner that it has the extra "preparatory condition that the speaker has reasons for the course of action urged". For example, if the speaker "urges the addressee to do something, he would be required to give reasons for the addressee to do that thing". For Searle and Vanderveken (1990: 200), urge is dissimilar to other directives, in a way that there is a matter of insistence and significance. Furthermore, Wierzbicka (1987: 61) explains that 'to urge' "means to get the addressee to do something". He adds that the manner of urging a person is as "forceful as that of someone who commands or orders, but the only sort of pressure he can utilize is psychological, as he has no power over the addressee". In this way, urge is "closer to 'demand' than to 'command' or 'order', but it is still far below 'demand' in strength" (ibid).

Based on Searle's (1969) felicity conditions, Ameen (2014:179-180) proposes the following principles for the happy execution of the illocutionary act of urge. For him, Urge can be construed in terms of the following regulations:

"When a speaker S utters a sentence St in the presence of the hearer H, then, in the literal utterance of St, S, non-defectively and sincerely, urges the H if the following conditions are met:"

1. Propositional content conditions:

- a) "The speaker conveys the proposition of the sentence(s), he utters."
- b) "The speaker anticipates a future act by the hearer."

2. Preparatory conditions:

- a) "The speaker is motivated and is more aware of the urgency of the case than the hearer."
- b) "The speaker has reason(s) for the act, he urges the hearer to do or comply."
- c) "There is frequently lethargy noticed on the part of the hearer."

3. Sincerity conditions: "The speaker intends to make the hearer realize that the case is urgent and that the hearer must not act lethargically."

4. Essential Conditions: "The speaker's utterance counts as a motivation to make the hearer execute the act urgently, and illustrates the speaker's understanding of the situation, and that the speaker has reasons for the act." (ibid)

IV. METHODOLOGY

This section is concerned with the methodology carried out in the pragmatic analysis of advisories in the selected religious proverbs; it involves three sub-divisions: method followed, data collection and the instrument exploited involving the model adopted for the investigation of the three advisory speech acts of advice, warning and urge in the data.

4.1 Method

For the method followed, the researcher employs a qualitative manner in his inquiry to designate and investigate the data and gain the obtained results. The qualitative exploration is applied to get a better

understanding of fundamental reasons, attitudes and impetuses; it intends to construct ideas and propositions giving response to the question raised "how are advisories pragmatically and functionally utilized in religious proverbs and how are they realized structurally?"

4.2 Data

Data collection involves 50 Biblical proverbs, realized as self-reliant in a way that their different grammatical constructions are fixed and cannot be replaced. Those proverbs are terse in meaning and are usually conveyed in succinct forms predicting complete meanings as determined by various (linguistic, social, historical, pragmatic, cultural, etc.) factors. However, religious Biblical proverbs in the current paper indicate those proverbs drawn from the Bible; those which primarily convey spiritual and divine importance and meaning and which guide people towards taking the virtuous pathway of God. Yet, when positioned in social circumstances, they turn out to be popular and common sayings and carry numerous sorts of meaning connected with the social positions in which they are manipulated. Actually, this collection of sayings is drawn from the holy writings of the religious conviction of world; they have acquired prevalent currency and acceptance and become universal expressions of wisdom. They are not only employed in religious settings but also in daily actions and proceedings.

In most cases, Biblical proverbs are metaphorically construed, usually in accord with the context in which they are put in and the speaker's intention which is determined by certain social and traditional norms and principles. Pragmatically, Biblical proverbs are manipulated to accomplish various verbal functions related to social issues in a society. Often, such proverbs are utilized to articulate humans' affinity to God, to convince others, advise and urge them towards taking an action ...etc.

A great number of proverbs originate from the Bible, specifically, the two books of *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes*, which primarily involve maxims about "the practical, intelligent way to conduct one's life. Psalms and other books from the Bible also contain pieces of advice". The Bible is deemed as a locus indication in the antiquity of proverbs, though people no more recognize the association between the Biblical proverbs and most collective proverbs; other religious proverbs have been revised in time (Tabarcea, 1982: 120-140).

4.3 Model of Analysis

With reference to didactic nature of religious proverbs, (i.e., they are held to express wisdom, morals, advice and warnings), they must be used to execute various pragmatic functions associated with social and divine messages. This fact is emphasized by Mieder (1999, p.7) who confirms that religious (Biblical) proverbs are often designated as "*wisdom expressed in a sentence*". Likewise, Paczolay (1995: 2) maintains that Biblical proverbs are attributed to people's "thoughts and wisdom"; they are essentially adjacent reflections of their spoken traditional wisdom. In sum, these proverbs are manipulated to enunciate various advisory functions (advising, urging people to take action or do something or warning them not to it). Hence, there should be a workable model by which advisories (advising, warning and urging) can be pragmatically analyzed in the selected Biblical proverbs. Consider the proposed model of the pragmatic analysis of advisories.

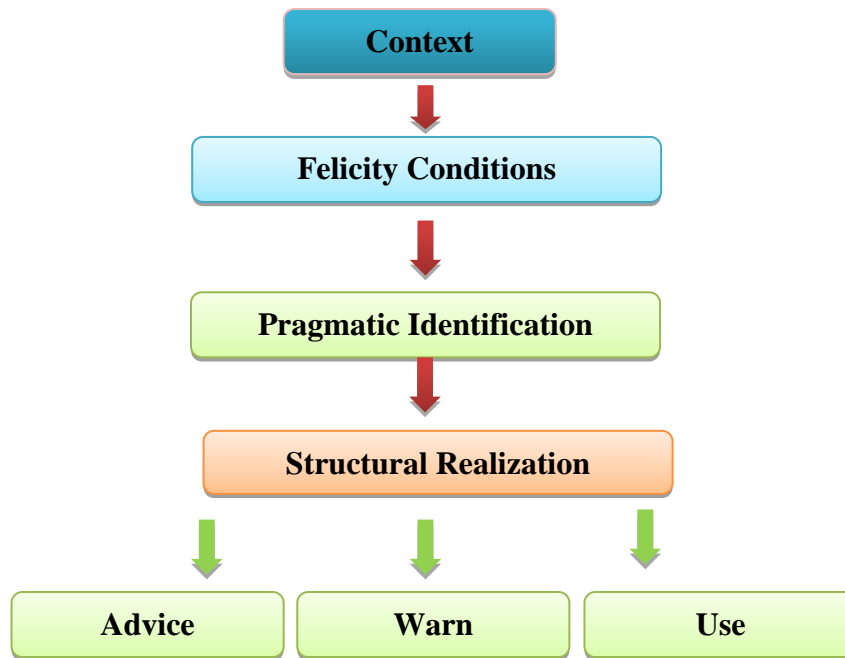


Figure: Proposed Model

Mainly, the pragmatic investigation of advisories necessitates two aspects: a practically workable practice for the identification and classification of speech acts plus the description of their linguistic realization. Relationally, the figure above illustrates that the pragmatic analysis begins with giving the contextual background surrounding the existence of the proverb amounting to felicity conditions utilized to identify advisory speech acts as *advise, warn or urge* and interpreting their pragmatic behavior. Finally, the structural realization of the nominated advisory is detected to give a satisfactory justification for this formal aspect.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

The significance of religious proverbs is meticulously allied to the didactic function that those proverbs exhibit in a society. Taylor (1975: 77f) clarifies that what differentiates this group of proverbs from the other groups of proverbs is that these proverbs are repeatedly manipulated by people "to express moral and instructional ideas with the help of moral expressions, rejecting vulgar and slang words". Relationally, religious proverbs usually assimilate wisdom intended to express educational meaning. This type of wisdom gives "moral advice based on personal experience together with practical advice gained from social observations of everyday life". That is, these proverbs are commonly originated to enunciate various pragmatic functions, among which are *advising, warning* and *urging*. The following pages are devoted to the exhibition of the pragmatic analysis of these speech acts of advisories in Biblical proverbs.

5.1 Advice

As for the speech act of advice, The Bible offers a lot of utterances in which the speaker directs the hearer to perform an action which is beneficial for him/her. Making use of the salient feature (i.e. Benefit), the following two examples of Biblical proverbs can be construed as issuing the advisory speech act of advice.

1- "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*" (Proverbs 1:7)

This proverbial utterance illustrates that for a man to be wise, the first thing he should do is to consider deferential and affectionate compliance to the Lord and His will, simply because He is the source of knowledge and information. Further, all knowledge stems from the upright association with the Lord. Originally, in the "Book of Proverbs" Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel, the author of those proverbs, particularly in uttering "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7) directs the attention of Israelites towards the point that the "knowledge and fear of the Lord" are the leading concepts of faith in the Old

Testament. However, this utterance expresses a suitable modesty of a pious man in the presence of the Lord. This saying has commonly been recognized and recurrently manipulated as it is grounded in a shared sense; it has regularly become an acquainted proverb observed in our social life (See Hahn 2003, Lesson: 1). From pragmatic perspective, since this proverb assumes wisdom and knowledge, it is essentially utilized to indirectly present the illocutionary act of advice. The speaker who articulates this proverb wishes to inform his addressee that God is the original donor of wisdom and knowledge, and the fear of Him is the principal prerequisite of faith. Hence, the illocutionary act of advice is communicated through the use of this proverb as highlighted by the existence of the characteristic of beneficiality. Put differently, this advisory act is initiated since earning wisdom and knowledge is to the best interest of the addressee. Structurally, this advisory act is indirectly expressed through the use of a declarative sentence accentuating the awareness that the fear of the Lord is recognized by the beginning of wisdom.

II- How forcible are right words! (Job vi:25)

This Biblical proverb is pertinent to the situation in which Job reprimands his friends, "Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar" for being untrustworthy and fraudulent as they let him down. He desperately proclaims that the distressed should be attended and sympathized by his friends. He becomes muddled and unhappy for he has never done any harm to them. He remorsefully contemplates "How forcible are right words!" His saying entails that however harsh reality is, one should tolerate it, for truthful words are normally sore; hitherto one should spell them (Gill, 1999).

Pragmatically, this proverb is articulated to indirectly issue the illocutionary act of advice through the employment of the exclamative utterance "How forcible...". Listener's obedience to the acclaimed future act of uttering truthful words is publicized to be advantageous for him/her since truthful words are forceful.

5.2 Warning

Warning, as an advisory illocutionary act, has also been observed in the selected data, by which the speaker guides his addressee to avoid doing an act which is not in the interest of the latter. Using the salient feature (i.e. non-beneficiality), two examples of Biblical proverbs have been designated to be pragmatically analyzed in terms of the advisory act of warning.

I. Judge not, that ye be not judged. (Matthew, viii :1)

This Biblical proverb is ascribed to a sermon given by Jesus (PBUH) to the people of Israel in which he guides them towards appropriately assessing others. He wants to elucidate that when a person is located in a position to assess others, he must be rational and fair in doing so, simply because one day he might be judged by others and wishes to be justly assessed. This Biblical saying has become a common maxim indirectly pointing to a warning to the judges to be meticulous in their verdicts. In other words, it is not beneficial for them to judge and assess others unjustly (Wilson, 2019).

Pragmatically, this proverb establishes an indirect illocutionary act of warning, as linked to circumstances whereby unpleasant opinions about others are barred. On the basis of the fact that the thing to be warned against is something unpleasant and even sometimes hazardous (judging others), this proverb is utilized to establish the advisory act of warning. In this warning, the speaker instructs his listener that something risky or malevolent might occur to him so that the latter can avoid it. What affirms the issuance of warning is that this proverb is featured by the trait of non-beneficiality to the addressee ("ye not be judged"). Structurally, this proverb is expressed through the use of negative imperative construction (Judge not...).

II. Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath. (Ephesians iv:26)

This Biblical proverbial saying is attributed to one important theme that Apostle Paul holds in his message to the saints of Ephesus is appeasing wrath. He remarks "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon thy wrath", clarifying that nothing is more ferocious than resentment and anger. Further, he adds that the fire that anger ignites may result in increasingly piercing disparity, simply because this rage abolishes his decision and spoils his conduct; the furious man is always trying to instigate a fight over a trivial issue. Placed differently, humbleness is essential in situations where a modest man recognizes how to justify others' faults, and how to placate his ferocity and smother the ignited fire, or perhaps, to turn anger away before it blazes up his body and soul (Bargerhuff, 2020).

In correlation with the above discussion, this proverb pragmatically enunciates the indirect illocutionary act of warning. Through the employment of the negative imperative sentence ("Let not..."), the speaker indirectly

asks the hearer to evade wrath since it is disagreeable and intolerable. The speaker, in this sense, believes that he has satisfactory reason to warn the hearer since the subsequent upcoming event is not only beneficial to the addressee but also to the entire society (i.e., by bullying peacetime). The speaker here feels that he is under religious and ethical responsibility to offer his warning as he wants that his words count as an act of advisory warning by the hearer.

5.3 Urge

Viewing the advisory speech act of urging (in Wierzbicka's words) as "a sort of psychological pressure on the addressee" (1987: 61), plentiful Biblical proverbs are utilized to exhort the addressee to do an action or comply with it, particularly, when there is an issue of persistence and importance. Based on the leading characteristics (i.e. speaker motivation, urgency of case, reason for executing the act), two examples of Biblical proverbs have been selected to be pragmatically analyzed in terms of the advisory act of urging.

I- Do as you would be done by. (Luke, vi: 31)(Matthew vii:12)

This extract is ascribed to Jesus' (PBUH) guidance to his groups exhorting them to treat others the way they would like others to treat him. This belief establishes the core of decent behaviour, which, if a believer did not comply to, he would be disciplined in respect to the Godly Laws, "for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew, v:17). Pragmatically, this proverb is exploited to enunciate the indirect speech act of urging, emphasized by the manipulation of the imperative expression "Do as you..." and featured by Jesus' motivation (as he sees that there is a reason for the act to be performed, the urgency of the issue concerned (treating others) which places "a sort of psychological pressure on the addressees" (Wierzbicka, 1987:61). Jesus, with respect of his responsibility as a leader, urges his followers to take an action of treating others decently. However, this advisory act of urging is structurally realized by the use of a complex sentence initiated by the imperative construction.

II- Honour thy father and thy mother. (Exodus xx:12 & Deuteronomy v:16)

Originally, the text of this proverb is credited to Moses (PBUH) who summons the Israelites for a congregation to enlighten them about the Biblical teachings. One of the great ten commandments that God endows Moses (PBUH) is that "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus xx:12 & Deuteronomy v:16). This fifth commandment (of honouring parents) has, since then, become a common proverb used by people in everyday life to evince a sort of responsibility that sons and daughters should witness towards their parents. From a pragmatic perspective, this proverb can be productively employed to issue the advisory illocutionary act of urging, since, in Ameen's (2014:80) term, "there is frequently lethargy noticed on the part" of the Israelites towards obeying this commandment. Moses (PBUH) is motivated and he is more mindful that there is an urgent case for Israelites to comply with this deed. In addition, Moses (PBUH) feels that this is a good reason for him to perform the act of urging them towards honouring parents. However, this proverbial saying is syntactically realized through the manipulation of imperative construction ("Honour thy...")

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The pragmatic analysis of the advisory speech acts in the data of fifty Biblical proverbs shows advising and warning speech acts are more common than that of urging. Further, the most noticeable characteristic that advisories enjoy is beneficiality; the happy accomplishment of the advisory acts (of advising, warning and urging) is based on the idea that these acts must be advantageous to the hearers first and to the whole society next. Specifically, advisory illocutionary acts, given by people of religious authority, are mainly manipulated in Biblical proverbs to achieve the function of asking addressees to do a set of actions towards something beneficial (i.e. advice and urge) or to avoid something not beneficial for them (i.e. warning). Additionally, advisories in these biblical proverbs are indirectly expressed to establish communications with people and to persuade them to comply with what they have been asked for. Structurally, most advisories are realized by the use of declarative sentences, i.e. those pertinent to the speech act of advising, whereas some cases of warning and urging are realized by imperative sentences, as they give more powerful tone to the addressees to perform the action. However, some cases of warning are realized by the use of negative imperative or negative declarative to stress the avoidance of performing an action which is non-beneficial to the hearer. Put another way, warnings are mostly expressed in negatively valued constructions to expound the unhappy consequences of the act warned against.

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