

Abstract

This study is aimed at discovering solutions to the questions whether speech acts arise by the speech texts performed in Buddhist and Catholic religious affairs in Sri Lanka? and if yes, what are their manifestations? based on the theories of pragmatics. Speech acts is a primary theory which is found in the sphere of pragmatics. If an act is done by speech, it is defined as a speech act. The relevant speech texts used in aforementioned religious activities were gathered by observations, investigating related literature and by consulting scholars and communicators. Pali stanzas and texts used in Buddhist religious activities and Catholic speech texts in the medium of Sinhala were selected in this study. Subsequently the speech acts which derive from these data were categorized under the classification of speech acts in pragmatics; representative speech acts, directive speech acts, commissive speech acts, expressive speech acts and declarative speech acts. By using this approach the aptness of considering the aforementioned religious speech texts as speech acts was researched in a pragmatic point of view. With reference to the theory of speech acts introduced by J L Austin which later has been developed by J R Searle, it is apparent that even though they have discussed speech texts in relation to the general usage of respective languages, a study focusing religious affairs has not been conducted to date. Due to that, this research could be considered as the first attempt which focuses on speech acts related to religious affairs. This study has distinguished how speech acts derive from the speech texts performed in Buddhist and Catholic religious affairs. Similarly the researcher has identified several speech acts which have not been addressed or discussed by linguists worldwide. This research is beneficial for scholars who are engaged in Sinhala as a second language studies and students who are learning Sinhala as a second language, linguists and language researchers, translators, authors, educationists, language education system planners, language lovers and anyone who is interested in language.

Keywords: Meaning, Pragmatics, Sentence, Religious affairs, Speech acts, Speech text, Utterance