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Demystifying Powers and Ideologies via Illocutions in Pope Francis' Pandemic Homilies: A Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The Roman Catholic Church, just like other churches in the world, has seen an unprecedented influx of afflicted followers as fear of death looms around the globe with the spread of an unseeable enemy the Covid-19 pandemic. This study analyzed how the Church's supreme pontiff, Pope Francis, mirrors his intentions in his ten randomly selected homilies to project his powers and ideologies amid the pandemic. Grounded on the supposition of discourse that language reflects and shapes social order and individuals interact and react to the words of others to better themselves and the world, this study revealed that Pope Francis' intentions in delivering the pandemic homilies encompass asserting the theological teachings of the Church, directing the congregation to act, committing himself and his audience to respond as a community, and expressing a mixture of personal emotions, which were revealed through the scrutiny of illocutionary forces used to assert legitimate, expert, and referent powers and profess magisterial, covenantal, volitional, and revelational ideologies. Notably, it could be observed in the findings that there appears to be a unification of powers to mirror the overriding ideologies that emerge. Indeed, the findings imply that the pope's homilies serve multiple purposes, including asserting theological teachings, directing the congregation to act, fostering community response, and expressing personal emotions through illocutionary forces establishing a meaningful correspondence between preaching and communication.

INTRODUCTION

The Roman Catholic Church is the most widespread denomination of Christianity, boasting a global membership of over one billion adherents, and Pope Francis serves as supreme pontiff of such a religious institution. As such, he fulfills a number of papal functions, encompassing serving as the primary witness to faith and as the unifier of the people of God (Ambrosino, 2016; Pappas, 2013; Smyth, 2022; Wolfe, 2017). Yet, there have been documented instances in which his comments were misconstrued and used in a manner that was not intended by him, which led to a variety of interpretations, and in some cases, outright hostility, among Catholics and non-Catholics alike across the world.

A growing movement to water down the message of Pope Francis manifested in Catholic media outlets and public figures who began to

question his words and teachings which were interpreted as insults to devout Catholics (Lewis, 2020). This was the beginning of an effort to emasculate the message of Pope Francis. For example, individuals who objected to his reliance on "unsettled science" and his condemnation of capitalism (Lewis, 2020) criticized his encyclical on caring for creation, known as *Laudato Si'*. Similarly, the apostolic exhortation on marriage and family, *Amoris Laetitia*, promulgated by the Pope in 2016, elicited a significant degree of public opposition among members of the Catholic community subsequent to its dissemination, which can be attributed to the conviction that the aforementioned manuscript contravened immutable Catholic tenets concerning the institution of matrimony, extramarital relations, and the veracity of objective reality (Cameli, 2017). In 2015, Fields reported that Pope Francis was misquoted on a

number of occasions when he spoke about topics such as atheism and salvation, the third Vatican council, and the fictionality of Adam and Eve in the Creation Story, among others. Likewise, the documentary film “Francesco” has garnered significant global attention subsequent to a particular scene wherein the pontiff advocated enacting civil union statutes for homosexual partners. This cinematic work was unveiled in the year 2020. Certain activists and media narratives have made allegations that the utterances of Pope Francis represent a transgression of the immutable doctrine of the Church (Flynn, 2020). With this, he was met with criticism from inside the Catholic Church, as well as shock and outrage from other religious communities across the globe (Talmazan et al., 2020). Despite this, a number of reports discovered that the views expressed by the aforementioned pope were either completely misreported or just taken out of context and that they did not in any way change the traditional stance that the Church has held on such a contentious issue (Babu, 2020; Lyon et al., 2020; Schiller, 2020).

Meanwhile, when the COVID-19 pandemic was at its height in 2020, Pope Francis delivered a series of homilies in Vatican City. Basically, a homily is oftentimes referred to as a moral exhortation that is delivered to challenge and help, inform and direct, and always bring Scripture to bear on the real lives of God’s people (Powell, 2017; Sousa, 2020). Otherwise stated, it is delivered to inspire and empower those who hear and reflect on the truth it bears (Merida, 2014). Due to the pandemic, the Roman Catholic Church, just like other churches in the world, has seen an unprecedented influx of suffering people as fear of death looms around the globe with the spread of the unseeable enemy. Thus, it is called to enlighten—essentially through imparting the message of comfort, peace, community, hope, and transformation (Sancken, 2020). This means church leaders are tasked with shepherding their congregations through times of crisis by witnessing strength, courage, and faith and being a calm, non-anxious presence in times of fear (Maxwell, 2020; Stack, 2020). Therefore, a study to investigate how a church leader, like Pope Francis, mirrors intentions with the use of language in his homilies to assert powers and profess ideologies when the

populace is in the midst of a worldwide tribulation, has been deemed necessary and urgent by the researcher.

In the past years, many curious linguists have looked into the enigma of homilies and sermons through a variety of lenses and corpora (Adedun & Mekiliuwa, 2009; Capaldi, 2017; Ferrara, 2014; Guzik, 2018; Hopkins, 2010; Karanja, 2014; Mansouri et al., 2017; Szudrowicz-Gartska, 2012). Yet, research on religious discourse and the systematic growth of “language and religion” as a discipline of sociolinguistics is still restricted and scarce (Darquennes & Vandenbussche, 2011; Hobbs, 2019; Rahimi & Hematiyan, 2012). To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, no scholarly work has been disseminated regarding the illocutionary acts employed by a pontiff to convey his purported authority and avowed ideologies in his homilies during a pandemic crisis. Thus, the present study’s results have made a daring contribution to the field of discourse studies by shedding new light on the linguistic and critical examination of homilies. Specifically, this research has highlighted how a speaker’s discursive intentions or purposes can reveal their underlying powers and ideologies.

As this study’s theoretical foundation, discourse analysis (DA) embraces the central idea that “discourse is a way of constituting knowledge and power relations that attach themselves to strategies of domination” (Foucault, 1970). It was used to examine the religious and political authority exhibited by the highest leader of the Roman Catholic Church. In this study, the researcher argues that Pope Francis, in his homilies, emphasized the importance of discourse to better understand how knowledge and power are intertwined within the Church. According to Gee’s (2005) argument, discourse analysis (DA) can be employed to scrutinize how language mirrors and molds social hierarchy, as well as how individuals engage and respond to the utterances of their peers to enhance their own lives and society at large.

This study operationalized discourse analysis within the framework of Searle’s (1969) speech act theory, focusing on illocutionary acts, to elucidate the mechanisms by which the pope’s authority and ideology are conveyed in his homilies. Searle (1969) states that the five categories of illocutionary forces are assertives, directives, commissives,

expressives, and declaratives. This "refined" theory shed light on the fact that utterances have a propositional content depending on belief and intention of production, as well as on the circumstance and real condition (Allott & Shaer, 2017). Founded on these premises, this study was pursued with an overarching objective: To examine how the pope asserts his powers and professes his ideologies through illocutionary forces of language in his pandemic homilies.

METHODS

This study followed a descriptive-qualitative methodology informed by discourse analysis (DA). Since DA is qualitative and interpretive, it allowed me to thoroughly analyze the data and draw meaningful conclusions about the research issues posed in this study (Budd, 2005; Syting, 2018). The objective of discourse analysis is to comprehensively delineate and elucidate linguistic occurrences by taking into account the affective, cognitive, contextual, and societal factors that underlie their usage (Gee, 2005). The present inquiry adhered to the conventional methodologies for a discourse analytical exploration, as espoused by Bannister (1995) and Fairclough (2003). The identification and formulation of a research topic initiated the research endeavor. Subsequently, the researchers proceeded to obtain access and consent, followed by the collection of data. The data were coded, analyzed, and validated. The final stages of the research process involved compiling a comprehensive written report and the application of the findings. Within the purview of this investigation, the homilies of Pope Francis were subjected to discourse analysis to scrutinize how language, both oral and written, embodies social and cultural viewpoints and identities. Additionally, the study sought to delve into institutionalized paradigms of knowledge that are made evident in disciplinary frameworks and function through the nexus of knowledge and power, as articulated by Foucault (1970).

The homilies Pope Francis preached during the pandemic served as the study's corpus. Homilies were chosen with consideration for when they were given, the languages they were given in, and the reliability of the publisher (Libreria Editrice Vaticana). In addition, approval was obtained from the author's institutional review board following the

submission of protocol number AL-GS 35-12-2020. Then, 10 homilies were randomly selected from the e-book, and each was given a unique code. As per the scholarly work of Fugard and Potts (2015), it has been suggested by Braun and Clarke (2013) that a discourse study can be adequately conducted with the analysis of ten generated texts.

In the analysis, every sentence was analyzed to identify what illocutionary acts were present based on the theory of Searle (1969), whether assertive/representatives, directives, commissives, expressive, or declarative. All sentences were then thematically analyzed to bring out what powers and ideologies Pope Francis reveals for each illocutionary act category. To set the framework used in the analysis, power is defined as the potential of the religious leader, i.e., Pope Francis, to inspire the believers and influence their activities toward accomplishing a goal. Moreover, power refers to the pope's capacity to exemplify authority over his followers regardless of distance, as he ideally stays in Vatican City, and the followers are scattered across the globe; relevance by adapting the content and language usage of his message to the level of the listeners, and identification through emphasizing common values, goals, and experiences or finding and highlighting common ground that exists between him and the audience. Whereas ideology is defined as a set of ideals, philosophies, beliefs, or theories that a leader, such as the pope, upholds and personifies in discourses. Seven experts in applied linguistics performed validation checks on each analysis to fortify the credibility of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the homilies considered as corpora of this study, the powers and ideologies of Pope Francis are determined by his intentions in the utterances, which can be examined through the illocutionary forces such as assertive or representatives, directives, commissives, expressive, and declarative. Findings reveal that the first four forces are exhibited and that there are three powers asserted in the homilies: legitimate, expert, and referent. Meanwhile, the ideologies that he professes cover magisterial, covenantal, volitional, and revelational ideologies. Notably, it could be observed that there appears to be a unification of

two powers, as it is done to mirror the overriding ideologies that emerge from the analysis.

Assertive in Legitimate-Expert Powers and Magisterial Ideology

Assertives play a crucial role in conveying both legitimate and expert powers in Pope Francis' pandemic homilies and in shaping the magisterial ideology underpinning his messages. Legitimate power is derived from a position of authority typically granted through election, selection, or appointment and is reinforced by societal norms. Leaders like presidents, prime ministers, monarchs, and religious figures like the Pope possess legitimate power. In Pope Francis' homilies, his legitimate power emanates from his position as the supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church. This role is recognized and accepted by the Church's followers worldwide. Through assertive statements in his homilies, Pope Francis asserts his authority as the highest leader of the Church, emphasizing his position as the primary witness to faith and the unifier of the people of God.

Conversely, expert power is based on an individual's expertise, knowledge, and experience. Pope Francis displays his expert power through the depth and wisdom of his messages during the pandemic. His homilies reflect a profound understanding of the subject matter, enabling him to provide guidance, comfort, and direction to the faithful during challenging times. The assertive expressions in his homilies demonstrate his ability to comprehend the situation, offer insightful perspectives, and effectively communicate his teachings to the listeners.

Pope Francis' homilies also embody the magisterial ideology, encompassing fundamental beliefs and principles that grant him the authoritative capacity to interpret divine words and provide authentic teachings. As the head of the Magisterium, the body of bishops with doctrinal authority in the Church, Pope Francis uses assertive statements in his homilies to convey his commitment to the truth of his beliefs, dogmas, and interpretations of the Scriptures. These assertive expressions affirm and reinforce the teachings of Roman Catholicism, offering hope and solace to the world amidst the pandemic's challenges.

In the following excerpts, it can be deemed that Pope Francis is consistently and adeptly preaching about unmitigated and unchanged

Christian beliefs: Jesus is the shepherd – this is how Peter sees Him – who comes to save, to save the sheep which had gone astray: they were us. (H1S3MET). In closeness, never distant, He says “I am here” (H9F8MET).

Pope Francis is preaching that at the height of uncertainties and fears caused by the present global health crisis, Christ remains to be our good shepherd who pastors his flock, being us, meekly and tenderly. Pope Francis, a church leader and an expert on the teachings, wants to emphasize the point that with the Lord, we lack nothing in His presence that saves us always and in all ways. Moreover, Pope Francis is reminding the audience that God is immanent in us. He is endeavoring to insinuate the philosophical concept of immanence, which posits that the divine is all-encompassing or revealed within the realm of the physical universe, in which the concept being conveyed is that the immanent manifestation of the divine essence pervades the ordinary aspects of existence. These assertions of Pope Francis to cause us to remember and embrace the teachings of the Church – to strengthen our faith, to revive our hope, to enliven our spirit – the following questions from the words of the Lord Jesus Christ himself as quoted by the Holy Father, extracted statements taken from H10F27ML, are used to lead us to a spiritual contemplation: “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” (H10F27ML).

Undoubtedly, the Covid-19 pandemic is a perplexing and alarming phenomenon for myriad individuals across the globe. A significant proportion of the populace has fallen ill, with many having succumbed to the ailment. Numerous individuals have experienced job displacement and entrepreneurial shortcomings, thwarting their aspirations and objectives. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the inquiries proffered by His Holiness posit that trepidation and apprehension are not divine in nature, whereas confidence and optimism are. The pontiff affirms that the global Covid-19 pandemic is not a divine verdict on humankind, but rather a divine summons for individuals to assess their priorities and commit to corresponding actions henceforth. As he directly talks to Christ in H4S11APT, he exclaims: You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a time of choosing. It is not the time of Your judgment but of our judgment: a time to choose what matters and what passes away,

a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to You, Lord, and to others (H4S11APT).

The assertion of the Holy Father is that Jesus Christ possesses a comprehensive understanding of all the apprehensions and concerns that afflict us, not solely on account of His divine nature and omnipotent capacity to direct all things, but also by virtue of His embodiment as a human being, having become “the Word made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Hence, Pope Francis opts to give prominence to the assertion that: We have an anchor: by His cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by His cross, we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by His cross, we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love (H10F27ML).

Amidst the ongoing pandemic, His Holiness Pope Francis has proclaimed, following the doctrinal foundations of the Roman Catholic belief, that the Almighty is mobilizing His people to faith. This faith is not merely confined to acknowledging the existence of the Divine but rather entails a resolute turning towards and placing trust in Him, regardless of the vicissitudes of life.

Pope Francis strategically employs assertiveness as an illocutionary force to assert both his legitimate and expert powers, thereby professing the magisterial ideology in his pandemic homilies. As the supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, he derives his legitimate power from a position of authority recognized and accepted by the Church's followers worldwide. Through assertive statements, Pope Francis emphasizes his position as the primary witness to faith and the unifier of the people of God, effectively conveying his authority as a leader coming from a higher power.

Furthermore, Pope Francis demonstrates his expert power through the profound knowledge and wisdom displayed in his sacred discourses. His homilies exhibit his expertise in matters about the Roman Catholic faith, enabling him to provide guidance, comfort, and instruction to the faithful. The assertive expressions in his homilies reinforce his expert status, eliciting attentiveness, confidence, and deference from his listeners.

Within the framework of the magisterial ideology, Pope Francis uses assertiveness to assert and uphold Catholic teachings and doctrines grounded in Biblical and traditional foundations. He

intends to affirm a set of beliefs that the Church professes, fostering an unwavering Christian faith amid the global affliction.

The present study aligns with previous research indicating that assertive signify a commitment to the truth of expressed propositions (Bryant, 2017; Dylgjeri, 2017; Sameer, 2017; Sari, 2014). Pope Francis' assertive expressions mirror the essence of the readings and align with the illocutionary intent of Scripture, as recognized in homiletic practices (Bryant, 2017; Keller, 2016; Osborne, 2006; Robinson, 2014).

In the context of the pandemic, the Church, led by Pope Francis, assumes a crucial role in inspiring and instructing the faithful in the beauty and truth of Catholic tradition and practice (Attard, 2014). The Church serves as a guiding light, offering individuals a sense of purpose and connection to the divine amidst profound existential inquiries. It provides a secure haven for seeking solace, guidance, and optimism during times of adversity and moral challenges (Del Castillo et al., 2020).

By disseminating precise information and encouragement through faith, the Church fosters readiness and fortitude while alleviating apprehension and instilling hope (Plaats, 2020; Sloan, 2020; Walgenbach, 2020; Webster & Neal, 2020). In this manner, Pope Francis, with his assertive use of language, empowers the faithful and strengthens their resolve to navigate the uncertainties brought about by the pandemic.

Directives in Legitimate-Referent Powers and Covenantal Ideology

Directives play a significant role in Pope Francis' pandemic homilies, as they are intertwined with legitimate-referent powers and the covenantal ideology he professes. Legitimate power, as previously discussed, involves imposing a sense of duty or accountability upon others. In Pope Francis' homilies, he utilizes his legitimate power to propose actions to be undertaken by his audience, aiming to reinforce or alter their viewpoints. Through directives, he expects changes in behavior and invites responses from the faithful. This use of legitimate power is rooted in his recognized authority as the supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church.

In addition to legitimate power, referent power is also evident in Pope Francis' homilies. Referent power arises from the perception of an individual's

attractiveness, worthiness, and ability to command respect. Pope Francis, as a charismatic leader, possesses robust interpersonal abilities, fostering a sense of ease and comfort among his audience. His deep and trusted relationships with his followers and connections to disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society further enhance his referent power. With this influence, he can inspire and mobilize the community of believers, urging them to act together as brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, particularly during challenging times.

By skillfully combining legitimate and referent powers, Pope Francis exemplifies the essence of the covenantal ideology in his pandemic homilies. Covenantal ideology, also called communal or ecclesiastical ideology, reflects the congregation's sincere commitment to living under the gospel's teachings. In his directives, Pope Francis calls, urges, encourages, challenges, commands, and requests the faithful to live out the principles of their faith, emphasizing the communal nature of their journey in following Christ.

Throughout the pandemic homilies, Pope Francis employs directives to guide the faithful in their actions and choices, aligning them with the covenantal ideology. His leadership is characterized by a sense of duty and accountability, where he encourages the community to come together and support one another in living out their shared faith.

In the following excerpts, he uses the phrase "let us" to typify the use of directives as an illocutionary force in his discourses: Let us ask the Lord for the grace of being near to each other; not to hide ourselves from each other, not to wash our hands of others' problems as Cain did, no. (H2W18ML). Let us welcome this time of trial as an opportunity to prepare for our collective future, a future for all without discarding anyone. (H6S19AET). And we, from this altar, from this sacrifice of Jesus, of Jesus who was not ashamed of weeping, let us ask for the grace to weep. (H7S29ML). Amid isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side (H10F27ML).

Becoming aware of the pattern demonstrated in the sample statements above, it can be observed that under his legitimate and referent powers, the pope through his language appears to possess the

power to influence people's line of thinking and spark a move as an assemblage. In the same way, he is emphasizing that the Church is a family wherein God's people are bound by one collective affection of love as brothers and sisters in faith. Additional directive statements from the homilies of the pope are presented below wherein the phrase "let us" is recurring to give emphasis on the communal bond the pope and the audience have. These samples make evidence of his legitimate and referent powers to bring out his covenantal ideology: Let us be attentive in prayer: let us not fall into habit without the awareness that the Lord is there, that I am speaking with the Lord and that He is capable of solving the problem (H3M23ML). So, let us not give in to resignation; let us not place a stone before hope. (H4S11APT). And let us show mercy to those who are most vulnerable; for only in this way will we build a new world (H6S19AET).

Another repetitive pattern in the pope's homilies that demonstrates his legitimate and referent powers and covenantal ideology is seen in the sentences expressing a prayer, keen wish, desire, or indirect request. Such a structure of these sentences is called an optative sentence. This sentence generally starts with 'may' and 'wish.' In Pope Francis' pandemic homilies, there is a slew of examples. In the following excerpts, he uses the phrase "may we": For we are all brothers and sisters – may we bring the song of life! (H4S11APT). May we stop the production and trade of weapons, since we need bread, not guns (H4S11APT).

The above statements imply the desire of Pope Francis that his audience must perform. Additionally, he also makes use of optative sentences to put on focus inanimate nouns: May the hearts of those who have enough be open to filling the empty hands of those who do not have the bare necessities (H4S11APT). May today be for everyone like a Sunday of tears (H7S29ML).

Noticeable as well is Pope Francis's use of this type of sentence to express his prayer and address it to God so His unified people will benefit and be blessed. Consider the following excerpts: May the Lord send us the Holy Spirit so we may be able to resist the temptations of moments of crisis (H5S2MET).

May the Lord give us all this grace to meet Jesus every day; to know, to know that He walks with us in all our moments (H8S26AET). From this

colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace (H10F27ML).

There are also some instances in the homilies wherein directive statements are expressed in plain and straight commands, in other words, through imperative sentences. The following are imperatives addressed to the audience: Dear sister, dear brother... do not give up... (H4S11APT). In moments of crisis, you need to be very steadfast in your convictions of faith (H5S2MET).

Also, in scarce instances, the Holy Father makes use of an apostrophe as a figure of speech to talk to the Lord and direct a "command" to the Lord: Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore You: "Wake up, Lord!" (H10F27ML). Tell us again: "Do not be afraid" (H10F27ML). Pope Francis adeptly integrates the concept of directives within the context of both legitimate-referent powers and the covenantal ideology in his pandemic homilies, creating a balanced approach to inspire and guide the faithful.

Through his legitimate authority as the supreme pontiff, Pope Francis induces a sense of duty and accountability in his audience, who willingly submit to his spiritual leadership. His legitimate power encourages a shift in their conduct and fosters a willingness to acquiesce to the teachings of the Church. Additionally, his status as a spiritual authority endows him with referent power, allowing him to significantly impact his adherents. This referent power stems from his perceived attractiveness, worthiness, and ability to command respect, further enhancing his directives' effectiveness.

In employing this approach, Pope Francis initiates a paradigm shift among the faithful, catalyzing societal advancement through disseminating ideologies centered around reverence, empathy, and affection. By utilizing the shared personal connection and belief between him and his audience, he effectively communicates the covenantal (communal/ecclesiastical) ideology through directives as an illocutionary force. The homilies reflect the agreement and unity between him and his audience to act and respond in harmony with the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. His intention to direct his audience to perform actions is revealed, encapsulated by an invitation to uphold

their devotion to Christ even amidst the challenges of the pandemic.

Moreover, as described by Bryant (2017) and Robinson (2014), the preacher's hope is not solely for the audience to comprehend the concepts preached, but to inspire them to respond actively and practically to the message. By using directives as an illocutionary force, Pope Francis encourages the faithful to apply biblical concepts to their lives, thereby fostering transformative action and spiritual growth.

This balanced approach to employing directives underscores their integral role in a homily. As Bryant (2017) suggests, a homily is incomplete without directives, as they serve as essential means through which the speaker communicates desired actions, such as pleading, advising, counseling, inviting, and challenging the audience.

In the context of strong leadership, as highlighted by French and Raven (1959), Pope Francis effectively demonstrates the relationship between himself as the leader and his followers, inspiring them and providing direction for their efforts and commitments. His legitimate and referent powers unite the Catholic community and direct them to listen to the gospel's message, emphasizing that Christ is alive and present with His people even in times of fear and failure. During the pandemic affliction, the Church invites its people to build solidarity through prayer and collective expressions of love, compassion, and empathy (Cherry, 2020; del Castillo et al., 2020; Nagem, 2020; Singh & Singh, 2020).

Commissives in Legitimate-Referent Powers and Volitional Ideolog

Pope Francis demonstrates the interplay of legitimate and referent powers once again, but this time, these powers are harnessed to advance a different ideology known as volitional or intentional ideology. Legitimate power, often called "title power", is widely acknowledged as the most prevalent form of power and leadership. As the pope, he wields significant influence over the direction of the Church and the desires, expectations, and aspirations of its more than one billion Catholic adherents. Simultaneously, he leverages his personal power, referent power, which stems from his distinguished, devout, and revered reputation. By exhorting the faithful to undertake

audacious and astute ventures and persist in their advancement, he serves as an exemplar, evoking profound admiration and encouraging them to emulate his example.

Through the use of commissives, an illocutionary force that refers to the speaker's intention for future actions, Pope Francis professes volitional or intentional ideology. This ideology revolves around the most powerful force of human behavior: willpower. In the homilies, Pope Francis clearly expresses his determination and dedicates himself to a specific course of conduct. His statements reflect his purposive striving, encompassing effect, motivation, and cognition.

The third ideology, volitional ideology, is grounded in the linguistic concept that volition distinguishes whether the subject or agent of a particular sentence intends action or not. Pope Francis's use of commissives in the homilies exemplifies his commitment to future actions, illustrating his resolve to pursue specific goals and objectives for the betterment of the Church and its followers.

While the corpora provide only a few sample statements of Pope Francis asserting legitimate and referent powers to profess the volitional ideology, these instances significantly impact the Catholic community. By employing commissives and expressing his resolute intentions, he inspires the faithful to align themselves with his vision and strive towards shared objectives. This cohesive sense of purpose strengthens the unity and solidarity within the Church, fostering a collective commitment to the volitional ideology.

The following excerpts showcase promising and guaranteeing from his end that action will soon be done: Today, as pilgrims in search of hope, we cling to You, Risen Jesus. We turn our backs on death and open our hearts to You, for You are Life itself (H4S11APT). Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter's rock-solid faith, I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the Stormy Sea. (H10F27ML). And we, together with Peter, "cast all our anxieties onto You, for You care about us" (H10F27ML).

The sample statements above demonstrate how the Holy Father galvanizes himself into an action that would benefit not just himself but the world at

large while facing all the atrocities and calamities at present.

By virtue of commissive statements, legitimate and referent powers are asserted and Pope Francis professes volitional ideology in his homilies. Through legitimate power, he delineates the Church's overall direction and the needs, hopes, and aspirations of the over-billion Catholic followers across the globe. Likewise, by using referent power through which he is identified as a dignified, spiritual, and esteemed personality, he utters promises and commitments as a response to faith in God and service to people. His compelling interpersonal skills that result in deep admiration of his audience are utilized to advance his volitional ideology. It is the volition of Pope Francis to commit himself to do actions in response to his authority as the pope to engage, empower, enlighten, and enliven his audience who are suffering from the travails of the pandemic, and therefore deserve their trust. By knowing what his audience feels and how to address their emotions, the Supreme Pontiff establishes a connection with them through his language in the homilies for the benefit of his audience. Renjen (2020) and Oluoch (2020) purport that by demonstrating an ability to address unanticipated situations and a steady commitment to address the needs of the followers, a leader acquires their trust. It is also important to recognize and address the emotions of the followers, as the words of a leader can be a powerful way to acknowledge the fears that naturally surface in times of crisis while framing the opportunity that can be achieved if they come together and commit to overcoming the challenges that stand in the way (Renjen, 2020; Shiramizu & Singh, 2007). For this reason, Brennan (2020) advocates that in the face of adversity, it is wise to lead with a message of hope and optimism, by including making promises about the future or commitments.

Expressives in Legitimate-Expert Powers and Revelational Ideology

In the context of Pope Francis' pandemic homilies, the interplay of legitimate and expert powers is once again evident. His legitimate power stems from his formal authority as the supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church and the sovereign of the Vatican City state. As a result, he is responsible for making decisions and guiding the

faithful in matters of faith and doctrine. Simultaneously, his expert power is derived from his extensive expertise in the domain of Catholicism, as demonstrated by his exceptional skills, knowledge, and proficiencies in theological matters.

Expressives, as an illocutionary force, play a crucial role in the manifestation of the revelational ideology that Pope Francis asserts in his homilies. Through expressive, the speaker divulges or uncovers their interpretation of veracity, erudition, and affective or cognitive disposition. This enables Pope Francis to assert declarations of gratification, affliction, predilection, aversion, elation, despondency, appreciation, and other emotional states. In the homilies, Pope Francis uses expression to emphasize the unwavering praise and adoration that Christ deserves from the faithful.

The use of expression allows Pope Francis to establish a profound emotional connection with his audience. By openly expressing his feelings of reverence and devotion towards Christ, he inspires the faithful to adopt a similar stance. Expressives create a sense of intimacy and authenticity in his communication, as he candidly shares his own emotional experiences and spiritual journey.

Through the interplay of legitimate and expert powers, Pope Francis instills a sense of trust and confidence in his interpretations and perspectives on matters of faith. The revelational ideology that emerges from his expressions emphasizes the unshakeable belief that Christ always deserves praise and adoration. This ideology aligns with the core tenets of the Catholic faith, reinforcing the reverence and devotion that the faithful hold towards Christ.

Moreover, expressions serve as a means of reinforcing the sincerity condition in communication. Pope Francis exemplifies honesty and authenticity in his discourse by openly expressing his emotions and affective disposition. This sincerity enhances the credibility of his message and strengthens the bond between the pontiff and his audience. The following relevant excerpts state: Indeed, "What great nation is there that has its gods so near as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call to him?" (H2W18ML).

Pope Francis, by his power and authority as a pope, and his profound understanding of the Scriptures, he expresses statements of assurance and

agreement. Through the repetition of one sentence, he was able to relay the feeling of belief in God's presence and power. Meanwhile, one statement from the homily is found to be a sample statement of gratitude: We need to resume the journey, reminding ourselves that we are born and reborn; thanks to an invitation given gratuitously to us out of love, there in our respective Galilees (H4S11APT). Meanwhile, a revelational statement of wonder is apparent in one statement from the homilies. Here, Pope Francis expresses a question to direct himself to a personal reflection of his action and capacity anchored on those of Jesus at the height of the sufferings of the world caused by the pandemic: Today, faced with a world that suffers greatly, many people who suffer the consequences of this pandemic, I wonder: Am I capable of weeping, as Jesus would certainly have done and does now? Is my heart like Jesus'? (H7S29ML)

Lastly, revelational statements of amazement are evidenced in the following statements: How beautiful it is to be Christians who offer consolation, who bear the burdens of others, and who offer encouragement: messengers of life in a time of death! (H4S11APT). With what tenderness Jesus weeps! (H7S29ML). These revelational statements conspicuously bring out the genuine human emotions of the Holy Father, being a human being himself who serves as an authority of the Church and as a teacher of Catholic morals and doctrines.

Grounded on expressions, legitimate power is asserted in the homilies which ensures that a responsible individual decides what is good for his congregation or community. Moreover, expert power is once more exhibited through the knowledge and wisdom in the pope's expressions. It confers the ability to execute his duties and endows him with an enhanced comprehension of the universe and its inhabitants. The aforementioned abilities are accompanied by a corresponding doctrine, namely, the revelational ideology. The homilies of Pope Francis reveal his perspective on truth and psychological disposition through expressions of confidence and concurrence, appreciation, astonishment, and admiration. Pope Francis, by his power and authority as a pope, and his profound understanding of the Scriptures. Authors like Osborne (2006) and Bryant (2017)

claim that there is a correlation between expressives and the delivery of a homily.

Moreover, the performative functions of expressions presuppose the inherent value of divine veneration and exaltation. In a similar vein to the oration of a homily, the ecclesiastic may exhibit fidelity to the script by merely reciting or supplicating the verbatim expressions. Through such an approach, the assertions as mentioned earlier can be articulated within the discourse with a corresponding disposition to the Scripture, characterized by a sincere sense of reverence and admiration for the magnificence of the divine (Keller, 2016; Robinson, 2014). The assertion of legitimate and expert powers and the profession of the revelational ideology via expressions reflect the intention of Pope Francis in the identified sample statements, which is to heighten affinity and sense of personal connection, closeness, and belongingness between him and his audience. Arevalo (2017) mentions that the use of expressions in a communicative act or in any discourse may serve to boost rapport among the participants since “emotional outbursts” follow them. This might be regarded as an interpersonal positive effect since it leads to a higher degree of affiliation (Siebel, 2003).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that language brings out powers and shapes ideologies, and the illocutionary forces in the homilies reveal these powers and ideologies, no matter how inconspicuous they may appear in the constructions, and that recurring patterns and diction play a crucial role in unboxing the preacher's asserted power and embedded ideology. The linguistic framework employed in the discourses holds the capacity to ascertain the speaker's intention and intended communication, as well as the ideological construct and authority that he or she espouses. Moreover, the utilization of linguistic expressions in theological discourses is all-encompassing. It is grasped through this study how illocutionary acts serve their purpose in bringing out how the preacher's authority is exhibited, and how his philosophical viewpoints underlie the construction of his utterances, mainly based on a certain objective of the delivery. Here, the supreme essentiality of critical thinking is accentuated through the analytical and evaluative scrutiny of the religious discourses, i.e., the

homilies of Pope Francis. Employing DA, this study has shown the framework's relevance in describing and explaining linguistic phenomena in the contexts of their use, and in constructing roles, intentions, emotions, knowledge, power, and ideology. Indeed, through judiciously and analytically looking into the intentions of a preacher such as Pope Francis, his asserted powers and professed ideologies could flourish and be examined for richer and deeper comprehension. It must be underscored also that teaching them to think systematically can improve their manner of constructing and articulating their sentiments and ideas concerning the manner of decoding the message received by the audience. On the other hand, a lack of this highly cognitive facility may result in an inability to grasp the preacher's assertions, directions, commitments, expressions, and declarations that mirror his authority and principles, as this study has demarcated. Homilies may appear plain and simple, but through a critical understanding of which, the profoundness of the language in the utterances could be appreciated even more deeply and spiritually.

Generally, it has been made clear that the purposes of delivering homilies, especially those during a crisis, could encompass asserting the theological teachings of the Church, directing the congregation to act, committing the speaker and his audience to respond as a community, and expressing a mixture of personal emotions, revealed through the scrutiny of illocutionary forces – making a conceivable correspondence between the illocutionary acts and the act of preaching, where speech acts could be accurate portrayals of human linguistic communication to assert a form of power that depends on a leader's need, purpose, and goal and to profess an ideology – an exposition delineating our identity, ethos, principles, and interconnections with external entities.

Nevertheless, the findings and implications of this study are only based on very limited corpora; hence, it is recommended that further research may be conducted using more homilies that Pope Francis delivered in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic to expand related literature and studies on the vital role of language in sacred discourses. Other researchers may also consider studying pandemic homilies of cardinals, bishops, or local priests using the theoretical underpinnings employed in this

study. Sermons of non-Catholic preachers, like pastors and ministers, may also be taken into consideration as a subject of a research endeavor. In addition, given the linguistic nature of the present investigation, forthcoming scholars should direct their attention toward the hermeneutical aspect of the pandemic and post-pandemic homilies, emphasizing the significance of interpretation, its fundamental essence, range, and legitimacy, as well as its position within and consequences for human existence. Prospective scholars may also express interest in alternative linguistic modalities and methodologies for discerning patterns in homiletic discourse that could facilitate comprehension of hegemonic structures and ideologies.

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