



THE USAGE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ANATHEMA IN SOCIETY

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Annotation

This article gives an account of the usage and interpretation of a speech act – anathema. Brief information about speech acts and strong tendencies provided by distinguished scholars is mentioned. Moreover, the article presents an investigation conducted among groups of people working and studying in educational establishments together with its methods, results, findings and conclusion. The origin of the term and its meanings in various periods of time are explained clearly. Situations where units expressing anathema and their pragmatic degrees, types are highlighted. Customs expressing curses by some nations are given as an example.

Key words: anathema, curse words, accurse, annul, invalid, Pope, heretics, liturgical meaning, church officials, speech acts, negative, positive

Introduction.

There is an irrefutable proof that words have power not only influencing on speaker's or listener's mood, but also changing the fates and the world. Lots of people in the past mentioned that words are more powerful than actions, religions state that people should always use words with positive meanings even thoughts are recommended to be good as any word we think and we speak has a certain degree of potential. Recently science has established a connection between words and plants, when the plants are told pleasant words they blossom, when they are cursed, the death comes to them, the same experiment is carried with words and water and the consequences are the same with the initial one. So, the interest towards learning words and their influence has been increasing among scientists and aphorisms told by philosophers and ancestors are being proven to be reasonable.

Literature review

Anathema is considered as a type of speech acts which are the main concern of pragmatics. Speech act theory has been investigated since 1950s and the distinguished scholar who classified speech acts as declaratives, commissives, representatives, directives and expressives was Searle. Each of those classes expresses certain meanings such as describing, predicting, threatening, refusing, vowing, requesting, inviting or praising, congratulating and so on. Joan Cutting writes (2002) that there are limitations while we are trying to categorize utterances because one utterance can belong to more than one class. The linguist attempts to prove the idea by giving example from the literary work Lord of the Flies: "They are all dead", said Piggy, "an this is an island. Nobody don't know we're here. Your dad don't know, nobody don't know"-

His lips quivered and the spectacles were dimmed with mist. "We may stay here till we die". J.Cutting says that although this is a representative speech act depicting the present state that the boy has found that they are alone on the island and his emotions are expressed by describing his lips and spectacles.

J. Cutting also notes that speech acts and their interpretations are culturally different. She says that in some countries where weight is regarded as the sign of wealth and health, saying to a person that he or she is fat expresses praising or congratulations. Whereas in prosperous countries that utterance is considered rudeness or criticism. (1, 21-22)

According to N. Sulaymonova (2023), "...any type of speech acts can have either positive or negative meaning". So, from this perspective, speech acts can be classified into two main categories: speech acts denoting positive pragmatic meaning and having negative qualities. Positive speech acts are used when there are benefits meeting a person's or communities requirements, events appearing to be pleasant for people, while negative speech acts are in use when something is not complete, or anything wrong and harmful happens, which are detrimental for society and inappropriate to accepted social norms. According to her, positive speech acts include praise, advice, congratulations, invitations, gratitude, approvals and negative speech acts constitute reprimands, insulting words and phrases, irony, boasting and cursing. (4.175)

Anathema is the speech act which is rarely investigated. Only a little information can be found in this sphere, in Wikipedia the history and the origin of anathema is clarified: The term is taken from Ancient Greek word and means "an offering" or "something dedicated". In Old Testament items for divine usage and intended to destruction for the sake of Lord are mentioned as "dedicated to evil" or "a curse". Such items can be either enemies who are considered unholy or their weapons.

It was St.Paul who used the term to refer a curse and expunged one from Christians community. By the 6th century liturgical meaning had developed and introduced for heretics by a Pope or church officials.

In Rome it was Eastern Patriarch who was issued an anathema in 1054 and in 1526 the word anathema was first observed in modern English as something accursed. (6)

Anathemas are devoted to people who disobey the religious and cultural norms of society, users desperately want receivers to face troubles and misfortunes in their lives on earth and be sent to hell after death. (3, 94)

The usage and influence of anathema remains mysterious and appealing even in the era of technological and scientific advances. The power of words has always been mentioned both by the folk and writers.

In the Uzbek language it is a folklore genre wishing hardships and death to a person. The word "anathema" is translated as "qarg'ish", derived from Turkish verb "qir/qar" meaning "to curse". M.Koshgariy wrote in his "Devonulug'otutturk" that it is the usage of the word "qirg'a" in an angry way. According to the dictionary of ancient Turkish words it means "to scold, to admonish" derived from the verb "qirg'a". Today, "qir" means "destroy, wipe out", it has the same root with the word "qirg'in" – massacre.

Anathemas can be observed in all nations' folklore. Therefore, the meaning, form and poetic aspects of curse words in different cultures are similar, they came from the unique root – notions related to the magic features of words. Curse words came into existence on the base of people's fear from magic words. There are some kind of social circumstances for anathemas to be used, they are never used without a reason. For instance, if a person takes offence, grieves, is angry at someone, they accuse those people who have made them feel sorrow.



Usually, curses are pronounced by adults, mostly by women. It is not common among children. People are afraid of being cursed and because there is strong belief that curses have adverse impact on receivers and they bring negative consequences.

Anathemas can be different based on the sender's age, life experience, emotional state and purpose, status in family: affecting the person and not affecting the receiver. The former one is usually pronounced by the elders, fathers, people getting the custody, or migrants, the poor and oppressed, while the latter is uttered by mothers, termagants who quarrel without any reason.

In the article "Pragmatic functions of units expressing curses" (Anatem mazmunli birliklarning pragmatik vazifalari), I mentioned that as complaints anathem units can be either direct or indirect, the former of which is intended a special person or a group of people conveying strong hatred while the latter may not be directed to a specific person or even if it has an exact receiver it may be uttered as a weak carpeting or even it may be a fixed expression in addresser's speech. Indirect anathem units do not mean to curse, they can be repeatedly used by addressers to provide with emotional release or just a wiggling, they do not plan to change the existing situation for the better side, they serve only to escape from emotional wreck or to supply with mental rest, such kind of units are utilized among people whose social status are the same or close to one another's. (2, 38)

In the past curses were performed as a ceremony, traces of such ceremonies can be seen when a person is accursing by striking the earth by their fists, or holding anything holy in their hands. According to Valikhonov Ch., the Kyrgyzs have a custom looking up the sky and licking their nails while using curses.

People believed that a person could anathematize others and annul them as well, they used some utterances to do it such as:

"If I have swallowed it, let it be digested, if I have intended, let it influence on my hands, if I have scolded, let it affect on me, if I have accursed, let it be in my stomach, let sables take it away, let it fly away with winds, let it strike on rocks, let it go away from my curse!"

It was believed that those utterances would weaken the consequences of curses. It is noticeable that not all curses could be annulled, only the ones pronounced unfairly against a person could be made invalid. (5)

Methods

In order to identify the role of anathema in today's society, a questionnaire containing 9 questions and three options for each was designed. They are:

1. What emotional meaning can be perceived by the word "curse"?
2. What is your attitude to using anathema in literary works?
3. Is there any positive meaning in anathema?
4. Can curse words enrich the lexis of the language?
5. Does anathema belong to the ethnic -literary stem of that nation?
6. Do you use curse words in your daily life?
7. In what situations do you use curse words?
8. What do you think about the influence of curse words on receivers?
9. Does using curse words illustrate that the nation is uncultured?

Participants

Teachers and students of Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, teachers of academic lyceum of Samarkand State University were involved. They were asked to choose



any option given in the questionnaire. The number of participants were 17-18 from each group.

Results

After collecting the data, the results were observed, the findings are given below in the table.

N	Question	a	b	c
1	What emotional meaning can be perceived by the word "curse"?	Definitely negative, because they discourage people	It depends on the context	I have no idea
	Teachers of lyceum	72%	28%	0%
	Teachers of SamSIFL	78%	22%	0%
	Students of SamSIFL	67%	33%	0%

N	Question	a	b	c
2	What is your attitude to using anathema in literary works?	The reader may get bored	It makes the play authentic and alive	I do not read any literary works
	Teachers of lyceum	12%	82%	6%
	Teachers of SamSIFL	11%	83%	6%
	Students of SamSIFL	6%	94%	0%

N	Question	a	b	c
3	Is there any positive meaning in anathema?	Yes	No	I do not know
	Teachers of lyceum	35%	59%	6%
	Teachers of SamSIFL	44%	50%	6%
	Students of SamSIFL	44%	50%	6%

N	Question	a	b	c
4	Does anathema belong to the ethnic -literary stem of that nation?	Yes	No	I do not know
	Teachers of lyceum	76%	24%	0%
	Teachers of SamSIFL	89%	11%	0%
	Students of SamSIFL	50%	50%	0%

N	Question	a	b	c
5	Can curse words enrich the lexis of the language?	Yes	No	I do not know
	Teachers of lyceum	65%	35%	0%
	Teachers of SamSIFL	78%	22%	0%
	Students of SamSIFL	38%	62%	0%



N	Question	a	b	c
6	Do you use curse words in your daily life?	Yes	No	Sometimes
	Teachers of lyceum	19%	56%	25%
	Teachers of SamSIFL	39%	44%	17%
	Students of SamSIFL	19%	75%	6%

N	Question	a	b	c
7	In what situations do you use curse words?	Usually, because they are a part of the lexis of the language	When I am emotional wreck	Never
	Teachers of lyceum	6%	41%	53%
	Teachers of SamSIFL	11%	67%	22%
	Students of SamSIFL	13%	47%	40%

N	Question	a	b	c
8	What do you think about the influence of curse words on receivers?	They are highly influential	They are not so influential	They have no influence
	Teachers of lyceum	70%	12%	18%
	Teachers of SamSIFL	53%	41%	6%
	Students of SamSIFL	52%	45%	3%

N	Question	a	b	c
9	Does using curse words illustrate that the nation is uncultured?	Yes, definitely	No, it is a part of a nation's culture	I have no idea about this statement
	Teachers of lyceum	32%	47%	21%
	Teachers of SamSIFL	44%	56%	0%
	Students of SamSIFL	82%	18%	0%

Findings

It can be seen from the table that the majority are likely to have negative feeling and mood when they hear curse words, while some of them think that anathema may express positive connotation.

Regarding using anathema in literary works, most participants consider it to be appropriate since they make works more authentic. In terms of the meaning anathema expresses, lots of participants agree that they have not any kind of positivity. While majority teachers believe that curse words constitute the stem of the language, while half of the participating students do not agree with them. Differences between participants' answers can be seen in the question whether curse words contribute to the richness of the vocabulary of the language, students think that they do not have any role in this field. According to the questionnaire,



people try not to use curse words in their everyday speech, however it is nearly impossible avoiding them when they are in a bad mood. The efficiency of curse words is believed to be strong by more than half of the participants. Unlike teachers, students consider using curse words shows the nation's low level of culture.

Conclusion

Although there is no strong belief of the influence of curse words, people try to avoid not using or being receivers. While bringing up young generation, adults keep on educating their offspring so that they will not consume of such bad terms. It is considered to be inconsiderate to use anathema in the civilized world, since their meaning has impact on people's spirits. Therefore, people who consider themselves as educated citizens should be careful using such lexical items. Anathemas as lexical units have different pragmatic levels such as direct and indirect, while using indirect type is regarded as fixed expressions in someone's speech causing no harm to receivers, direct type serves to show negative feelings such as hatred and dislike towards people who have done something wrong or evil. It should also be noted that if the receiver is innocent and a victim of slander, the influence of curse words on that person will be powerless.

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