Lexico-Semantic Features of Religious Terms

Feruza Khodjakulova Rustamovna

Senior teacher of International Islamic academy of Uzbekistan "Foreign languages" department.
email: feruzahodjakulova77@gmail.com

ABSTRACT	This paper examined the lexico-semantic features of language of religion and advertising. The study used relevant data from these two disciplines to show the lexical complexities and semantic inconsistencies or difficulties. Through this study, it has been discovered that both the language of religion and advertising have certain features in common such as being informative, eulogistic and persuasive, figurative, employing unusual collocation and deviant forms, employing emotive, adjectives and ungrammatical structures. The study also revealed that the language of religion and advertising differ from each other in that, religion still retains archaic forms while advertising employs simple words. Moreover, religion is wordy and dignified in nature while advertising is brief and casual. It is also observed that religion does not admit fragmentation and deviant spelling patterns but this is observed commonly in advertising. The study further shows that lexical and semantic features of language of religion and advertising distinguish them from everyday use of English language. Hence, features of language of religion and advertising are worth studying and are qualified for unique variety of the English language.
Keywords:	Lexical, semantic features of language of religion, collocation

The use of English depends largely on the field of discourse. It is therefore to be expected that there should be peculiarity in the applicability of language in the disciplines. This linguistic variation based on field of discourse has generated interest in an area of English referred to as English for Specific Purposes, (ESP). Of particular relevance to this paper, is the revolution in linguistics after the World War II. This revolution occurred in the sense that traditional linguists set out to describe the features of the English language. Those who pioneered the revolution in linguistics began to focus on the ways in which language is used in real communication. The most important word emphasized was 'context' (Hutchinson and Waters 1987: 7); this reveals that language use depends on the context and varies in different contexts. The primary implication of the above

is that language is shaped by variety and function. Therefore, in this paper, the language of religion and that of advertising shall be discussed, compared and contrasted after the characteristics of both, as affecting words and meaning in context will have been stated.

Religious language is so removed from everyday conversation as to be almost unintelligible, except to an initiated minority. Religion itself is often emotive, lofty, serious and spiritual, not addressing the mundane but the grand. Its language therefore reveals grave, sober, solemn, serious and spiritual discourse. The text in the original language is a restriction on one's choice of English which does not normally apply to other varieties.

Similarly, there are traditional formulations of belief of doctrinal significance, which are difficult to alter without an accusation of

inconsistency or heresy being levelled. This accounts for the rigid character of religious language. Moreover, religious English is bent to suit the phenomenon and personality of that which is referred to. The language is figurative in nature and most often, embellished with metaphors and paradox. Words which in other situation would seem meaningless, absurd or self-contradictory are accepted as potentially meaningful in a religious setting. Again, language of religion is sometimes ambiguous. This means, it has more meanings or interpretations than the surface meaning. This statement is confirmed in Etim's assertion (2006: 27)

Religious language is meaningful but only within a context. The meaning of religious words then can best be understood not abstractly but within the context in which it is used. Besides the fact that the language of religion may have several readings, it is also metaphoric and figurative. Meanings are derived only when placed in context. Karl Marx's observation that 'man is driven to religious feelings by exploitation' suggests the exploitative and oppressive nature of the language of religion.

The eternal bliss, eternal condemnation, second death etc. captured by religious language prove man's consolidation in religion. Thus, language of religion, like any other profession, could be manipulated to appeal to the psychology of the oppressed. It is worthy of note that religious English is characterized by Latin words.This is because Christianity originated in the Roman Empire in AD33, and Latin was the religious language.

Words like, Amen, alleluia, pastor, etc. are all Latin words in the structure of religious English. Going by its etymological derivation, religion is from the Latin word Ligare (meaning to bind), Relegere (meaning to unite or to link) and Religion (meaning relationship). This definition captures the bi-polar nature of religion which involves a relationship between man and a supernatural being (Etim 2006). And this proves the language 'sacred', of what is being expressed. Again, religious language combines archaism (old forms) with modern English. Such words as thou, thine, ye, prodigal,

whosoever, verily, cometh, howbeit, hither, henceforth, etc. are examples of such archaic words frequently used. This language also comprises some theological jargon and complex constructions, especially in liturgical situation. Examples of such jargons include multitude, parable, prophecy, disciple, kingdom, etc. The language is eulogistic and persuasive in some occasions.

The language of advertising is a language of its own. Mostly, it does not follow the logical rules of everyday conversation. It deviates from the norms because the purpose is brevity and attention driven. It might even be used in a negative way to captivate the audience. Advertising is defined by Ekah (2008: 203) as 'a marketing strategy to make products and services available to the consumers through subtle persuasion' while Dennis (1998: 318) sees it as a 'sale propelling power of a business'. For Wright et al (1998: 10), 'advertising is controlled identifiable information and persuasion by means of communication media'. The term advertising comes from Latin ad vertebra, meaning 'to turn the mind toward'. Thus, it is a message paid for by an identified sponsor and delivered through some medium of mass communication. The point in all this definitions is the fact

that advertising primarily serves as a marketing strategy. The effectiveness of advertising is strongly determined by language, since the choice of words has a crucial meaning in the world of advertising. It is a tool to persuade people to buy a particular product. The language of advertising is replete with brevity, mostly laconic; it thrives on metaphors and idioms, neologisms or creative use of words. It is made up of superlatives, ellipsis, parallelism, repetition, etc. This is because this language is designed to 'grab and hold attention', 'stamp a message on the mind', create image that will forage a link between emotion and the product on offer (Russell,1996: 176). Besides, it makes use of adjectives, verbs, patterned sounds such as alliteration and assonance etc.

In advertising, the verbal group is commonly consists of only one word' and is doled with simplicity (Leech 1972: 121). According to

Leech, passive voice occurs very sporadically and so does the application of auxiliary verbs. Two auxiliary verbs often used in advertising are the future auxiliary 'will', because it evokes the

impression of 'promise' and the modal 'can'. Thus, the consumer is told that the product gives him the ability to do this or that.

 On the whole, the language is vague but often emphatic and wholesome in the expression of product content and value. Often, brand names are marked by deviant spellings. For example, 'Peau Claire', a brand of cream, is obviously a pun of the English word 'pure clear'. This, of course, can hinder the appropriate meaning of the product. Equally noteworthy is the fact that advertising often envelops the meaning of words with exaggeration about a product. The language of religion and advertising, like every other field of discipline, have registers of their own; very often they do not follow the grammar or logical rules of the everyday language. They are a kind of language that function and familiarize with the contexts in which they are used. Religion and advertising have kinds of languages peculiar to them such that the linguistic features employed help to identify the field that such language use belong. Hence, the choice of language affects the way messages are composed and conveyed.

This study, therefore, examines and compares the language of religion and advertising in order to solve the problem of meaning in the language use.

The beauty of language and its utilitarian functions deserves attention that is why the study takes an evaluative assessment of the lexical and semantic features of the language of religion and advertising. It examines compares and contrasts distinctive linguistic features of the two fields of discipline and the nature of

language they employ. Considering how elaborate and relevant this discourse is, it is believed that this study will certainly aid students to appreciate those peculiar lexical and semantic features that characterize the language of religion and advertising. Also, it would enhance scholarship as it would be a valuable contribution to the study of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In addition, it

unravels the distinction between language use in religion and in advertising and ultimately, serves as a reference material to researchers in this area.

Since the language of religion and advertising belong, to an aspect of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), it would be natural to employ ESP as the theoretical framework for this study. English for Specific Purposes or simply ESP can be defined as the study of registers or varieties of specialized English usage.

It is a discipline in which linguists focus attention on the language of specific disciplines and how its main function as a means of communication is performed. Ike (2002) observes that both the clothes we wear and chameleon change colours to suit specific contexts and environments. He states that 'like a chameleon with its innumerable colours, English does not only have regional, social and functional varieties but it also has varieties for law, engineering, business, journalism, science and technology, religion etc'. Thus, ESP studies the nature of communication in the various disciplines and professions. In doing this, it focus attention on two concepts which are of interest to this study – registers and jargon. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 19) argue that 'English for specific purposes is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learners' reason for learning'. A few other scholars describe it as the teaching of English for any purpose that could be specified.

Others describe it as the teaching of English used in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes. (Ufot, 2013: 2) Lorenzo (2005: 23) posits that English for Specific Purposes concentrates more on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structure'.

Thus, religion and advertising employ language in order to suit their respective fields. One of the current or modern definitions of jargon is given by Ike (2002: 8) that, it is 'a technical language of a particular profession, group or trade'. In other words, it is a collective term for words, expressions, technical terms, etc. which are intelligible only to the members of a specific group, social circle or profession; but

not the general public. The recurring problem with jargon is that only a few people may understand the actual terminology used by different groups. This explains its originating from 'twittering'; thus, remaining unintelligible to the non-initiates. Against this backdrop, religion as well as advertising has their respective peculiar jargon. Hence, this shall be investigated in the subsequent chapters.

Semantics, the study of meaning; it deals basically with the mind to give appropriate meaning to a word or an expression. According to McGregor (2009: 129), "the notion of meaning in linguistics concerns which is expressed by sentence, utterance and their components by language. The message or thought in the mind of a speaker is encoded in a way that sends a signal to the hearer also in a way that the message can be got.

He further explains that the context which is being communicated in a language is meaning which makes the language effective. McGregor's view about meaning points out that both the speaker and the hearer contribute in giving the appropriate meaning to a word or an expression in a language.

Hence, religious adherents employ rich lexicosemantic items such as words, phrases, jargon and registers in their vocabulary which distinguish it from ordinary usage and at the same time, restrict it to an initiated minority while upholding its dignity. In other words, it has a rich register which is peculiar to only its converts. One of such usages is the use of archaic phrases and words in their vocabulary.

The language of religion in general has a wide range of vocabulary which is different from other varieties of language use. The words help to build up a different system of lexicon in the language through the use of archaic words.

Religious language is often poetic, with such literary devices as antithesis, paradox, inversion and metaphor.

References

1. Grinev S.V. Terminology and scientific cognition. Moscow. (1991).p.15-27
2. Zhukov, O.R. (2017). Sistemnye aspekty definirovaniia v terminolohii vyrazitelnykh sredstv yazyka [Systemic aspects of definition in terminology of expressive means of language]. Candidate's thesis. Saratov [in Russian].
3. Mihina, I.I. (1988). Semanticheskaia variativnost termina i sredstva ee leksikohraficheskoho otrazheniia (na primere terminolohii literaturnykh zhanrov v anhliiskom i russkom yazykakh) [Semantic variability of the term and means of its lexicographic reflection (on the example of terminology of literary genres in English and Russian languages)]. Candidate's thesis. Moscow [in Russian].
4. Xodjakulova F.R.(2020). Analysis of terminology of literary criticism in English. Namangan state university. Scientific journal .11issue .2020 year.
5. Xodjakulova F.R.(2021). Lexical semantic problems in translation. Thematic journal of English language teaching.Vol-5-Issue-1-2021.