

Perlocutionary Features of Speech Acts

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ABSTRACT

Perlocutionary speech acts serve specific communicative functions and aim to alter the psychological and emotional state of the interlocutor. This research investigates the linguistic and pragmatic features of perlocutionary acts and analyzes their influence on communication. The results demonstrate the significant role of perlocutionary features in communication.

Keywords: Pragmatics, speech acts, perlocutionary features, communication, locutionary act, illocutionary act, perlocutionary act, speech influence.

INTRODUCTION

It is a well-known fact that humanity has long been intrigued by issues related to speech processes, and the impact of speech. Heri Kuswoyo emphasizes that humans are constantly engaged in communication and acknowledges Halliday's explanation of language is a system for shaping meaning. Additionally, Byuller & Byuller classify the functions of language into three types: 1) using language as a means of regulating and understanding perception and worldview; 2) communicating with others through language, expressing emotions, and making evaluations; 3) acknowledges dedicating effort to use language to create a connection between the text and events [1; 257].

Pragmatics studies not only the structural and semantic aspects of language but also its communicative functions. This

field primarily deals with issues related to the process of speech. According to Hakimov, “Pragmatics studies speech processes that reflect human social activity, the communicative intentions specific to participants in speech, and the influence of the speech situation” [2; 5].

A speech act is “defined as a purposeful speech action performed in accordance with the principles and norms of speech etiquette accepted in a particular society. It is also considered a normative socio-speech action unit within a pragmatic context” [3]. In linguistics, it refers to the process of communication aimed at achieving a specific goal, encompassing not only requests and commands but also the speaker’s intention and impact on the listener.

Speech acts play a crucial role in linguistics and pragmatics as they bridge the connection between language and social communication. Through speech acts, speakers reveal their goals and intentions. Moreover, they can express communicative intentions in both explicit and implicit forms. “According to Searle, in all linguistics communications has a speech act. He proposes that communication is not just enough to a symbol, word or sentence but also the result from the fire of performance of speech acts. Thus, it can be said that the speech act is the basic unit of communication. Speech act is a basic analysis in pragmatics study” [4; 24].

There are various perspectives on the classification of speech acts. Many pragmalinguistic sources emphasize that speech acts are primarily divided into three types: locutionary (the act of speaking), illocutionary (goal-oriented) acts [5; 83-91]. J. L. Austin identified these three types in his theory of speech acts. In Austin’s framework, “locutionary acts involve expressing specific content through speech and explaining the meaning of words and phrases. Illocutionary acts aim to perform a certain action or fulfill a task, such as warning someone or making an invitation. Perlocutionary acts are concerned with the consequences of speech, such as persuading, compelling, intimidating, or misleading the interlocutor [5; 92]. John Searle later introduced the propositional speech act as a distinct type. [6; 151-169]. Among these, the perlocutionary act occupies a

significant place, as it manifests the impact of speech on the listener's emotions, consciousness, and actions. The purpose of this study is to linguistically analyze perlocutionary features and determine their role in communication. Based on this, the communicative and pragmatic significance of these features will be examined.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. **Through what linguistic elements are perlocutionary characteristics expressed?** Pragmalinguistics studies issues related to the speech process, context, and the influence of the speech situation. The relationship between the speaker and the listener is one of the core components. Additionally, pragmatics serves to illuminate the relationships are manifested through speech acts.
2. **How do these characteristics affect the interlocutor?** According to N. Mahmudov, for accurate understanding of information, in addition to the participants' knowledge of the language, one must also consider the listener's worldview, understanding of the social context in which the sentence is used, knowledge of the psychological state of the speakers, and other relevant information. All of these factors work together in the process of understanding information. Only by considering the interplay of these aspects can we approach an understanding of the essence of the speech process [7; 5-6].
3. **What is the role of such acts in communication?** Speech acts play a vital role in communication as they enable effective interaction between people and contribute to goal-oriented understanding. Speech acts help express the speaker's intentions, purposes, and emotions during the communication process.

METHODS

This research utilizes the speech act theory developed by J. L. Austin (1962) and John Searle (1969). Additionally, practical

linguistic analysis and textual analysis methods were employed. Both foreign and national communication examples were used, analyzed based on their linguistic features. Examples from texts were collected to identify the perlocutionary characteristics of speech acts.

Sample selection

It is well-known that humans are the most advanced and complex beings on Earth. As Sh.Safarov acknowledges, humans represent the most perfect and intricate phenomenon for scientific study [8; 253]. Due to these characteristics, the study of humans and their linguistic activity has become one of the primary objectives of linguistics today. This research selected examples of perlocutionary acts used in various cultural and social contexts for analysis. The study examined different outcomes of speech influence. For example, "The systematic explanation of speech acts ensures that the expression plan reflecting the speaker's intention is correctly understood by the listener and that the intended speech reaction is realized" [9; 19]. However, the expected speech reaction may not always materialize. As Sh.Safarov explains: "It is difficult to predict the outcome of speech influence, as the listener's future behavior and responses to the speaker's words (or written text) may vary significantly" [8; 85].

RESULTS

The analysis revealed that perlocutionary characteristics strongly influence interlocutors and assist in achieving speech goals. It was observed that perlocutionary acts are more effective in emotionally charged situations. In such cases, intonation and context are crucial factors contributing to the success of communication.

DISCUSSION

The results highlight the relationship between the linguistic and pragmatic features of perlocutionary acts. Furthermore, the

correct application of perlocutionary acts enhances the effectiveness of communication. The findings indicate that the successful execution of perlocutionary characteristics significantly contributes to the accomplishment of communicative objectives. For example, in declarative speech acts, the perlocutionary effect can be observed in how the message influences the listener's reaction. In the novel *Bygone Days* ("O'tkankunlar"), a character's silence following a statement reflects a perlocutionary response.

"The actions of virtuous people's sons will certainly not be considered inappropriate", he said.

The father lowered his gaze at his son's reply and was at a loss for what to say next.

("O'tkankunlar", p. 71)

The son is making a general statement asserting that the actions of sons of virtuous people are inherently proper. The father's reaction (lowering his gaze and being at a loss for words) suggests that the son's words had a significant emotional impact. In summary, the son's utterance leads to the father's reflective silence and emotional discomfort, which are key perlocutionary effects in this interaction.

"Your seat is made, Bek."

With this words, the servant addressed Otabek as he entered the room and went to sit by his bedding.

("O'tkankunlar", p. 9)

The servant's statement is a declarative act, intended to inform Otabek (the addressee and master) that the preparation of his seat has been completed. It also conveys deference, as evidenced by the respectful address "Bek," adhering to the cultural and social norms of subordination.

Hasanali entered. After greeting Rahmat Otabek once again, he asked: "Who is this person to you, Bek aka?" Instead of answering Rahmat's question, Otabek looked at the door. After leading Hasanali out of the room, he replied:

“Our servant”.

For some reason, Homid was surprised by this statement.

“Your servant?”

“Indeed”.

(“O‘tkankunlar”, p. 2)

Rahmat’s question: “Who is this person to you, Bek aka?” The perlocutionary intent of this question is to elicit an explanation and clarify the situation. The question places pressure on the listener (Otabek) to provide an answer. Otabek’s answer: “Our servant.” This brief and definitive statement delivers a clear explanation. Perlocutionarily, it creates a sense of surprise in Homid, as the response conveys notions of social hierarchy and status. Homid’s reaction: “Your servant?” Through this repetition, Homid reveals the perlocutionary effect of Otabek’s words – surprise and a need to reassess the situation. The perlocutionary characteristics of the dialogue manifest in how it evokes astonishment, prompts reflection, and challenges preconceived notions of social roles. Otabek’s concise and authoritative answer solidifies his position within the conversation.

The perlocutionary characteristics of speech acts are fascinating to analyze with examples from world literature. In this article, we focus on the perlocutionary aspects of speech acts, namely how the speaker influences the listener or reader, evoking emotions and reactions. The following literary works are useful for studying these features: Shakespeare’s works, particularly tragedies like *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth*. In these plays, speech acts are used to create conflicts and impactful dialogues between characters, leaving a strong impression on the emotional state of the audience and readers. Speech acts can evoke various emotional responses in the audience when they influence their psychological state. For example:

Barnardo

Tis now struck twelve. Get three to bed, Francisco

Francisco

For this relief much thanks. Tis bitter cold,

And I am sick at heart.

(William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, p. 8)

This passage is rich in perlocutionary characteristics, where speech acts establish emotional and social closeness between the speaker and the listener. Bernardo, through his speech, evokes a sense of relief in Francisco. In response, Francisco expresses his gratitude, revealing his state of mind and reinforcing empathy and solidarity.

Queen

Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet.
I pray thee, stay with us. Go not to Wittenberg.

Hamlet

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

(William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, p. 29)

In this passage, the Queen's words exert emotional pressure on Hamlet in a perlocutionary manner, urging him to reconsider his decision. Hamlet accepts his mother's request. His response provides reassurance to the Queen, as she feels that Hamlet is complying with her demand. However, while Hamlet's reply outwardly demonstrates obedience, it conceals an inner conflict and contradiction. Thus, this excerpt reflects the complexity of human relationships through the perlocutionary effect of speech.

Laertes

For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute,
No more.

Ophelia

No more but so?

(William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, p. 39)

Laertes' words in the poetic text exert psychological pressure by disregarding Ophelia's emotions. Ophelia, however, expresses her objection with a brief and clear response.

In Cervantes' *Don Quixote* Don Quixote's declaration of himself as a knight and his conversations with others on this

subject evoke amazement and laughter in the other characters. These perlocutionary acts of Don Quixote influence the other characters, compelling them to reconsider the boundaries between reality and imagination in their lives. For example:

“But of you”, he cried, “base and vile rabble, I make no account; fling, strike, come on, do all ye can against me, ye shall see what the reward of your folly and insolence will be”. This he uttered with so much spirit and boldness that he filled his assailants with a terrible fear, and as much for this reason as at the persuasion of the landlord they left off stoning him, and he allowed them to carry off the wounded, and with the same calmness and composure as before resumed the watch over his armour.

(Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, p. 25)

Don Quixote’s loud and furious words have a psychological impact on the attackers. He aims to intimidate them by presenting himself as more powerful. As a result, they stop their attack. His firm stance and speech divert the enemies’ attention from attacking to retreating. In the end, Don Quixote allows assistance for the wounded, demonstrating a transition from a state of rage to calmness. This is also a positive outcome of perlocutionary effect.

“Well, how goes it, good man?”

“I would speak more politely if I were you,” replied Don Quixote; “is it the way of this country to address knight-errant in that style, you booby?”

(Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, p. 112)

In this text, the speaker’s question offends Don Quixote because he sees himself as a great knight and perceives such a simple, inappropriate style as disrespectful to his honor. This dialogue begins with a positively toned greeting act. In response to the question, the listener uses a reproachful act. Additionally, the listener addresses the speaker’s request with a question. Through the sentence, “Is it the way of this country to address knight-errant in that style, you booby?” irony is expressed. With this, the listener encourages the speaker to reconsider their thoughts and reflect on their behavior.

IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study serve to expand the possibilities of applying perlocutionary acts in linguistics. At the same time, the correct application of these features plays a significant role in international communication.

CONCLUSION

Perlocutionary features constitute an essential part of communication and have an emotional impact on interlocutors. The scientific study of these features provides a foundation for new research in linguistics. Understanding the perlocutionary aspects of speech acts helps to reveal how a speaker's intentions can influence the listener in ways beyond the direct meaning of the words. Moreover, a deeper exploration of perlocutionary features enables the enhancement of communicative effectiveness on an international level.

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