

## Illocutionary Function of Language in the Healing Miracles of Jesus Christ

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### Abstract

Apart from its expressive and communicative functions, language is used to perform certain actions in interactions. However, with the exception of Waribo-Naye (2016) who combined generic structure potential with speech acts in studying Christian marriage proceedings, existing linguistic studies on religious discourse have largely focused on the ideological constructs, generic structure potential, and sociolinguistic features of religious texts to the neglect of performative acts, especially with respect to the healing miracles of Jesus Christ (HMJC). This study, therefore, fills the gap by examining the illocutionary acts performed by Jesus Christ in His utterances in His healing miracles in order to establish the illocutionary force in God's word. Twenty healing miracles were purposively selected from the Gospels of the *Revised Standard Version Bible*. The data was subjected to content analysis, drawing insights from the theory of speech acts. A quantitative analysis of the preponderance of the speech acts types was also carried out by working out their simple percentages. The findings reveal that the speech acts performed in the miracles are dominated by directives (63.75%), followed by constatives (30%). Instances of commissives acts (3.75%), acknowledgments (1.25%), and effectives (1.25%) are also found in the discourse. The study reinforces the claim that most human utterances are actions with illocutionary force, not mere statements.

**Keywords:** Illocutionary acts, utterance, religious, discourse, interactions

### 1. Introduction

Language is "a distinctively human endowment" (Odebunmi 2016, p.3) which provides human beings with not only the capacity to express themselves, but also the ability to perform different actions in different interactive or communicative contexts. The performative function of language is no doubt paramount in religious discourse, especially with respect to the utterances

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made by God in the Old Testament during creation and those made by Jesus Christ in the New Testament in His healing miracles.

Christian religious discourse has been studied from different theoretical perspectives such as discourse analysis (e.g. Inya 2012, Chilwa 2013, Kim 2016), pragmatics (e.g. Waribo-Naye 2016, Babatunde & Aremo 2016) and sociolinguistics (e.g. Oboko 2019). Inya (2012) for instance, examines the Generic Structure Potential (GSP) of Christian apologetics using a database of twenty texts of Christian apologetic writers. The study reveals that Christian apologetics have the following elements: "Title TT, Author's Name AN, Background Information BI, Presentation of Contrary Positions PCP, Articulating Own Position AOP, Argumentation A, Elaboration EL, Finis F and Testimonials TMs" (Inya 2012, p.78). The paper concludes that these elements work together to achieve the communicative goal of the defence of Christian belief.

Chilwa (2013) examines the ideological perspectives of naming among Nigerian Christians. He identified nine categories of names among Nigerian Christians that are driven by ideologies – ideological (positive) confession names, prophetic, experience/circumstantial, worship and praise, virtue, parental admiration, offering and commitment, self-abasement, and sermonic names.

Kim (2016) studies Richard R. Melick's article, "Women Pastors: What Does the Bible Teach" which was posted on the website of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) from the lens of critical discourse analysis with the aim of unravelling the underlying chauvinistic ideology of SBC with respect to women ordination. The study reveals the deployment of discourse strategies such as context models, macropropositions, modality and lexico-semantics, and local meaning to reproduce "patriarchal religious ideology" (Kim 2016, p.72).

Babatunde & Aremo (2016) investigate Nigerian Christian tracts using conceptual metaphor and pragmeme. They identified seven conceptual metaphors in Nigerian Christian tracts, namely, God is a father and container, sin is a wall, Christian life is a journey, the world is a market, human body is a house, human heart is a container, and more is up, less is down (p. 146). Waribo-Naye (2016) studies the generic structure potential and acts in Christian marriage proceedings in Ibadan. She identifies nineteen (19)

structural elements in the selected data. Thirteen (13) of the structural elements were compulsory while five (5) were optional. The study also reveals that Christian marriage proceedings exhibit all the six categories of Bach and Harnish's (1979) illocutionary acts, though "in varying proportions" (Waribo-Naye 2016, p.366). From a sociolinguistic perspective, Oboko (2019) looks at the use of coinages, code-switching and code-mixing, proverbs, among others, by Pentecostal pastors in their preaching.

Although the studies reviewed above are relevant to the present study in their dealing with religious discourse, they have not given significant attention to the illocutionary force in the utterances of Jesus in His healing miracles on earth. This study therefore, examines these utterances in order to unpack the illocutionary acts in them as a means of establishing the performative function of language in religious discourse.

## **2. Miracle: Meaning and significance**

The manifestation of God to man remains a mystery to humanity. Such mysterious manifestation could be referred to as a miracle. Eve ( cited in Cadenhead, 2008) describes a miracle as a "strikingly surprising event, beyond what is regarded as humanly possible, in which God is believed to act, either directly or through an intermediary." In other words, a miracle is an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs (Merriam webster.com). This implies that miracles are manifestations of supernatural influences on situations that affect human beings. They are often viewed from a positive perspective, that is, the divine intervention usually changes human situation for good. They have both religious and social significance to the affected individual(s) and the society. From a religious perspective, God used miracles in both the Old and New Testaments of the bible to manifest Himself, confirm His message, judge the people, bring about faith, and demonstrate His love for humanity etc. In his study on the significance of Jesus' healing miracles, Cadenhead (2008) argues that "the idea that one can be healed of physical pain through faith is a varied theme in the Synoptics and a strong motivator to bring an interest in early Christianity, especially during a time of persecution." This shows how Jesus' healing miracles promoted the growth of early Christianity, and indeed till date when people attend some religious functions in order to be healed of their physical, spiritual and psychological problems. The social significance of miracles could be seen from the happiness it brings to the people, especially those who receive healing.

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During His ministry on earth, Jesus who was God's incarnate used His therapeutic work, that is, His healing miracles as "an integral part of the salvation work of mankind" (Popescu 2019, p.70) to manifest God's love and mercy for humanity. Since faith in God was a prerequisite for healing, Jesus showed compassion to, and healed the sick who demonstrated faith in God's power to forgive and to heal. In accounting for the role of faith in Jesus' healing miracles, Popescu (2019, p.71) avers that "Christ's whole salvation work is a work of healing the entire individual who, through faith, receives a new life". This implies that Jesus' salvation work of healing depends largely on the faith of the sick. It is pertinent to note that most of the healing miracles (e.g. healing the leper, woman of the Cannan, woman with an issue of blood, the blind, the paralytic; casting out unclean spirit, etc. ) that Jesus performed while on earth were done by mere uttering of words which had illocutionary force.

### **3. Theoretical orientation: Speech Act Theory**

Speech act theory (SAT) could be traced to J. L. Austin (1962) who believed that language is used to perform some actions. Austin observed that some utterances that look like statements lack the necessary elements of a statement, that is, a truth value (Schiffrin 1994, p.50). Such statements do not "describe" or "report" anything, but "the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which arguably would not normally be described as, or as just saying something "(Schiffrin 1994, p.50). Austin considers such utterances that are used to carry out some actions as performatives, and referred to declarative statements whose truth or falsity can be verified as constatives. This implies that within the ambit of SAT meaning and action are related to language. The theory emphasises the intention of the speaker than the speech itself. Austin identified three main categories of speech act – locutionary act (what is being said, that is, the utterance), illocutionary act (the intention of the speaker), and the perlocutionary act (the effect of the utterance on the hearer). He further classified the illocutionary act into verdictives (utterances that are used to issue judgment), exercitives (utterances that are used to exercise power and authority), commissives (utterances that commit the speaker into doing something in future), and behavitives (utterances that are used to indicate the speaker's psychological feelings).

Since after its inception, the speech act theory has been modified by different scholars (e.g. Searle 1969, Bach and Harnish 1979, Allan 1986, etc.

For the purpose of this study, Bach and Harnish's (1979) model of speech act is adopted because of its elaborateness and its emphasis on the attitude expressed by the speaker (S) and the hearer (H) in a communicative event. Bach and Harnish (1979) categorised the illocutionary act into four main types, namely, constatives, directives, commissives, and acknowledgments. Bach (2008) provides examples for each of the categories as could be seen below:

**Constatives:** These are utterances that are used to make statements, e.g. affirming, alleging, announcing, answering, attributing, claiming, classifying, concurring, confirming, conjecturing, denying, disagreeing, disclosing, disputing, identifying, informing, insisting, predicting, ranking, reporting, stating, stipulating.

**Directives:** These are utterances that make the hearer to take action, e.g. advising, admonishing, asking, begging, dismissing, excusing, forbidding, instructing, ordering, permitting, requesting, requiring, suggesting, urging, warning.

**Commissives:** These are utterances that commit the speaker to future actions, e.g. agreeing, betting, guaranteeing, inviting, offering, promising, swearing, volunteering.

**Acknowledgments:** these utterances are used to express the speaker's psychological disposition or feelings towards the hearer, e.g. apologizing, condoling, congratulating, greeting, thanking, accepting.

However, Bach (2008) observes that if each of the above illocutionary acts does not clearly indicate the attitude it expresses, conventional illocutionary act would be invoked to account for how a particular speech act could succeed. The conventional illocutionary act bifurcates into effectives and verdictives with the following examples as offered by Bach (2008) below:

**Effectives:** banning, bidding, censuring, dubbing, enjoining, firing, indicting, moving, nominating, pardoning, penalizing, promoting, seconding, sentencing, suspending, vetoing, voting.

**Verdictives:** acquitting, assessing, calling (by an umpire or referee), certifying, convicting, grading, judging, ranking, rating, ruling.

#### **4. Methodology**

The data for this comprised forty-six utterances from twenty healing miracles performed by Jesus Christ during His ministry on earth. The data were purposively selected from the synoptic gospels of the *Revised Standard Version Bible*. The choice of these miracles was informed by their inherent performative acts, and their religious and socio-cultural significance to the people. The *Revised Standard Version Bible* was chosen for this study because of its simple and straight forward use of language. The study adopts

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a descriptive research design to account for both the qualitative and quantitative analyses. For the qualitative analysis, the selected texts are explained based on Bach and Harnish’s (1979) classification of illocutionary acts to ascertain their speech act type and their pragmatic functions within the context. Quantitatively, the simple percentages of the different illocutionary acts are worked out to further explain the pragmatic functions of the different speech acts in the selected data.

**5. Analysis and findings**

The analysis reveals that the healing miracles discourse was largely dominated by the employment of directives, followed by constatives. Few instances of commissives and one instance each of acknowledgment and effectives acts are also found in the discourse. The analysis also shows the explicit expression of attitude of belief in God’s supernatural powers by both the speaker and hearer. The preponderance of directives suggests that Jesus used His therapeutic works on earth to assert His power and authority over sickness and death, while constatives are used to teach the people the mysteries of God and His works.

Table 1 below shows a graphic representation of the analysis:

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentages of Illocutionary acts in the HMJC**

S/N	Illocutionary act	Frequency	Percentage (100%)
1	Directives	51	63.75
2	Constatives	24	30
3	Commissives	3	3.75
4	Acknowledgement	1	1.25
5	Effectives	1	1.25
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 above shows a preponderant use of directives with a frequency of 51 representing 63.75%. This was followed by constatives with a frequency of 24 representing 30%. Commissives occur 3 times with 3.75%, while acknowledgements and effectives are utilised once each in the selected data, representing 1.25% respectively. These performative acts, together with their attitudinal expressions are discussed in turn:

**a. Directives in the HMJC**

Directives acts are used to urge the hearer to carry out instructions or take some actions. They are the most frequently used illocutionary act in the selected data with 64% of the total utterances. They manifest through ordering and asking as shown in examples 1 and 2 below:

**Example 1:**

**Background:** In this example, Jesus casts out an unclean spirit.

And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, "What have you to do with us Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him (Mark 1: 23 – 26).

In example 1 above, one could infer from the utterances of the unclean spirit that it recognises God's supernatural power. To confirm God's supernatural power, Jesus performs the illocutionary act of ordering by commanding the unclean spirit to leave the man. This ordering act is indexed by the utterances, "Be silent", and "come out of him". The cleansing of the man through utterances is used to assert the authority and power of Jesus over evil spirits. The success of the directives act shows the attitudinal expression of Jesus' supernatural power and the belief in such power. Let us consider another instance of directive in example 2 below:

**Example 2:**

**Background:** In this miracle, Jesus heals an invalid man who has been ill for thirty-eight years.

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethzatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralysed. One man was there, who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no man to put me in the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk."

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And at once, the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked.” (John 5:1– 9).

In example 2 above, the directive act in form of asking is expressed in the interrogation, “Do you want to be healed?” This is used to elicit information from the sick man with respect to his desire to regain his health. Rather than give a direct response of yes or no, the man performs an indirect act of acceptance that he wants to be healed, but had no one help him. His expected positive response, though in a veiled form receives the expected perlocutionary effect from Jesus, hence, He performed yet another directive act of ordering in the expression: “Rise, take up your pallet, and walk.” The verbal elements “Rise”, “take up” and “walk” are pragmatically deployed to index the illocutionary act of directives.

**b. Constatives in the HMJC**

The analysis reveals the use of constatives acts by Jesus to make statements in His healing miracles. These acts manifested mostly in form of stating, affirming, informing, announcing, and disclosing. This will be made clearer presently in examples 3 and 4 below:

**Example 3:**

**Background:** In this miracle, Jesus healed a woman of Canaan.

And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon.” But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him saying, “Send her away, for she is crying after us.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel”. But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord help me.” And he answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs can eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly (Matthew 15: 21 – 28).



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In example 3 above, Jesus initially refuses to listen to the entreaties of the Canaanite woman who has come to ask Him to heal her daughter. When His disciples plead with Him to answer the woman so that she could leave them, He responds in the statement: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel". The performative act in the above statement is that of informing. Jesus uses it to inform the people that He has a mission. With the deployment of bald on record strategy, Jesus tells the woman that, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." In this utterance, the constatives act of stating is performed to assert the irrationality in giving what belongs to one's children to a stranger. Not deterred by the seemingly impolite response by Jesus, the woman demonstrates her faith that Jesus has the supernatural power to heal her daughter, and that He is for the entire world in the expression, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs can eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Moved by the woman's faith, Jesus in another constatives act of affirming says, thus, "O woman, great is your faith!" This performative act of affirming in the end yields the directive, "Be it done for you as you desire" to indicate that the woman's wish that her daughter should be healed has been granted. Let us consider another example.

### **Example 4**

**Background:** In this example, Jesus opened the eyes of a man that was born blind.

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which means sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.... Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you." He said, "Lord, I believe"; and he worshipped him. Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not

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see may see, and that those who see may become blind.”  
.... (John 9: 1 – 41)

There is a predominance of constatives in example 4 above. The constatives acts in example 4 manifest in the form of informing, announcing, and disclosing. The utterance, ““It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him” is an instance of informing act. In informing His disciples, Jesus enlightens them that the man’s blindness was to glorify God. By extension, some human sufferings are not because of their sins, but rather for the purpose of God to be made known. Jesus also informed the man of His purpose on earth in the expression, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” Through this illocutionary act of informing, Jesus reveals that His mission on earth was to bring “judgment”.

The illocutionary act of announcing is exemplified in the expression, “I am the light of the world.” In this utterance, Jesus announces Himself to the world. He proclaims that for as long as He is in the world, He is the light, hence, everyone who believes will not be blind anymore, but will receive his or her sight and freedom.

When asked by the man who “the Son of man” was, Jesus performed the utterance act of disclosing in His response, “You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.” Through this utterance, Jesus discloses His true identity to the man and the entire world. The essence of this disclosure was to ensure that the man and the entire world do not go astray, but follow Him who would lead them to God, the Father.

#### **c. Commissives in the HMJC**

The analysis shows that commissives acts in the selected data are used to commit Jesus to undertake a future action. The commissives acts that are identified are promising, guaranteeing, and agreeing. Examples 5, 6 and 7 below will be instructive here:

##### **Example 5**

**Background:** In this example, Jesus healed the centurion’s servant.

As he entered the Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, beseeching him and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress.” And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” But the centurion

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answered him, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” When Jesus heard him, he marvelled, and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.” And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; be it done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment. (Matthew 8:5 – 13)

### **Example 6**

**Background:** In this example, Jesus heals a noble man’s son.

So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my son dies.” Jesus said to him, “Go; your son will live.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way. As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was living. So he asked them the hour when he began to mend and they said, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live”, and he himself believed, and all his household. (John 4: 46 – 53).

In example 5 above, Jesus performs the illocutionary act of commissives in the expression, “I will come and heal him.” He performs the act of promising the centurion that he would come and heal his servant. The first person pronoun “I” in the subject position refers to Jesus Christ who commits Himself to the futurity intention of healing the centurion’s servant through

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the modal auxiliary, “will”. To clearly indicate his belief in the promise and power of Jesus to heal his servant, the centurion stated thus, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed”.

Example 6 above shows that Jesus guarantees the man that his son will be healed. In other words, He performs the illocutionary act of guaranteeing. The guarantee given to the noble man that his son’s health will be restored, and that he will not die is captured in the utterance, “your son will live”. This guarantee is indexed by the modal verb, “will” which indicates assurance of future event. The grammatical object of the verb is “son”, who will receive the healing. The man expresses his positive attitude towards God’s power to heal and to give life as he walks away in total believe of what Jesus had said to him. This act was performed to show that Jesus has power over death.

**Example 7:**

**Background:** In this example, Jesus healed the leper.

And a leper came to him beseeching him, and knelling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him, and said, “I will; be clean.” And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. And he sternly charged him, and sent him away at once, and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded for a proof to the people.” But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter. (Mark 1: 40 – 45).

Example 7 above shows the construction of knowledge of the power of God by the leper in his assertion that Jesus could heal him if He wanted. This knowledge is co-constructed by Jesus in His utterance act of agreeing to heal him in “I will”. In this utterance, the agentive personal pronoun “I” refers to Jesus. The modal auxiliary verb, “will” is used to perform the act of agreeing and resolving. In other words, it encodes Jesus willingness to heal the leper, hence, committing Him to the action of cleansing the man.

**d. Acknowledgments in the HMJC**

Acknowledgements acts in the selected data are used to express Jesus' psychological disposition or feelings towards the sick. Only one instance of the act representing 1.25% is found in the data. It comes in form of condoling as would be made clearer in example 8 below:

**Example 8**

**Background:** In this example, Jesus cured the paralytic man.

And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, "Take heart my son, your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" – he then said to the paralytic – "Rise, take up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men. (Matthew 9: 1- 8).

In example 8 above, Jesus' psychological expression towards the paralytic is evident in the utterance, "Take heart my son" in which He sympathises with, and consoles the paralytic. Jesus heals the paralytic out of sympathy. The same excerpt is used in example 9 to demonstrate the deployment of effective acts in the selected data.

**e. Effectives in the HMJC**

An instance of effectives acts is also identified in the selected data to bring about change in some states of affairs. The analysis reveals that the act which manifests in terms of pardoning is deployed by Jesus to forgive the sins of the sick, thus, healing them. Let us consider example 9 below:

**Example 9:**

**Background:** In this miracle, Jesus healed the paralytic

And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts,

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said “Why do you think evil in your hearts?” For which is easier, to say, “Your sins are forgiven” or to say, “Rise and walk?” But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins – he then said to the paralytic – Rise, take your bed and go home.” And he rose and went home. (Matthew 9: 1 – 7).

In example 9 above, the utterance act of pardoning is performed by Jesus in the expression, “your sins are forgiven”. In this utterance, the past participle verb, “forgiven” is used to index pardoning. The uttering of, “Your sins are forgiven” brings about healing to the paralytic thereby ensuring a change in the state of his spiritual and health affairs. Although he was once a sinner and a paralytic, now he is forgiven and healed. The performance of this act implies that God has the authority to forgive any kind of sin that human beings might commit

### **6. Conclusion**

In this study, we have examined the utterances of Jesus in the discourse of His healing miracles using insights from the speech acts theory. The study has revealed the utilisation of directives, constatives, commissives, acknowledgements, and effectives in Jesus’ therapeutic utterances. These illocutionary acts were used to index Jesus’ intentions which include the establishment of God’s authority on earth, His love and mercy for human beings, His teaching and manifestation. The study has succeeded in reinforcing the notion that language is not only used to make statements, but also to perform certain actions as we have demonstrated in the analysis. It is therefore, recommended that future studies should also explore the utterances of Jesus in His other miracles in order to account for their pragmatic implications.

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