

El pésame como acto discursivo enunciativo *Condolences as a discursive act of enunciation*

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Recibido: 13 de octubre de 2022

Aceptado: 19 de enero de 2023

Resumen

El artículo aborda el tema del pésame como acto discursivo enunciativo, el cual constituye un problema para los individuos en la sociedad, acentuado en el contexto pandémico vivido. Tiene como objetivo exponer variantes de expresiones que conducen al ofrecimiento del pésame o condolencia a personas dolientes. Toma en cuenta el dominio de las estructuras lingüísticas, su contenido semántico emocional y su uso en la praxis, implica desarrollo cognitivo, comunicativo, social y espiritual, articulado con lo afectivo - emocional -específico. El método fundamental utilizado ha sido la observación y la lectura de enunciados leídos por diferentes medios. Los principales resultados se concretan en enunciados que favorecen el intercambio verbal y no verbal.

Palabras clave: Discurso; Lenguaje; Comunicación; Pésame; Acto; Enunciativo; Interactivo

Abstract

The article deals with the topic of condolences as an enunciative discursive act, which constitutes a problem for individuals in society, accentuated in the pandemic context experienced. It aims to expose variants of expressions that lead to the offering of condolences or condolences to mourners. It takes into account the mastery of linguistic structures, their emotional semantic content and their use in praxis, involving cognitive, communicative, social and spiritual development, articulated with the affective - emotional - specific. The fundamental method used

has been the observation and reading of statements read by different means. The main results are statements that favor verbal and non-verbal exchange.

Keywords: Speech; Language; Communication; Condolence; Act; Statement; Interactive

Introduction

Language is the essential means of cognition and communication, it includes the fundamental functions: noetic and semiotic. The thought - language relationship is materialized in discourse, in which ideas, criteria and concepts (content) are embodied, which require a form determined by a context that allows the subjects to be able to participate in it. In this process of interaction, new contributions to the interpretation and construction of messages emerge. Thus, communication is placed in a broad and integrating interpretative framework.

Since ancient times, man has been concerned with the study of language and its structures, but has not always seen it as part of the meaning of a specific speech act, in correspondence with the communicative situation in which the particular utterances and the discourse as a whole are produced.

The teaching of discourse has been introduced at all educational levels because it reveals the elements involved in communication. Communication consists of an act through which an individual establishes contact with another individual that allows him/her to transmit information involving: sender and receiver.

The sender is the one who provides the information. The source from which the messages emanate. The receiver is the one who receives the information. The message is the content of the communication. This message circulates through a channel by means of a code that is in the domain of both: sender and receiver.

Addressing discourse at all educational levels is in line with the most current conceptions of linguistic science through the development of a new approach that studies discourse structures in communicative situations in different contexts. However, in practice, discourse is not always analyzed in all possible communicative situations, as part of a real event that evidences the role of language in social interaction, i.e., it is the approach to the use and effects of signs in a behavior-revealing environment.

Hence, the attention to condolences is introduced as an important specific enunciative discursive act. It implies communication and execution of operations to interact, which constitute simple and sensitive linguistic structures, which, are concretized, by means of language. This action requires a pragmatic disposition to express feelings and moods to mourners.

Currently, the offering of condolences as a specific enunciative discursive act constitutes a problem for individuals in society in general and in educational institutions in particular.

This problem was exacerbated in the context of the pandemic. We observed utterances issued - in a hasty manner - which expressed condolences due to individuals who died as a consequence of death by the virus.

The death: a fateful, moving, and poignant event. Condolence: revealing the feeling of grief or pain.

Grief is considered in this writing as a sign of something difficult and sad, which cannot be easily measured. It is an intense suffering, a grief, which is commonly associated with the color black.

Considering the value of condolences means taking into account the social context, individual needs and discourse. This can be done verbally, non-verbally and in writing. Specifically in this paper, it is approached taking into account the verbal and nonverbal.

The article aims to expose variants of verbal and nonverbal expressions that lead to condolences as a specific enunciative discursive act due to the social nature of language as an essential means of communication and a way through which the process takes place, not only of assimilation and elaboration of knowledge in the classroom context, but also of expression of feelings, emotions, sadness, which leave specific painful traces that shock man from the social to the family.

Therefore, it has been considered that, if variants of the use of interrelated verbal and nonverbal expressions are present, then the contextual performance in the specific enunciative discursive act, in the offering of condolences, is favored.

Development

Communication is a daily activity inherent to human beings and as old as life in society, hence it is close to common knowledge. Even before the development of oral language, our primitive ancestors were already communicating non-verbally. Likewise, communication is a space for the

configuration of the social. In the communicative processes themselves, society makes sense, based on the interaction between individuals and the entities that form it.

In the last decades of the 20th century and so far in the 21st century, the interest of many researchers shifted towards a linguistics of speech or discourse, which was already being addressed by the Prague School and the systemic functional linguistics of Great Britain, which always maintained a theoretical line that never separated language from discourse.

They were maintained and coexisted alongside formal linguistics, which dealt with language in itself and which predominated in both research and teaching. Those who defend this criterion generally argue that discourse is too diversified and that it is linked to the world, so that its study would cover everything from an informal conversation, a letter, an oratorical piece, a poem or a scientific article, a congratulation, a condolence, and, apparently, such diversity intimidates them. In any case, it has been considered that, just as the global problems of the contemporary world are dealt with, so should any type of discourse, without fear.

Since the 1960s, language scholars have shown great interest in social aspects and in the idea of language as social behavior rather than as an object of knowledge. In this sense, pragmatics and sociolinguistics have challenged the idea that the analysis of the problems of language and meaning should be confined to questions of logic.

This shift of linguistic studies towards the social has meant the incorporation of new linguistic units other than the sentence, such as conversation or texts that constitute broad discursive processes.

Sociolinguistics has highlighted the eminently social nature of language, in contrast, language can be studied as a formal system outside any context.

Language must be assumed as a form of social life, as one more form of interaction through symbols. Approaching language in schools as social semiotics means interpreting it within a sociocultural context, in fact, it establishes a relationship with one of the laws of didactics. All of the above is conceived in the functional approach to language and language development.

In this perspective it is "society" and not "the individual" that occupies the center of the approach, and the linguistic potential of the individual is interpreted as the means by which the various social relations in which he or she participates are established, developed and maintained.

Adopting a functional approach to language means recognizing what the speaker can do with it. Thus, language is conceived from a sociocultural perspective.

Instead of studying the abstract structures of language, as traditional linguistics has done, and then analyzing its functioning in a social context for communicative purposes, it is necessary to analyze what functions language performs, in order to understand what is organized in a certain way.

It is evident that the communication-context relationship is used again and again in a broad, integrative and holistic interpretative framework. This implies a higher and deeper understanding of social life, making possible the communication of individuals and the exchange of experiences in the development of daily and scientific activity, preserving the cultural heritage achieved by expressing our feelings, moods and allowing us to enter the inner world of the people with whom we interact.

At present, the theoretical position that focuses on discourse linguistics, with all its complexity and richness, is gaining more and more strength. Discourse is considered in different ways: in the broadest sense, it is the set of words with which someone expresses what he or she thinks, feels or wants. In a narrower sense: an exposition on a serious matter made in an illustrative tone by one person to others. Particularly, allocution, oration, exposition of one's thoughts made by someone in public for persuasive purposes.

This perspective of analysis is based on the principles that appear in the book *The cognitive, communicative and sociocultural approach in language and literature teaching*. by Dr. Cs. Angelina Roméu Escobar (2007: 9)

- The conception of language as an essential means of human cognition and communication and of the personological and sociocultural development of the individual.
- The relationship between discourse, cognition and society.
- The contextualized nature of the study of language.
- The study of language as a social practice of a group or social stratum.
- The interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary and autonomous nature of the study of language.

The study of discourse, cognition and society based on these principles allows for an in-depth study of the use of language: who communicates..., how they do it..., when they do it... and what resources they use to do it... In this way, it is conceived as a communicative event.

In other words, people use language to communicate ideas (or to express emotions) and do so as part of other more complex social events in specific situations. It is worth noting that, in order to emphasize the interactional aspect of discourse, it is often described as verbal interaction.

In Van Dijk's opinion, reflected in the book by Dr. Angelina Roméu Escobar (2007: 6, 7), discourse, cognition and society form a triangle. Hence, discourse is seen as the way of realization of the system, because through it, the system can fulfill its role in the communicative function, that is, it acquires its concreteness.

Therefore, discourse is marked by a series of factors external to the language used that condition it, and which have to do with the way in which discursive activity is carried out and which are related to characteristics such as: the concrete character, subjectivity, individual character and situational conditioning of the discourse.

On the other hand, O. Lorié (2008: 30), reflects in his doctoral thesis the theory of Austin, J. L. and Searle. Said theory takes into account that communication acts, seen as speech acts, consist of three aspects: the sender says something; the sender indicates an intention in the speech act and the speech act causes an effect in the receiver or in the participants. Based on the analysis of these aspects, they establish in their taxonomy that speech acts can be analyzed as:

- Locutionary acts,
- Illocutionary acts,
- Perlocutionary acts.

They define locutionary acts as the enunciation of certain noises, the enunciation of certain words in certain constructions and the enunciation of them with a certain meaning, in the philosophical sense of that word, that is, with a certain sense and reference.

The illocutionary act expresses the intentional content of the discursive act, as opposed to the propositional content (locution) and the effect projected or caused in the interlocutors (per locution) and manifested at sentence and text level as a complex syntactic structure.

The perlocutionary act is that which acts on the interlocutor, making him believe that something is as it is said; persuading someone to do something; promoting a state of mind in someone; comforting someone in his grief, among others.

In later studies it is the illocutionary acts that have deserved greater attention for their illocutionary force. Their taxonomy includes: verdictive acts, exercitive acts or acts of execution, acts of commitment, acts of behavior, expository acts.

In this article, we assume Austin's behavioral acts, which articulate with Searle's expressive acts, which make a second taxonomy. They are taken into account, because they express a reaction to the way of proceeding of other people or an attitude. Among the verbs used for these acts are: thank, apologize, thank, pity, congratulate, welcome, deplore, criticize, applaud, congratulate, bless, toast, curse, dare, protest, challenge, and challenge, among others.

In this perspective, a basic element is constituted by the enunciation of speech acts.

The theory of enunciation and speech acts is also developed by O. Lorié (2008, p.58, 59), which enriches and accommodates it, fundamentally, to the comprehension of written texts in teacher training. He integrates the speech acts and the levels of textual comprehension. As a result, it configures the quality of textual connotative enunciation in three superior levels that express a subordinate hierarchical system: locutionary translation, illocutionary interpretation and perlocutionary extrapolation.

- In textual connotative enunciation at the locutionary translation level: the speaker expresses the explicit and implicit intentions of the text read. It is formed by a content, based on the comprehension of the text, which integrates the translation and the construction of acts oriented to the designated discovery.
- Textual connotative enunciation at the level of illocutive interpretation: it expresses the intentional decision of the speaker. It is formed by a content that implies the evaluation, the emission of judgments on the text read and the construction of acts that allow critical action.
- Textual connotative enunciation at the level of perlocutionary extrapolation: it expresses the contextual transcendence that the text acquires in the speaker. It is formed from the content of the text and the construction of acts that imply reaction to what is read, application and modification of behaviors.

These levels include the integration of the comprehension of text meanings and the construction of speech acts oriented to discovering meanings in a specific context.

Through these levels there is a transfer of meanings that allows interaction based on previous knowledge and conditions a positive attitude towards this type of learning. They serve to learn the teaching of comprehension (learning to do), by focusing the interest on the statements, starting from the understood text.

They constitute a significant content that, once assimilated, is transferred to other sociocultural contexts; hence, the ways of guiding the interaction process are incorporated to the cognitive

structure, expressed didactically through the construction of a varied system of enunciations that facilitate the orientation of the analysis and the achievement of an effect, as an expression of a deep knowledge, not only of the understanding of the written text, but of the diagnosis of each student, in particular, and of the group in general, becoming a singularity in the teacher's training.

These levels, when associated to the teaching-learning process of comprehension of written texts and its aspects: structure (components of the process), comprehension of meanings and contextual use, account for the totality of the process of "teaching to teach". Therefore, this look at the acts gives a pragmatic meaning to the didactic action.

Specifically in this paper, we delve into condolences as an enunciative discursive act through which everyone, in one way or another, has to pass. One might ask: who has not had to offer condolences? This act implies taking into account the psychological conditions of the sender and the communicative action up to his relations with the emotionally affected interlocutor. The individual character means that in these communicative conditions the discourse is familiar, respectful and formal.

The individual character leads to the existence of variations with respect to what is established by the system. It is precisely these variations that are the source of linguistic changes, which take place when the variations become collective experience.

Like any social activity, discourse is conscious and goal-oriented, i.e., it has an intentional content, which is expressed in utterances that are in turn composed of speech acts. Speech acts are considered dynamic units of discourse.

The performance of the speech act is conditioned by factors: the subject and the addressee (sender and receiver; enunciator and enunciate) who have a common general cultural background; the conditions for the performance of the discursive activity; the fragment of reality on which the communication is made, among others.

These factors constitute the pragmatic side of discourse and are related to the users of language, to their communicative intentions, to the contextual and referential character of discourse.

Condolence as an enunciative discursive act has always existed, it comes from mourning, pain, grief. It implies the use of speech acts, which become complex; it is about offering condolences to those who have lost a family member. In this communicative situation, it usually happens that the speaker assumes contradictory enunciative and interrogative speech acts: how do you feel, how are your relatives, how are things going, how are you recovering, among others.

The illocutive emerges as an answer to these questions, which, on many occasions, are not answered, not only because of the emotional state of the individual, but also because, as the interrogative enunciation is contradictory, the individual does not know what to answer.

For the explanation, recurrence is necessary, in this example: how do you feel? it is considered that if we take into account the dark, mournful, dull situation in which the mourner finds himself (before the death of...), it does not require an ambiguous enunciation such as the one expressed in the example, since the state of affliction of the person is inferred.

Death is considered as something natural. However, the absence of the dead person causes great desolation; it is a matter of changing from the habitual state - something is left behind, a detachment takes place in order to move on to something new, different, but, without that person. This change requires assimilation and accommodation.

One of the communicative situations specific to death is condolences. In this article, condolences are considered as a complex enunciative discursive act, embarrassing for the achievement of interaction through which compassion, commitment, esteem, tenderness, friendship, affection, sympathy and plainness, among others, are expressed. This means that, in communicative events, individuals do something else besides using language or communicating ideas and feelings: people are interacting.

Many express their discomfort when they have to offer condolences, and we hear enunciative acts such as:

- I don't know how to offer condolences....
- I don't like to offer condolences....
- How uncomfortable I feel when I offer condolences...?
- I go to the funeral home, because then I find it difficult to....
- What do I say when I am next to the person...?
- I go to their house, what do I do...?

These enunciations express the individual's concern about how he/she should behave at that moment.

Therefore, in this perspective of analysis, variants of verbal expressions (given through the word) and non-verbal expressions (which do not depend on the word) are exposed, leading to a condolence as an enunciative act discursive, which is offered as a ritual: expression of tradition and custom. Among the verbal variants, the following are noted:

- A hug of light...
- My embrace...
- Peace in your soul...
- I accompany you in your pain...
- I open my heart to you...
- Snuggle in my heart...
- Take refuge in me...
- I am with you...
- I am here...
- I feel so much pain...
- I'm sorry for what happened...
- My deepest condolences...
- My condolences...
- I am with you in your sadness...
- May he rest in peace...
- Heartfelt condolences...
- How much pain!...
- What sadness!
- Light for his spirit...
- Glory to his spirit...
- Peace to his spirit...
- Eternal glory...
- We weep with you...
- Spiritual light...
- Eternal light...
- Spiritual glory...
- Spiritual peace...
- I pray for you...
- I pray for you...
- God rest his soul...

- Peace to you...

Although the work has not been oriented to the written construction, it is appropriate to point out that these variants of enunciative discursive act can also be used in the written construction, such as: letter, telegram, WhatsApp messages, Facebook, among other means used.

Another communicative objective that can be achieved without the need for verbal discourse at the time of condolences is in non-verbal language, in which enunciative gestures are present. Particularly, in the condolence it is denoted:

- A handshake
- A hug
- A hand on the shoulder
- Silence
- Crying
- A light nod of the head
- A light rub on the arms
- Handing over a candle
- Handing over a flower
- Closing of the eyes coexisting with a squeezing of the lips
- Closing of the hands
- Bringing open hands to the head

These means are considered paralinguistic and are expressions of feeling, emotion and sadness, among others.

The spontaneity of communication allows the use of other variants not included in the examples. It is recommended to avoid the use of insipid and recursive expressions that further aggravate grief, sadness and crying.

Therefore, the preparation in this sense, needs the systematization of deciphering of this type of communicative situation. It allows to exercise the affective with a sensitive and generous vision, favoring the tender enunciation in the treatment of a specific sentimental communicative situation.

Therefore, it is recommended to exercise the enunciative discursive act with a pragmatic orientation for an appropriate behavior in the mourning situation. This exercise allows an awareness and decision making on the communicative acts to be produced. It implies full activity and the establishment of feedback relationships between the individual, the collective and the affective.

Conclusions

The coherent systematization of the enunciative discursive act adjusted to the context - during the condolence - favors the achievement of an emotionally superior level of development that has its maximum expression in the affective interaction with the other. The variants of verbal and non-verbal expressions proposed lead to an adequate expressive behavior in communication. This perspective of analysis allows the treatment of a specific sentimental communicative situation oriented to the integral formation of man, who constitutes the center of the problems given in society, so that he can think, express himself and socialize conveniently.

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