

DOI: 10.18454/RULB.4.04

Тарабрина Т.Б.

Российский Университет Дружбы Народов

МОРФОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ ПРОПОВЕДИ: МОДАЛЬНОСТЬ УБЕЖДЕНИЯ

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматриваются морфологические аспекты модальности убеждения на материале англоязычных проповедей митрополита Антония Сурожского и приводятся результаты наблюдений, сделанных в ходе исследования.

Ключевые слова: морфология, модальность, убеждение.

Tarabrina T.B.

People's Friendship University of Russia

ON THE MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SERMON: THE MODALITY OF PERSUASION

Abstract

The article dwells upon morphological aspects of the modality of persuasion as exemplified in the sermons by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh and provides the results of the author's the research work.

Keywords: morphology, modality, persuasion.

The speaker's communicative intention, or modality, reveals itself on different levels. It is the level of grammar that we are going to discuss in the present article. The type of modality we are going to dwell upon is that of persuasion. The material chosen for analysis includes contemporary English Orthodox sermons by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh as a type of oral discourse. The research seems relevant, for contemporary linguistics tends to study linguistic phenomena not in isolation but in whole texts, imposing much weight on functional-communicative aspects. The choice of material is to be accounted for by the fact that texts of this kind have not received sufficient scholarly attention on the level of grammar.

Texts that aim at persuading the addressee usually vividly incorporate various means to promote the addresser's intention, such as logical arguments, rhetorical constructions, lexical devices (key words, emotionally and stylistically coloured words, etc.), intonational arrangement of oral discourse, various stylistic devices, understatement and overstatement, etc. The level of grammar is also incorporated into this 'collaborative work, modality of persuasion finding its expression on the levels of both morphology and syntax.

The term 'modality' in this article refers to the communicative intention of the addresser of the text. In terms of grammar, the communicative intention of persuasion can be revealed on two grammatical levels, i.e. morphology and syntax. On the morphological level phenomena to be primarily discussed are modal verbs, the Imperative Mood and the Passive Voice.

Modal verbs are used very extensively in the material under consideration. The ones relevant for the purposes of persuasion are 'shall', 'will', 'must', 'should', and 'may'.

The verb 'shall' is used exclusively with the pronoun 'we', but its grammatical meaning is far more complicated than expressing futurity or the grammatical modality of volition (4). Metropolitan Antony often combines a clause with 'shall' with the one with 'unless', the modality being the one of inevitability. Remarkably, the clause with 'shall' always predicts something connected with a bad and strongly undesirable human behaviour. For example:

Unless we understand this quality of joy, we shall make of it a monstrous, blasphemous caricature, when in God's very name we make our life a misery for ourselves and for those who must pay the cost for our abortive attempts at holiness.

Unless we renounce ourselves and accept his life in place of our life, unless we aim at what St Paul defines as 'it is no longer I but Christ who lives in me', we shall never be either disciplined or disciples.

The material shows that the verb 'shall' is always used in a sentence containing an opposition. Another adverb to be found in combination with 'shall' is 'otherwise', which also has the meaning 'if not' and is "often used when there will be a bad result if something does not happen"(5). For example:

It is in continuous dialogue with us, gainsaying us at every moment, and we must come to terms with it, otherwise a moment will come when we shall come before the Judge and then this adversary will be an accuser against us and we shall stand condemned.

The modal verb 'will' is used only with the third person in the material in question. It is used mostly to predict some future events that people cannot influence, the events depending only on the

external factors, on the Divine power. This semantic implication being persuasive as such, the preacher does not need further persuasive devices. For example:

For those who would wait for it in that spirit, it will come indeed: it will come at the dead of night, it will come like the Judgement of God, like the thief who takes us unawares, like the bridegroom who comes when the foolish virgins are asleep.

Later on it will no longer be death, it will be a life greater than his own...

The modal verb that is most commonly used in the sermons is 'must'. The preacher wants to make it clear for the audience that there are things every Christian *must* do and says it in a straightforward way. Using this modal verb is a strong means to persuade people. 'Must' is almost exclusively used with the pronoun 'we'. The instances of 'have to' are very rare, for the preacher wants to emphasise the moral obligation coming from a man's personal conviction. For example:

... we must judge ourselves in order to change and become able to meet the Day of the Lord, the glorious Resurrection, with an open heart, without hiding our face, ready to rejoice that he has come.

The love which Christ teaches us is incompatible with hatred of the other, we must learn to 'discern the spirit of God from the spirit of the prince of this world', and the touchstone is humility and selfless love.

Milder obligation is expressed by the modal verb 'should'. The latter is mostly used in the sentences containing or presupposing an opposition between what is demanded from us and the real state of affairs in our lives. 'Should' shows the discrepancy between the two phenomena and calls the listeners to reform their lives. For example:

This is not the way in which we should await the Kingdom and the Judgement.

How costly our love is to others and how cheap it is for us, and yet Christ's command is that we should love one another as he loves us; to give his life was his way of loving: we could begin with much less than giving our lives, but we should begin with the commandment Christ gives to the selfish, the most selfish of us — 'Do unto others what you wish them to do to you'.

The modal verb 'may' introduces something different from obligation and imperative. It largely refers to the inner world of the listeners and introduces a would-be dialogue, the preacher suggesting what could happen in the mental world of the listeners.

We are still, whatever we may say, pagans dressed up in evangelical garments.

I know that the words 'at all cost' may mean a great deal more for one person than for another.

Another means of supporting a dialogue, that is including the listeners in the situation of speaking, is the use of the pronoun 'we' throughout the sermon. The probable semantic field where the pronoun 'you' is to be found in the material under consideration is appealing to the listeners' background in phrases like '(perhaps) you remember'. In other cases the preacher can only say 'we must' or 'we should', the obligation thus sounding milder and less categorical. There are instances where the pronoun in the first person plural is combined with a singular noun to emphasise the unanimity of the preacher and his listeners:

But in this respect we very often walk in darkness, and this darkness is the result of our darkened mind, of our darkened heart, of our darkened eye...

In this connection it seems necessary to mention a non-standard use of a reflexive pronoun. As is well known, the reflexive form of 'we' is 'ourselves', but Metropolitan Anthony uses the form 'ourself' to emphasise that the situation with all the believers (including the preacher) is quite the same, that they are all in the same sad spiritual situation:

The first step therefore in our evaluation of ourself will be to measure this state of disruption.

Powerful means to support a dialogue include intimisation of speech and rhetorical questions. In our material they often go hand in hand. To intimize speech means to direct it to each listener in particular and make them pronounce the preacher's words in their own hearts. One of the morphological means to do this is to use the first person singular pronouns in questions and statements pronounced by the preacher but meant to be pronounced by each listener. Rhetorical questions and questions without answers are meant to evoke penitence in the hearts of the listeners. Using rhetorical questions, as well as asking questions without answering them, encourages the listeners to reflect on them and give the expected answers in their own minds. We deal here, therefore, almost with a real dialogue, with the only reservation that the answer is not pronounced aloud. As both the preacher and the audience have the same idea in their minds at the same time and are in complete agreement, this adds to the persuasive power of the sermon. The examples are as follows:

How much are my heart and my mind at variance with one another?

Is my will directed to one unique goal, or is it incessantly wavering? How far are my actions directed by my convictions, how far are they under the sway of unruly impulses? Is there any wholeness within me? On the other hand, how separated am I from God and my neighbour?

Despite the fact that the **Passive Voice** is very rarely used in everyday speech (only 0.1 % of finite verbal forms are to be found in Passive in the register of conversation (6)), it can be used in public speech rather extensively, for it suits the purposes of impressing and convincing the audience. For the same reason Passive is widely used in sermonising. There are different semantic domains in which Passive forms are typically used in Metropolitan Anthony's sermons. First of all, it is when the action described by Passive is performed by God. It is not true, however, that in such cases only Passive is used. There are instances when God is named in the subject, the predicate being in the Active Voice. But in the contexts when the preacher wants to sound more imposing and persuasive Passive is most appropriate. For example:

We are called to become inwardly what he is, to have with him a communion of life, a common life in the mysterious body which is his Church.

These words, these passages, these images or commandments, are spoken to us directly.

There are cases when Passive is used for the purpose of not annoyingly but still strongly persuading the listeners to do something. In this semantic domain Passive verbs are often combined with modal verbs. For example:

... the Kingdom of God is to be conquered.

... judgement must be pronounced by ourselves.

Passive is also used to reveal passivity and helplessness of man before the evil powers and the power of God. For example:

Each of us is an image of the Living God, but an image which, like an old painting that has been tampered with, overlaid or clumsily restored to the point of being unrecognizable ...

We are encompassed on all sides by worries, concerns, fears and desires and so inwardly perturbed that we hardly ever live within ourselves — we live beside ourselves.

Bare **Imperative** is a very rare grammatical form in the chosen material. When it is used, it is accompanied by some softening explanation weakening the imperative semantics so that it sounds more like an appeal. It is in this context that the pronoun 'you' comes to the fore. For example:

You want to be happy; do so, but with justice. Give to your neighbour exactly as much as you claim for yourself. You want happiness — give an equal measure of happiness; you want freedom — give freedom in exactly the same measure. You want food, give food; you want love, unselfish and thoughtful — give unselfish and thoughtful love.

A milder variant of the Imperative uses the construction 'let us', which serves the purposes of unification of the preacher and the listeners and is, again, more of an appeal. For example:

And then let us beware of what St John Chrysostom called 'the dark side of devilish love'.

Let us then take unto us the whole armour of God; stand therefore, having our loins girt about with truth ...' (7).

A conclusion can be made that although a sermon is a monologue, a vast number of the analysed morphological devices are aimed at stimulating and supporting a would-be dialogue between the preacher and the listeners. Thus, the modality of persuasion here is expressed first and foremost through dialogisation. When the preacher wants to sound more imposing and persuasive he uses the Passive Voice. The preacher may sometimes be rather straightforward using the modal verbs 'must' or 'should'. This straightforwardness, however, is far from giving strict prescriptions. The preacher always cares about sounding milder and less categorical. That is why Imperative is a very rare form in the material analysed. Each obligation or Imperative is always accompanied by a softening phrase, an explanation it is necessary for the listeners to do that way. Remarkably, the preacher never emphasizes his authority. Using the pronoun 'we' throughout the sermon, as well as the Imperative with 'let us', he prefers to emphasise his unanimity with the audience.

Примечания / Notes

1. Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English. P. 496 — 497.
2. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. P. 1002.
3. Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English. P. 938.
4. Eph. 6:13 — 14.

References

1. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. Pearson Education Limited, 2001.
2. Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English. Pearson Education Limited, 2000.
3. Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh. Meditations on a Theme: A Spiritual Journey. Mowbrays, London & Oxford, 1976.
4. Александрова О. В., Комова Т. А. Современный английский язык: Морфология и Синтаксис. М., 1998.
5. Прохвятилова О. А. Православная проповедь и молитва как феномен современной звучащей речи. Волгоград, 1999.