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SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONALIZED DIRECTIVES IN THE MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The article analyses the features and use of social and authoritarian directives in the Middle English language. In particular, attention is focused on the study of the functioning of verbs of directing that contain strong clues to the social settings in which the acts they describe occur. Directing has been said to be one of the basic functions in social interaction.

The author examines basic directing verbs, such as to advise, to assign, to ask, to beseech, to ban, to claim, to command, to demand, to invite, to law, to plead, to tell, to suggest, to warn, etc., their specific or 'neutral' semantic dimensions and 'basic' ones that can single out some areas of social interaction in the Middle English period which directing other people's behavior as a prominent activity. The semantic dimension can deal with different frames of action with which linguistic acts of directing are associated. The main reason is that illocutionary force itself is the criterion for including verbs in different groups with different senses: the sense of 'to authorize', for example, to apply for, to appoint, to assign, to authorize; the sense of 'to license', which is a type of permission, for example, to charge (in the imposing a certain duty or task), to give official sanction, to license. The different shades in force that present themselves depend on a large variety of factors that have to be dealt with in terms of different semantic dimensions.

The result proved the functioning of directing verbs predominantly in the legal settings, thus focusing on 'civil law'. But there are societies in which behavior is regulated more by religious-ethical codes. Indeed, in many cases it may be impossible to separate these two types of regulating institutions.

It is postulated the idea that the cases of such a situation could be found in Middle English: a considerable number of them are ambiguous between an emphasis on the frame of civil law and the frame of ecclesiastical law. Nevertheless, in Present-day English civil law clearly dominates over ecclesiastical law, which is no doubt in keeping with regular observations of the directing norms but distinctly manifesting and realizing through the prism of English spiritual values and the peculiarities of national character.

Key words: Middle English language, semantics, directives, intention, illocutionary force, proposition, social/institutionalized setting, communicative behavior.

Introduction. Authority can be expected to be one of the major phenomena involved in acts of directing and to be necessary to understand in order to grasp the nature of such appropriate behavior. Searle claims that the distinction between a request and a command is simply that the latter implies authority on the part of the speaker whereas the former lacks such an implication [8, p. 133]. Our intention is simply to show that authority really constitutes a complex semantic dimension in the lexical frame of directing. The verbs of directing force us to distinguish a whole range of different types of authority.

Recent research and publications. The existing theoretical approaches could be balanced, for instance, by a systematic study of the words and expressions used to describe linguistic action. Verbalizations of many aspects of social life have been investigated by cultural, especially linguistic, anthro-

pologists. Linguistic action, however, has mainly been theorized about. It is true that verbs used in the performance and description of speech acts have been studied (e.g. Austin 1962; Copeland J. E. 1984; Searle 1976; Wierzbicka A 2003). It was recently pointed out by Dijk (1983) and convincingly shown by Rohmah E. (2020), speech-act theory, the framework for most of those studies, does itself embody an ideology (in particular an excessively 'privatized' view of language) that is not necessarily applicable to other speech communities [7, p. 21]. This finding is entirely in keeping with the more general assumption, put forward by Susanti R. (2019), that theories of language are geared to (the needs of) the societies in which they are created [10, p. 385].

Directing may be defined as one of the basic functions in social and institutionalized interaction. The verbs and expressions used to describe linguistic

actions of a directive kind are referred to as verbs of directing.

We are supposed to explore a subfield of the vast area of illocutionary force. The reason is that illocutionary force itself is the criterion for including a verbal in the subject matter of this paper. The different shades in force that present themselves depend on a large variety of factors that have to be dealt with in terms of different semantic dimensions. The overview of directive speech-act types in this paper could be regarded as an outline of the illocutionary dimension in question and afterward will clarify the different shades of illocutionary force. Though primarily a matter of illocutionary force is at stake, some of the linguistic action verbs to be investigated do not describe what would traditionally have been called an 'illocutionary act' [1, p. 111; 8, p. 121]. Instead, many of them refer to larger configurations of linguistic acts such as text-level structures. These configurations of speech acts, however, can be said to possess a force similar to individual directive speech acts. It should be kept in mind that when we use 'a directive act' and this phrase can frequently be replaced by 'a set of directive acts' or 'a series of acts with a directive force', these different levels of linguistic structure show how fundamental directing is as a function of language [12, p. 143].

The overview of some directive speech-act types leads us toward the following definition of verbal of directing: all verbs and verb like expressions that describe linguistic actions by means of which a speaker typically directs or influences a hearer's subsequent behavior. Directing is not only one of the fundamental functions of language, it is also one of the vital in social life; for the performance of this role the directive function of language is usually put into an action.

Whereas silence was to be situated in the frame of language and lying in the frame of truth, directing belongs in one of the most basic frames of social interaction in general [2, p. 76–82; 4, p. 109]. It involves parameters such as authority and wishing, which will be reflected as semantic dimensions in the verbal of directing. The verbs can also be expected to reveal the specific areas of social interaction in which directing is a major function.

We will try to supply an overview of semantic dimensions to which the verbs focusing on linguistic actions of a directive kind are conformed: the dimension of 'to authorize', the dimension of 'to license', which is a type of permission, the dimension of 'to charge' (in the imposing a certain duty or task), to license, (the dimension of 'to petition'), to petition to post (the dimension of assigning to a specific posi-

tion or station), to present a petition, to vouchsafe (the dimension of granting as a privilege, allowing, permitting), warrant (the dimension of 'to authorize' [2, p. 89; 5, p. 115–117].

It is necessary to keep in mind that classifying a verb or verb like expression does not mean that it can be applied only to a directive linguistic action performed in a legal context. It means only that the verbs in question are strongly associated with the legal and institutionalized context [3, p. 67–71; 6, p. 64].

The **purpose of the article** is to investigate the functioning of directive verbs in Middle English social and institutionalized settings and the ways of their using and perceiving by addressees. The topicality of this article coincides with the role that civil and authoritarian directive verbs played in the life of Middle English people, influencing and informing readers and speakers. This paper is also an attempt to find convincing evidences to prove that our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally verbal in nature. That is why the texts of Middle English literature were chosen as the base for our investigation of the directive verbs and their peculiarities in the social settings. It is important that the public becomes aware that we think by using conceptual systems, which are not immediately accessible to consciousness and that conceptual verb is a part of our normal thought processes.

Presentation of the main material. The largest group is the set of illocutionary verbs that situate the acts described in legal and institutionalized settings. The prominence of this frame of action in the domain of directing is not surprising. After all, regulating people's behavior is what the law is all about.

The group of verbs predominantly focusing on legally directive linguistic acts might be as follows: *to appeal, to assign, to ban, to cite* (in the sense of calling upon to appear before a court), *to claim, to examine* (in the sense of interrogating closely), *to legalize, to levy, to ordain, to outlaw, to proscribe, to reclaim, to regulate, to requisition, to summon, to try* (in the sense of interrogating an accused person), *to veto* [12, p. 235–237].

Some verbs of this group need for further comment. *To summon* can be used to illustrate the assumption that it cannot be used to account for acts performed outside the legal frame of action. The verb refers to an official and authoritative invitation that can be issued either by a court or not.

King Ryence vanquished in fair fight Twice six good kings save one;

He summons thee that one to be, Or proffers thee a boon [11].

But since summoning is strongly associated with the courtroom situation, one can hardly regard *to summon* as neutral with respect to the type of official setting in which the acts it can be used to describe are performed. The acts of demanding denoted by these two verbs are based on the speaker's belief that he/she has a right to what he/she asks. Such belief can only be based on law, written or unwritten one.

To assign, to claim can be used as neutral directive verbs with respect to the type of official setting in which the acts are connected with the ecclesiastical life.

But in no other version is the incident coupled with that of a temptation and testing of the hero's honour and chastity, such as meets us here. At first sight one is inclined to assign the episode of the lady of the castle to the class of stories of which the oldest version is preserved in Biblical record—the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife [11].

*And claim the crown right worshipful
'On pain of blessing lost'
With that he turned him o'er again,
And yielded up the ghost* [9].

The traces of such a situation are still to be found in English: a considerable number of them are ambiguous between an emphasis on the frame of civil law and the frame of ecclesiastical law. Nevertheless, civil law clearly dominates, which is no doubt in keeping with regular observations of the directing forces in our Western societies [12, p. 245–247]. Among those we find *to enjoin* (which is especially strongly associated with the legal and ecclesiastical context in its prohibition sense), *to interdict* (which describes ecclesiastical or judicial order or prohibitions), *to issue an injunction* (which refers to an ecclesiastical or judicial order or prohibition), and *to ordain* (which denotes an order or appointment based on a court decision or on the authority of church) [12, p. 249]. *To ban* in its original sense (*under the ban*) – the official announcement of one's guilt is to testify only obliquely related to a legal frame of action. The speaker must be a person invested with the authority to execute the law. Needless to say, its extended meaning of giving a strong warning, which is more prominent now, is not related to a legal setting.

*He said, 'To him that asketh you
Mercy and pardon give,
Under the ban of forfeiting.
My service while ye live* [9].

There are the directive verbs that are most explicitly related to a legal context, e.g. *to lay down the law, break the law, under the law, within the law, rule the law, respect the law* are more commonly used in its

metaphorically extended sense of giving strict order (as nature, a parent, a friend, etc.).

*Half way between the hill and wood Oft his mind
turned upon the cause,*

*Why Nature broke her common laws;
Why she allowed, by day or night,
To wander thus th'imprisoned sprite
'He bids thee here on bended knee* [9].

*Thy law homage pay, Or he will come with fire and
sword*

To waste, and burn, and slay' [11].

It was already mentioned that many verbs of directing focus on the legal setting of the act described. This would probably not be the case in languages spoken in societies that lack an elaborate legal system. However, there are no societies without laws. But in more 'primitive' societies, behavior is regulated by religious-ethical codes rather than by what we would call 'civil law'. Indeed, in many cases it may be impossible to separate these two types of regulating institutions [2, p. 214; 12, p. 267].

There are, in addition, some verbs the use of which can be extended without difficulties to context. These verbs focusing on contexts are *to catechize* (i.e. giving systematic religious instruction by means of asking questions, receiving answers and offering explanations or corrections), *to censure* (the meaning of which can easily be extended to nonreligious and no ethical settings), *to excommunicative* (i.e. to shut off by an ecclesiastical sentence from communion with the church), *to preconize* (i.e. to approve a high ecclesiastical appointment public ally by papal proclamation in consistory), *to put on the index*, and *to taboo* [12, p. 267–269].

Apart from *to ordain, to catechize* and *to preconize*, all the rest verbs refer to acts that are or can be prohibitive in nature. The predominance of negative directives is certainly not unrelated to the prohibitive nature of Christian ethics [2, p. 217; 12, p. 287].

When asked to sketch a prototypical directing or commanding situation, informants can be expected to call attention to a military frame of action. Yet there are almost no verbs of directing.

There seem to be only a couple of verbs focusing on contexts, but even the use of these few can easily be extended outside the military world: *to conscript* (i.e. to enroll into service by compulsion), *to draft*. *To call up* is frequently used in the same sense, but it is less strongly associated with the military [2, p. 248].

These typical commands are directed at no soldiers. As far as English is concerned, we are aware of the existence of only one, namely *to order up* (which also has the nonmilitary meaning of ordering some-

one to go or come upstairs). For example, 'The general ordered two battalions up to strengthen a weak point in the line. It means 'to order from a position in the rear to the front line'. Is there any explanation for the discrepancy between the conceptualization of the military world as a prototypical directing situation and the lack of verbal of directing focusing on the military setting? [12, p. 321]. The solution is probably to be found in the very fact that the situation is so prototypical: if a military command is a command par excellence, there is no need to call it differently.

'Nay; tell me more!' the Cestrian cried; 'Why are these steeds in **order** tied?

Why sleep those men all bright in arms? And why prepared for war's alarms?' [11].

Then Owain **ordered** Gwres the son of Rheged to lower his banner.

So it was lowered, and all was peace [11].

The intrinsically positive directive verbs are equally numerous, but it is harder to relate them to categories specified previously in the discussion of different semantic dimensions. In this class all the traditional central examples of directive linguistic action verbs are encountered. The English set is *to accede*, *to accredit*, *to blackmail*, *to brief*, *to acquiesce*, *to adjure*, *to admonish* to one for; *to apply pressure*, *to approve*, *to ask* (in the sense of requesting), *to assent*, *to authorize*, *to beg*, *to beseech*, *to call* (in the sense of requesting, as in "He called for an investigation of the facts"), *to command*, *to conjure*, (in the sense of entreating earnestly or solemnly, as in 'I conjure you to weigh my case well', *TO dare*, *to demand*, *to dictate* (in the general sense of speaking commandingly and imposing orders, *to order*, *to permit*, etc.). For example, 'Else were I much to blame! I am Beholden so to you, **Command** me, and may God me help I will your bidding do. 'I have the sword, and I must be The King of all England. But when he showed it to his sire Sir Ector gave **command** [11].

Leodogrance was overjoyed To welcome Merlin's suite,

Exclaiming that it pleased him well Arthur's **demands** to meet [9].

Nor **dared** the farmer wait; In haste he past the IRON GATES [11].

Very clear cases of directive verbs implying authority of some sort are *to order*, *to command*, *to demand*. They can be used to describe linguistic acts of the intrinsically positive directive type conforming to intrinsically negative verbs of directing, i.e. (A1) Sa directs Ha toward some action; (C1) Sa has authority over Ha. A less salient but equally clear example is *to tell*, e.g. *Thy sordid purpose can I tell* Thou'dst give

they favourite mare for pelf [12, p. 367]. The main difference between *to tell*, *to order* or *to command* seems to be that the former implies authority of a somewhat weaker type, though essentially of the same kind. To the category also belongs *to plead*, *to ask*, *to beseech*, e.g. *To plead his suit, and ask the King what might his pleasure be?* [11].

But if thou be as bold as all men tell thou wilt freely grant me the boon I **ask**. And Arthur answered, "Sir Knight, if thou cravest battle here thou shalt not fail for lack of a foe." And the knight answered, "Nay, I **ask** no fight, in faith here ... [9]. Then Gawain, who sat by the queen, leaned forward to the king and spake, I **beseech** ye, my lord, let this venture be mine [9].

The directive verb *to advise* might be identified as an intrinsically positive one. It means that there must be more to warning than (usually) negative advising. Every of directing pushes Ha to either doing or not doing something, e.g. *And he had been advised of some knightly deed, or some strange and marvellous tale, of his ancestors, or of arms, or of other ventures* [9].

The directive verb *to warn* is not intrinsically negative, because its directionality is positive, not negative, when it is followed by a positive complement; it is negative when a negative prepositional content signals the act toward which Ha is directed, e.g. *A vision to King Arthur came, Warning him not to fight* [9].

Both verbs *to beg*, *to request* are used to describe acts of trying to get the hearer to do (or allow) something, and in both cases the decision to perform the act or not is completely in the hearer's hands. There is a clear reversal of authority, and still the speaker's behavior remains directive one, e.g. *False Mordred granted her request, In that she spake so fair* [9].

Conclusions. Thus, we have singled out a number of areas of social and institutionalized interaction in Middle English in which directive behavior is prominent, e.g. legal, religious, commercial, military, political, diplomatic, educational, criminal, etc. We use language to communicate with each other, to exchange our knowledge, to explain our behavior, to express our feelings, to enrich our worldview and to reflect everyday events and environment around us.

We claim that the directive verbs partially structure our everyday concepts and that are reflected in different social settings. This article may be regarded as one step in verb investigation. The whole phenomenon of verb, no doubt, needs some further investigations, as it plays a great role in social and institutionalized spheres of life.

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Матковська М. В. СОЦІАЛЬНІ Й ІНСТИТУЦІЙНІ ДИРЕКТИВИ В ІСТОРІЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ СЕРЕДНЬОГО ПЕРІОДУ

Стаття присвячена функціональним особливостям соціальних та інституційних директивних дієслів в поетичних творах середньоанглійського періоду англійської мови. Зокрема, увагу зосереджено на вивченні середньоанглійських дієслів спонування на рівні текстових ситуацій. Вважається, що спонування, когось до виконання чогось, є однією із найголовніших функцій соціального та інституційного спілкування.

Автор досліджує функціонування директивних спонукальних дієслів, таких як *to advise, to assign, to ask, to beseech, to ban, to claim, to command, to demand, to invite, to law, to plead, to tell, to suggest, to warn, etc.* на основі найменших семантичних компонентів відповідних дієслів в прагматичному контексті середнього періоду англійської мови, що дає можливість формувати правила розуміння певного типу соціальної взаємодії та прогнозувати дії комунікантів в різних предметних ситуаціях, як-от інституційній, релігійній, дипломатичній, комерційній, політичній, освітній тощо. Ілокутивна сила виступає основним смисловим (семантичним) критерієм, що визначає тип ілокутивного директивного акту.

В результаті висвітлено групу директивних дієслів із прагматичним значенням спонування, функціонування яких відбувається, переважно, в соціальній сфері взаємодії комунікантів, акцентуючи увагу як на цивільному, так і релігійно-моральному праві. Варто відзначити, що існують суспільства, орієнтовані на релігійно-етичну норму спілкування. Насправді, у багатьох випадках практично неможливо розділити ці дві сфери інституційної комунікативної взаємодії.

Постулюється ідея, що випадки саме релігійно-етичної норми спілкування є характерними і для середнього періоду англійської мови. Велика кількість цих випадків є двозначною, оскільки значна увага приділяється нормам як морального, так і цивільного регулювання відносин між комунікантами. Однак, у сучасній англійській мові соціальні норми комунікації домінують над відповідними церковними нормами, які, безсумнівно, реалізуються крізь призму духовних цінностей та особливостей національного характеру англійців.

Ключові слова: середньоанглійська мова, семантика, директиви, інтенціональність, ілокутивна сила, пропозиція, соціальний/інституційний дискурс, комунікативна поведінка.