

# A Pragmatic Study of Preaching in Religious Texts

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**ABSTRACT:** Preaching is the communication of truth. There are two essential elements: truth and personality. Preaching is multifaceted. It involves both the Bible and the Holy spirit. Words consider as one of the main aspects of preaching. This study has set itself the task of analyzing preaching in the Holly Qur'an 'Surah Luqman'. The study aims at the following: finding out the pragmatic meaning of preaching in Luqman Surah, identifying the pragmatic structure of preaching in Luqman Surah, pinpointing the pragmatic strategies that are used to issue preaching in Luqman Surah, and identifying the functions of preaching in Luqman Surah. It hypothesizes: preaching is the act of persuading others to do good deeds and avoiding sins, preaching in Luqman Surah is a process with stages. The researchers developed a model to analyze the pragmatic strategies of preaching in Luqman Surah. The analysis shows that preaching is the act of communicating divine truth to people. Furthermore, it is found that preaching is achieved via three stages.

**KEYWORD:** Pragmatics, Preaching, Religious Text, Surah Luqman'.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. The Problem

Preaching is the act of communicating divine truth to your people. It is the most important calling on earth. It is proclaiming the truth, God's Holy Word (Kohl, 2000: 3). Many studies have tackled preaching pragmatically, grammatically, logically, dialectically, but still it has not been given its due attention. Therefore, this study has set itself the task of analyzing preaching in the Holly Qur'an and answering the following questions:

1. What is the pragmatic meaning of preaching in Luqman Surah?
2. What is the pragmatic structure of preaching in Luqman Surah?
3. What are the pragmatic strategies that are used to issue preaching in Luqman Surah?
4. What are the functions of preaching in Luqman Surah?

### 1.2. The Aims of the Study

1. Finding out the pragmatic meaning of preaching in Luqman Surah.
2. Identifying the pragmatic structure of preaching in Luqman Surah.
3. Pinpointing the pragmatic strategies that are used to issue preaching in Luqman Surah.
4. Identifying the functions of preaching in Luqman Surah.

### 1.3. The Hypotheses of the Study

1. Preaching is the act of persuading others to do good deeds and avoiding sins.
2. Preaching in Luqman Surah is a process with stages.
3. Preachers prefer certain strategies than others to issue preaching.

4. There are two functions for preaching in Luqman Surah; religious and social.

#### 1.4. The Procedures of the Study

1. Surveying the literature about preaching.
2. Developing a model to analyze the pragmatic structure of preaching in Luqman Surah.
3. Developing a model to analyze the pragmatic strategies of preaching in Luqman Surah.

#### 1.5. The Limits of the Study

This study is limited to identifying preaching pragmatically, finding out the pragmatic structure and strategies and functions of preaching in Luqman Surah.

#### 1.6. The Value of the Study

It is sincerely hoped that the present study will be of some benefit to those involved in pragmatic fields, students concerned with applied linguistics and its principles and anyone interested in linguistic aspects. This study tries to bridge the gaps left in the studies of preaching hoping to help those interested in answering their questions.

### 2. Literature Review

#### 2.1. Preaching: Definition and Functions

Preaching is the act of advising others to do good things and to run a perfect way of life and to worship God as He deserves. Preaching is often done by people who are specialists in this regard; they are often referred to as preachers. They do preaching according to certain rules and regulations (Mace, 2000: 7).

Mace (ibid) states that there are two main functions for preaching; religious and social. The religious function of preaching is to declare the word of God and the commands of his prophets. The social function of preaching is to guide people in the right way.

#### 2.2. Preacher –Hearer Relationship

A wisdom focus in preaching yields an open relationship between preacher and hearer that confers the same title upon both speaker and listener: The preacher functions as a wise observer of life and models that role in the stand, empowering listeners to claim that role for themselves as they continue their God-guided search for wisdom in daily life.

The stage serves as a role model for the wisdom that has traditionally been denied formal entrance to public life. The knowledge that stages may need to be disobedient to the existing quo in order to be true to the gospel helps hitherto suppressed groups to find their voice in the Scriptures and in modern life (Mckenzie, 2012: 23).

#### 2.3. The Pragmatic Structure of Preaching

The development of the act of preaching involves many stages to be accomplished. As any process preaching moves across different steps. These steps are necessary for this process to be finished (Mace, 2000: 56).

These steps are as follows:

##### 2.3.1. The Initiating Stage

This stage represents the introduction of the preaching process where the preacher prepares the recipient to be able and ready to get what he wants him to get. Preachers often prepare their audience by greeting them or thanking God and praising his Prophets and calculating his merciful blessings. Some of them start preaching by mentioning a certain religious story or social story that is talking about the theme of what they want to preach about. Others may tend to speak about themselves and how they are straight in life. And other preachers may refer to the Holy Books and their words, while others may prefer to refer to God worshippers and their great deeds. Some preachers mention sinners and their bad deeds and how God cursed them as a result of such deeds (ibid: 60).

### 2.3.2. The Preaching Stage

It is at this stage that preaching occurs. Preaching is the primary task of those involved in religious tasks. The 'act' of preaching, or what is sometimes called preaching, is considered as distinct from the sermon. Now this matter of the delivery is, once more, very difficult to define. It is certainly not a matter of rules or regulations; and much of the trouble arises because people do regard it as a matter of instructions and rules and regulations, of dos and don'ts (Jones, 1972: 567).

The challenge is actually communicating our definition in words. One can tell when someone is preaching when they hear it. Therefore, the most we can do is to make a few statements about it. No closer than that can we get. When you hear authentic teaching, certain things must be true and present. The preacher's entire personality must be taken into consideration. The key idea in Phillips Brooks' well-known concept of preaching is that "truth is conveyed through personality." Preaching should encompass all of one's faculties, the entire person, and even the body, according to the idea that it should be involved. (ibid).

It is at this stage that the preacher tells the audience what they should do and what they shouldn't. He often resorts to rhetoric to be more effective in preaching and to make them obey him to the letter. The preacher at this stage may use illustrations, eloquence and humor (ibid).

### 2.3.3. The Ending Stage

At this stage, preachers end their preaching in different ways. Some end their preaching with a description, statement of facts, praising the listeners, repetition of preaching, threat, order, emphasizing the sin, or mentioning what God wants or hates (ibid).

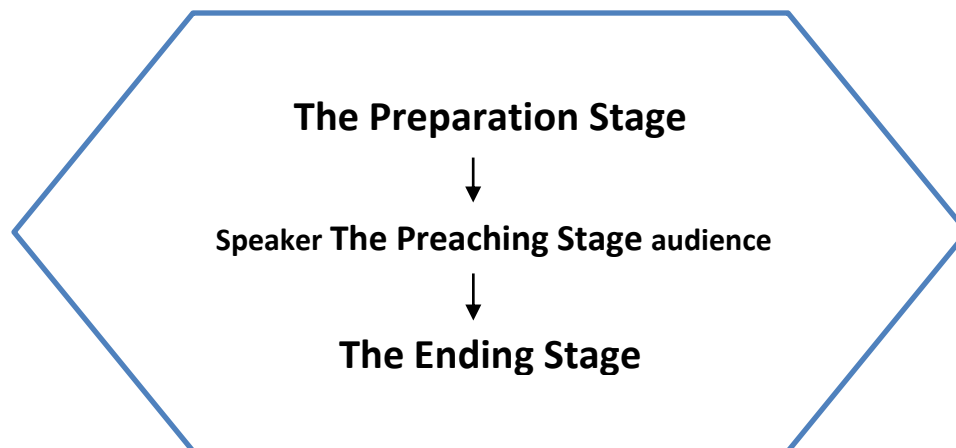


Figure (1): The Pragmatic Structure of Preaching

## 2.4. The Pragmatic Strategies of Preaching

Each stage of preaching development is actualized by certain strategies:

### 2.4.1. Pragmatic Strategies of the Initiating Stage

The first stage of preaching development is realized by a number of strategies like:

#### 2.4.1.1. Speech Act Strategies

Many speech acts are employed by preachers at the preparation stage like:

1. The speech act of Greeting
2. The speech act of describing
3. The Speech act of thanking
4. The speech act of praising
5. The speech act of telling

#### 2.4.1.2. Rhetorical strategies

Preachers and public speakers frequently employ the rhetorical devices ethos, pathos, and logos. The rhetorical methods known as modes of persuasion, sometimes known as ethical strategies or rhetorical appeals, categorise the speaker's appeal to the listener. They are the less common kairos, ethos, pathos, and logos.

According to Aristotle's Rhetoric, persuasion is plainly a form of demonstration because we are most convinced when we believe something has been shown (Natalie, 2002: 89).

There are three kinds of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word: Firstly, persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech was so spoken as to make us think him credible. Secondly, persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions. Thirdly, persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question (ibid).

#### 2.4.2. Pragmatic Strategies of the Preaching Stage

This stage is realized by two types of strategies: speech act strategies and rhetorical strategies. Speech act strategies are:

##### 2.4.2.1. Speech Act Strategies

1. The speech act of warning
2. The speech act of ordering
3. The speech act of humor

##### 2.4.2.2. Rhetorical Strategies

The rhetorical strategies utilized by preachers at this stage are:

1. Appeal to Authority
2. Appeal to pity
3. Appeal to fear

##### 2.4.2.3. Pragmatic Strategies of the Ending Stage

The pragmatic strategies of the ending stage of preaching development are: description, statement of facts, praising the listeners, repetition of preaching, threat, order, emphasizing the sin, or mentioning what God wants or hates. There are certain speech act strategies at this stage:

1. Speech act of supplication
2. Speech act of threat
3. The speech act of praising

Figure (2) below shows the pragmatic model of analyzing preaching in Luqman Surah:

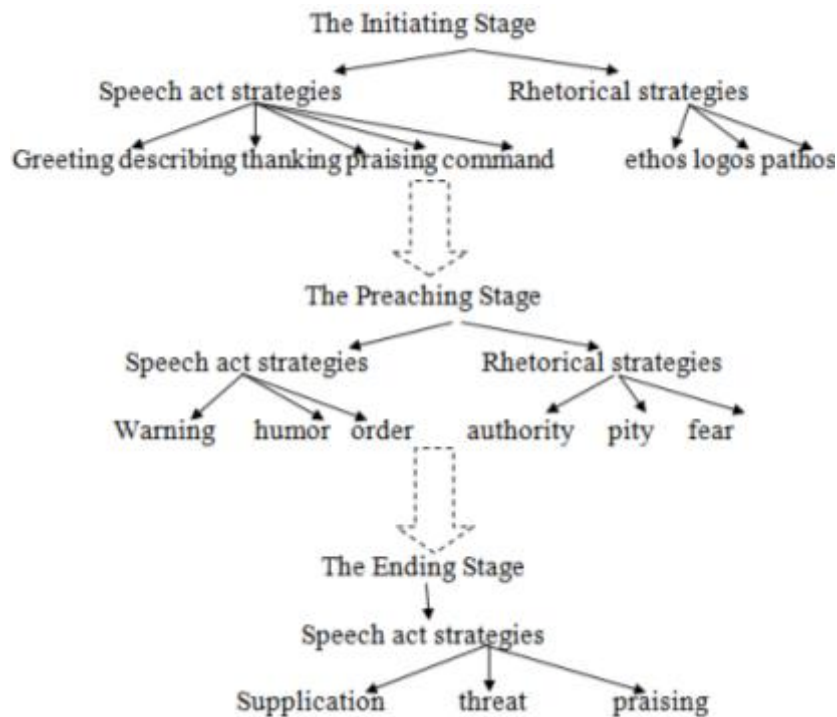


Figure (2): The pragmatic model of analyzing preaching in the Holly Qura'n

### 3. Data collection, Description and Analysis

#### 3.1. Data Collection and Description

The data collected for the analysis is represented by some verses taken from Luqman Surah, they are in fact six verses. This is because only six verses of the whole Surah contain preaching.

The data under analysis are characterized by variation in that some of them are conversations others are narrations. Some are long situations others are short ones.

#### 3.2. Selected Examples for the Pragmatic Analysis

In the present study, only some illustrative examples are presented for analysis. This is because analyzing all texts representing the data will occupy a large space:

##### *Text (1)*

**In the Name of Allah the most Gracious and most Merciful And (remember) when Luqman said unto his son, when he was exhorting him: O my dear son! Ascribe no partners unto Allah. Lo! to ascribe partners (unto Him) is a tremendous wrong**

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ (13)

In this verse of the Surah, the preacher is the prophet Luqman. He is conversing with his son in a way of preaching him to make him worship God and not to ascribe partners with God.

In this type of preaching, the preacher skipped the first stage. He started directly with the preaching stage using the speech act of ordering in his attempt to guide his son in the right way "يا بني لا تشرك بالله". The other pragmatic strategy used by the preacher is appeal to fear. He tries to terrify his son when he appealed to his fear by saying "ان الشرك لظلم عظيم".

The third stage of preaching is also skipped by Luqman for rhetorical reasons.

*Text (2)*

**And We have enjoined upon man concerning his parents. His mother beareth him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Give thanks unto Me and unto thy parents. Unto Me is the journeying.**

**31:14**

In this text, the preacher is Allah; he is addressing humans in general. The preparation stage in this preaching is actualized by the speech act strategy of command "ووصينا الانسان بوالديه" and the strategy of description when the preacher describes how mothers suffer in pregnancy and giving birth to the children and the suffering of breast feeding. All these strategies actualize the preparation stage.

The preaching stage is represented by the speech act strategy of order "ان اشكر لي و لوالديك" and the rhetorical strategy of appeal to pity when the preacher appeals to the addressee feeling of pity towards his parents and especially towards his mother.

The ending stage of preaching is represented by the speech act strategy of threat. This is done when God threatens people that there will be an end for everything and he will be the only judge. In this text, all the three stages of preaching are used skillfully and in a very beautiful way in order to advice people to respect their parents and to enable them to realize the big amount of respect that Allah orders humans to give to their parents.

*Text (3)*

**But if they strive with thee to make thee ascribe unto Me as partner that of which thou hast no knowledge, then obey them not. Consort with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who repenteth unto Me. Then unto Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what ye used to do. 31:15**

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (15)

In this preaching, the preacher is God addressing humans. He starts the preparation stage with description of the act that may be done by parents to press their sons to ascribe partners to God.

The preaching stage is actualized by the speech act strategy of command. He commands them not to obey their parents in the case mentioned above (when the parents don't obey God and do not follow His instructions) and to live with them thankfully and indebted for what they have done. The preacher warns not to hurt them or causing any pain for them.

The last stage is represented by the speech act strategy of threat. The preacher is threatening them that their destiny will be fearful if they do not obey him.

*Text (4)*

**O my dear son! Establish worship and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity, and persevere whatever may befall thee. Lo! that is of the steadfast heart of things.**

**31:17**

يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ أَنْ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ (17)

In this text, the preacher starts his preaching skipping the preparation stage and starting with the preaching stage. The preaching stage is opened with two strategies: the speech act strategy and the rhetorical strategy.

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The speech act strategy is represented by the speech act of command repeated three times in this verse. The rhetorical strategy is represented by the strategy of appeal to authority since the preacher has the authority to command the addressee.

The third stage, the ending stage, is actualized by the speech act of praising. This praise is not for the addressee himself but for the deeds commanded by God to be done.

#### 4. Conclusion and findings

1. Preaching is the act of communicating divine truth to your people. It is the most important calling on earth. This finding achieves the first aim and verifies the first hypothesis. This study reveals the great advantages of the act of preaching in every aspect of life.
2. There are three stages of preaching: the starting stage, the preaching stage and the ending stage through which the preacher does the act of preaching others to do or not doing something. This finding fulfills the second aim of the study and verifies the second hypothesis.
3. Preachers tend to use different strategies in preaching. This finding fulfills the third aim of the study and verifies the third hypothesis.
4. Religious functions are the main functions of preaching in Luqman surah more than any other functions. This finding fulfills the fourth aim of the study and verifies the fourth hypothesis.

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