



UNDERSTANDING SPEECH ACTS: STRUCTURE, FUNCTIONS, AND CONVERSATIONAL DYNAMICS.

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Annotation. This article explores the concept of speech acts, examining their structure, functions, and role in conversational dynamics. Drawing on foundational hypotheses by J.L. Austin and John Searle, it categorizes discourse acts into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary sorts, as well as the five major classes: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and statements.

Keywords: Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives, Declaratives, Communication, Context, Pragmatics, Speech Act Theory, Language and Communication.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola nutq aktlari tushunchasini o'rganib, ularning tuzilishi, funksiyalari va suhbatdagi rolini tahlil qiladi. J.L. Ostin va Jon Sirlning asosiy nazariyalariga tayanib, nutq aktlari lokutsion, illokutsion va perlokutsion turlarga, shuningdek, beshta asosiy toifaga ajratiladi: **reprezentativlar**, **direktivlar**, **kommissivlar**, **ekspressivlar** va **deklarativlar**. Maqolada shuningdek, kontekstning nutq aktlarini tushunishdagi ahamiyati va samarali muloqotni ta'minlashdagi roli yoritiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Reprezentativlar, direktivlar, kommissivlar, ekspressivlar, deklarativlar, muloqot, kontekst, pragmatika, nutq nazariyasi, til va kommunikatsiya

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается понятие речевых актов, их структура, функции и роль в коммуникации. Опираясь на теории Дж. Л. Остина и Джона Серля, анализируются основные виды речевых актов: локутивные, иллокутивные и перлокутивные. Также выделяются пять ключевых категорий: репрезентативы, директивы, комиссивы, экспрессивы и декларативы.

Ключевые слова: репрезентативы, директивы, комиссивы, экспрессивы, декларативы, коммуникация, контекст, прагматика, теория речевых актов, язык и общение.

Introduction

Language is more than just a tool for communication; it is a dynamic system through which people perform actions, convey intentions, and shape social interactions. Understanding speech acts gives important bits of knowledge into the structure of discussions,

the capacities of dialect completely different settings, and the basic elements of human interaction. This article dives into the nature of speech acts, analyzing their classifications, capacities, and part in effective communication. By analyzing how language works completely different social settings, able to way better comprehend the nuances of meaning, aim, and conversational stream.

Literature review

The concept of a "speech act", refers to a specific unit of communication. According to Yule, three key actions occur when making an utterance: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Austin and Leech also discuss these concepts. Below is a summary:

1. **Locutionary Act** – The fundamental act of making an utterance or forming a meaningful linguistic expression within a given context.

2. **Illocutionary Act** – The communicative force behind the utterance, often referred to as illocutionary force. This can take the form of a comment, invitation, interpretation, or other communicative intents.

3. **Perlocutionary Act** – The impact or effect an utterance has on the listener, known as the perlocutionary effect.

Searle, as cited in Nadar, categorizes speech acts into five types:

Representatives – Speech acts that express a state of affairs with varying degrees of truth relative to a proposition, such as stating, believing, assuming, refuting, or reporting.

Commissives – Utterances that commit the speaker to a future action, including promises, pledges, vows, swearing, and threats.

Directives – Statements intended to prompt the listener to perform an action, such as commands, requests, challenges, and invitations.

Declaratives – Speech acts that, through their expression, bring about a change in reality, such as marrying, naming, blessing, and arresting.

Expressives – Statements that convey the speaker's psychological state or attitude regarding a situation, such as welcoming, deploring, greeting, thanking, congratulating, or apologizing.

Further studies in pragmatics and discourse analysis have explored the role of speech acts in everyday conversation. Grice's (1975) *Cooperative Principle* and its associated maxims (quantity, quality, relation, and manner) highlight how speakers navigate meaning through implied intentions. Brown and Levinson's (1987) *Politeness Theory* examines how speech acts are modified to maintain social harmony, introducing the concept of face-saving strategies. For instance, indirect speech acts (e.g., "Could you pass the salt?" instead of "Pass the salt") are commonly used to soften commands and maintain politeness.

Discussion and results

Speech acts can be classified as direct or indirect based on their structure. A **direct speech act** occurs when there is a clear and direct connection between the structure and its intended

function. An **indirect speech act**, on the other hand, occurs when the intended function is implied rather than explicitly stated.

For example:

Direct speech act: "*Close the door.*" (A clear command for the listener to shut the door.)

Indirect speech act: "*The director is coming.*" (This could imply that employees should continue working hard because the boss is approaching.)

In the first case, the directive is explicit, whereas in the second, the intended meaning must be inferred based on the context. According to Yule, directive speech acts are used by speakers to persuade someone to perform an action. These speech acts reflect the speaker's attempt to influence the listener's behavior. The illocutionary point serves as the foundation for these acts. Directive speech acts vary in form and interpretation depending on their degree of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). They can be classified into different types, including begging, appealing, recommending, advising, demanding, commanding, and ordering. The level of politeness used in these directives depends on the context, the relationship between the speaker and listener, and cultural norms.

Speech Acts and Conversation

Although syntactic structures convey specific meanings, people often do not express themselves in a straightforward manner. Instead, language is frequently used in ways that differ from its literal meaning, serving functions beyond its apparent structure.

For example, instead of directly stating:

- *Open the window.*
- *Hand me the wrench.*

People may phrase their requests differently:

- *Could I get you to open that window?*
- *How'd you like to hand me that wrench?*
- *Would it be too much trouble for me to ask you to hand me that wrench?*
- *I know this is an imposition, but could you possibly open the window?*

Sentence Structure and the Function of Utterances

Typically, questions are used to request information, declarative sentences to make statements, and imperative sentences to give commands. However, these structures can also serve other functions in conversation. While certain sentence structures are commonly associated with specific functions, they can also serve different purposes in conversation.

Form: request: *Can I ask you to please refrain from smoking?*

Function: command: (= *Please stop smoking!*)

Form: Statement: *We ask that you extinguish your cigarettes at this time, and bring your tray tables and seatbacks to an upright position.*

Function: command:(= *Stop smoking and sit up straight!*)

Form: question *Well, would you listen to that!*

Function: exclamation (= *That's really something to listen to.*)

Speech occurs in a variety of settings, each with its own typical forms of communication. Formal discourse occasions incorporate political energizes, wrangles about, classroom addresses, devout administrations (such as sermons, supplications, and songs), government hearings, and court trials. These settings require particular discourse designs suitable to their setting.

Conversational discourse can too take put in more casual circumstances, such as phone discussions, obtaining tickets or daily papers, and requesting dinners. Discussions have an basic structure composed of different discourse acts, counting welcome, request, congrats, comments, solicitations, demands, and allegations. When these components are not utilized appropriately, communication can get to be befuddling or uncooperative, damaging the guideline of participation in discussion. In discussion, individuals for the most part dodge talking at the same time. They indicate the end of their turn using certain expressions, such as *ya know?*, *or something*, *I dunno*, *isn't it?*, or *whatever*.

Certain conversational exchanges follow a predictable pattern, where one type of speech act typically prompts a specific response:

- A question is usually followed by an answer.
- An invitation is typically met with either acceptance or an explanation for refusal.
- An assessment is often followed by agreement or disagreement.
- An apology is generally followed by an acknowledgment of the apology.

A: Sorry about last night!

B: No problem; we were all pretty tired.

but not:

*B: *Where'd you get those shoes?*

People typically start conversations with conventional greetings or casual topics such as the weather or sports. When ending a conversation, people often use summary statements or transition phrases such as *Okay*, *all right then*, *Well*, *that's about it*, or *So*, *umh*. This is usually followed by multiple farewell expressions, such as:

Okay, goodbye then.

Nice talking to you.

See you soon!

Thanks for calling/dropping by.

Take care!

Cross-Cultural Communication

Speech conventions, including politeness strategies, vary across cultures. What is considered courteous in one culture may seem too abrupt, overly formal, or even excessively deferential in another. For example, in American telephone conversations, people tend to engage in casual chatting immediately, which might not be the norm in other cultures.

Conclusion

Speech acts are fundamental to human communication, shaping the way individuals interact, convey intentions, and establish meaning in conversations. By analyzing speech acts through the frameworks of Austin, Searle, and other linguistic theorists, we gain a deeper understanding of how language functions beyond mere words. Furthermore, the role of context, politeness, and cultural norms in speech act interpretation underscores the necessity of pragmatics in communication studies. Recognizing these elements enhances our ability to navigate conversations effectively, fostering clearer and more cooperative interactions across diverse settings.

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